

# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

## NATIONAL LIBERTY CONVENTION,

HELD AT BUFFALO, N. Y.,

JUNE 14th & 15th, 1846;

INCLUDING THE

## RESOLUTIONS AND ADDRESSES

ADOPTED BY THAT BODY, AND

SPEECHES OF BERIAH GREEN AND GERRIT SMITH

ON THAT OCCASION.

Goodell Anti-Slavery Collection No. 70

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WILLIAM GOODELL.

B

## SPEECH OF BERIAH GREEN.

[WRITTEN OUT BY HIMSELF.]

MR. PRESIDENT:—It is hardly necessary, that I should occupy your time in saying, that the general aim, which shines through the Address under discussion, commands my admiration. It is doubtless better, if I solicit your attention at all, to refer to particulars, in which I may regard the Address as capable of radical improvement. I know of no better way of attempting what I would gladly see accomplished, than to suggest a few somewhat general and comprehensive hints, on the subject of Civil Government and the mutual relations which bind rulers and subjects together. Before entering on this design, I am strongly tempted to offer some account of certain inconsistencies, which at one point and another, seem to me to mark the Address. The Government here or there must not, we are taught, bring Labor with its relations, interests, operations, under its jurisdiction, further than in some general way to afford it protection. An exception is indeed made in favor of the recent attempt in France to organize labor—an expedient, it is hinted, demanded there by special necessities, which therefore would naturally be only temporary. But while, according to the Address, Government ought not to bring Labor under its jurisdiction, it ought not to permit more than ten hours a day of toil to be exacted of the Laborer. Its negative obligations then are in direct conflict with its positive obligations. Both, it cannot honor. Besides, one thing here is so connected with another, that the Government cannot define the time, during which Labor may be exacted, without affecting its relations in various respects. Any responsibility here, therefore implies other responsibilities, which must at the same time be recognized. To the whole subject of Labor, it must, as it may find occasion, accordingly, apply itself.

To every man, moreover, the Address teaches, the Government should secure a "Homestead." He is entitled to this, as inalienably and obviously, as he can be to the enjoyment of air and sunlight! If this be so, it cannot well be denied, that the Soil, in opposition to the doctrine of the Address, lies under the jurisdiction of the Government. Otherwise, it can by no means fulfill any such obligation. How can it assign, directly or indirectly, to any man, his portion of that, which lies beyond its jurisdiction?

Such inconsistencies in many ways, men of different schools and parties are continually running into, filling the whole sphere of morals with perplexity and confusion. And no wonder. For our countrymen have all along been cherishing, under the name of "the peculiar institution," a monster, which has for ages been prolifically producing anomalies and abominations of all sorts and sizes, which it has scattered over the Republic as thickly and universally as ever frogs and

vice were spread over Egypt. The creatures, who have been placed at the head of affairs among us, have cherished *Slavery*, as if it were the very heart of the nation—as if upon its maintenance and prevalence, our welfare vitally depended. No extravagancies, no humiliations, no sacrifices have been reckoned too great, in the effort to extend and perpetuate its influence. Reason, Conscience, Will—all the attributes of our Human Nature—have been laid upon its altars. We have poured our treasures and our blood at its feet as freely as water can be spilled upon the ground. Every form of social life among us, it has reached—every element of our social existence, it has infected. It has affected our character every way—all our aims, methods, modes of thought, and currents of sentiment. Thus affected, we fall, unconsciously, into the strangest confusions, and utter the flattest contradictions! Arguments we often employ for one purpose and another and on the gravest occasions ludicrously unintelligible or inconclusive. To illustrate, Slavery is manifestly founded on the ruins of the Idea of Rectitude. That is a fundamental and all-comprehensive Law of Rectitude, which requires us to treat every thing according to its character—according to its essential attributes and qualities. A person on the one hand, and a chattel on the other, are distinguished from each other, intrinsically, widely, and eternally. They stand opposed to each other not in degree merely, but in kind—in the very nature by which they are respectively characterized. A chattel therefore can never be raised to personality—a person can never be reduced to chattelship. To attempt this, is to assail the very Idea of Rectitude—to boast of success is to affirm, that the Idea of Rectitude has been obliterated. Now this is the boast of Slavery—a boast, uttered in the solemn, measured language of Law! It describes the persons, whom it thus reduces to slavery, as chattels; and enjoins that as chattels, they should be disposed of. It admits their personality, only when through their personality injuries may be inflicted on them. It tosses them back and forth between personality and chattelship, just as may be convenient for the master and hurtful to the slave. Thus Rectitude is treated not as a Divine Idea, immutable and authoritative; but as a phantom, to be called forward or kept back according to the convenience or caprice of the conjurers, on whom it is expected obsequiously to wait. In other words, the slave is now regarded as a person and now as a chattel—he is forced to fly back and forth from one to the other, shuttle wise, as the passions of the master may demand. Thus the very Idea of Rectitude—its intrinsic, essential, distinctive characteristics—is trampled into nothing. Right and Wrong become merely arbitrary terms, applicable to whatever may suit the occasion; descriptive of this or that or nothing. And yet after consenting, that within the sphere of Slavery every thing belonging to responsibility and obligation should be thrown into utter confusion, our countrymen are continually talking about the *rights* of the master and the *duties* of the slave, and about what we *ought* to do or *ought not to do* in our relations to the one and to the other! Nothing more confused or unintelligible can be found at the heart of old Chaos.

Let us take up this general statement under some of the particular applications, of which it is clearly capable. The Slave, it is often alleged, is apt to steal. Those who agree with each other in affirming, that he may well exert himself to escape from his hands, differ from each other, some in asserting and others in denying, that he has a right to take, anywhere along his course, the horse or the boat, which might aid him in his flight! Now nowhere within the sphere of slavery can theft be committed. And for the reason, that it annihilates the institution of property. The right to appropriate and possess can nowhere be found. For property always implies personality, from which it essentially differs. If the distinctions separating the one from the other be destroyed—if the two be confounded with each other, the very Idea of property vanishes. For it is absurd to suppose, that property can own property—that cattle can own the fields they may be grazing in. To attempt, then, to reduce, in any case, personality to property, is to assail the institution of property. If there be one word of truth—the least significance in the slave-code, the right of property, even in Idea, must be pronounced abolished. Who, then, where this code asserts its authority, can be convicted of stealing? No such crime can there be committed or even conceived of!

Why should any of us hear with an air of incredulity, that the life of the slave, the code, under which he groans, leaves unprotected; that he is every where and at all times exposed to violence: that caprice or malignity may do their worst upon him with impunity? The thing may not only be so, historically; it *must* be so according to the intrinsic tendencies of the slave-laws. The slave is there as such pronounced a *chattel*. Now the destruction of a chattel, whatever it may be, cannot be murder. *Human* blood cannot flow in the veins—a *human* heart cannot beat, in a chattel. Where personality is not, can there be murder? A death of violence the slave may suffer—often does suffer. Damages may be demanded and obtained. But with what show of propriety can an indictment for a capital offence be required and proceeded on? *The death of chattels cannot be murder*. The personality of the master, moreover, cannot be maintained under the influences of slavery. The master and the slave in this matter stand side by side—are indissolubly united to each other—must share the same fate—sink or swim in the same element. To strike down the personality of one man, is to strike down the personality of all men. As they all are made of the same stuff—as common blood flows in all their veins—as they are united in one and the same nature, they must, in respect to their personality, stand or fall together. Now in reducing its victim to chattelship, slavery has triumphed over all that is essential and distinctive in human personality. The very basis, therefore, on which the master proclaims his existence, and asserts his rights, is at best a mere shadow. His blood, as well as the blood of his slave, has lost altogether its human qualities. It is not human blood. To shed it, if there be any significance in the slave-

code—if the very least respect can be due to the doctrines and demands of slavery; to shed his blood can by no means be murder. If the slaves should this very night kill all their masters, they would commit no murder. They would not fairly be liable to indictment or punishment. They are reckoned chattels. Can chattels be accused, and convicted and punished? Whatever might be the results of an insurrection, however violent and extended, we should witness nothing else than a fight among mere animals—one herd rushing wildly upon another! This is the condition to which slavery reduces all its victims, whether they impose, or receive, its manacles. And to this conclusion, all men must yield, who have the least respect for the Laws of Reason. For it is as absurd as it is wicked—it is as ridiculous as it is mischievous, to attempt to mix up personality with property; to treat a name, however it may be spelt, now as a person and now as a chattel—now as an article of merchandize and now as capable of guilt and liable to penalties. Such confusions—enough to frighten chaos itself—compared with which the strife, tongues at Babel was a heavenly anthem—put every thing within their reach out of joint. All things are thrown out of place into wild disorder. The sphere of ethics among us is the very home of hurly-burly. Right and Wrong join in a Bacchannalian dance—changing places with each other—tripping up each other's heels—plunging pell-mell into the same excess of riot. Such results must be witnessed wherever slavery is endured. Why, then, should not the most marked inconsistencies creep out of the same lips—the flattest contradictions fall from the same tongue—the affirmative and negative be stoutly maintained on the same point? If the presence of slavery does not overwhelm us with astonishment, why should we be surprised at any thing, which may creep from the entrails of the hugest mother-monster?

In opposition to such inconsistencies and contradictions, it may well be affirmed that Civil Government has intrinsically and necessarily a character of its own. It is strongly and permanently marked by distinctive elements—has features essentially characteristic. Its origin and authority, all true Thinkers describe as divine. It is as truly and plainly a principle of Philosophy as it is a declaration of the Bible, that "*God is the only Potentate.*" Civil Government must be a reflection of His Throne. Whatever is not this is not—can never be Civil Government. Repeat its titles and assert its claims as you will; if it be not true to the principles of the Eternal Throne—if it be not conformed to the arrangements of the Heavenly Kingdom, it may be a cunningly devised, a plausibly defended, a stoutly executed conspiracy. It can in no wise, for no purpose be a Government. How can that be an ordination of God, which is in conflict with His will—opposed to His designs? Can the Deity wage war upon the Deity?

The principles of His Government, God has made the very basis of the human structure—the very soul of our being. His great Laws he has inscribed upon our hearts—wrought into the very texture of our

existence. His voice penetrates right royally the awful depths of our consciousness, giving utterance and expression and effect to the obligations, which bind us, indissolubly and eternally, to His Throne. Are we not conscious of the Law of Rectitude, in which may be found, and from which may be derived, the treasures of Wisdom, Goodness, Power:—in which are hidden, and from which may be evolved all the various specific requisitions, which as adapted to the different aspects and relations of human existence, we are bound to respect;—in which the sum and substance of all authentic Revelations are sublimely condensed and majestically uttered? In this great Law, indelibly impressed on universal Human Nature, all the elements which distinguish and characterize Civil Government, are found. Here is their origin, here their substance. Hence they must be derived, whatever form they may assume—whatever titles they may bear. To assert the claims of Justice—to define and defend Rights—to cherish and express a world embracing Philanthropy—to promote the General Welfare—to afford Counsel and Protection—these are the appropriate objects of Civil Government. On these, the great Majesty—the Sovereign Authority is royally intent. And wherever, in these all-vital respects, the Divine designs are embodied and expressed in human arrangements, there, and there only, can we find Civil Government.

From the essential elements of Civil Government, the characteristic features of Rulers—*who and what they are*—may be easily and certainly inferred. They are the men, whatever their condition and employments, who are distinguished for their Godlike qualities—for their integrity, wisdom, magnanimity, power—who are able to give counsel and afford protection. These are Rulers by a “divine right”—they are Heaven-anointed. They are Rulers by nature, character, necessity. They are just as truly so, against as with the suffrages of their fellows. As they are not indebted to the popular voice for the high qualities for which they are distinguished, so the popular voice cannot degrade them from the high position, where they stand. As their character is royal, so must be their influence. Wherever they exert themselves, they will leave the impression of themselves—their own “image and superscription.” And this, whether they sit upon the ground among criminals or on thrones among heroes.

I am aware, that such words are contradictory to the utterances which the popular voice is continually and confidently repeating. It is but too generally asserted, that the majority can create or destroy at its option, throughout the whole sphere of Civil Government! It can make as it can unmake Rulers! And this, out of all sorts of materials! It can take the sceptre from the hand of Wisdom and confer it on Folly! It can remove Power from the Throne, and put Weakness in its place! It can degrade Heroism and exalt Selfishness! To such feats, the majority is commonly reckoned competent! And so it puts on airs—boasts and swaggers—utters big threats, and makes huge promises, and swells itself into a kind of god! In the mean time, it cannot confer wisdom, or power, or magnanimity, man-

liness under any form or in any degree upon its favorites. Far enough from that. It does not even understand the meaning of the words which are employed to describe such divine qualities! The majority create Rulers! It does not even know them when in their presence—under their eye—beneath their control!

As to reducing them to degradation and depriving them of power—the majority once made the attempt when the Source of Authority stood incarnate among them. They maligned Him, reproached Him, “smote Him with the fist of wickedness,” and finally fastened Him to a cross! They affected to triumph over Him—to exult in the success of their machinations. But what did they effect? Did they pluck His crown from His brow? Did they even reduce His power, or dignity or authority? Far otherwise. Never had He exerted an influence more sublimely kingly—never had He swayed His sceptre with a higher majesty. They could not touch a hair of His anointed Head! Themselves they plunged into the fathomless depths of wickedness, absurdity, misery; Him, their utmost violence and cunning could by no means reach or even approach. Thus has it always been—must always be, with all, who bear His image—with kingly men, the world over. Rulers in character, and thus Rulers by Divine appointment, whether recognized by their fellows or not, they have acted a royal part—have in one way or another offered counsel and protection to those around them. And this, not by virtue of any suffrages they might have received, but through the Heaven-derived elements which shine through their character. And what have *they* done for the benefit of mankind, who without the character, have assumed the place, of Rulers? Have the suffrages of their fellows made them wise, strong, magnanimous, intrepid, faithful? Made them the light and the shield and the glory of those, whom they affected to be busy in guiding and feeding and protecting? What else have they been in the sphere of their responsibilities, but a plague and a nuisance and a curse—pillaging and devouring and wasting whatever bright and beautiful thing lay within their reach? Mere snakes on the throne, the terror of all who were exposed to their loathsome breath and venomous fangs!

Universal suffrage, as the grand remedy for the political evils men complain of—I know how eagerly and loudly and incessantly this is generally demanded. The people, the people, the people at large—give them the reins and the goal will doubtless be speedily reached! Give the multitude up to the control of the multitude, and all men will be well provided for! Guidance and protection will be afforded in the largest measure and at the least expense! “Milk and honey without money and without price!” Such are the dreams which men of different parties confidently and emphatically proclaim. Just as if the experiment of a democracy, pure or mixed, had never been witnessed! What, so far as forms, and methods and arrangements in the sphere of government are concerned, have we not seen tried! Way-worn and heart-sore, burdened, benighted and storm-driven, men have

assailed the monarchy as the source of their embarrassments. Aristocracy has been brought into requisition, and to this they have looked with eager expectation. Disappointed, mocked, mortified, they have thrown themselves into the arms of Democracy, and found themselves in the embrace of a bear! Maddened and desperate, they have broken loose, and tried what anarchy might do for their relief. From this, always found absolutely unendurable, they sullenly throw themselves at the feet of grim Despotism! Like an eyeless horse in a mill, round and round they go; always seeking, never finding what their restless souls are blindly intent upon—expecting from mere names, forms, shadows, what the neglected Substance can only confer. What substantial good can be gotten out of suffrage, however unlimited and universal? Integrity, Wisdom, Heroism—these are the only source whence human welfare can proceed. And are these the product of any sort of suffrage, however modified and maintained? If the whole Human Family should vote by acclamation till faint and weary with the business, no poor grain of Wisdom—no shred of Heroism could they thus produce! Multiply blindness, folly, weakness as you will; what as a result can you expect, but weakness, folly, blindness? The qualities, characteristic of, and requisite to, Government, must proceed from a higher origin than the multitude. They are God-given endowments, quickened into life and activity in the character of Heroes. The Elective Franchise in the hands of a knave or a fool, is a dagger in the hands of a madman or an assassin! It belongs only to those, who can wield it wisely and well, in subserviency to, and promotion of, the General Welfare; who, while they distinguish between wisdom and folly, magnanimity and meanness, power and weakness, exert themselves to raise those and those only to the “head of affairs,” who are worthy of the position and alive to its responsibilities. For it is the business of the elector, not to create, but to select, Rules, and offer his allegiance to them. If he has no eye or heart for this business; if he can see no essential difference between a Government and a Conspiracy; if he feels quite at liberty, in disposing of his vote, to prefer a usurper, who may favor his cherished designs, to the king who, “without partiality or hypocrisy,” will execute justice, shew mercy and promote every way the General Welfare, he has no more right to vote, than a blind man has to preside over the sphere of optics. The Elective Franchise, as well as Official Authority, should be kept within natural limits; and these limits are to be found in the elements and attributes of the character, which may be maintained and manifested. *For no man can have a right to do what he is not qualified to accomplish.*

In preparing these thoughts for the Press, I shall take the liberty to suggest a hint or two, which I did not urge on the ear of the Convention. The cherished and honored author of the Address somewhat emphatically affirmed, in publicly explaining and defending it, that “the greatest scoundrel was as fully entitled to the Elective Franchise, as the most distinguished saint.” This strong statement drew



forth, I know not how generally, expressions of applause. Now scoundrels, *not always, perhaps, the greatest*, often find their way to the State prison. Ought we not to acquiesce in the equity and wisdom of the arrangement which prevents them, afterwards, from wielding the Elective Franchise? On what ground may this arrangement be maintained and commended? Clearly on this; that driven by their passions into the commission of crimes, they are to be regarded as having lost self-possession—as unmanned—as unable healthfully to exert themselves—manfully to wield their powers. Now ought not the principle which this announcement implies, and by which it is supported, to be univorsally applied and with strict impartiality? The General Welfare obviously demands, that it should be applied to all vassals and victims of passion. But *who*, a thousand voices demand, shall make the application? Those, I reply, those *of course*, whoever and wherever they may be, *who are qualified for such an office*. If it be affirmed, as it often is, that no such thing can be attempted—that the principle in question can be applied only to minors and convicts, I have only to say, we must then go on in the sphere of Politics as hitherto we have proceeded; we must stumble blindly along, we know not how or whither, and, as a result, fall into all manner of absurdities, contradictions and embarrassments. If the blind, as hitherto, are to be entrusted with the conduct of the blind; both those who lead and those who are led, must, as hitherto, be precipitated into the abyss.

The truth is, a truth to be most earnestly and gratefully recognized, we are shut up, wherever the General Improvement and Welfare are to be promoted; we are shut up, absolutely and inevitably, and by a necessity as beneficent as it is imperious; WE ARE SHUT UP TO CHARACTER. It is high time, this all vital truth were studied, understood, applied. It is as true in Politics as any where else, that character is every thing—that in it, is to be sought, from it, to be derived, whatever of good the Human Family is capable of appropriating and enjoying. We may task our ingenuity and exhaust our strength in devising “ways and means”—we may multiply expedients to the utmost stretch of human computation; may increase our exertions without measure and without end; but without character, nothing can be done to bless mankind. Here we may give an impulse and there impose a check—we may modify and remodel—add at one point and subtract from another—condense or expand—quicken or retard, we can do nothing for ourselves or others without character. With character, what may we not attempt in hope and triumphantly achieve? Your patience will permit me to offer a few illustrations.

Men often mark out with much solicitude the limits, within which, they allege, the operations of the Government should be confined. The boundaries prescribed, must by no means be overstepped. Here they set up a way-mark, there utter a caution, and at another point impose a check. And after all, they find large occasion for alarm and complaint. The Constitution, they affirm, is violated—its provisions treated with con-

**tempt**—its characteristic objects, sacrificed. How often and how loudly does not the party out of power charge the party in power with such enormities! But what remedy can be applied to such evils where they exist—what provision can be made against them where they threaten to assail us? We may declare and remonstrate and enact. One party may snatch the reins from the hands of another. New measures may be proposed—new expedients hit upon. But nothing in any such way can be effected. *Put true Rulers at the helm, and all is well.* The heart of Heroism—the light of Wisdom—the arm of Power—these are the stuff out of which Government is to be constructed. All else is “vanity and vexation of spirit.” Where these are, there is counsel and protection—there human necessities are provided for, human rights asserted—progress made toward the true goal. Till you can have too much of these, you cannot have too much of what deserves the name of Government. With these, your limitations and checks and cautions are needless—without these, futile.

Taxation—how many delicate and difficult questions may it not suggest? How much shall be exacted? By what method shall it be collected? Shall it be direct or indirect? How shall it be appropriated? Shall salaries be larger or smaller? How may the taxed best be persuaded to honor their obligations? Such questions very naturally attract deep attention—awaken warm discussion—open the way for various experiments and results. But while those who are placed at “the head of affairs” care only for *the wages*, leaving the *work* to take care of itself, how can the problem of taxation be happily disposed of? They may bear the title of Rulers, while they themselves are the slaves of prejudice and passion—they may profess a warm regard for the General Welfare, while they are wholly engrossed with their own petty objects: they may seem to be intent on affording counsel and protection, while really busy in offering insults and inflicting injuries. They may set up high claims to respect, reverence, obedience, while they deserve abhorrence and execration. They may be called the Government, while they are nothing better than a conspiracy. Their official activity, however invested with an air of solemnity and dignity, may be nothing better than mischief-doing on a broad scale. The persuasion may be general and well-grounded, that the less they attempt the better for their country—that our obligations to them increase as their activity diminishes. All this may be, alas, has often been. To pay taxes, directly or indirectly, to support any such government, cannot be otherwise than a grievous necessity. Whatever men may say, their objections lie, not against the mode, but *the thing*, whatever mode may be preferred. Activity in committing crimes—mischief-doing on whatever scale and with whatever pretensions, we cannot be expected to pay wages for with complacency and alacrity. It is quite enough to endure insults and injuries, without submitting to inconvenience and expense to reward those, who inflict the one and offer the other. Here within a narrow compass lie all the difficulties and embarrassments, which the problem of taxation im-

plies and presents. But for guides and defenders, give us men, who can defend and guide, and every thing becomes plain and easy—the embarrassments and difficulties, which cannot otherwise be grappled with, vanish at once and forever. For engrossed with their work, they will not clamor for their wages. As otherwise, so in self-denial—in moderation, simplicity, frugality—a readiness to help themselves and assist others, they will be an "example to the flock." In whatever goes to reduce human wants and increase human supplies, their influence will be inspiring and powerful. To support such Rulers, light taxes will suffice. And these will be paid right cheerfully. How can it be otherwise under the persuasion, that they "have earned their money"—have returned an ample equivalent for whatever they may have taken—that all the demands which are urged on their account, are most obviously and certainly "for value received." Thus and thus only can the problem of taxation be divested of its difficulties—be solved to general satisfaction. While all this is overlooked, we may fatigue our brains and rack our inventions as we will, in devising ways and means to raise revenues and collect taxes, we never can accomplish what we are thus intent upon. The great principle of Work and Wages must here as elsewhere be admitted and applied.

Let us look for a moment at the question which is beginning to attract so much attention—the question of Land-monopoly. On this subject, one declares and affirms—another qualifies or denies. Strong statements are made and promptly contradicted. All sorts of metaphysics are brought into requisition—all sorts of arguments are framed and urged. Here it is affirmed that the Soil is naturally as free as air or sunlight, and appropriation on any ground and to any extent, is no better than robbery. There, it is alleged, that appropriation should not be absolutely excluded—only kept within narrow limits. But however their doctrines may be qualified and modified, almost all agree that Land-monopoly should be abhorred. If the thing, however it may be to be defined, could be done away, almost all agree, that the condition of mankind would be greatly improved. To be sure, I may say in passing on, that our relations to the Atmosphere and the Soil may be the same, if the one, as truly and fully as the other can be fenced in and improved; if human skill and industry can make the air as well as the land ten times better than they found it—ten times as available for all the ends of human existence; if on the air as on the soil we may write our names in permanent characters—may with the one as with the other mingle our very blood, and impress upon it our very image. But without making a long pause at any such point in our progress, the hint may be permitted, that if the soil be to be reduced to a common, those who are found upon it, must either have, or not have, what may deserve the name of character. Some may be supposed to be with, and others without this highest of all acquisitions. From good character, the results of rectitude, wisdom, enterprise, industry, fidelity may be expected. Bad character will betray itself in dishonesty, idleness, self-indulgence, recklessness. Put

those notorious for the latter qualities on the same common with those distinguished for the former, and what sort of a "community of goods" should we witness? A "division of labor" would be made, difficult of description and hard to be borne! Dishonesty would lay the hand of violence on the productions of Rectitude—Idleness would riot on the fruits of Industry—Self-indulgence would throw its burdens on the shoulders of Enterprise, and Rocklossness would tread Fidelity under foot. Thus a common soil would produce little else than a common misery. But suppose a sound character any where, and the evils of Land-monopoly would not be to be provided against. For Nature, whose laws are the basis of sound character, frowns on *all* monopolies. Where her voice is heard—where her authority is respected—no monopoly can be endured. Every man will regard himself as belonging "soul, spirit and body," to every other man. As a member of a great household, he will devote himself earnestly to the general welfare, in the best use, of which his powers and resources may be capable. The Individual and the Social will be continually and vigorously playing into each other's hands—mutually encouraging and strengthening each other in the great enterprise, to which Human Nature is Heaven-summoned. Whatever arrangements might be preferred and whatever methods adopted, the general result could not but be beautiful, grand, divine. Thus through character only can the evils of monopoly be avoided—thus and thus only can men be brought to subserve each other's improvement and welfare.

Well enough in theory! the exclamation rings on every side; well enough in theory, but *wholly impracticable*. In Utopia, such doctrines might be to be admitted and applied; but not in this world. Here, we must remember, that cunning, fraud, violence, are in the ascendant; that passion sways the sceptre; that the usurper holds the throne: this we must remember and act accordingly. We must adjust ourselves as best we can to the arrangements and usages which prevail—to the designs and methods with which the majority are engrossed—to the general sentiment and to popular opinion. Justice, Philanthropy, Magnanimity, are in bad odor amidst the practical arrangements of life; what can be effected by asserting their authority and insisting on their claims? Thus men allow themselves to talk—thus absurdly and wickedly—like shallow, canting Atheists as they are! For all history proves clearly and certainly, that in the sphere of politics as elsewhere, all other methods are impracticable. The experiment has been made a thousand times, and in a thousand ways, and always with the same results. Expedients innumerable, fresh from the abused brains of the cunning, have been employed to ward off the natural effects of Injustice and Misanthropy. In vain, everywhere and always. Sooner or later, in one way or another, they have turned out—injustice and misanthropy have turned out to be misery. They have subverted empires, broken thrones to pieces, driven nations, one after another, into the abyss. On a broad scale and a narrow scale, publicly and privately, in individuals and in communities, they have

ever shows themselves to be what they are—death in disguise. It is said, mankind cannot get along without them. It is most certain, then, that no getting along is to be expected—no other than what we witness in the horse sinking in the mire—straining, and struggling, and plunging, with the certain result of going deeper and deeper in the element he is contending with. If it be impracticable to assert the demands and maintain the claims, and secure the influences of what may deserve the name of Government—if we cannot hope to avail ourselves *in this world* of the guidance of wisdom and the protection of power, then are we either orphans or outcasts; either God is a mere figure of speech, or he has thrown us upon the “tender mercies” of the devil! If we cannot have Wisdom, Justice, Philanthropy, we can have nothing but Despair. Our life is wrapped up in these divine Ideas; if they fail us, we are dead men!

But we have no occasion for despair or even despondency. We can at once, and where we are, in despite of fraud and force, under any form and in any degree; we can, in God's name, do whatever our improvement and welfare demands. If we will open our eyes, we shall see that the Idea of Government shines like the face of God upon our consciousness—asserting there the authority of Wisdom, Goodness, Power. To this authority we may submit—to this, in the very face of cunning and violence, may swear allegiance. Thus bound, we may maintain our integrity and fidelity with the high result of a character which can no where, and in no way be manifested without presenting to mankind *THE MODEL on which Government is to be constituted and maintained.*

We can treat all conspirators, however commended to our confidence and respect, according to their character, sternly and steadfastly resisting their false claims—promptly and resolutely refusing to obey them under the title of Rulers. We may submit to their dictation as we yield to the demands of highwaymen, whom we cannot overcome and from whom we cannot escape. Thus we may pay taxes, directly or indirectly exacted, to furnish them with the facilities and luxuries on which they may be intent. But we shall refrain, on all occasions, by any voluntary token of regard, from recognizing as truthful and well-grounded the pretensions they set up.

Our allegiance to true Rulers, we may cordially, faithfully, intrepidly maintain. We may afford them countenance and support—we may do them honor. We may avail ourselves of their wisdom, magnanimity and power. Thus we may, in despite of the distracting influences and disturbing forces to which we may be exposed, sustain their authority. We may thus, in the most effective manner; commend them to the confidence and veneration of our fellows. *THIS IS THE ONLY WAY IN WHICH IT IS NOT DISGRACEFUL AND INJURIOUS TO ELECTORER.*

Thus may we achieve, in opposition to all the intrigues, arts, and exertions of all parties and demagogues whatever, that may be armed for the conflict, a noble triumph. Thus may we acquire self-possession and inward harmony—secure for our powers a happy develop-

ment, and a healthful exercise, and obtain for ourselves the appropriate objects of Civil Government. Thus will Heaven enrich us with a pledge, sure to be redeemed, that the reign of the "Only Potentate," the True King, will be universal; that "His Kingdom shall come, and His will be done, upon the Earth as in the Heavens."

O, when, for ends so sublime, for purposes so divine, shall a standard be set up, and multitudes gathered around it! To belong to such a party—truly "the party of the whole" what a privilege! What powers and prerogatives must it not wield! What influences must it not exert! What results must it not produce! Oh, Friends and Brothers! why should not we, *this very hour*, call it—in the name of God, call it into existence, and devote to its high objects our entire being, now and forever?

## SPEECH OF GERRIT SMITH.

[WRITTEN OUT BY HIMSELF.]

Why is the progress of the anti-slavery cause in this land no more rapid? One answer—and the most important answer—to this question is suggested by the Resolutions, which have just been read. It is, that, in this land, the negro is not felt to be a man, and to have the rights of a man. The mass of the American people do not feel it. A large share of the abolitionists feel it but imperfectly. Even, in their esteem, the negro is not fully a man; and has not fully the rights of a man.

Six years ago last January, a Convention of the Liberty Party of the State of New York sent forth an Address to the American slaves. The Address bade them regard themselves as men, and exercise the rights of men. Among other things, it bade them take the horse, the boat, the food, the clothing, necessary to help themselves out of slavery—and not so much, as pause to enquire, who owned the property they were taking. The Address was, of course, very offensive, not to say horrifying, to the people at large. At the first, no small share even of the Liberty Party were astonished at this new and strange anti-slavery measure. With scarcely any exceptions however, the whole of that Party, very soon, became reconciled to the Address, and expressed their hearty approbation of it. I am sorry to say, that Dr. Bailey never became reconciled to it. It was, however, hardly to be hoped, that he who condemned the merciful and Christ-like conduct of Thompson, Work and Burr, as an imprudence for which they ought to suffer, could become reconciled to the Address. He criticised it from week to week; but would never do it the justice to give it a place in his newspaper.