

A

# S E R M O N,

PREACHED

AT LYME, NEW-HAMPSHIRE,

AT THE

Annual Thanksgiving,

NOV. 27, 1856,

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

HANOVER:  
PRINTED AT THE DARTMOUTH PRESS.  
JANUARY—1857.

# S E R M O N

PSALM 82 : 3, 4.

DEFEND THE POOR AND FATHERLESS : DO JUSTICE TO THE AFFLICTED AND NEEDY. DELIVER THE POOR AND NEEDY : RID THEM OUT OF THE HANDS OF THE WICKED.

FEELINGS of sympathy, with men in want and trial, are a dictate of nature and revelation. There are mutual offices, growing out of mutual relations, that men sustain to each other, which cannot be disregarded, without infringing the essential laws of their being. There are offices especially due from the strong to the weak ; from the rich to the poor ; from the learned to the ignorant, prompted by the natural principles of a common brotherhood ;—offices, that cannot be withheld, only by degrading humanity beneath mere animal creation. Some of these offices are described in the text. Here we are taught that it is a duty of universal obligation to protect the poor and the needy ; to rid them out of hands that would rob them of their birthright ; to secure to them privileges to which they are entitled as men. This law is binding in reference to the millions enslaved in the United States.

I am led to inquire, why the emancipation of the American slave is to be sought ?

1. This duty is inferred, from the *inherent character* of American slavery. American slavery is the involuntary and perpetual subjection of one man to the will of another. It is a system, which has its sanction in the false maxim, that superior *might* constitutes *right*—a system, that tolerates the appropriation of the physical and mental energies of the less, to the gratification of the pleasure and passions of the more enlightened or wary ; that puts the avails of labor, to which the laborer is entitled, surreptitiously, into the hands of a professed superior. It is a system,

in which the right of property is claimed to the time, physical strength, mechanical genius, tact for business, mental capacity, and entire services of another, and that enforces the claim without equivalent or compensation ;—a system, that abstracts the powers of one man from the direction and control of his own determination, and surrenders them to the direction and control of his fellow ;—that takes away from him what distinguishes him from the irrational creation, what constitutes him a man, and gives them to another. This it does, without his consent. This it does, not on a particular occasion merely, not for a limited period only, but during life. Has such a system any claim to perpetuity ? Are there not, in its very nature, reasons for seeking, by all proper means, its subversion ? Can gratitude for the gifts of Jehovah be more appropriately expressed, than in efforts to deliver men, made in His image, from its tyranny ?

But slavery, it is urged, is a Divine institution, and not to be rudely assailed by men, lest they be found fighting against God. It is claimed to have the sanction of Divine revelation, and is, therefore, to be *upheld*, rather than *subverted*.

But where is the scriptural sanction to be found ? It is said, that Noah pronounced a curse upon Canaan—a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren, and therefore American slavery has Divine authority. How natural and easy the corollary !

But let him who claims the right, on the ground of this curse, to enslave the man of color, first settle the question, whose blood flows in his veins. Let him determine, whether he is the son of Shem, Ham or Japheth. Let him go to the geneological tree and establish the point, by undoubted evidence, upon which of the branches he grew. Let him go up to this source of the races of men, and follow the streams that have flowed into each other, and mingled their waters, and parted again and again united their floods, for the thousandth time, and then select the drops upon which the curse was entailed. If he cannot do this, let him not quiet his conscience with the airy dream, that he is the legitimate executor of Jehovah's wrath upon his fellow man. Or if he can select these drops and clearly designate the token of the curse that is upon them, let him not presume to be the instrument of its infliction, till he can furnish, clearly, Divine warrant for such

a terrific mission. But let him remember, that the curse was pronounced upon Canaan, not upon Ham, and was fulfilled in the line of Canaan, and not upon the Africans, whom he asserts to be in the line of Ham. If then he claims to be the authorized agent to execute the curse, he might inflict it, as legitimately, upon the the Patagonian, or Norwegian, or Laplander, as upon his colored brother or son at the South.

But it is affirmed, that the sacred record of *patriarchal* servitude sanctions American slavery ;—that this servitude and American slavery are distinguished by similar characteristics, so that the justification of the former implies the justification of the latter ; and that the fact, that this servitude is not condemned by any Divine utterance, proves that American slavery has the approval of Jehovah. The word that denoted servitude, in the time of the patriarchs, was used manifestly to designate different kinds of service. This is so obvious, that it is generally, if not universally admitted. If, then, Abraham had slaves, servants born in his house, and if Jacob, as is affirmed, held slaves, servants, without the least seeming consciousness of guilt, the word denoting slave, or servant, does not determine the nature of patriarchal servitude. It does not prove it to have been, like American slavery, involuntary and perpetual. It does not prove that the servants were the *property* of the master, to be retained, or sold, at his pleasure. It does not prove, that he had the power to withhold from them the means of moral or mental culture, or to dictate to them the time, place, or amount of their labor ; or to separate children from parents, wives from husbands, and break up associations of home, and ties of affection, at will. He, who bowed down to idols, no less than the worshipper of Jehovah, and minister of the altar—he, who labored for another—tribes and nations, that were subject to another nation—were designated by the word slaves or servants. If the word, then, was ever used to denote slavery, in any form, it is clear, that its use does not determine the nature of patriarchal servitude. It does not prove, at any event, that there were embraced in this servitude the essential elements of American slavery.

But Abraham not only had servants, but servants *bought with money*. And does not this indicate the nature of the servitude of

his time? Does it not show it to have been a system of slavery, in one, at least, of its most merciless forms? But the word *buy*, as the word denoting *slave*, or *servant*, was used in a variety of senses. It designated different kinds of purchases — purchases for every variety of objects. It does not imply, that he bought them for slaves; or that he bought them without their consent; or that he bought them to exact their service contrary to their will; or to retain them and their descendants as his property and the property of his heirs to the latest time. And if it does not imply this, it implies something essentially different from American slavery. It is plain, that the scriptural language, designating and relating to patriarchal servitude, does not determine its character. It does not declare it to be a system of involuntary and perpetual servitude. But even if it was such a system, and the Scriptures so declared it — if it possessed all the revolting features of American slavery, the fact, that there was no scriptural language expressly condemning it is not evidence of its Divine approval. There was no scriptural language expressly condemning polygamy; none expressly condemning divorce; none expressly condemning some other sins. Are polygamy, divorce and other sins, therefore, divinely approved? Because they were not directly specified and condemned, in the language of the Bible, would their general practice now be justified?

But the comparative mildness of patriarchal servitude may be inferred, from the fact that servants were *armed*, and that they were, at a certain time, sent forth to distant lands, almost unattended, to fight the battles of their masters — a consideration, which, alone, would show the system to be something different from American slavery.

But if the Scriptures do not speak of *patriarchal* servitude in way to justify American slavery, does it not receive countenance from their description of the nature and fruits of *Egyptian* servitude? Or is there not something in Jehovah's dealings with *this* system that gives countenance to the *American* system?

Though the Israelites, in their servitude in Egypt, held property, personal and real; though they were a distinct community, an organized body, separate from the government, to which they were tributary — a community living in permanent habitations,

governed by their own laws, and retaining the family relation unbroken; though they were not transmitted as property from one to another, or sold for debts, and were all armed, still they were an oppressed people. The service they rendered was compulsory. They entered upon it involuntarily and reluctantly. And the service was not only involuntary, but unrequited. They were compelled to work, not only against their will, but without pay. Taskmasters were set over them to *afflict* them, and to enforce, against their will and without remuneration, the most rigorous demands upon their time and energies. Egyptian servitude then, however on the whole less at war with whatever is subservient to man's elevation and highest interests, than American slavery, is, nevertheless, *like* it, in exacting involuntary and unpaid service. It is like it, in being unfeeling, unrighteous, and *tyrannical* in its treatment of its subjects. But is Egyptian servitude any where commended in the Scriptures? Is it described as a system peculiarly adapted to man "as fallen" — a system, specially demanded to fit him for his duties, in the relations he sustains to society, or to his Creator? — an institution, accommodated to the imperfect state of the world, subduing the passions of men, or giving them a safe direction or furnishing facilities for intellectual, moral, or religious advancement? Is there an *intimation*, even, of its being approved of Jehovah? So far from this, the instruction given to the Egyptians, relative to this system, is grounded on the assumption, that it is wrong. The instructions imply, that the relation itself is *unnatural*, *unrighteous*, and to be *abandoned*. They were required to *cease* that relation, and to let the people go. Judgment after judgment was inflicted upon the Egyptians, *not simply* for their *abuse* of the system — *not simply* for their occasional acts of excessive tyranny, to which the system naturally led, and which it justified, but *for retaining the Israelites in bondage*. It was because they refused to let the people go — because they refused to let them breathe and speak as freemen — because they persisted in holding them in the relation of *servants* that they were visited with rebuke and buried in the deep.

The inquiry arises, do these teachings of the Scriptures — these judgments, inflicted upon men, for persisting in a relation less degrading, less ruinous to every interest of humanity, than Ameri-

can slavery, look like toleration of American slavery? Is there any thing in the divine teaching or conduct in reference to the former, that has any show of Divine approval of the latter? — Plainly not.

But if the Divine teaching, in relation to *patriarchal* and *Egyptian* servitude affords no countenance to American slavery, is there not something in the *Mosaic* institutions, indicating that it has the sanction of Jehovah? It is boldly asserted, by apologists of slavery, that slavery existed under the dispensation of Moses; that there was legislation in relation to it, clearly recognizing its existence, and the existence of the relation of master and slave; that men were permitted to buy slaves as an inheritance for their children forever; that slavery existed and slaves were purchased without a solitary expression of disapprobation — indicating, clearly, as is supposed, that the system was divinely approved, and that if it was divinely approved, then American slavery has the sanction of Jehovah. But if these statements are generally correct, to the inference from them exceptions will be taken. Before admitting its legitimacy, the apologists must show that what they term slavery, was something more than a system of apprenticeship, or of servitude, like the subjection of a minor to his guardian, or of one nation to another. They must show, that it was involuntary and perpetual, like the American system. If the obnoxious features, *involuntary* and *perpetual*, are wanting in the servitude, in the time of Moses, then Divine approval of that servitude does not not imply Divine approval of American slavery.

Before admitting the legitimacy of the inference, the apologists must show, also, that what was divinely approved under the Mosaic, must be divinely approved under the Christian dispensation; and that what was fit and best then, is fit and best in the present condition of the world. This must be shown, notwithstanding the changes the Highest has actually effected in the condition of the church, in the state of society, and in the habits of men; notwithstanding He permitted then, on account of the hardness of men's hearts, many things which he condemns now.

Before this inference is admitted, it must be shown, too, that the consideration, that Hebrew servitude was not expressly con-

demned by the lawgiver of Israel is proof, that it was approved of Jehovah. This must be done, though the very argument, which would furnish evidence, that the servitude was divinely approved, would furnish evidence, that many practices, clearly condemned under the Christian dispensation, had the Divine sanction under the Mosaic. But it is hazarding nothing to assert, that these things have not been, and cannot be shown.

That Hebrew servitude was voluntary seems evident from the following considerations. Servants were not the property of their masters. Men owned cattle and sheep, furniture and clothing; and there was a particular word designating them, as such owners; but it was not applied to them as owners of *men*. Another word is carefully employed, designating them in their relation to servants, simply as *masters*.

Servants were permitted to flee from their masters, if they supposed themselves misused, and no power could, against their will, compel their return.

The children of servants were free. None but their parents could sell them,—that is, sell their time and service. And their parents could do this, only during their minority.

Men were spoken of as selling themselves. The buying or selling of persons, when it was not a voluntary transaction, or when it was not temporary, to pay a debt, or to make amends for theft, was a capital offence.

If then servants were not the property of their masters; if they could flee from servitude at their pleasure and none could compel their return; if their children were free, and none could dispose of their time, but their parents, and they only temporarily; if men were spoken of as selling themselves, and if the buying and selling of men, only as a voluntary contract, except in the cases specified, was condemned, it can hardly admit of a doubt, that whatever may have been the general character of Hebrew servitude, it was a voluntary system.

It is obvious, that Moses adopted regulations, fitted to bring the servitude of his time to a speedy termination. He made the stealing and sale of a man a capital offence. He forbade the restoration to his master of a fugitive from servitude. "Thou shalt not deliver to his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee in that place where he shall choose. Thou shalt not oppress him."

We find in his code of laws, that foreigners that were taken captive in war could not be reduced to servitude. What was common among all other nations of the earth, in this respect, he expressly prohibits. They could be made servants only by purchase.

We find, too, that there was an appointed period, in which the yoke of servitude was to be broken from every neck. Every Hebrew servant, after six years' labor, was to be liberated. "If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years shall he serve, and in the seventh year he shall go out free for nothing." There was no exception to this law, save when a man, for some reason, preferred continued servitude : and even in this case, he must submit to a degrading ceremony, as an expression of his preference.

But not only the Hebrew servant, but every man, in the year of Jubilee, was to be free. "Thou shalt proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof. It shall be a Jubilee unto you, and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and every man unto his family." This law was evidently designed as a universal law. Its unlimited nature could not be expressed in clearer, stronger terms. It is not said, that *Hebrew* servants shall go free ; or that certain persons, held as servants, peculiarly favored as to family, or wealth, or talents, shall go free ; or that all, save strangers and foreigners, shall go free ; but "throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof, thou shalt proclaim liberty." Whatever might be the nature of the contract between master and servant — though the latter might be purchased as a possession for his master, or as an inheritance to his children forever, still, at the Jubilee, the obligation of the contract ceased — the purchased possession was surrendered, and every man's chains were loosed. Men could enter into no condition, or relation — they could bind themselves by no promise or engagement, that would exempt them from the blessings of liberty, on this fiftieth year of universal triumph. It was an ordinance of Heaven, to bring man, whatever privileges he had forfeited, however degraded, however deprived of that to which he is entitled, as made in the image of Jehovah, — back to his original, natural, inalienable rights. It was an ordinance, in which there was to be general exultation, as all men, without distinction or exception, were to be made free — exempt alike from ev-

ery yoke ; at liberty alike to pursue, unobstructed, their individual interests and pleasure. To hold servants as an inheritance for their children *forever* — as bondmen *forever* — denoted that the purchased right to their service might be transmitted from father to son, and down through all the changes that are effected in families and in society, to the latest period possible, that the relation can be retained, — till the very moment had arrived, in which, by express, Divine appointment, the claim ceased. It denoted, and denoted only, that their service was held by a tenure that might be good, in all circumstances, and always, till it was broken by the trumpet of Jubilee. No right to their service ever transcended this period. No chains or yoke — no contract or promise could hold them in subjection longer.

As Moses then did not originate the system of Hebrew servitude — as he no where expressed approbation of it — as he made laws clearly indicating, that the system was undesirable, and that would bring it to a speedy termination, can the system be regarded as having his sanction, or the sanction of Jehovah, from whom he received his authority as lawgiver ? And if this system, which was voluntary and temporary, and therefore necessarily the less rigorous, has not the Divine sanction, can the system of American slavery, which is involuntary and perpetual, have the sanction of the Highest ? Can an argument of the least weight be drawn from the Divine conduct towards the former, to prove the Divine approbation of the latter ? The former is essentially unlike the latter ; its worst features — those, which give it its great aggravation — are not found in the former. Divine approval of the one, then, cannot imply Divine approval of the other. But the former, even, is not Divinely approved. There can be, therefore, no evidence here of such approval of the latter.

It is manifest, that Hebrew servitude had no countenance in the Mosaic institutions, and that these institutions embodied instructions and principles, designed and adapted to bring the servitude to a speedy termination.

It is manifest, too, that there is nothing at variance with these instructions and principles in the Divine teaching, from the death of Moses to the coming of Christ.

It is manifest also, that during this interval of centuries, the entire expressions of the Divine will, in relation to slavery, are condem-

natory of its spirit, and of all modes of its existence. In the teaching of the prophets there is not the shadow of approval of any system of slaveholding, or species of oppression, or deprivation of the conscious rights of others. They teach the proclamation of liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, the undoing of heavy burdens, and the breaking of every yoke, and denounce the judgments of Heaven wherever there is continuance in the practice of injustice and tyranny. We think it impossible to read the declaration of the prophets, in relation to oppression in all its forms, and doubt that they uttered sentiments in which it was decisively and emphatically condemned.

If, then, as is obvious, the Divine teaching in regard to systems of servitude and oppression, subsequent to the death of Moses, to the coming of Christ, is condemnatory of these systems, the entire teaching of the Old Testament is averse to them, and consequently no argument can be drawn from this source in justification of American slavery.

But is Christ or his Apostles more favorable to slavery than patriarchs and prophets? Does the New Testament inculcate doctrines, in relation to slavery, essentially unlike the Old? It is asserted, that slavery existed in the time of Christ; that he lived in the midst of it; that he never spake of it in terms of censure; and that, therefore, he must have approved of it.

But though slavery existed in the time of Christ, it has not been proved, and it is hazarding nothing to assert, that there is not the slightest scriptural evidence that he ever came in contact with it.

Subversive of Hebrew servitude, as must have been the tendency of the laws of Moses, it would be natural to infer, that the servitude must cease, and it is believed, that it did cease, in the commonwealth of Israel, previous to the advent of Christ. So that the system, at his coming, had no being in Judea. If the system had then been in existence, it must have been kept up by the purchase of slaves of other nations. But there is no mention of any traffic of this kind, no allusion to it, even though other articles of traffic are particularly specified. Slavery existed in the time of Moses, and directly under his eye, and in the scriptural history of that time, we can hardly conceive how allusion to it could have been omitted. It was not omitted. And if it had ex-

isted in the field of Christ's labor, we cannot well conceive, how in the scriptural history of that field it could have been overlooked. Having so particular account of it, so many hundred years before, it is unaccountable, had it been prevalent in Judea at the time of Christ, that there should be no specific teaching touching it, or no allusion to it, by Christ himself. As therefore it cannot be proved, that Christ ever came in contact with it, that he did not expressly condemn it, is no evidence of his approval of slavery, in any of its forms. He did not enumerate all possible sins, and then condemn them individually and specifically. He inculcated principles at variance with all departures from God, and condemned individual sins as they passed under his observation, in the labors of his humiliation.

But admitting that there was servitude, at that time in Judea, and that Christ came in contact with it, if the fact, that he did not expressly condemn it, proves approbation of it, then it is evidence, that he approved of other sins, which he did not particularly condemn. {It proves what is manifestly false, which is absurd.

But it is evident, that Christ no where expressed approbation of slavery. He no where inculcated principles, giving it the shadow of countenance. He did utter sentiments, however, which, if reduced to practice, would at once exterminate every system of oppression and slavery from the earth. Let the holders of slaves, who appeal to Christ for justification, obey the injunction, "whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," and that moment their slaves are freemen; that moment, involuntary and perpetual subjection of others to their will, ceases. If Christ, then, inculcated principles, fitted at once to destroy slavery, let not the imputation be cast upon him, of approving and upholding the system.

But it is said, that the Apostles, beyond the limits of Judea, labored amid the embraces of slavery; that they gave instructions in reference to the system; that they received men to their churches who were involved in slaveholding, if not in slave-traffic; that they did not openly denounce the system; and that, consequently, they must be regarded as giving it their sanction.

But in reply, it may be said, that the Apostles found slavery in existence. It was nothing of their creation. They found its principles lying at the very foundation, and extending into all

the frame work of a government, in which they had no voice. Their great object was, to win men to God, to save them,—not to reform governments, or to effect changes in the settled habits of society, over which they had no direct control. They seem, therefore, to have deemed it preferable to inculcate general doctrines, destructive of slavery, than to attack, directly and expressly, the system. They teach sentiments of kindness, equity and benevolence, which, if carried out, in the different relations of life, would put an end to slavery, and every other sin that afflicts the world.

The Apostles address masters in two instances only, as follows, “And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there any respect of persons with him.” “Masters, render unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.” Here masters are taught, that as there is no respect of persons with God, there should be none in kind and equitable treatment, among men; that they should render to their servants that which is just and equal. Let these precepts be regarded; let masters give their servants what is *just*—what is clearly due for their labor; what is *equal*—do them as great favors as they receive from their servants, and what would be the result? How long would slavery, in any land, any where, survive such treatment? This language, then, so far from implying approval of slavery, teaches that, which, if regarded, would secure at once its universal extinction.

But the Apostles taught servants to be obedient unto their masters, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward, and to do them honor in the relation they sustained. And the reason assigned is, this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. Does this teaching prove, that the Apostles deemed slavery a good institution, or that they approved, and sought to perpetuate it? This is not admitted. The purport of the instruction to servants is—“You are servants—you are in a state from which you cannot readily extricate yourselves; escape it if you can; choose liberty rather than servitude; but, especially, exhibit an obedient, courteous spirit towards your masters; give them the attention and subjection expected, in the relation they sustain; perform the office of

servants, unrighteous and hard though it be, in the fear of God, looking to Him for a reward; for if, with a kind, forbearing, christian spirit, you suffer the wrongs to which you will be subjected, you will be accepted of your Master in Heaven; you will honor religion.” The Apostles teach servants, that they were to prefer freedom to servitude, and that in their servitude they would suffer wrongfully. Is this, regarding slavery a good institution? Is it approbation of it? They said just what every lover of liberty, and every friend of man would now say to the slave at the South. Prefer freedom to bondage; use all lawful means to secure your liberty, your exemption from the wrongs you suffer; but while a slave, be obedient to your masters; bear your burdens patiently; perform the duties of your relation faithfully, respectfully; for in so doing, you will be approved of your consciences, and of your Master in heaven.

Teaching subjection to masters, then, is not tantamount to approval of slavery. It is no more evidence of such approval, than their requirement of subjection to human governments, unrighteous and bloody, is evidence of their approbation of these governments.

But it is said, in the case of Onesimus, if no where beside, the New Testament gives its sanction to slavery. It is affirmed, that Onesimus was a slave; that he was sent back to his master Philemon, in circumstances to show that slavery is not at war with Christianity; and that slaves, who have escaped from their masters, should be restored to them. But the only evidence, that he was a slave is derived from the word translated servant—a word denoting clearly and unanswerably, all kinds of service. Had Onesimus been Philemon's ward; or had he been employed for a few days only, to perform a particular work for him; or had he been his agent; or a teacher of religion, he would have been designated by the same appellation. It is clear, then, that there is no proof of his having been a slave at all. The argument in favor of slavery, for which this example is so often quoted, is, to say the least, entirely without weight. But even admitting that he had been a slave, he was not to be sent back in that capacity, “but above a servant, as a brother beloved.” He was to be received by Philemon, as he would receive Paul himself. Let it be understood, that a fugitive slave from the South may be re-



stored to his master, not as a slave, but above a slave, as a brother beloved — as an equal and intimate friend, as Paul and Philemon — and there would be no need of civil law to effect a restoration. The expression, “brother in the flesh, and in the Lord,” seems to teach, that Onesimus was Philemon’s natural brother, as well as a christian brother. Probably, a younger brother, bound to service to his senior, till his majority.

The examination of this subject, to the results of which there can be but a bare allusion in a single discourse, it is a satisfaction to gain evidence, that American slavery has no sanction in the Scriptures. It is a satisfaction to feel, that a system so tyrannical and degrading, so fatal to every interest of humanity, so destructive of morals and religion, has no claim to the approval of Him, “who made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.”

If, then, American slavery has no claim to Divine sanction, it is evil and only evil. I come back, therefore, to the sentiment with which I began, that the emancipation of the American slave is to be sought. It is to be sought, on account of the *inherent character of slavery, as involuntary, perpetual subjection of one man to the will of another.*

I infer in the second place, *that the emancipation of the American slave is to be sought, from what slavery has done.*

In 1620, a Dutch man of war passed up James river and introduced 20 slaves into Virginia. There was work to be done in the Colony; the slaves were wanted to do it, and were bought for this purpose. In this purchase, American slavery had its origin. Other Colonies needed laborers, and other slaves were introduced, to meet their necessities. At the commencement of the Colonial settlements, the Dutch traders found the slave trade a lucrative business, and transported slaves to America, so liberally, that slavery became almost universal, before the colonists seem to have been aware of the enormities of the system. Soon as they began seriously to consider the evils, slavery commenced its decline, which continued till some time subsequent to the war of the revolution. The Continental Congress voted unanimously in 1774, to import no slaves, and purchase none imported, after December of the same year. This Congress, the next year, resolved, that Jehovah never designed a part of the human race

to hold absolute property in, or unbounded power over others. The Congress of the United States early adopted resolutions and measures, clearly showing their opposition to slavery, and determination to prevent its further extension. And the general feeling accorded with their action. During the agitation of this subject, public and private, Vermont in 1777, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania in 1780, and Rhode Island in 1784, abolished slavery within their respective limits. These State acts, more than any thing beside, aroused the fears of a few who were bent on rendering slavery perpetual, and called out marked enmity to every effort for its suppression, or limitation. While Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Franklin, Pinckney and Patrick Henry expressed their decided condemnation of the system, as unrighteous, and ruinous in its tendencies, labored for its suppression, and believed it must be soon effected, there were a few planning and toiling for its continuance, and wider diffusion. Their plans were gradually developed, and with fearful success. Though previous to the invention of the Cotton Gin, in 1793, by Eli Whitney, slave labor was found not profitable, still, through love of ease, lust of power and sensual pleasure, there were some determined and unscrupulous advocates of slavery. But after this invention, when one man, in working Cotton, could do the work of a multitude previously, its advocates became more numerous and determined. It now opened an avenue to wealth, no less than to the gratification of the baser passions of the human heart, and slavery boldly demands more distinct recognition by the government, wider diffusion, and greater facilities for executing its purposes, and strengthening its dominion.

First it asks for more territory, and the government must procure it at its bidding. It will suffer no denial. The territory is purchased, and surrendered to its service.

Again, it asks for more slave States, to equalize its power in the Senate. The wisest statesmen resist the demand. The sentiments of the founders of the government; the design of the Constitution; the nature of the system; principles of philanthropy and benevolence, are urged, in opposition to the demand. But in vain. Its requests must be granted, or the existence of the nation is imperilled — the Union is dissolved. To escape the execution of its terrific threats, and soothe it into quiet, Ken-

tucky and Tennessee, Louisiana and Mississippi, successively, open their bosom to its foul embrace, and subject themselves to the perpetual dominion of its darkness and chains.

Again, slavery wants peculiar privileges and special legislation in its behalf. Men must have a bounty, for their devotion to the peculiar institution. Butler, of South Carolina, says, that the labor of a slave at the South, is as productive and valuable as that of a freeman in Massachusetts, and that the one ought to be counted against the other. But it is replied, if slaves are to be admitted as citizens, then why not on an equality with white citizens. If they are admitted as property, then why is not other property to be admitted into the computation? But slavery rises in its potency, and presses its demand. Opposing arguments and remonstrances avail nothing. Connecticut, in its great devotion to the whole country, comes in as a compromiser, and the matter is adjusted, by rendering five slaves equal to three white men. So that the slave, on election days, is *three-fifths of a man*! But on all other days, a *chattel* — a *thing*, like a bale of Cotton, to be bought or sold in the shambles. One Southerner, with 500 slaves, can bring the same amount of influence into Congress, as 300 northern men. The slave States have more than thirty votes in the House, above that, to which, in equity and justice, they are entitled. But this privilege slavery must have, and through dogged persistence and menaces, the North, as usual, yield, and the point is gained.

Again—When slavery sought to extend its dark dominion, its tyranny, into Missouri, and it was about to be admitted into the Union, in 1820, the North demurred. They maintain, that a system so at war with the dictates of nature and revelation — so hostile to every interest of the country, and to every principle of benevolence and humanity, should be extended no further. They support their position by considerations the most weighty; by arguments entirely unanswerable. But slavery had made its demand, and, right or wrong, life or death, it must be granted. Civil war, the dissolution of the national fabric into its original elements, was denounced as the penalty of refusal. The North, through weariness of protracted bickering, or *fear*, again yield, and with the express condition, the solemn pledge on the part of the South, that the territory north of 36 30, should be sur-

rendered to perpetual freedom, Missouri is added to the sisterhood of slave States.

Again—The grasping ambition of slavery, its unquenchable thirst for dominion in the national counsels, is not yet satisfied. Texas is wanted to consummate its purposes. And, opposition notwithstanding, Texas is gained to slavery. The North bows assent, as ever, to the dictates of its master! It sacrifices principle, justice, mercy, to the will of the southern oligarchy.

Again—More territory still is wanted, and suddenly it is opened to the far reaching vision of slavery. Mexico, with an extended domain, and proverbially weak and defenceless, proffers a promising field for the labor of slavery propagandism. And quick, hostilities are provoked — war is proclaimed, and the autocrat pounces upon its innocent and imbecile neighbor, as a tiger pounces upon its prey, and California, Utah, and New Mexico, are taken, at once, into its insatiable maw. Opposition, remonstrance, the frown of the world amount to nothing.

Again—The slave sometimes seeks the rights he has in common with all men, and flies to a place of refuge, where he can enjoy them. But slavery cannot brook the sudden, unbidden departure. Consequently, in 1850, the Fugitive Slave Bill is announced, making every northern man, in effect, the servant, the *runner* of any southern taskmaster. The North object to its humiliating conditions. But in vain. Slavery, always successful, had made another demand, and through a storm of threats, the bill becomes a law.

Again—Slavery seeks territory and sister slave States, north of 36 30, and, to gain its object, the Missouri Compromise must be repealed. Slavery had gained a slave State and all the advantages on its side, to be expected, and now, when the North is to receive its benefits from the Compromise, though having been regarded as inviolable for more than thirty years, it must be repealed. Accordingly, in 1854 a bill is introduced into Congress for its abrogation. And though opposed, as a violation of a most solemn pledge — as flagrant injustice — as gross imposition upon the rights of the North, slavery is clamorous in its demand. It threatens, if resisted, disunion — the subversion of the national temple — and the North again yield, and every inch of territory on the Continent is effectually thrown wide open to the withering curse of slavery.

But this is not enough. Kansas is becoming a free State. Slavery finds, that the object of its treachery — of its broken pledges — of its brazen-faced faithlessness, is being defeated. The progress of freedom must be arrested. Consequently, companies of men, of more than a thousand, from a neighboring State, with arms and provisions for the expedition, in November, 1854, march into the territory, to choose a candidate of slavery for Congress. They control the ballot box, effect their purpose, and return.

But freedom has not yet drawn its last breath in Kansas. Another effort must be made to effect its extinction. And at the election of the first Territorial Legislature, March 1855, organized bands of Missourians, with officers, tents, provisions, revolvers, bowie knives, and all the fixtures of an army, prepared for a protracted warfare, march into the territory, and, by superiority of numbers and power, control the election at will, and impose a mock Legislature upon its free inhabitants.

But this is not enough. At the recurrence of an election of a Delegate to Congress, October 1855, a similar scene was exhibited. Bands of men from the same State, arrayed as before, take the matter of election into their own hands, affix the seal of authority to the man of their preference, and, without a blush of shame, exult in their triumph.

But the climax is not yet reached. Slavery has not perfected its work in Kansas. There are still fears, that the settlers may secure the Territory to freedom. To prevent the possibility of such an occurrence, troops of desperadoes, from a slave State, rush into the defenceless region, spreading desolation and death in their train. Villages of citizens are burned; their retired habitations sought out and demolished. Men, for no other crime than love of liberty, are hunted and shot as beasts of prey. Women are subjected to worse than brutal barbarity. Children are sent out into a dreary, desolate waste — fatherless, homeless, breadless. And when the Territory is nearly freed from the friends of liberty, by expulsion and murder — when no man, as he loves his life, or the life of his family, dares utter a sentence, or draw a breath for freedom, *then* a call may be issued for a Territorial election. *Then* preparation may be made, for the reception of Kansas as a State. When liberty of speech, the press,

the bar, trial by jury, and the elective franchise, have all received a fatal blow, *then* is the time to effect its State organization. *Then* the incubus of slavery may be affixed to it, without the possibility of failure. These are some of the doings of slavery. Not that *every* slaveholder approves of these doings. There are honorable exceptions. But still these are the doings of slavery.

I might direct attention to a southern plantation and speak of the corrupting, debasing influence of slavery there. I might enter a slave mart, and speak of the tragic scenes there enacted; of families divided; of husbands and wives separated, at the will of a tyrant: of children and grandchildren torn from the embrace of their mothers, by their own fathers and grandfathers, and doomed to perpetual slavery, at a returnless distance. I might speak of the slave, robbed of his birthright — the privilege of using his powers of mind and heart, that God gave him, so as to accomplish the design of the gift — so as to rise to the dignity of a man, in intelligence and wealth, in virtue and religion. I might go into the walks of the Capitol of the nation, and speak of an inhuman assault upon a plain man, for the crime of honestly giving utterance to truth. I might refer to the tragedy in one of its public houses, where an Irish servant is slain with impunity, by southern chivalry. I might go into the Senate chamber, and speak of a man, in a defenceless attitude, who had dared, truthfully, to plead for humanity and right, brought to the floor in his blood, by the repeated blows of a bludgeon — and of the murderous act, as since approved and sanctioned by the general southern sentiment of the nation. But I forbear. Enough has been said of the doings of slavery to show, that the emancipation of the American slave is an end to be sought — that every man, who is not lost to every better feeling of his nature, to say nothing of the Christian, should labor to rescue his fellow men from the dominion of a system, marked by such expressions of injustice, oppression and blood.

I infer, lastly, that the emancipation of the American slave is to be sought, *from what slavery aims to do*. It gives no evidence of being satisfied with conquests already gained. The rapid extension of its limits and power, has only strengthened its ambition of universal sway. Its avarice and tyranny have kept pace with its successes. Its purpose to secure Cuba, and Hayti, as new

slave territory, either by purchase, or filibustering, or open war, has been distinctly and repeatedly avowed. Its most thoroughly trained and artful leaders have indicated no disposition to conceal the intention, doubtless thinking, after what they have already demanded and gained, that no reach of cupidity, no usurpation of power, no aggravation of oppression or wrong could shock the sensibilities of the North.

But slavery is not only looking forward to this new territory, *but also to the restoration of the African slave trade.* It is, in various quarters, discussing the expediency of taking it out from under the ban imposed upon it by the civilized world, and giving it renewed existence and prevalence. Its restoration is seriously defended in prominent places, and in popular publications at the South. Leading members of Congress, representing the interests of slavery, have advised the withdrawal of our naval forces from the coasts of Africa, preparatory to the revival of the trade. And why should it not be restored, with all the terrific scenes of the middle passage? If the system of American slavery is right, is not that right, in which it had its origin and long continued existence? If the stream is pure, is not the fountain, by which it is fed, pure? Hopkins, the slave's early friend and advocate, says, it is not possible for slave-keepers to justify themselves in what they are doing, if they cannot justify the slave-trade. If then they are determinately bent on slave *keeping*, why not be bent on slave *stealing*, in Africa? Or if slave keeping requires and justifies slave traffic between Virginia and the extreme South, why not justify, if not require, slave traffic, between the coasts of Africa and the South? A settled purpose to restore the African Slave Trade is only in harmony, with the settled purpose, to extend and perpetuate the slave system. They are twin sisters.

But slavery is *seeking to enter the free States, with its property.* It aims to secure the liberty of driving and working its slaves, and of rioting upon the fruits their oppression, at the North, as at the South. It seeks to kidnap men, and to buy and sell human sinews and blood, in every section of the nation, and has boldly declared its intention, speedily, to effect its object. And if what is done at the South, in these respects, is right, then why not right to do the same things at the North? And why not

seek to do them on both sides of a dividing line, as on one? If slavery should build its marts and cause the voice of the auctioneer, in the purchase and sale of human flesh, and the despairing cries of separated families, to be heard under the shadow of the Capitol of every free State in the Union — if slaves, like droves of cattle to the place of slaughter, should be driven, under the lash, *by our own doors*, to the auction room, or the field of unrequited toil, in one year, it would not make greater advances in encroachments upon the rights of man, and the rights of the North, than in the past year. Seeking then to make these advances, as it does, is only in keeping with what it has done. It is adopting no new principle, but only extending and carrying out a long established and settled policy.

But slavery *aims at universal triumph — at the accomplishment of its purposes, every where, without limitation or obstruction.* It cannot brook opposition, and therefore seeks, with iron heel, to crush it in the dust. The spirit which it fosters and strengthens, through every stage of being, from the cradle, cannot tolerate a master, or an equal. From its very nature, it cannot rest — it never will rest, if its ambition of unlimited dominion be not broken, till every power and influence in the nation is brought submissively under its feet. There is, then, in what slavery aims to do, a reason, that the emancipation of the American slave should be sought — that every lover of himself, of his children, and of man, should labor and pray for universal deliverance from its chains.

My hearers, I prescribe no governmental measures. I plead for no political party, but for humanity and right — for principles of liberty and equality — and for justice, that has been stricken down in our streets. I plead for suffering children, that have been made fatherless — for women, that have been made widows — for peaceful citizens, that have been bereft of their substance and home. I plead for the opening of prisons and the breaking of their chains. I plead for the inviolability of human life in the maintenance of eternal truth, whether at the centre or at the circumference of the nation. I plead for the image of God in man, that is, by ruthless power, degraded, — trampled under foot, — brutalized. I plead for the principles of our fathers, to which we are indebted for our national blessings, and which are fast dying

out in the land. I plead for a return to those habits of primitive simplicity and integrity, through which our national fabric, with its good institutions, was reared, and through the decline of which the fabric is shaken to its very foundations. I plead for resistance to slavery, by peaceful, lawful measures, as it is at war with every interest of the nation — with every prompting of reason and humanity — with every law of virtue and religion. Let it accomplish its purposes, and that for which our fathers bled and died, has departed — that, which elevates us among the nations of the earth, has lost its glory — that, which renders a residence in the United States preferable to a home in Spain, or Tartary even, has ceased to be.

We may sleep over the encroachments of slavery, but we sleep upon the mouth of a volcano. We may suffer its dominion to extend, saying, Peace, peace, but we countenance the influence, that is fast plucking the pillars from our national temple. We may look upon its rapid strides, in pursuit of its object, without fear, but every step is bringing corruption and ruin into the sources of our national life and blessings. The spirit of slavery must be arrested in its progress, by the spirit of freedom, or its triumph is speedily gained. And the triumph of slavery, and the ruin of our interests, agricultural, mechanical and commercial — of our privileges, intellectual, moral and religious, go together. When its general dominion, which seems approaching in mad haste, is perfected, an Egyptian darkness covers us — an Egyptian retribution has overtaken us. The experience of other nations — the Divine rebukes of similar sins far less aggravated, warn us of a hastening catastrophe, more signal and terrific, than was visited upon these nations, as our guilt is deeper. Our only hope of preserving our children, our civil and religious institutions, and our country, from the debasing, destructive influences, the tyranny of slavery, is in GOD ; and without speedy, manly, determined resistance of its encroachments, even this hope is presumption.