SKETCHES

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

JAMES GILLESPIE BIRNEY.

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PREFACE.

The record of a good man's life naturally bears the aspect of eulogy. It is his prerogative to bless—his privilege to be blessed. The following facts from the history. and paragraphs from the writings, of Mr. Birney fully justify the estimate, given in these pages, of his character. The study of such a subject is both instructive and delightful. May it prove as deeply so to the reader as it has been to the writer. When as a People, we discover where are our men of Wisdom and Strength; when we learn to repeat their names with the confidence and veneration, to which they are entitled; when we welcome them to their proper places amidst the relations and responsibilities of life, the evils, multiplied and frightful, which now stare us in the face, will retire. Our condition and prospects will then be worthy of our privileges. Will not every reader contribute his share towards such a consummation? B. G.

Whitestown, *July*, 1844.

LIFE OF JAMES G. BIRNEY.

Faith and works—the ideal and the actual—theory and practice—things, which God hath joined together, different men in various ways try to put asunder. Some there are, who under this or that relation—in certain spheres of responsibility, seem to be exclusively engrossed with the ideal. The world, so far as human agency is concerned, is, they see, ill governed. Selfishness is made the basis of institutions and arrangements, maintained professedly for the benefit of mankind. Hence, the disorder, confusion and misery, which every where prevail. They are sick of these things—they are eager to get away from them. The folly, in which things so hateful and destructive had their origin, they regard as too rank and inveterate to be subdued. They have no heart to attempt a reformation. Why should they? Their exertions will be fruitless. The old world must wag on in its own chosen way, and get to perdition as best it can. As little as possible will they have to do with its ecclesiastical, political, and economical concerns. They are above all these. Their home is the spiritual sphere, where they find support, refreshment and delight in the ideas which shine upon their consciousness—in the principles which demand their allegiance. Hence, say in the sphere of politics, they decry and abjure all those arrangements, in which human rights and obligations are professedly described and asserted—in which the general welfare is professedly subserved. Human governments they pronounce an abuse, a usurpation, a nuisance. Of course, they trample on the elective franchise, and stand aloof from the ballot-box. The ethereal government, which they profess to reverence, needs, they say, no visible tokens—no symbols of its presence, authority, designs.—Others might consent to vote, if the ballot-box would come to them. In the work of electing rulers, they will not take a step, or lift a finger. In such matters it is their privilege to be indifferent; waiting for Heaven to correct the disorders and remove the

evils, which they profess to deplore as much as any body.—Others go to the ballot-box, and cast their votes for Justice, or Freedom, or Equity. When the chair of the Governor, the seat of the Senator, the bench of the Judge, is to be filled, they are for these divine ideas, pure, naked, disembodied. It is not known that they attempt to employ these ideas in blacking their boots, mending their stockings, or cooking their dinners.

Surely mankind were sent hither on another and a higher errand than to be occupied exclusively with the ideal. This is indeed ever to be present to their thoughts, distinct in their consciousness, warm on their hearts. Without this they are blind and impotent. Without faith, they can neither please God, nor bless mankind. But faith without works—what can that avail? It must be for ever fruitless. Our business in this world is, amidst the various relations we sustain, to translate the ideal into the actual—to reduce theory to practice—to show our faith by our works. It will not do, amidst the realities of life, to set up Justice, Freedom, Equity, as candidates for office. These must be embodied in human forms. We must have just, free, magnanimous MEN, to wield the powers of government. This institution must be adapted to the condition in which we here are placed. We must see to it that the ideal live in the actual—that faith be embodied in works.

But when in the political sphere it is insisted on, that in candidates for office sound principles shall be embodied in their charactors; that they shall not only speak eloquently, but act wisely; that the logic on their lips shall be made impressive and conclusive by the integrity of their lives; that they shall show their love of freedom, not merely by impassioned declamation in exposing the wrongs of Greeks and Poles, but especially by asserting the rights and promoting the welfare of the oppressed around them, what a hue and cry is raised! A motley multitude rush around you, and shout, some one thing, and some another. Amidst the voices which are scattered in confusion on the air, words like these fall upon your ear: Your theory may be good, but can not be reduced to practice. You go too far in asserting the claims of Justice and Humanity. Here, to demand too much is to gain nothing. In such a world as this, where selfishness is the proper basis of society, we must be content to choose the least of the acknowledged evils to which we are exposed. The meaning of all this in plain English is, that this is the Devil's world, and we must submit to his

authority, or go to wreck and ruin! Hence the blind and impotent are chosen to guide and protect; those who can not govern their own passions, to govern the republic; knaves, to assert the claims of justice; bad men, to perform good actions; oppressors to defend the cause of freedom. To such lengths are matters carried in this direction, that integrity, magnanimity, philanthropy, are but too generally regarded as quite out of place in the sphere of politics. Such words may be employed to catch the public ear; to round off a period in a stump oration; to cover up the most nefarious designs. But to insist, that without the imperishable qualities which these words describe, no man is qualified to wield official power; this is generally reckoned the height of fanaticism. Indeed, it has come to that, that politics, even by those who are most devoted to such things, are regarded as a vulgar and filthy concern. Hence, they exert themselves to dissuade every honest man from attempting to maintain sound principles in this sphere of responsibility, by cautioning him to beware how he *dabbles in the dirty waters of politics.* And this they do under the same impulse as led the Gadarenes to try to get rid of the Savior's presence. How could their evil-doings bear the light of His countenance?

Surely the occasion for a third party in politics is sufficiently obvious and stirring. The necessities which demand it reach down to the very foundations of Human Nature, and are as imperious as the authority of Heaven. Unless, by some means or other, the claims of truth, justice, freedom, could be clearly explained, strongly asserted, and resolutely maintained, we must, as a nation, soon be utterly undone. HENCE THE LIBERTY PARTY.

For a candidate for office, the Liberty Party must have one whose character is formed on the model of their principles. He must be an incarnation of the truths which are the basis of their enterprise. They must animate his spirit, and shine through his countenance. He must give them form, and life, and expression. Through him their healthful influence must be exerted on every fit occasion. It is for the Liberty Party within the sphere of politics, to maintain the cause of justice, humanity and freedom. He, their candidate, then, must be just, manly, free;—must have acquired self-possession and inward harmony;—justice, humanity, freedom, with these, as the breath of the Almighty, he must be inspired:—they must be the soul of his soul, the life of his life, the secret of his strength, or he can do little for the

Liberty Party. *True to their responsibilities, the Liberty Party have with great wisdom selected* JAMES G. BIRNEY *as their candidate for President of the United States.*

Mr. Birney is about fifty years of age—in the full maturity of his powers. He was born in 1793, in Danville, Kentucky; in a country equally beautiful and fertile. His father was a native of Ireland, strongly marked by the characteristic qualities of his countrymen. Prompt, ardent, enterprising; full of generous impulses; easily excited; strong in his attachments, and quick in his resentments; frank, bold, vehement, he rose by wakeful and unwearied industry in the sphere of business from one position to another, till he took a high place among the men of wealth around him. A deep interest he took in the institutions and arrangements and prospects of his adopted country;—in whatever belongs to the sphere of politics. He was an ardent admirer of patriotism, of which he thought the name of Washington a striking symbol. And the statesmen of the school which maintained doctrines and pursued measures in opposition to the opinions and practice of the Father of his Country, whom he so greatly venerated, he regarded with deep-toned antipathy.—Mr. Birney's mother is understood to have been a beautiful and accomplished lady, with rich gifts, improved and refined by elegant culture. Her maiden name was Reed. Her family were remarkable for rare intellectual endowments, and for the figure which they made, near the summit of society. She died when James was a child.

In his constitutional endowments, Mr. Birney seems to have been greatly blessed. Choice elements were here happily combined. His very being was strongly marked with the distinctive qualities and characteristic features of human nature. His great heart beat vigorously. He was full of life. His was a very liberal inheritance in the stuff, which MEN, true and strong, are made of. The elements of manliness were wrought into the very texture of his being.—He was a bright and beautiful boy, vigorous and active; upon whom surrounding objects made a deep impression. He was *alive*, in a world instinct with the breath and a-glow with the beauty of the Almighty. He early received upon him the impress of the truthfulness and dignity of Nature. Hence he was frank, truthful, manly. Falsehood, meanness, oppression—these things his young heart abhorred. His friends remember how valiantly, even when a school-boy, he struggled against tyranny, and how boldly he would tell the truth, even when it exposed him, as expose him it did

repeatedly, to the rod of chastisement.—For it is not to be inferred from the hints now given, descriptive of Mr. Birney's native character, that the blood of fallen Adam did not flow in his veins. Generosity, truth, justice, courage; by these things was his very being strongly marked. An air of nobleness and grandeur was breathed around his very cradle. But these words, as applied to him, describe him not as absolutely conformed to the model on which human nature was originally constructed, but as compared with mankind at large. One perfect Man, and one only, has appeared since the great apostasy. When young, Mr. Birney was exposed, susceptible as he was, to influences which were too well adapted to give the animal within him the ascendancy over the spiritual. Wealth, fashion, luxury—how without a living faith in the Savior could he withstand their fascinations? And he was not yet a Christian. His course was all along marked by those freaks and follies and excesses which might fairly be expected in a generous youth, well supplied with money, in the midst of boon companions, and without those powerful restraints and that healthful control, which the Gospel only can supply. But what in justice to the Hand that fashioned him is to be gratefully recorded, is, that his magnanimity, truthfulness, love of justice, courage, never, even amidst the irregularities of youth, forsook him. And these things were the basis on which Christianity has reared the well-proportioned, compact, beautiful structure, which it is our privilege now to describe.

Of the natural courage, resolution and fidelity of Mr. Birney, we have a striking instance in his early history. At the age of thirteen, he went with two other boys, one a cousin, to a piece of deep water, to amuse themselves with swimming. Birney was a good swimmer, his cousin merely a beginner. At a distance from the shore, a rail was set up on end, on whose top, a number of feet beneath the surface, one might pause and rest. Here Birney took his stand, and invited his cousin to come to him. That he undertook to do. As he approached, Birney left the rail for him to occupy. But, wearied with the effort, he found it difficult to fasten on the resting place. Full of alarm, he seized on Birney, and down they went once, and down they went again. Their companion, still standing on the shore, shouted to Birney to let his cousin go, and take care of himself. Instead of this, he encouraged and assisted him, till his feet were planted on the rail. He now swam around him, cheering and supporting him, till his friend acquired self-possession. He then set off, and swam

ashore. Referring to the advice which his companion so earnestly gave him, to abandon his cousin for the sake of saving himself, he quietly observed: IT NEVER ENTERED INTO MY MIND TO DO SO. The boy, who thus, in despite of the solicitations of a cold, calculating prudence, at the hazard of his life rescued his friend from a watery grave, must have had in him the elements of true greatness.

Mr. Birney early enjoyed the benefit of a liberal education. At Nassau Hall, New Jersey, he was greatly distinguished for the success with which he pursued his studies, where he was graduated in 1810, at the age of 17. After spending about two years in Kentucky, he went to Philadelphia, where he entered the law office of Mr. Dallas. He returned to his native State, in the spring of 1814. Soon after, he was chosen a member of the Legislature, where, young as he was, he exerted his powers as a public speaker with considerable effect. About this time, he married a young lady of strong attractions, who was akin to some of the most distinguished names in American history. At about the age of 25, he removed to Alabama. Here, for some five years, he was a planter, surrounded by some five and thirty slaves. From his plantation he removed to Huntsville and resumed the practice of the law. His views of slavery at this time did not materially differ from those which prevailed around him. The relation which is founded on the chattel principle, he did not then condemn. His slaves, a small number excepted, he sold to a neighboring planter, who had the reputation of a humane master. After fixing his residence at Huntsville, he was presently chosen solicitor for the Judicial Circuit in which he lived — an office full of responsibility, and demanding no common measure of integrity, resolution and courage. We have proofs, various and delightful, that he honored his responsibilities — that his course was strongly marked by vigor, impartiality and magnanimity. His diligence, fidelity and intrepidity were crowned with marked results. His exertions in his proper sphere were rewarded with success. He rose high in the general estimation. Business beyond the sphere of criminal law flowed in upon him apace. The demands which were made upon him in civil processes, were at length too numerous and pressing to permit him to retain his office as solicitor. From this it may be inferred how lucrative and honorable his practice must have been. Near the close of his residence in Alabama, Mr. Birney was chosen to a seat in the Legislature.

A single fact from the history of Mr. Birney's professional career in Alabama, illustrating his integrity, courage, magnanimity and generosity, may be as acceptable to our readers as it is refreshing to us. The following statement, from authority on which the fullest reliance may be placed, we give in the language, slightly altered, of our informant. Jackson county lay in his circuit. Three years' practice there as solicitor had made him acquainted with nearly all the people of the county. He was personally popular, though as prosecutor, he had acted rigorously. The making of counterfeit coin had become quite a business in that county, after he had resigned his office as solicitor. One day, a young man of very humble and rough appearance applied to him at Huntsville, where his office was, to bring a suit for him against some of the most respectable men in the county, for having lynched him on suspicion of his having aided his father, who *was* a notorious coiner, and who as such had also been lynched. Between eight and nine hundred of the people of the county, embracing most of the influential men, had associated together as a lynch club; and such was their power, that they inflicted punishments openly—knowing that no verdict could be had against them in Jackson county, where they would be sure to get some of their own friends upon the jury, if they failed to intimidate those whom they had injured. It was hinted to him, that unless his cause was just, and himself free from the stains of a bad character, it must be far from desirable to engage for him in a struggle with such an influential corps. Satisfied in this respect, Mr. Birney undertook for him, and issued his writs against the wealthiest and most responsible men in the band, all of whom were personally his friends.—It had been his custom, in order to avoid traveling on Sunday to the court-house, as was the custom of his brother lawyers, to go to the village where the court was held, the *Saturday* before. He had, of course, to travel alone. It was given out that he durst not go to the court-house—that he would be lynched, and so on. He proceeded, however, as if nothing unusual had happened. Within a few miles of the village, he met a man, who was very anxious that he should return and stay with him till Monday, when the Judge, and the officers of the court, would be in the village. His exposure, then, would be less fearful. He went on, however, and put up at the tavern where he usually boarded. On the Sabbath he was at church; and on Monday went about his business as usual, saluted even those whom he had sued,

quietly, and in full self-possession, as if nothing had happened. Each wondered that all except himself did not insult him. But they were confident that no jury could be found in that county, from which he could obtain a verdict. This he understood as well as they. He had therefore, made provision, through which the cause was to be tried in due season at Huntsville, the place of his residence. *Before he left, however, he brought the defendants to terms agreeable to his client; pecuniary remuneration was made for the trespass; and an agreement was entered into by them never more to molest him. The lynching business was broken up for that time,* AND THE ASSOCIATION DISSOLVED.

During his residence at Huntsville, the attention of Mr. Birney was fixed upon the truths of the Gospel, especially in their application to himself—to his own condition and prospects. The method of salvation provided in the Gospel, he clearly saw his need of—heartily welcomed. He made a profession of religion; and with deep sincerity and great earnestness entered on a course of Christian activity. How he could any longer continue to be a slaveholder, is a fair question, on which many things might be offered. In no case can such a thing be justified. The relation in itself, whatever its origin and however continued, and in all its bearings, tendencies and effects, involves a manifest and flagrant invasion of the dearest rights of Human Nature. It inflicts the deadliest injuries on all who give it their countenance and support. What other fruits could it be expected to bring forth, opposed as it is to the fundamental principles of a sound morality—to the leading maxims and characteristic truths of the Gospel? And yet the Christianity which prevails in our country regards it with great indulgence, if not with secret complacency. Great numbers among us, and of these not a few religious teachers, assert with one breath that slavery is every way a great evil, and in the next that the Bible gives it countenance! Though condemned by the laws which are inscribed upon the human heart, they alledge that it is consistent with the doctrines and precepts of the Savior. Not a few eagerly fasten on the inference that they may be true Christians and yet hold slaves! Accordingly, in the leading denominations in our country, slaveholders are welcomed to the churches, and often occupy high positions there. In all this, violence is done to the elemental principles of the human constitution. The demands of Justice, asserted in the depths of our being with a God's voice, are contemned. Every thing noble,

generous, manly, within us, is wantonly sacrificed. How can such a matter bear inquiry and discussion? Amidst the facts of history, in the light of Reason, it stands exposed, condemned, abhorred. Concealment then must be practiced, inquiry discouraged, silence enjoined. And if now and then, amidst the enormities of slavery, attention should be arrested and speech extorted, every body is expected to look squint-eyedly, and speak with a double tongue. The result of all this is gross and wide-spread ignorance, whence, as weeds from a dunghill, the most noxious errors and hateful habits proceed. Trained up in such circumstances, and under such influences, what less could be expected than that any human being would be the victim of unworthy prejudices—would survey the objects around him, through a distorting medium—would embrace conclusions equally false and hurtful? And could a Christianity which had adjusted itself to slavery be expected to bring deliverance? Now and then, as in the case of Mr. Birney, a mutilated Gospel may be the *occasion* of results which it is not adapted to produce. It may bring within the range of one's vision, truths which, in despite of the glosses whereby it would neutralize their power, may at length produce their appropiate effects: especially at a time when influences from abroad, in behalf of truth, righteousness and freedom, in opposition to American slavery, began to be exerted with considerable effect.

With his great heart, with his love of truth, with his extraordinary candor, Mr. Birney might well be expected to take the condition and claims of the slave into earnest consideration. The wrongs which our countrymen inflicted on the Indians had deeply affected him. He mourned over the violation of public faith, which in its relation to that unhappy people, the republic had made itself guilty of. Such wickedness, such folly, such infamy—such plague-spots upon the body politic, filled him with sorrow and indignation. In this case, he poured out his heart into the bosoms of his countrymen, in behalf of outraged Humanity.

His views and feelings on this subject may be inferred from the following paragraph of his, in which, it will be seen, he compares the argument whereby the colored American was to be persuaded to go to Africa, with that by which the Indian was to be induced to abandon the sepulchres of his fathers for a *home* beyond the Mississippi. "I am here reminded of the very great resemblance this case bears, in its most prominent features, to that of the Indians, who have been moved upon, in nearly the same manner, to 'consent'

to leave their lands within the limits of several of the States. To these unhappy people—unhappy because cruelly treated by those upon whom they, as children, cast themselves for protection—it was urged, that the encroachments and lawlessness of the whites would render their situation, whilst they remained near them, too grievous to be borne—that they would be far happier, when separated from us, in a country entirely under their own control—and in conclusion, that this advice was dictated *by humanity—by a pure regard for their welfare.* What was the Indian's reply? "'Tis true, our situation, owing to the causes you have mentioned, is bad enough, but is it not made so by your negligence of right, and disregard of the most solemn stipulations? Will you, by your injustice—your fraud—your force, *create* the necessity which makes it expedient for us to remove to a wilderness, and then, by persuading us to fly from its destructive influence, claim the praises of philanthropy and humanity? Strange reasoning this!—since it leads to the conclusion that the greater your frauds the louder will be the plaudits you will gather for *good will* to the poor Indian. Where are your treaties, by which you are solemnly bound, before God and the world, to conduct yourselves towards us, at least, with *justice?* Go tell your countrymen to restrain their avarice, withhold their force, repress their injustice—purify and elevate their morals, and not approach us with the disgusting skeleton of *policy*, decked out with the tawdry vestments of *humanity.* Away with your humanity that is based on selfishness, we'll none of it!'"

Compassion, awakened by one object, readily embraces others. From the Indian to the Negro, the transition was easy and natural. From his very boyhood, Mr. Birney had felt himself armed against oppression. In their struggles with the strong, the weak had always counted upon his countenance and aid. The slave had a commanding place in his thoughts and sympathies. He could hardly fail to see, when the wrongs of the Indian had thoroughly aroused him, that the sufferings of the Negro flowed from the same bitter fountain. With renewed and increased earnestness, therefore, he applied himself to the subject of slavery.

He was for a while arrested in his progress towards just conclusions and healthful action, by the scheme of African Colonization. It was generally maintained, and that stoutly enough, that Immediate Emancipation must be fraught with many and frightful perils. Slavery was admitted to be an outrage on Human Nature; but then it would never do at

once to restore to the slave the rights to which he was inalienably entitled! What mischiefs, what crimes, what misery must be the inevitable consequence! If slavery was a great evil, its immediate abolition, it was asserted, must be a greater! And such words were upon the lips, not only of the thoughtless and profane, but also of professed saints and reputed prophets. Almost nobody dared to contradict them. But to expatriate the free negro to Africa:—could Benevolence in the name of Freedom hit upon a happier expedient? In this way, our debt to Africa might be liquidated. Her long lost sons, a nuisance here, would be a blessing there! Ignorant and degraded here, there they would be wise and honorable! No power could raise them here to the dignity of manhood; there they would spontaneously rise to the glory of saintship! Unworthy here to be door-keepers in the house of the Lord, there they would at once be welcomed to the Holy of Holies, as the anointed priests of Heaven! One class of our fellow citizens was incited to give this enterprise its countenance, under the pretense that it would facilitate the emancipation of the slaves, by providing the means of shipping them off before they had time to cut the throats of their masters. The coöperation of another was expected, on the ground that the removal of the free people of color would set slavery free from a powerfully disturbing force, to which it was exposed. And then the missionary tendencies of the scheme; could it once succeed, how soon would "Ethiopia stretch forth her hands unto God!" Vision after vision, resplendent with all the colors of the rainbow, animated the dreams of philanthropy. And James G. Birney, in common with many of our truest men, was for a time led astray by this glittering ignis-fatuus. And like an earnest man as he was, he vigorously pursued the phantom which, under the guise of an angel of light and love, was beckoning its followers on to an apparent Paradise, but to a real quagmire, gilded by dense fog.

So much in earnest was Mr. Birney in trying the virtues of this scheme for delivering our country from the evils of slavery, that he abandoned a profession equally lucrative and honorable, to prosecute an agency in its behalf. He exerted himself with resolution and fidelity to enlist the sympathies and coöperation of his countrymen, white and black, in favor of a design, which, he persuaded himself, was full of blessings, both for America and Africa. For this purpose, he visited the principal places in a large dis-

trict of country around him, embracing no less than five large States, and pursued the object to which he was devoted, with what was reckoned encouraging success. But as the result of more careful observation and deeper reflection, he became thoroughly convinced, that the scheme he was supporting lacked the basis of sound principle: that it was as impracticable in its application as it was hurtful in its tendencies. He could no longer lend it his countenance. His views on this subject are expressed with great beauty and power, in a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Mills, Corresponding Secretary of the Kentucky Colonization Society.

A few extracts here, we are sure, will be acceptable to our readers. In the following paragraph, he alludes with piercing pungency to the methods tried on the colored American, to *extort* his "*consent*" to abandon his native country for the shores of Africa. "If its operations be limited to the gratification of an intelligent wish, on the part of the free people of color, or any other class of our population, to remove to Africa, with the view of establishing a colony for the prosecution of an honest commerce, or for any lawful purpose whatever, there could exist, so far as I can see, no reasonable ground of opposition, any more than to the migration, that is now in progress, of crowds of our fellow citizens to Texas, or any other part of Mexico. If, on the other hand, it is meant, that this '*consent*' may lawfully be obtained by the imposition of civil disabilities, disfranchisement, exclusion from sympathy; by making the free colored man the victim of a relentless proscription, prejudice and scorn; by rejecting altogether his oath in courts of justice, thus leaving his property, his person, his wife, his children, and all that God has by his very constitution made dear to him, unprotected from the outrage and insult of every unfeeling tyrant, it becomes a solemn farce, it is the refinement of inhumanity, a mockery of all mercy, it is cruel, unmanly, and meriting the just indignation of every American, and the noble nation that bears his name. To say that the expression of 'consent' thus extorted is the *approbation of the mind*, is as preposterous as to affirm that a man *consents* to surrender his purse, on the condition that you spare his life, or, to be transported to Botany Bay, when the hand of despotism is ready to stab him to the heart."

Again. "The influence of these principles is opposed to emancipation. I am not unaware that it has been supposed to be adjutory to emancipation; and proof of this is offered

in the 800 or 900 slaves that have been transported to Liberia. The fact, that about this number have been emancipated by transportation to Africa, is admitted. These are *all* the instances of emancipation, that can be attributed to the influence of colonization principles—for when they insist that emancipation should never be divorced from deportation, they can not lay claim to the many thousands who are emancipated in this country, that they may, if they choose, remain here, and who have remained here. It would be an unfair pretension, to ascribe to the influence of certain principles, effects, which they have no natural and inherent tendency to produce. But it is very confidently believed and asserted, that the discussion of colonization throughout our country has, *incidentally*, brought up the subject of slavery to public consideration—and that to this are to be set down the numerous emancipations that have been granted, where the beneficiaries have not been sent out of the country. I grant, it is probable, that in this way many persons may have been led to see the duty of emancipation, who would not otherwise have been conducted to a knowledge of it. But would it not be altogether illogical to ascribe emancipations, *in the country*, to a principle that insisted upon emancipations, *out of the country?* Fully as much so, it seems to me, as to ascribe the conversion of a man to the Christian religion, to his having heard the ingenious arguments of an *infidel*—when, in truth, it may have been only the occasion upon which his mind discovered, for the first time, the weakness of infidelity, and the strength of the Gospel.

"But, sir, during all this time—these 16 or 17 years of gloom to the slave—what has not been lost to the cause of freedom and religion, by the substitution of a cowardly, *incidental* discussion of slavery, for one which is manly and undisguised? If the sly and incidental presentation of it produce the effects with which it is credited, how much more rich, blessed and abundant would they have been, had it been pressed openly and directly, yet kindly, upon the hearts and consciences and patriotism of this community! It is to be feared that we, who have been supporters of colonization, have, through ignorance, been instrumental in prolonging, at least through one lifetime, the dark reign of slavery on the earth, and in sending one generation of our fellow men, weeping witnesses of its bitterness, to a comfortless grave!

"So thorough has been the inoculation of the public with the sentiment, that our slaves, if emancipated, must be removed from the country, that its effects are of surprising

uniformity. Address men in this way—'Do you not believe that slavery is *sinful*, and in direct opposition to the principles of our government?' the reply—almost without exception—is, what shall we do with our slaves, if we manumit them? Where shall we send them? It will never do, in the world, for them to remain among us—it is better to retain them as they are, indefinitely in slavery, than to liberate them here! This feeling has led to cases of great apparent inhumanity and uncharitableness. One of these has come to my knowledge in so direct a manner, that I have no ground for doubting the truth of it, in any particular. A person living in a slave State is the owner of a good-looking young man, who is permitted, on his parole of honor, to reside in Cincinnati—to receive the *hire* for his own services from the gentleman in whose employment he is—not in any part for his own use, but to be transmitted according to his [the slave's] discretion to his owner. He has learned to read and write, and has given, *in his uniform conduct*, the *best* evidence that he is, in truth, as he professes to be, *a Christian*. He has never, in the least degree, violated his integrity toward his owner, by retaining any of the fruits of his own toil, or by asserting his liberty, as he might, at any time, do in Ohio. His friends and connections are all residents of this country. This circumstance, united to a very unfavorable opinion of the present condition and future prospects of Liberia, has made him entirely averse to a removal thither. He has a strong desire to obtain his freedom, and has offered for it a large sum. His offers have been steadily met by a refusal, *at any price*—yet he has been promised his liberty *gratuitously*, if he will 'consent' to emigrate to Liberia. To this he entertains an insurmountable repugnance—preferring to remain in his present condition, although his noble spirit is almost worn down with its hopelessness. Now, sir, were it not for the prevalent opinion, that the colored man, whatever may be his intellectual or moral elevation, can never be respectable or happy among us, I doubt whether such a case as this, calling for the deepest sympathy, the most earnest commiseration, could have been found in the private annals of western slavery. There is no country, in its best state, that would not suffer loss by the banishment of such a man."

And then: "Colonization principles have in a great degree, paralyzed the power of the *truth*, and of the ministry in the South. That the messages of the Gospel have comparatively but little influence upon mind, in the exclusively planting sections of the country, where the number of slaves

is great, will not be denied by any impartial and considerate observer. This I am not inclined to attribute to any defect in the inherent power of the great truths—as applicable to *southern* mind—adapted by God so wisely to the internal constitution of man. For there have been, and there are, yet, daily overturned by them, sins as besetting and as soul-destroying, as slavery. When I recollect, too, the condition of the Roman Empire, at the time when Paul preached in her voluptuous metropolis, and throughout her scarcely less voluptuous tetrarchies: the aggravated system of slavery that prevailed there—the incontinence—the political corruption—the private vice—and that over all these Christianity chanted her mild triumphs, I see no reason for distrusting her efficacy, when fairly tried upon any portion of our countrymen. But when I further remember, that he was partaker in no vicious custom of the country, leading him to perpetrate injustice and to overlook mercy; that whatever impurity might be demanded by social manners, or authorized by municipal institutions, *he kept himself pure*; that, when thrown into the very midnight of Roman pollution, his *Christianity* was seen, emitting a clearer, purer, and more quenchless lustre—the secret of his success is fully revealed. Behold, at the present time, a professed follower of Paul and of his Master—blessed, perhaps, with a sound education in letters and science—versed in Christian lore—brought up in the land of the *free!* with a mind revolting against slavery and every form of oppression; see him, making his way to the South, ready with the fervor of a neophyte, to declare the messages of God's love to *all* for whom they were intended;—see him, almost as soon as the introduction to the scene of action is past, beginning his labor of love by utterly neglecting 'to preach the Gospel to the poor'—by lamenting the hard lot of *masters*, the *evil* of slavery—complaining of the wickedness of the slaves—excusing every thing in the slaveholder, except acts of cruelty that rouse a neighborhood to astonishment; *next*, marrying a widow, or a ward, or a '*fortune*,' with a retinue of his parishioners for her dowry; *afterward*, talking bravely of the price of cotton, and of *men* to make it; and, *at last*, in desperation, *drumming* into silence his agonizing and wailing conscience by using the very book of *God's love* to justify *man's oppression*;—seeing all this, the secret of *his* unsuccessfulness is made as clear as noon-day. Slavery has shorn him of his strength, and his hands are as indolent and uncertain in pointing out the way of life—if they

point at all—as are the hands of a chronometer to point out the progress of time during the last half hour, previously to its running down.

"I am altogether unconscious of any feeling which would prompt me to utter an unkind word against ministers of the Gospel in the South. There are amongst them, I know, men of the most sterling principle—who, so far as they are individually concerned, have lived, and are yet living, elevated far above the pestilential influence of slavery. To such, in my apprehension, the most disinterested witnesses—I appeal for testimony in the case; and ask, if the marriages of poor ministers with widows *rich in slaves* have not become so frequent as to take away from them their 'casual,' or 'accidental' character—if they have not brought a deep reproach upon the cause of religion,—and if those gentlemen who have thus entangled themselves in the meshes of slavery, are not looked upon by the very people to whom they were sent, and who are in the same condemnation, as 'blind watchmen, dumb dogs that can not bark, sleeping, lying down to slumber?' And further, whether those gentlemen, who, on the rare occasions of their preaching, rebuke with all authority the profanation of the Sabbath—the love of money, luxury, profanity, intemperance, &c. &c.—who have been heard to pray with all fervor for the Poles, the Greeks, and all the down-trodden of *foreign lands*, have ever been heard, in any of their public ministrations, to prefer but one listless prayer for the conversion of the slaveholder to the doing of justice—his heart to the love of mercy, and that the two millions of his 'neighbors' lying in bondage before his eyes, might, by the force of Christian principle be enlarged, and the oppressed *among us* go free? And, yet further, are not such slaveholding ministers somewhat warmer in their attachment to colonization, than the majority of other men? Do not they insist upon its capacity for the extermination of slavery, as a reason why they do not themselves act more decisively upon the subject? and do they not in frequent instances, become angry and indignant at those who attempt to agitate their consciences, by holding up their own duty in reference to slavery, *right before them?*"

And here again: "Dr. Finley doubtless intended by his scheme, the permanent benefit and exaltation of the whole class of free colored people. If so, he was led into the error into which, I think, he fell, by contemplating, with great intensity of feeling, nothing but the down-trodden state of that people among us—throwing altogether out of the

range of his vision the causes which produced it, and forgetting the energy of those great principles, asserted first by this nation, and even yet received by a great majority of it as *undeniable and self-evident*, and which might still be plucked from their drowning state, for its fuller melioration and correction, *here*. He supposed it was easier to remove from the country those who were the subjects of this degradation, than to successfully combat and overthrow the prejudices and false principles which produced it. He fell into a similar mistake with those who think that slavery can be exterminated by transporting to another country such of the slaves as may be liberated among us, without having first given the death-blow to slavery, *itself the producing principle*,—and forgetting that the few who would be emancipated, under such circumstances, would be only the *superfluity* occasioned by the generative power of the principle, and their abstraction but lopping off the dead and unsightly branches of *Upas*, and giving to it more comeliness and vigor.

"Had he been in Turkey, and seen some thousands of Christians in the same condition as that occupied by the free colored people in the United States, rearing their families under all the oppressions of that government, as they are exercised upon those who are even nominally Christians, it would have been an act of benevolence to persuade them to remove—albeit, to a wild and unsettled coast—and of still greater benevolence, to have provided the means for their transportation. Why? because neither the *government* of Turkey, nor the *moral structure of Turkish society* contains in it any principle acknowledged by all to be 'undeniable,' 'self-evident,'—which could be held up and urged and traced in its consequences, before the people and those in power, of sufficient efficac to condemn their practice. They are both constituted up e principle, that it is *right* to persecute a 'christian dog'—to kick him, spit upon, deny him all legal privileges, and if he gives any, the slightest provocation, to *bowstring* him. Under such circumstances—where neither *the government* nor *public sentiment* acknowledge any principle sanitary and corrective of oppression—efforts tending to any other object than the removal of the oppressed from the scene of their sufferings, would justly be deemed enthusiastic and absurd.

"But how widely different is the case here! Does the advocate of slavery assert that it is *right* to oppress a fellow creature, because God has given him a complexion unlike what he has bestowed upon us?—to subject him to all the

weight of the law, whilst there is wrested from him all its *power* for his protection? Does the slaveholder say it is *right* that slavery, with all its soul-killing enormities, as well as with its lesser evils, should be continued? To meet this, with what powerful armor has God clothed the American patriot and Christian! Shall he consent to extinguish slavery, by removing its *redundancy*?—a process that may be carried on for a hundred years, and, then, leave our 'last state worse than the first.' Or to compass sea and land, that he may find some hole or corner for the thrusting away of the free colored man, sad, sick at heart, by reason of oppression?—that the slaveholder may repose in all the voluptuousness of the most undisturbed quiet? Or shall he not rather raise the slaveholder's earth-directed vision to the clear arch of the sky, and bid him there read words that are eternal in the heavens, '*whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do you even so unto them*,' with its noble commentary, '*all men are created equal, and have rights that are inalienable, to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness*?' Shall he not rely upon the salutary operation of great principles sanctioned by God, and declared by man to be '*undeniable*;' that are of sufficient efficacy, whereever they are ably and honestly urged, for the reformation of every unjust and pernicious usage in the land—rather than upon some poor shift, some conscience-calming expedient for the present exigency, whilst future exigencies—going into eternity, it may be—to which it is totally inadequate, are left entirely unprovided for."

"But it was not long before the benevolent object of Dr. Finley was greatly perverted, and the benefit that was intended for the free colored man—his chief aim was made secondary to the *policy* of sending him away. At first, the apparent benevolence of the enterprise moved the spirits of some of the free people of color, and not a few of them, were preparing, doubtless, as true heralds of the cross, to bless benighted Africa. Emigrants offered themselves in greater numbers than the means of the Society were competent to send out. Seeing this, the *philanthropy* of the enterprising was thrown somewhat in the background, or became, with many, merely auxiliary to the *policy* of sending out of the country the whole of the free colored population. In this way, it was recommended to the most determined slaveholder. He was reminded that the free colored man was a nuisance to the white—a source, almost the only one, of disquiet and discontent to the slave,—that he was bound-

lessly degraded and vicious, polluted and polluting all around him,—and, that the fact of its being so might always remain as strong as it *then* was for sustaining such an *argument*, it was asserted with ceaseless repetition, that in this degraded state he must continue as long as he resided among us—that *here* his condition was irretrievable, hopeless, in fine, it was an ordination of Providence! All this was surmounted by *pæans* to our humanity. And the free colored man, for *his* encouragement was told, that the whole field of honorable ambition lay open before him; that he might, in the land of his fathers, engage in the high offices of legislation—in the solemn ministrations of the altar—and in laying the foundation of a great people, a mighty Christian nation, before whose feet the countless idolatries of Africa's unnumbered tribes would fall in ruins to the ground.

"All this sounds well—but it will be found, on examination, to contain principles at variance with each other, and mutually destructive. Let us suppose these motives to be addressed to an intelligent free man of color, would not his train of reflections, most probably be somewhat of this kind? 'I belong, then, to a class which the white man declares to be a *nuisance*. If this is true, what has produced it? His own conduct. What has this been but a course of systematic neglect, contempt, abuse—withholding from us every franchise and immunity of the government, whose tendency, he says, is to elevate and ennoble those who exercise them? We were thrown out from the charnel-house of slavery, ignorant, unconscious of the want, unable to appreciate the advantages of education—our families cut off from all associates, except the degraded slave, or the polluted and polluting white:—and what has been done for us? Whilst the white man has established, at great expense of life and treasure, schools for the Caffre and Hottentots—for the Indian of Ceylon and the negro of New Zealand; whilst he has his missionary, on the one hand, plying with untiring step his course to the summit of the Rocky Mountains, and, on the other, scaling the wall of China, to declare that Truth which makes men 'free indeed'—what has he done, what is he doing, for the class, whose ignorance and error must be daily witnessed, and whose wants must be fully known? Nothing, nothing, nothing. What confidence, then, can I properly repose in a benevolence acting only *afar off*, whilst it neglects so much *at hand*—in that charity which will dispatch a band of missionaries to *Africa*, whilst it will not supply one to her sons *here*, though fainting—perishing for

the bread of life? In what manner am I to estimate the sincerity of men—aye, of *Christian* men too—who, in one breath, tell me, their prejudices against us, whilst *here*, are insurmountable, but that they vanish when we are removed from them some six or seven thousand miles—that whilst we remain here, *religion* itself is incompetent to destroy them—but that when it acts across an ocean, it possesses wondrous, overmastering potency, for their extirpation: who say, that *here*, under the restraints of wholesome laws, with the presence of the whites to check and control us, we are utterly unfit, because of our moral and intellectual depravity, for the enjoyment of the lowest privilege—yet, forsooth, would fling us, with all our stupidity, our inexperience, our vileness and infamy, in one unbroken and reeking mass, upon a distant land,—unchecked by wholesome laws, or animated by virtuous example—to do what? To carry on a system of piracy?—of robbery?—or to establish a *factory* for conducting a commerce in the blood and gore, and groans of our fellow men? No: it is not in these occupations we are to be employed, and for which, it would seem, *our benefactors being witnesses*, we are well fitted, but it is—O wonderful adaptation! to Christianize and civilize one hundred millions of heathen!!

"'Again—if we are a nuisance *now*, by what necessity are we always to remain so? Are we incapable of improvement—impenetrable to those great truths by which man's mind is enlightened—his heart purified, and he made a *freeman indeed?* This can not be asserted without impugning God's word. What, then, will make up this everlasting pressure? *Prejudice, prejudice*—so proclaimed 'before all Israel, and before the Sun!' We have none against the whites. Deeply injured, neglected, vilified, as we have been, we are willing to pass it all by, take a lowly station, and cheerfully acknowledge their superiority. But how is this temper reciprocated? By still accumulating abuse. They say of us, as a class, we are diseased, sick, ready to die, and yet, by emigration to Liberia would they suck from us the most healthful blood that circulates in our system. They declare by their *language*—by their *laws*, an inflexible purpose to grant no mitigation of our ills, unless we respond harmoniously to their *policy* in sending us away. How then can we, in a matter so important to us—so far from our homes—so irremediable, if it fail, trust to those whose rigor of temper no persuasion can soften—whose selfish *policy* is the *substance, our good* but the *accident?*

"'But further, why are we spoken of as *a class?* why do they throw together the good, the bad, the indifferent, and make of them one mass, baptized by the name of *nuisance*, when they deal not thus with other men? I do not perceive that men of black hair and of light-colored hair—of black eyes and blue eyes—of low stature and high stature, are spoken of in *classes*, to which any moral or intellectual designation is given. No: each one is judged by his own merits—nor are they mixed up with the vices and demerits of others, to make a foul and unsightly lump. This common-sense and common-charity measure of judgment and treatment is all that I have a right to ask, it is all I desire, and *justice* can not withhold it.

"'But more than all, we are especially obnoxious to the slaveholder. Here is the spring of all this preparation. My fellow man is in bondage—the sight of a freeman of his own color released from chains will make the slave more restless under *his;* and the slaveholder, with his hand on the throat of my father, my brother, my sister or my mother, must, by all means, be kept tranquil and undisturbed—his property in man must be untouched, whilst *he* is robbing him of the use of the limbs and muscles that God gave, and of the daily products of their toil. And this is the sum and substance of this mighty charity! We are to be driven from the country as a *nuisance*—we are to be persuaded by unceasing reiteration, that such we are *now*, and so we must remain, *to all*,—but especially to the unrelenting slaveholder.' 'O my soul, come not thou into their secret—unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united!'"

"But, sir, has it ever been known that *commercial* establishments have proved to be sources of religious knowledge and improvement to the heathen, among whom they have been placed? The colony of Liberia is emphatically one of this character—there exists in it, according to all accounts, a rage for trade. Let us recur for a moment to the history of religious efforts among our neighboring Indians. Who, amongst us, would ever think of encouraging a *trading station*, or *company of petty shop-keepers*, (such as could be induced to emigrate for *gain*) and upholding them, as the best means of diffusing a knowledge of Christianity among the Indians, as *missionary stations!!* I will venture to say that among the greatest obstacles the *true missionary* has to encounter in recommending 'Christ' to our aboriginal natives, is the influence, direct and indirect, of such establishments. When we consider *their object*, we can not be at a loss, for

an instant, to arrive at this conclusion. It is *to supply the wants of savage life, but more especially the* PECULIAR WANTS *of savage life.*

"These peculiar wants are trinkets, baubles, beads, tobacco, ardent spirits, fire-arms, powder and ball. It is the gratification of these wants that gives vitality, and their growth that gives encouragement to the trading stations. Now, so long as these peculiar wants exist, *savageism* must continue—so long as they grow, it must also be growing more rude and untameable. So superficial is this truth, that no missionary station, so far as I am informed, has ever been supplied with any of the articles mentioned above, calculated to keep alive savage customs. What is the first work of the missionary? Is it not to allure to peace, to *stationary* life, and habits of settled industry? If he succeed, he puts an end, in proportion to his success, to the sale of arms, powder and ball, whether they be intended to kill men, or for hunting. If he inculcate abstinence from the use of ardent spirits, he is brought directly in collision with the interest of the trader. Should he be blessed in his honest labors for the amelioration of savage life, it must be almost entirely by the annihilation of the trader's occupation. It would seem strange, then, that with experienced persons, there should, after twelve years' disastrous trial, too, at Liberia, exist such pertinacity in insisting upon the practicability of uniting the trader and missionary—and that there should still be indulged such bloated expectations of good to the heathen of Africa, from the instrumentality of men who go out, [if *preachers*, so much the worse,] with fire-arms, powder and ball, and rum, in one hand, and the Bible in the other."

Thus beautifully and impressively Mr. Birney concludes this letter: "Permit me, in conclusion to say, that the views submitted in this communication, are entertained after long and very circumspect examination of the main subject to which they apply. Born in the midst of a slaveholding community—accustomed to the services of slaves from my infancy—reared under an exposure to all the prejudices that slavery begets—and being myself, heretofore, from early life, a slaveholder—my efforts at mental liberation were commenced in the very lowest and grossest atmosphere. Fearing the reality, as well as the imputation of enthusiasm—each ascent that my mind made to a higher and purer moral and intellectual region, I used as a *stand-point* to survey deliberately all the tract I had left. When I remember

how calmly and dispassionately my mind has proceeded from one truth connected with this subject, to another still higher—that the opinions I have embraced, are those to which such minds and hearts as Wilberforce's and Clarkson's yielded their full assent—that they are the opinions of the *disinterested* and excellent of our own country; I feel well satisfied that my conclusions are not the fruits of enthusiasm. When I recur to my own observation, through a life already of more than forty years—of the anti-republican tendencies of slavery—and take up our most solemn State paper, and there see that 'all men are created equal, and have a right that is inalienable to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;' I feel a settled conviction of mind that *slavery, as it exists among us*, is opposed to the very essence of our government—and that by prolonging it, we are *living down* the foundation-principles of our happy institutions. When I take up the Book of God's love, and there read, 'whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them,'—my conviction is not less thorough, that slavery *now* is sinful in his sight.

"But one word more. The views contained in this letter are my own, and they have been the result of my own reading, observation and thought. I am a member of no anti-slavery society—nor have I any acquaintance, either personally or by literary correspondence, with any of the northern abolitionists.—No one, besides myself, is committed by any thing I have said."

After breaking through the meshes of this popular delusion, the attention of Mr. Birney was fixed more earnestly than ever on the subject of emancipation. His mind was for some time occupied with some plan for gradually restoring to the slaves the freedom of which they had been so cruelly deprived. With this, however, he was not long embarrassed. He saw clearly enough, that in this way the oppressor could not be led to repentance—could not be induced to break the yoke he had fastened upon the neck of his unoffending brother.

In a paper containing "the reply of Mr. Birney to queries of some Friends" in 1835, appears the following paragraph on this subject: "I consider all schemes of gradual emancipation as utterly unfit to meet the present evils, and to avert the dangers which threaten from the continued existence of slavery. They are all, in the first place, imperative on the *master*—they let go his conscience, by not insisting on immediate repentance for present sin. In the second

place, they produce no good effect on the heart and mind of the *slave*. Founded on expediency, or policy, as all such plans must be, from their very nature, the slave will feel no respect for the motive which originates them. He will consider that nothing has been done from a regard to *his* rights, or *his* interests, but all for the advantage and benefit of the master. The master, uninfluenced by Christian principle, in the act of emancipation, would not, in all probability, follow his *freedman* with Christian effort for his moral and intellectual improvement—the freedman, feeling no respect for the motives of the master in giving him his liberty, would naturally, as it appears to me, reject his influence. Thus they would be left unbound by any tie that would lead to continued kindness on the one side, and respect and grateful recollections on the other. Any plan of emancipation, however gradual it might be, would be better than perpetual slavery; but surely it is the great desideratum of any plan, that it leave the parties *friends*, as *freemen*. None will effect this, which is not founded on Christian principle—and there can be none, so far as I am enabled to see, which so fully recognizes Christian principle as its basis, as that which urges *immediate emancipation*."

So deeply at this time, which was about ten years ago, was his mind interested in the whole subject of slavery, that, to use his own words, "he read almost every work he could lay his hands on; talked much of it in public and in private. In the month of May, 1834, he became so fully convinced of the *right* of his slaves to their freedom, and of his *duty* as a Christian to give it them, that he prepared, say on the first day of June, a deed of emancipation for the six that he brought with him from Alabama, and had it duly entered on record in the office of the County Court of the county in which he lived. They all remained with him, receiving such wages—with the exception of a little girl—as were customary in the country." For this "deed of emancipation," beautifully evincing his deep sincerity and thorough honesty, Mr. Birney was far enough from claiming applause. It was in his view a simple act of justice.

Just here, a few words from a paper of Mr. Birney already referred to, will be read with profit and delight. "There would be no danger of personal violence to the master from emancipation, brought about by Christian benevolence. Such an apprehension is the refuge of conscious guilt. Emancipation, brought about on the principle above mentioned, I hesitate not to say, would, in most instances,

where the superior intelligence of the master was acknowledged, produce on the part of the beneficiaries, the most entire and cordial reliance on his counsel and friendship. *I do not believe that I have any warmer friends than my manumitted slaves—none, I am sure,* if sacrifices were called for, who *would not freely make them, to promote my happiness.*

"The injustice which the *slave* feels as done him in taking the avails of his labor, leads him to take clandestinely what he persuades himself he is entitled to. He has comparatively no character to lose, no ultimate object for the attainment of which the building up of a good character would contribute. As a freeman, *character* would be essential—his earnings would be his—his wife, his children would be his; the apprehension of forcible separation would depart, and he would have every motive that ordinarily influences men to build up a good name for worth and honesty. The depredations on the master's property by *slaves,* I should suppose, are tenfold what they would be by the same slaves made freemen.

"The slaves, if emancipated on any terms, would be able to provide for themselves and their families. If they should be *kindly* treated by their former masters, and Christian benevolence should make the same efforts for their improvement, that are made in many places for the improvement of the distant heathen—they would not only provide for themselves, but with such opportunities become good citizens. I have made frequent inquiry as to the number of paupers among the colored people of Kentucky, amounting to nearly five thousand—I have, as yet, heard of but one. I think it is a rare thing, so far as I have had opportunity of observing, in slave States, to see free colored persons arraigned in courts, to answer to criminal accusations. *My own manumitted slaves, at the end of the first year of their employment on wages, will have used but half the amount they are to receive. They have not fallen into disorderly or vagrant habits; but have manifested—at least the younger ones—an increased desire for knowledge, and for attendance on the Sabbath-schools, and the common ministrations of the sanctuary.* To delay emancipation, in order to attain the greatest good it is believed will result from it, is, in my judgment, but to accumulate the difficulties now in the way, and to delay to a remoter period its full consummation.

"*Having emancipated my slaves from a full conviction that the bondage in which I was holding them was* SINFUL, *I conceive I have no greater right to ask for* COMPENSATION *from*

any quarter, than I would have in any other case, where a similar conviction would lead me to return to my neighbor any property to which he had an unquestionable right, and which I by superior power had withheld from him. The claim of 'compensation,' it seems to me, can be fairly sustained, only on the ground that slaveholding is not sinful. Would not the Ephesian converts, who at once abandoned their 'curious arts,' and burned the 'books' which contained instructions in them, have been as equitably entitled to compensation as the slaveholder, who abandons a *property* equally condemned by God's law, and commits to the flames the charter by which he has hitherto supported his groundless claims?"

Mr. Birney had now reached ground where he could stand erect, and speak with a man's voice. He could not be inactive. The doctrine of Immediate Emancipation, cordially embraced, and decisively acted on, had shed light and peace and joy through his spirit. Its influence upon him and upon his slaves was equally renovating and refreshing. Both them and him it raised to the dignity and power of genuine manhood. And the benefits he had thus received he would freely impart—impart to all within the sphere of his influence. His exertions were vigorous and untiring to convince his fellow citizens, on the right hand and on the left, of the sin of slaveholding—to persuade them to unite with him in subserving the cause of Holy Freedom. He went from place to place—he visited family after family, to collect fit materials for an anti-slavery society. A few listened to his voice. A Buchanan and a Munsell bravely came to his assistance; and claimed a share in the privileges he enjoyed, and the sufferings he endured. At length, a small anti-slavery society was organized.

To bring the Press, moreover, into the service of enslaved Humanity, Mr. Birney exerted himself promptly and resolutely. He made arrangements for publishing the Philanthropist in Kentucky. About this time, the affair at Vicksburg occurred, with its wide-spread alarm and horrible atrocities. The fear of a servile insurrection agitated the community where Mr. Birney resided. The slaveholders there were intent on preventing the publication of the Philanthropist. They employed persuasion—they "breathed out threatenings." But Mr. Birney was not to be deterred by the one, or dissuaded by the other. The rights to which he was entitled, he calmly assented. For the discharge of the duties to which he was Heaven-summoned, he cheerfully and resolutely girded up his loins. His kindred and friends

marked with deep apprehension the perils which were thickening around. With "many entreaties they besought him" to abandon the position he had undertaken to maintain. But "deadly imminent breach" though it was, he could not retire. Nor did he relinquish the design, till he found that his printer could not be persuaded to fulfill his engagements. And he could not, in the circumstances he was placed in, persuade another to come to his assistance. And as he was resolved on publishing the Philanthropist, he must, of course, as he did, leave Kentucky. So far as the welfare of the slave was concerned, it made indeed no great difference on which side of the Ohio river the press went into operation.

Just at this point, a strong light is shed upon the Man and his position, by the following statements, taken from a paper which we can not help ascribing to the powerful, polished and faithful pen of Prof. Wright. "In the prospectus he said: 'Those who have investigated it (slavery) with one consent declare, if something effectual be not done without any delay, it will become in a short time unmanageable, and in the end *overwhelming*. In our condition, to do nothing would show an unpardonable lack of manhood. Something effectual ought to be—for as yet it *can* be done. With the *sin* of slavery, its evils may be terminated; our land may be blessed of God; raised up; cleansed from defilement, and, without a single remaining blood-spot, stand clothed in the majesty of her free principles, the rebuke of tyrants, the refuge of the oppressed.'

"'The paper was to maintain the duty of immediate emancipation, among other reasons, 'Because it (slavery) is the mighty barrier—resisting the progress of pure religion in the slaveholding States:

"'Because *Slavery*, the institution of man, is opposed to *Liberty*, the institution of *God*. In a contest with the Almighty, we must be overthrown. 'Who hath hardened himself against Him, and hath prospered?'

"On the 12th of July, thirty-three of the citizens of Danville addressed a letter to Mr. Birney, remonstrating against the proposed establishment of the paper. They said:

"'We address you now in the calmness and candor that should characterize law-abiding men, as willing to avoid violence as they are determined to meet extremity, and advise you of the peril that must, and inevitably will attend the execution of your purpose. .... We propose to you to postpone the setting up of your press, and the publication of your paper, until application can be had to the Legisla-

ture, who will by a positive law set rules for your observance, or by a refusal to act, admonish us of our duty. We admonish you, sir, as citizens of the same neighborhood, as members of the same society in which you live and move, and for whose harmony and quiet we feel the most sincere solicitude—to beware how you make an experiment here, which no *American slaveholding community* has found itself able to bear.'

"Mr. Birney returned a reply, refusing, in respectful, yet dignified and decided terms, to comply with their request. He suggested that it would have been far more becoming, and more like the spirit of 'law-abiding men,' had they '*abstained entirely* from the threat that a resort might be had to violence, to prevent the exercise of one of the most precious rights of an American—a right which however it might be violated in the destruction of his property, or cloven down in the abuse of his person, can never for a moment be surrendered.' He, therefore, after giving his reasons, concluded, 'However desirous I may be of obliging you, as citizens and neighbors, I can not accede to your proposition.'

Before leaving Kentucky, however, Mr. Birney prepared, in a "Letter to Ministers and Elders," a compact, strong and beautiful argument "on the sin of holding slaves, and the duty of immediate emancipation." From this, extracts will now be given.

The following is the plan of Mr. Birney's argument, with the particulars under the first division: "I mean rather to present: 1. Some of the most prominent characteristics of slavery. 2. Some of the excuses of our church for not purifying herself from this sin, with answers to them; and 3. The consequences to the church and the State at large, if she should at once enter upon her duty. The characteristics to which I now ask your attention, are—

"1. It originated, has always been, and is at this day, maintained by a violence that is utterly at variance with the mild spirit of the Gospel.

"2. It wrests from one set of men, without crime on their part, the fruits of their bodily toils, for the support and ease of another.

"3. Its effects upon its subjects are to stupify and benumb the mind, to violate the conscience, to multiply the sins of the grossest character, to exclude the knowledge of God and Christ, as well as of the necessity of any preparation for the world to come, and, of course, to prepare them for hell.

"4. Its effects upon those who maintain it, and in some

measure upon those who witness and consent to it, are indolence, diabolical passions, deadness to the claims of justice and the calls of mercy, a worldly spirit, and contempt for a large portion of our fellow creatures: therefore, as far as their qualifications for an eternal state are modified by slavery, it rather prepares them for the sentence of the damned than for the invitation of the blessed.

"That the above are some, but by no means all of the characteristics of slavery, no one, with our opportunities of witnessing the thing itself, will deny. Now, does it not seem passing strange, that a 'monster of such hideous mien,' should have been received within the very midst of the church of God—that it should find in its bosom its surest and softest resting-place—that it should be fondled, sleeked and cherished there? and that if any one attempt to tear him from his lodgment, with one consent all cry out, 'Let him alone! let him alone! we have become so accustomed to his presence, that much of his deformity has been taken away, and we can not do without him; we are preparing him for his discharge, which, as he is slow to learn, he will probably be ready for, in some hundred or two years; *then* he can be dismissed without injury to any one concerned; but don't disturb him *now;* he is very quiet, all things are going on well. Make what preparation you please for his *future* dismission; but by no means touch him at *this time.* The church! the *church!* you'll endanger the church, and make it more unpopular than it now is. I charge you, wait for a 'more convenient season.' God is opening the way for his discharge in his own good time. If you attempt it *now*, you will not only utterly fail, because all the *church* will be against you; and besides, they will call you, and join with those who are without in calling you, a madman and a fanatic—and your influence will be destroyed.' This is no caricature; it is solemn, serious truth; should it be denied, there are 'clouds of witnesses' to prove it. But to return."

Under the second division, how impressive and refreshing is the following answer to the allegation that "Paul and Peter establish, or recognize as established, the relation of master and servant, (slave,) when they give admonition to both as to their reciprocal behavior. It is very certain that this would not have been done, they being holy and inspired men, if the relation itself was sinful; or if there was any thing in the subjection of one human being to the will and caprice of another, that was forbidden by God's law. Now

if the word '*servant*' be used by Peter and Paul to mean '*slaves*' exclusively—a meaning I admit only that the excuse may have all the force it can claim—their exhortation to persons in this condition amounts to no more than what had been impressed before upon all who were, or might become, the victims of injustice or oppression, *to bear it patiently*. It was given with the same object, and in the same spirit, as the command of the Savior himself, that the persecuted should *pray for their persecutors*. Had it been a common evil during the ministry of Paul and Peter to which Christians were exposed, to be cast into prison by the lawless power of individual persecutors, would the exhortations of these apostles to them to bear their sufferings with resignation and meekness, establish or recognize as established the relation of persecutor and persecuted? or authorize Christians to exercise grievous oppressions upon one another, or upon such of the heathen as they might be able to circumvent and bring into their power? Or when Paul, through Titus, admonishes his brethren to be 'subject to principalities and powers, and to obey magistrates,' does he in the slightest manner sanction the imperial atrocities of a Nero, a Domitian, or any of their legitimate successors until now? I know you will say he does not; and that he would have condemned in the conduct of those tyrants towards their obscurest subjects whatever was inconsistent with the great and universally binding law, 'Thou shalt do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you.' If then Nero, for example, had submitted to the Gospel that Paul proclaimed in his capital, and become an obedient disciple of the apostles—although he might have retained the *power and authority* of an emperor, yet his oppressions, his cruelties, would have ceased, the very temper that prompted them would have been suppressed, his power would have been put forth for good, not for evil, and he would have been seen a prince dispensing justice in mercy, and dwelling his own happiness in that which he daily scattered over a grateful people. Would he under Paul's discipline have seized upon the poor, the weak, the defenceless of his empire, that he might exact from them toil unrequited during their whole lives, and consign them, and their innocent children after them, to social and civil degradation in the midst of happy millions—to personal bondage—to mental darkness—to the power of vice and the dominion of sin—to hopelessness in this world—to shame and everlasting contempt in that which is to come? Or had the converting grace of God found

him acting the bloody and relentless tyrant, and thus fulfilling his relation to the oppressed, would he, Paul being his teacher, have continued it during his life? And not content with this, would he—calling upon Paul to indite his last will and testament—have perpetuated by legacy to his issue this continually growing mass of blood and groans—of misery and tears? But let us come down from the tyrant over millions to his miniature—brandishing the sceptre of his authority over some half dozen of his fellow creatures, and see how the matter stands. You insist that Paul recognized—that is acknowledged to be right—the relation of master and servant among his cotemporaries; of course, that it could not have been wrong *then*, when tested by the great principles of man's duty to his fellow man, preached by him in his own time, and which we consider as preached to all persons *since*. The inference you would deduce from these premises—one which is unavoidable—is, that as these principles can never change, as they were intended for the direction of men in all time, (to say nothing of eternity,) this relation, *then* right, must be so *now*. This I believe is a fair statement of the position assumed, on this passage, by the scriptural advocate for continued slavery. Admitting all the premises to be true, the conclusion to which you have come, would be altogether undeniable; and we would be authorized now to inflict on our fellow men, white or black, who might be reduced into our power, all the enormities of Roman or Grecian slavery.

"But there is an essential part of your premises—the approbation of Paul of the injustice and cruelty of the master, covered up under the very comprehensive word *relation*, that I apprehend, is very far from being maintainable: For if it can be maintained, it must be by making him nullify all those principles of moral action which he had been unceasingly inculcating upon his fellow men, and of which he had been giving in his own conduct a bright example. For if this *relation*, [in which are to be included all the atrocious powers conferred by the Roman laws in the time of Paul, as well as the powers, not much less atrocious, exercised in some parts of our own country now,] be right; it follows consequentially, that to do any thing fairly necessary in the estimation of the superior in the relation, to maintain it, can not be wrong. Thus, among the Romans, masters could put their slaves to death at pleasure; and it was done with great cruelty and frequency; they kept their slaves chained to the door-posts as janitors, they branded them in the fore-

head, and, if the master was slain at his own house, and the murderer undiscovered, all his domestic slaves were liable to be put to death. Under this power, four hundred were put to death on a single occasion. Will you drive the apostle to a recognition of such horrible deeds? To an acknowledgment that they were right? That there was in them no violation of the great law of love? No: you reply; this is too horrible. I rejoin and say, that you can not then, on your own principle, charge him with the recognition of any violation, how small soever it may seem, of this law. For the same purpose, (the maintenance of the relation,) it may be thought necessary by masters among us, to keep back the hire of the laborers who reap down their fields, (this is injustice)—that if a slave, in obedience to the very constitution of man's nature, when self-interest, the mainspring of action, is taken from him, become indolent,—if he be reluctant to spend gratuitously for another that property which the great Author of his being has given him in his own physical powers, in his own bones and muscles and sinews—he may be beaten and scourged to any extent, however cruel, till this indolence, this reluctance to an unrequited transfer of his labor to another, this natural tendency to self-indulgence, be overcome. (This is oppression.) To the same end it may be necessary, in the opinion of the master, in order to derive that profit from the *relation* which only makes it worthy to be maintained, that marriages among his slaves be discouraged, and a gross state of concubinage permitted; that the wife be torn at midnight from the man of her love, and her screaming children wrung from her frantic grasp; that the husband find his manly arms, intended for the protection of his helpless offspring, bound in the weighty and sure fetters of the southern slaver; and the last, the sole atom of earthly happiness they were all enjoying, cast upon the winds. This is cruelty unmixed—and to justify it, you bring the noble-minded apostle who suffered persecutions without number, distress and death, that he might bring men to love one another!!!

"Further: It might be that the whole life of a master would be passed in the perpetration of injustice, the exercise of cruelty and oppression; that a relation might be perpetuated whose substance is the aliment of the most overbearing despotism on the one part, and the vilest abjectness on the other. If the sins that may be said to be inherent in slavery—if injustice, cruelty and oppression were habitually committed against persons *not in the rela-*

tion, and unrepented of, the perpetrator, by the judgment of all men, would be damned for ever—if they were committed against our *white* 'neighbors,' a furnace as hot as Nebuchadnezzar's would be too cool for them. Yet, notwithstanding his character may, by the indulgence of the worst passions against his slaves, have become as mean, as vicious, as degraded, and as unfit for the society of the just made perfect, as if he had indulged them against free persons, and his equals in society; because, forsooth, his slaves are in the *relation*, there seems to be no harm done, and at his death he is taken up to heaven, where all this treatment of his slaves, they being in the *relation*, goes for nothing. Thus it would appear that Paul and Peter, after exhorting men to do all—even to their eating and drinking—for the glory of God—to be holy in all manner of conversation, are found supporting a *relation* whose sole object is, on the one side temporary convenience, at the expense of personal degradation on the other, and the moral pollution of both—whose universal tendencies upon the parties concerned, and upon society at large, have been mischievous, polluting and unholy. To these apostles I do not think can fairly be attributed such miserable logic to support such miserable morals.

"For further illustration: suppose that during the ministry of Paul, a Christian slave at Colosse, thinking himself treated in an unchristian manner by his Christian master, had brought his case before the church whilst Paul was on a visit to that city. He would alledge against his master, that instead of giving him, as Paul had directed, what was just and equal for his services, he gave him nothing but his food and clothing, and these in many instances adjusted to his wants with the most scrupulous nicety: that his 'threatenings' were many, and his scourgings not a few. The master may be supposed to have admitted all the facts of the case, and to have justified himself in such words as these: 'As to the command to give my slave what is just and equal, I have never interpreted it to mean what the standard of justice among equals would require; but rather that I should give him just what suited my convenience; and as to giving him what is equal, or, as he understands it, a fair equivalent for his services, it never once entered my head—for I might as well have no slave at all as to do this; indeed he would, if this be the meaning of it, soon be as free as I am. And as to the threatenings and scourgings that I have bestowed upon him, his own insolent claims, now reiterated—have justly provoked them: they are absolutely necessary to keep him

humble and obedient, make him know his place, and to perpetuate the relation which you yourself have recognized, and know, ought by all means to be maintained.' What now do you think Paul would have done, after hearing such a harangue as this? Would he have sent for the *Phrygian slave code*, have collated the laws, and heard testimony as to all the recognized and approved customs of oppression? Or would he have taken up the word of God, the perfect law of liberty, and quoted to him, '*in all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them?*' Brethren, if such a case were brought before you, how would you decide?—By the laws and customs of slavery, as they exist in Kentucky, or by the *book of God?* If by the latter, what becomes of slavery? It is shivered to atoms."

In dwelling on the natural consequences of immediate emancipation, Mr. Birney uttered words, to which one delights to listen. Take the following as a specimen. "But if we set our slaves free among us, they will turn round and cut our throats. This would be bad enough truly. But do you entertain any serious apprehension of such a result? For if you do, I shall be compelled to attribute it either to conscious guilt for bad treatment of your slaves, or to a total want of manhood. We have succeeded thus far in keeping in subjection this people, whilst committing against them the greatest trespass that man can commit against his fellow, whilst withholding from them rights for which men in all ages have hazarded life, fortune and honor; and yet, when we restore those rights peaceably and kindly, it is most stoutly maintained that they to whom they are restored will turn and rend us. This is surely unsound philosophy—altogether at variance with the laws of mind, as well as with historical facts. For I am very sure that those who insist upon the objection may safely be challenged to produce a single well-authenticated instance to show, that dangerous or even inconvenient consequences have followed the sudden emancipation of large bodies of slaves. Now I am by no means so sanguine as to indulge the belief that in emancipation will be found a *panacea* for all the ills that flesh is heir to; but that they will ultimately be immeasurably diminished by it, I can not for one moment doubt. And I wish it always borne in mind, whilst we are discussing that part of the subject which relates to the expediency of emancipation, that it is not the introduction of a new and untried evil, where none of kindred character existed *previously;* but that it is the substitution of an evil, in the opinion of its

advocates, light and transient when compared with the evil of slavery, whose ultimate tendency, in the judgment of all considerate men, who have weighed it, is to crush us.

"Now to every one of you who is a slaveholder, and in whose mind exists an apprehension of the danger predicted in the objection, I am bold to offer some means of defense from all harm. Say, you have become convinced that slavery, as it exists among us, is a *sin* before God; that you have repented of your own guilt in this matter, and are now anxious to show fruits that consist with repentance; you summon before you your servants—the fathers and mothers, and such others of them as may be old enough to understand an explanation of the principles on which you are about to act: you say to them, you have become convinced that the bonds in which you have held them are inconsistent with the law of love to our neighbor, enjoined by God upon every man, and that moved by the sacred authority of the religion you profess, you have determined to continue the sin no longer. With this you read and then deliver to them, accurately authenticated deeds of manumission for themselves and their children. You further say to them, 'As I have already given to you the most convincing proof I can furnish of my friendship, it is not my intention to push you out of my doors, desiring never to see you again—exposed to the impositions of a world with whose business you are in a great measure unacquainted, or to the prejudices and scorn of such as cherish for you no kind sympathy; no, if you choose to remain in my employment, I will pay you what is just and equal, a fair equivalent for your services. I will continue to feel for you the love, and extend to you the conduct of a Christian; I will assist you in providing the means of educating your children for usefulness in life, and should you so choose, in binding them out to profitable trades and employments; and I will be your sure and steadfast friend, and your protector so long as your conduct shall not render it improper for me to be so.' I ask you, now, if after doing this, and kneeling down with them at the footstool of God's throne to thank him for the Christian courage he has bestowed upon you, and to implore his blessing upon the down trodden and the poor, in their new estate, you would fear the flames of the incendiary, or the knife of the assassin? Hateful as is to many the very name of abolition, here it is in its essence—and its safety is sure, because it is the offspring and the exhibition of benevolence.

"Well, after all this you say, 'What can we do?' I

answer, you can rise up to-morrow and liberate all you hold in bondage. 'But,' you reply, 'what effect would this have upon the great body of slaveholders in the State?' I will undertake to affirm, that by such a course, small as is your number, you have crucified the giant sin of our land; his dying struggles may be fierce and long protracted, but his dissolution will be certain, because the death-blow will have been given. The ministers and rulers of any of the larger denominations of Christians have it in their power to-morrow to give the fatal wound to slavery in Kentucky—and if in Kentucky, throughout the slaveholding region of the Union for how would the congregations over whom God has placed them, and upon whom they would then be authorized to press this subject with all its overpowering weight, upon sound consciences and Christian hearts, stand in the blaze of such virtuous action, and not be consumed or won by it? If it were to prevail among Presbyterians alone, how long could the other denominations hold their fellow men in bondage? Not twelve months, as I honestly believe. If then you will come up to the next Synod, after having 'loosed the bands of wickedness, undone the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, and broken every yoke,' so far as you are concerned, you have the promise of the Lord that 'your light shall break forth as the morning, and your health spring forth speedily; that your righteousness shall go before you, and the glory of the Lord be your rereward.' You may, it is true, be called madmen; but Paul was so called before you. You may be called fanatics, fools and knaves; but Sharpe, Clarkson and Wilberforce were so baptized by the enemies of humanity; you may at first obtain but little honor from men; but you will win an eternal weight of glory from God. That you may be influenced by Him so to act, is the earnest desire of your friend and brother."

About this time, the spirit and movements of Mr. Birney, as the friend of Freedom, began to attract the attention and rouse the animosity of his old neighbors and acquaintance in Alabama. They held a public meeting, described as "large and respectable," in which, as a basis for a number of foolish and wicked resolutions, they adopted a preamble drenched in falsehood and absurdity. They affect to look with a kind of horror upon those who "live upon the labor of others," as if this were not a prominent feature of their own character! With unblushing effrontery, such as only the adroit villain could exhibit, they associate the name of Mr. Birney and his coadjutors with those of certain black-

legs and gamblers, whom they proposed to visit with terrible inflictions. "The *sole* and AVOWED object of Mr. Birney and his friends, they declare, is to sow the seed of discord, rapine and murder among the slaves of the South." These fervent and determined patriots, therefore, appoint a vigilance committee, to inflict blows and death upon the objects of their vengeance, whenever they may lay their lawless hands upon them. Of this committee, more than one-third were described as professed Christians, belonging to three of the leading denominations in our country, one of whom was a Baptist minister. It is very difficult in the way of riot to do mischief with a desperate hand, and on a large scale, especially in opposing the cause of Freedom, without the countenance and assistance of some baptized mountebank, of some heartless religionists. And such can easily be found almost any where in our country, where a Christianity prevails, which can apologize for slavery.

The assault thus made on him, Mr. Birney repelled with manly indignation and conscious power, which it does one good to peruse. There he stands, calm, erect, self-possessed. Hear him. "*Gentlemen*,—A number of the Alabama Watchman, containing the foregoing account of the proceedings of a 'public meeting,' lately held at Athens, has reached me, enveloped as newspapers usually are, when sent by mail. An *extra* of that journal, containing a duplicate account of the same proceedings, carefully enclosed in a blank wrapper, sealed, and charged with a double rate of postage, (unpaid,) has also been sent to me and received. All this care, to convey speedy and authentic information of the notice you have been pleased to take of one who had little reason to expect such conspicuity as you have given him, it is to be presumed, has been exercised by your agency and direction. In this reply, which, after no hurried reflection, I have thought proper to make to your proceedings, I shall take but little time in noticing what was done that is strictly personal to myself. I will stop only long enough to remind you—especially that portion of you who profess to be followers of Christ—of the *unjust* impression you have attempted to make on those to whom I am a stranger, by associating me, in your proceedings, with '*gamblers*, *blacklegs*, and *suspicious persons*.' It is well known to you all, that with laborious diligence I prosecuted in your county, and with no mean success, a profession, arduous in its duties, and, to a conscientious mind, beset with difficulties and temptations. To the generousness of my practice, the *bar*

will testify, and, with *parties* and *witnesses*, bear record of my exemption from the petty tricks and advantages which bring the profession into disrepute. Knowing me, by an acquaintance of many years, as you did—in my profession—as a member of the church—as a citizen—you have tried to produce an impression that you *knew* to be unjust and injurious. As Christians and as gentlemen—now that you have had time for reflection—you should be sorry for it, and ashamed of it."

Again, "Nor, do I believe, hateful as is the very name of abolitionists to slaveholders, that you would refuse to mingle your sympathies with theirs, for the oppressed of other lands. In all our South, the tyrant Nicholas had not a friend, while he was drenching his hands in the blood of his Polish subjects, goaded by oppression to revolt. No: the faintest ray of hope for their success in vindicating their liberty, warmed your every heart; the clang of the Polish falchion on the invader's casque, made music delightful to your ears; whilst for every blade that was raised by an arm that struck for liberty, your silent orisons went up, that it might descend with resistless energy upon the strongest of the oppressor's bands. Your prayers ascended not for the staying of the pestilence, that was sweeping off the thousands of the foe—and when, at last, after the struggle of despair, the sun of Poland's hope went down in tears of blood, it was followed by your tears of sorrow—whilst in mournful sympathy with the poet, you exclaimed—

> 'Hope for a season bids the world farewell,
> And Freedom shrieked when Shrejeneski fell.'

"But stay—not so fast: Is it not '*fanatical*,' thus to suffer the honest feelings of your nature to go out for the oppressed—and is it not '*incendiary*' for you here, to reprobate the cruelty of the tyrant, or to commiserate the afflictions of such contemptible 'disturbers of the peace?' There are two sides to every question. You have not yet heard the high-souled and chivalrous Emperor's account of this matter. You have not heard from his own lips of the great 'delicacy of the subject'—nor have you properly appreciated his 'peculiar circumstances.' To your furious zeal we may suppose him to reply, 'You have forgotten altogether, that however wrong might have been the dismemberment of Poland, and the *first* reduction of its inhabitants to political servitude, that, *now*, they had become accustomed to it—that they were

exceedingly degraded*—totally unqualified for liberty, many of them being Jews, who will neither amalgamate with Christians, nor Christians with them—that, therefore, they never can be free in their native land—the only way to elevate them to a proper sense and enjoyment of freedom, being either to transport them to the hospitable and healthy shores of Palestine, (which is impossible,) or for me to retain the power I now possess over them, using it of course with a merciful discretion, as I have always done, and solely for their good; making them, as it were, candidates for freedom, till, some how or other, in the lapse of time, they may be inducted into its full fruition.' May it not be, too, you have overlooked that most manly and satisfactory of excuses for inveterate habits of oppression—that they were introduced by his very worthy autocratical ancestors, who, themselves being oppressors, had transmitted the fashion to their descendants, and now, without any agency of his, he had it '*entailed*' on him. Beside, may he not well have urged, that his power would be curtailed, his wealth diminished, and his princely ease broken in upon, by removing the weight of his oppression? And still more fiercely, that the oppressed were his '*property*'—that it was his own concern—that no other people knew any thing about it, or had any interest in it—and that, if any canting sympathy for his subjects (contented and happy he knew they were, if meddlers would let them alone) should be felt and expressed any where; or, if a misguided philanthropy should attempt to convince him, that in the stores of heaven there is laid up wrath for the oppressor—or that it is better, safer, happier, to be served by willing subjects than reluctant slaves; or if his neighbors should permit any discussion of the wrongs of tyrants and the rights of men, he should regard it as a hostile interference with his own peculiar despotical interests, calling, at least, for a withdrawal of his friendship, if not for open war upon the guilty. Now, in what light would you look upon such pleas as these? Not, I am sure, as the candid reasons of an intelligent and honest mind, desiring to show mercy and do justice—but, rather, as the guilty subterfuges of a base, and selfish, and cowardly despot, who has the meanness to back with threats, his feigned excuses for practising an iniquity, he has not the magnanimity to forsake.

"Thus far, you and the abolitionist 'walk together,' in admiring the beauty and comeliness of liberty. But at this

* 'The peasantry are in a wretched condition, dirty, improvident, indolent, addicted to intoxication, and, of course, poor.'

point you separate. He *loves* her as a substantial good for himself, his neighbor, his country, the world; you admire her as good in the 'abstract'—or, as having her habitation *at a distance*—in Ireland—in Poland—or in Greece. But let her blazing beacon begin to sweep over the Atlantic and approach our shores, and its warmth begin to be felt near your cotton-bales, your rice-tierces, and your sugar-hogsheads—let but

> England's flag,—
> Proclaim that all around is free,
> From 'farthest Ind' to each blue crag,
> That beetles o'er the western sea;—

and, oh, how fanatical! how visionary! how suicidal to her own interests, how destructive to those of the oppressed! and how injurious to her neighbors!

"Now, what a shame is this! Lovers of freedom, are ye?—and well content that her fires should blaze, and warm and purify *abroad*—whilst at home, they must be extinguished, and your own house left desolate and dark! Lovers of liberty, are ye?—and yet, whilst the abolitionist is striving to uprear her fallen standard in our country, that all the world may see its broad folds, waving in the purest air of heaven, representing in letters of sunlight, that ALL MEN *are entitled to* LIBERTY—with myrmidon bands you rush to seize, that you may consume it in the furnace of a sugar-house, or bury it forever in the marshes of a rice-field.

"The importance of the object is by no means diminished, when it is seen how rapidly slavery is insinuating itself into the very religion of the American church. Time was—and it ended but a little while ago—when slavery was deplored in the south, not only as an *evil* of large dimensions, but as a transgression of the great law of love; which, whilst it could not be justified, yet some palliation was found for it, in the peculiar circumstances of that portion of the country—and a hope often expressed, that, in some way or other, it might terminate. No section of the church was then found so besotted as to become its advocate and supporter on *principle*, and boldly take God's book of love as their warrant for holding their brethren in a bondage, unequalled for its enormities even among Mahomedans or Pagans of modern times; nor so reckless of all decent regard to their character, as to challenge the praise of men for the meliorated condition of the enslaved here, as to morals and physical comforts, above what it would have been had they remained

in Africa; or to set off against their iniquity the few instances of conversion to Christ, by which God, in the greatness of his mercy, had chosen to exalt his name, and make it glorious, among the down trodden and perishing of a Christian land. Yet, all this has been done—not by a few ignorant and iron-hearted slave-driving professors of religion, but by the accredited organs of different churches in the South, claiming high stations on the scale of general intelligence, biblical knowledge and spiritual purity."

What a terrible rebuke is implied in this pointed demand: "What has slavery, acting through the South, done for the freedom of speech and of the press, those great conservatives of our government? I will tell you; She has used the refinements of metaphysics and the delusions of sophistry to explain away the obvious meaning of constitutional provisions enacted for their preservation; she has claimed for herself the peculiar favoritism of the Constitution of the United States; she has reared herself aloft on a bloody throne, demanding, with lash in hand, of States sovereign as herself, that all their rights should bow in submission to her and 'do her reverence;' that her dignity must be regarded as a thing too holy to be handled; and that these common rights of the people be restrained lest her sacred mysteries be profaned by men of 'unclean lips;' and the secret things of her *penetralia* be exposed by freemen to the rude gaze of a vulgar world.

"What has it done for the security of the citizens under the Constitution and laws of the land? You shall hear: She has *mocked* at Constitutions and laws; she has raised up tribunals unknown and opposed to them both; she has instituted inquisitions and invested them with power to execute punishments, not only of disgrace, but even unto death; she has set aside the trial by jury, and freemen of our country have been apprehended on suspicion, and without any charge of crime known to the laws, they have been shamefully treated; they have been ignominiously scourged, as slaves are scourged; and they have been executed on the boughs of your trees, whilst the once sacred appeal, '*I am an American citizen*,' has been drowned by the deafening shouts of a law-contemning rabble."

The charge of hurling denunciations against the slaveholders, so often urged against the abolitionists, is thus happily disposed of: "But again: the abolitionists call hard names that can not be borne. Now, it is very true, and we all are witnesses how difficult it is to bear their application

to ourselves. Yet they ought not to throw off its centre any well-regulated mind. If charged falsely, we should most generally disregard it, and *live down* the falsehood. If truly, we should be admonished *(fas est ab hoste doceri)* to reform that part of our life which has brought the bad name upon us. Sure it is, if the balance be struck between abolitionists and their opposers, the latter will be found to have overpaid them, in an amount so great, and in a coin so pure, and so thoroughly unadulterated with the alloy of moderation, or respect, or restraint, that its repayment must be utterly and forever despaired of. However, to a brief answer to the objection.

"There were, doubtless, in the days of Paul, a class of men well described as 'men-stealers.' The Mediterranean, and the smaller seas connected with it, were greatly infested by *pirates*, an important branch of whose business was *man-stealing*. Whenever they were able to overpower a village or settlement, and near the coast, they seized on the inhabitants, reduced them to bonds, and sold them in other lands for slaves. So formidable had they become in the time of Pompey the great, that his eulogist, Cicero, in one of his most labored and eloquent orations, makes it ground of high praise, in recounting Pompey's merits as a commander, that he had conducted to a fortunate conclusion the *piratical war*. It may have been to such piratical man-stealers that the apostle especially referred. It is true, he does not mention as a class, distinct from the actual kidnappers, those who became the purchasers, and the holders, and users, through life, of their fellow men thus reduced to bondage. We are left to conjecture as to the probability that his bold and honest mind did not discern any real difference, and that he had not penetrated to the prevailing distinction of our more enlightened age, which makes such wide discrimination between the guilt of the original captors and that of the very unfortunate gentlemen on whom the 'ENTAIL' has fallen. He may have thought as you would, in a case where one of your half-fed negroes breaks into your meat-house at midnight, and after satisfying his present hunger, sells the surplus spoil to an unworthy white neighbor—*the latter knowing that the meat was stolen. Here*, you hesitate not to stigmatize the purchaser, by the same name you would use in describing the actual rogue, and to assign to him, as worthy of it, disgrace and punishment proportioned to the elevation of his intelligence above that of the slave. Yet, *he* was not the *thief*—he only took, retained, and used—and this, in all prob-

ability, too, after having paid for it—property stolen from its rightful owner. But no one would be thought uncharitable under any code of ethics with which I am acquainted, who should, in speaking of the purchaser, as connected with this transaction, describe him as a *thief*, or his children as *thieves*, if they were to permit the stolen property to be 'entailed' on them, or to use it as their own with a full knowledge of the circumstances under which it was introduced into the family. And for this very simple reason—the moral turpitude contracted is as great in the one case as in the other; the *circumstances* of their offences differ, but the *subject-matter*, the *substance* of them is the same. However necessary it may be for the purposes of judicial investigation to make a distinction in describing the two offences —in *morals* there is none called for; they are both *thieves* of the same grade.

"Will you not find it difficult on applying the same moral code to the man-stealer and the man-buyer, to arrive at a different conclusion as to their comparative guilt? I will merely state the case, leaving you to make the application. A poor *sans culotte* heathen prince, on the coast of Africa—say for instance, 'King Joe Harris,' or 'Long Peter,' with some fifty or sixty followers in the same trim with their liege lords, as to their outward man, inflamed with rum, bedazzled by a few beads and trinkets; equipped with musket, powder and ball, pike and cutlass, purchased by the slaver at a neighboring colony, sets upon his unsuspecting neighbors in the dead of night—kills the old and the resisting; overpowers the weak, and delivers them in chains to their instigator; *he*, to the civilized, the educated, the enlightened American, who, within the sound of the bell that calls him to hear God's messages of woe—if they were but preached —against the oppressor of his brother—buys, retains, and uses for his own advantage, well knowing the manner in which the spoil came into the slaver's hands. Now, tell me, where, in morals, is the difference in amount of guilt? Does the *greater* lie on the untaught African, or on the refined American?—Shall the heathen be denounced as the man-stealer—the intermediate agents have heaped on him all the foul names that language can forge, whilst he who consummates the whole transaction, without whom the plunder of his fellow-man could not be continued a single year, is looked upon as entitled to our most delicate regards, our tenderest sympathies; in fine, as a very unfortunate, yet as a very interesting and Christian gentleman? Is this the judgment

according to God's standard? I speak as unto wise men—judge ye."

On the reluctance of the South to discuss the subject of slavery, Mr. Birney suggests the following thoughts, well worthy of the attention of the thousands whom they so vitally concern: "A few words more, and I have done. The South say, they will have no argument on the subject of slavery. Why not? Does it not concern them? Do they not understand it? Have they nothing to lose by a wrong, and nothing to save by a right decision? Has a dogged sullenness beset them—and do they suppose that this will arrest the inquisition now making by the *people* of this nation into this abuse inveterated by two hundred years of disgraceful duration? Strange resolve! Strange expectation! Persisted in, nothing could furnish stronger evidence of that *dementation* in a community, which, it is said, is the forerunner of its destruction. Already is the subject of slavery infixed on the minds of the *American people. Hæret lethalis arundo*—you might as well command the lungs not to inhale the surrounding atmosphere for which nature made them, and by whose inspirations they perform their functions, as the public mind not to welcome a discussion, so well fitted to call forth its energies and engage its noblest powers. Neither Southern legislation, dictated by passion and written in blood—nor yet its most faithful execution—any more than the brickbats and bludgeons and city mobs of the North, can exclude it. A decision *will be made*—it is with you to make it one of tremendous calamity—to *yourselves;* or one which shall raise this whole nation from her dishonorable dust, and show her to the world clothed in the garments of love, and honor, and mercy, and truth. Come, then, and like men, gird yourselves for the contest, and let it be one of reason and of mind—not of passion and abuse. On you, especially, devolves the duty of aiding in the investigation. You have an inexhaustible store of facts—you profess, alone, to understand it, and make light of the pretensions of others. You can not escape the guilt of a refusal. I invite you, without cost, to the use of the *Philanthropist.* Through its columns your voice may be raised, and your arguments carried to the remotest corner of the land."

After finding it impracticable to publish the Philanthropist in Kentucky, Mr. Birney went for that purpose to Cincinnati. He might well presume that in a free State, the voice of Freedom would be welcomed—would be responded to by a thousand faithful echoes. But how greatly was he not

mistaken! "Judge," he exclaims, "of our astonishment, when, on the occurrence of a very trivial circumstance, in which we had no agency, and almost before we had made an orderly adjustment of our domicil, we were waited on by an official gentleman, and assured that the issue in Cincinnati, of a paper favorable to emancipation, would produce an explosion of mobocratic elements, more violent and destructive than had been known before; so much so, that any attempt on the part of the city authority to suppress or restrain it, would be altogether useless and unavailing; for, that respectable and influential men, such as might be relied on to aid in arresting a riotous outbreak from any other cause, would in this case, encourage it by their silence and acquiescence, if respect for themselves should prevent them from actual coöperation with the mob." Without entire confidence in this assurance, he thought there might be something in it; and as a sacrifice to peace, he concluded to issue the Philanthropist for a time at New Richmond, some twenty miles from Cincinnati. He ought not, however, to have expected any benefit from such a movement. The spirit of slavery had pervaded the whole body politic and poisoned every drop of blood in its veins. It was every where easily aroused and full of rancor and malignity. The triple headed dog, that guards the gate of Hell, could not bark more furiously or bite more virulently. The sympathy, which binds a gang of dark and bloody conspirators together, has always united in a dreadful league the tools of tyranny. These in the game, in which they have staked their all, play into each other's hands, eagerly and desperately. In a struggle with creatures, who are so dead to all the claims of decency and manliness; who trample so ruthlessly upon the rights of others; who have "sold themselves to work iniquity," no compromise on the part of true men can be of the least avail. You must come down to their low level; and become as vicious and degraded and miserable as themselves, or they will continue to hate and persecute you. You must, therefore, give up the contest or beard the monster in his den. No man had a better right to live in Cincinnati than Mr. Birney, and *to live there as editor of the Philanthropist.* Of this, his adversaries were well aware. A hair of his head they knew they could not touch, without playing the tyrant. And this they had resolved to do, come what might; and Mr. Birney could not well hope long to escape the threatened onset by yielding to their violence so far as to issue the Philanthropist at New Richmond. So far

as the habit of basely bowing to Southern domination was concerned, Cincinnati was much like the rest of Ohio; and whereever it might ring its appalling tocsin, it might reckon on sympathy and aid in putting down the spirit of Freedom. No sooner had the Philanthropist made its appearance, than a Kentucky editor through his journal exclaimed: "We have no doubt that his office will be torn down, but we trust that Mr. B. will receive no personal harm. Notwithstanding his mad notions, we consider him an honest and benevolent man. He is resolute too." Ay, resolute, undoubtedly. And this noble trait of character a Kentuckian could hardly help respecting, however it might be regarded by the craven spirit of Ohio.

Presently a great meeting was drawn together in Cincinnati, to prevent the friends of Freedom from wielding either there or in the vicinity the energies of the press in its service. The editor of the Philanthropist must be taught to bow his neck to the yoke which the insolence of the South had fastened on his unresisting neighbors. But the following words of Mr. Birney, uttered at this time, show that he was not quite prepared to receive the lesson which they stood ready impudently to force upon him. "The continued indisposition of Mrs. B., and the management of the Philanthropist, keep me near home. But, sir, I have enough to do here. The war is raging—the pro-slavery spirit here feels as if it had been *struck*, and is girding itself for the strife. An anti-abolition meeting is to be held this evening, called by 'gentlemen of property and standing.' The hand of the South has almost benumbed the spirit of freedom here. .... I can not print my paper *here;* I lectured here one evening, to a small audience, in a private manner, no notice having been given of it in the papers. This is the exciting cause of the meeting this evening. It was but yesterday that a wealthy slaveholder, of Kentucky, called to let me know that my press in *Ohio* would be destroyed by a band of *his* fellow-citizens, who had determined upon it; that almost the whole county would be summoned to the service, and that my life was in continual danger. A few days before, a citizen of Cincinnati, a high commissioned officer of the militia, called to inform me that I would be disgracefully punished and abused, and my property destroyed, if I persisted in my anti-slavery movements. .... I pray you press on. It is not a time to be indolent. If we are, our children may wear the livery of the slave. If I fall in this cause, I trust it will bring hundreds to supply my place."

At the meeting just alluded to, the Mayor in the chair, Mr. Birney obtained liberty to defend himself against the attacks which were there made upon him. But before he had proceeded far, a tumult arose; and the voice of Wisdom was lost in the clamor of fools. Determined, like the devils of old, to be let alone, the meeting resolved to trample on the rights of every American citizen by suppressing the publication of any abolition paper in the city or neighborhood. The Philanthropist, however, continued from week to week to cheer the hearts of its readers, until after some three months it was removed to Cincinnati. Here it was published without interruption or embarrassment for about the same period.—In the mean time, Mr. Birney was more or less occupied with lectures on the all-engrossing subject, which he delivered in one place and another, as he had strength and opportunity. But every where he was resisted, often with frightful violence, by the "dark spirit of slavery." The following paragraph illustrates the opposition he met with, and the spirit he cherished on such occasions. He had been lecturing at Columbus. "During the hour I spoke," he said, "the mob, having crowded about the door, were engaged in discharging at me their lighted missiles. When I had finished, and was returning to my lodgings a mile distant, I was attended by them a greater part of the way, they breaking in on the stillness of the night with their fierce and demoniac shouts. But why, you may ask, do I dwell on such things, of late by no means of uncommon occurrence? I recall them, that our friends, the friends of Freedom to the slave, of freedom to the white man, of protecting law, of inalienable rights, of constitutional liberty, may be more and more animated to the conflict. Every day is disclosing to us more evidently the dangerous condition of our country, and how a God of justice is bringing on an impenitent nation retribution, in the loss of our own liberty, for having plundered and violated the liberty of others. Let us then still more industriously gird up ourselves to the work before us, of bringing our country to penitence, as the best, nay, the only means of saving her. We, who are now in the field may all perish. But what of this! Our faithfulness unto death, if we be called thus far to suffer, will animate others to fill our places, whilst we go home to reap our reward, and be forever with the Lord. We fight, not with the courage of despair, but with the calmness of certain victory—with the strength of those who feel that their power is from the Almighty."

After the Philanthropist had been published in Cincinnati about three months, and when the city was "filled with its usual summer influx of slaveholders," an onset was made upon the Press. In the first place, at midnight and stealthily, dark figures worked their way into the printing-office, and there committed various depredations. They evidently expected to intimidate. But the damages were at once repaired; and all went on as usual. The air was now filled with angry voices. More fearful things were threatened, unless the friends of Freedom would abandon their position, and submit to the authority of the minions of slavery. Mr. Birney was continually exposed to every kind of insult. He had occasion to stop for awhile at a public house. The boarders were at once assembled to devise ways and means to protect themselves from his presence! For this purpose, a little less than a score of them, other modes of redress having been tried in vain, actually abandoned the table! A handbill, moreover, "was posted about the city, offering a reward for the delivery of one James G. Birney, a fugitive from justice," to "Old Kentucky." About this time, Mr. Birney, for himself and his companions in the struggle for Freedom, published an address to their fellow-citizens, in which the following weighty words impress themselves deeply upon the reader: "A band of lawless men array themselves against the constitution, declaring that *their* will, and not that of the *people*, is paramount. What, fellow-citizens, ought we to do in such a case? Ought we to yield to fear? .... We have now, in some degree, from the force of circumstances, committed to our custody, the rights of every freeman in Ohio, of their offspring, of our own. Shall we, as cravens, voluntarily offer them up, sacrifices to the spirit of misrule and oppression, or as American citizens contend for them, till a force which we can not withstand shall wrest them from our hands? The latter part of the alternative we have embraced, with a full determination, by the help of God, to maintain unimpaired the freedom of speech and the liberty of the Press—THE PALLADIUM OF OUR RIGHTS."

During the "Reign of Terror" at Cincinnati, Mr. Birney had reason to expect that on a given night an attack would be made upon his house. His wife was thrown into great distress. After soothing her in the best way he could, he proceeded, like a man as he was, to put his castle into a state of defense. Arms were there, and heroes. But, probably aware of the danger to which any such attack would expose them, his adversaries forebore, and kept their distance.

Matters were fast coming to a crisis. To this result a thousand things contributed. The leading impulse, however, had its origin in the lust of lucre. No sacrifice was too costly for the altar of Mammon. The trade of Cincinnati—the prosperity of the city;—compared with these, what was Freedom—what was Humanity? In trampling on the most sacred rights to which Human Nature is entitled, such as were clothed with the gravest responsibilities were not ashamed to prostitute their powers and influence. The dignified judge, supported by the solemn priest, and surrounded by men of wealth and influence, not a few of whom were members of different churches;—these were the heart of a conspiracy, to which on every side the ill-bred, the profane, the profligate, the reckless attached themselves, to work the will of a knot of the most desperate tyrants that ever brandished a knife in the face of the republic. No expedient was left untried which might reduce the resolution of Mr. Birney and his co-adjutors. The Press was plied; large meetings were held; speeches were made; resolutions adopted; committees organized—every thing was put in motion to reduce or destroy the little band of philanthropists, who had pledged their all to the cause in which they were enlisted. At length the assault was made. The printing-office of the Philanthropist was broken open, the type was scattered in the streets, the presses torn down;—the office, in a word, was completely dismantled. The crowd then rushed to the houses, one after another, of well-known abolitionists, whose absence saved them from the hand of violence. But Mr. Birney was the special object of the Bedlam-vengeance which had now broken loose. Hands, as cowardly as cruel, were eager to seize upon him, and drag him away to the tribunal where Lynch Law, with its gallows-ropes and bowie-knives, clamors for the best blood in the veins of the republic. He was, however, as a gracious Providence would have it, at a considerable distance from the city, aiding the friends of Freedom in their philanthropic exertions. Before he returned, the wrath of the multitude had in some measure subsided. He at once prepared for the public a "Narrative of the Riotous Proceedings against the Liberty of the Press in Cincinnati." This done, he was at his post again, assisting his fellow-laborers in making arrangements for re-issuing the Philanthropist. In less than two months, every thing was ready; and the voice of Mercy, through the Press, was heard again in behalf of the victims of oppression. At the

present time, Cincinnati gives the cause of Freedom not merely a weekly but a daily paper.

Those who were active in the riot at Cincinnati to crush the Freedom of the Press, doubtless professed to be "as much opposed to slavery as any body." They would by no means be regarded as in league with oppression. They were, on one occasion and another, loud and eager in praise of the largest liberty which the laws of the republic allow. And yet they rushed ferociously on James G. Birney, as if nothing but his blood could quench their thirst for vengeance. And why? What evil had he done? He had undertaken in the use of his vigorous and well-trained powers, and with singular wisdom and magnanimity, to do his part towards the deliverance of his country from an evil which, according to the admission of all, threatened its destruction. He was himself from the land of whips and fetters, had been himself a slaveholder, and was familiar with the chattel principle, in all its applications. Decisive proofs he had given of deep-toned sincerity, of a thorough acquaintance with the work to which he applied himself, and of a resolution which could not easily be shaken. He was, moreover, candid, courteous, affable: every way a *gentleman*. His rare fitness for the work evinced, that of all men he *ought* to attempt the deliverance of his country from the plague of slavery. The judges, and priests, and jurists, and editors, and merchants, and artisans, who employed the wild powers of riot to crush the Philanthropist, had manifestly sold themselves, no matter at what price, to the slaveholding power. They were under the control of the chattel principle. That they were voluntary slaves—putting their necks of their own accord under the yoke, made their servitude all the more degrading.—What, then, could Mr. Birney do, when they required him also to sacrifice his manhood on the altar of slavery? He must maintain his position, or sink to a level with his assailants—into the very depths of infamy. With this alternative before him, he made his choice, promptly, wisely, manfully.

The following paragraphs illustrate the spirit which amidst lawless tumults and fierce threatening, he was enabled to maintain: "The enemies of law," said Mr. Birney, "will adopt a new course—they will hereafter operate privately—their aim will be against the persons of abolitionists. This is now the course. We fear it not. Threats of personal violence, to ourself especially—of seizure and deportation—are common as the air we breathe; nor have they

been withheld which contemplated a still more disgraceful, if not more fatal violence. .... But law has been prostrated —violence exults over its downfall; the Constitution lies in dishonorable dust, whilst bloody treason flourishes over it. Men are struck dumb, and *speech* is useless for the reformation of abuses that threaten to load with the fetters of the slave themselves and their children.—All this is here—almost upon us, now—and shall it be said, LIFE and FORTUNE and HONOR should not be hazarded, that the CONSTITUTION and LAW and LIBERTY may be restored to their lost thrones, and sway their mild sceptre without a rival? No: this must be done by those who would rather themselves die freemen than live slaves, or our country, glorious as has been her hope, is gone forever."

Again. "Grievous threats have been made for some time, chiefly against me *personally*. I know not whether the ferocity of the slaveholders and their confederates here, will lead them to attempt the seizure and deportation to the South of my person—or whether they will attempt a sudden and still more effectual removal of me. If such a thing should be *permitted*, I must of course look on it as the way in which an infinitely wise God has appointed for me, as the part I am to act in the great revolution which he has set on foot for the liberation of the oppressed of our land."

The paper already alluded to, in which a narrative is given of the riotous proceedings against the Liberty of the Press in Cincinnati, is a historical document of inestimable value. A new edition of it ought to be published, and a copy put within the reach of each of our fellow citizens. It can not fail to awaken in every upright and generous reader a variety of conflicting sentiments;—indignation, disgust, abhorrence, at the unbridled insolence of the slaveholding oligarchy; shame, sorrow, and alarm, at the wide-spread and unquestioning servility which prevails among us; admiration, love and confidence, at the magnanimity, wisdom and high-souled heroism of the few like James G. Birney, whose hearts God had touched, and who were nobly prepared for the dreadful crisis on which they were thrown. We need make no apology for introducing here a few extracts from this invaluable paper. The following array of facts well deserve the earnest eye of every student in American history: "During our colonial dependence, the States were all slaveholding States. They did not, as colonies, possess the power of legislation independently of the control of the mother country, exerted either directly or indirectly. Had they

desired, ever so much, to abolish slavery, they could not have done so, by their own independent legislative act. But, it is believed, that prior to the enlightened discussion, and the full establishment of the great principles which led to the American Revolution—principles which are embodied in the Declaration of Independence—the desire was but feeble, in most of the colonies, to see slavery extinguished. It is true, that petitions were presented to the competent authorities of the mother country to restrain the further importation into the colonies of slaves from *Africa*—but none, to abolish, or to mitigate slavery, as it already existed among the petitioners themselves. The history of the times will show, that it was not *repugnance to slaveholding*, as a violation of the great principles of natural justice or of revealed religion, which constituted the true grounds for urging the petitions;—but, rather, that a *few*, who held in their hands the political power of the country, and who had already become possessed of a large amount of slave-labor, might secure to themselves and their families and connections, in perpetuity, a monopoly of such labor. The continued importation of slaves from Africa would put it in the power of such citizens as owned none, to become purchasers, and thus interfere with the present and prospective benefits of the monopoly. The criminality in a moral and religious point of view, of slaveholding, exerted but a feeble influence, a century ago, on the public mind of the civilized world. What is so often alledged now, as 'fanaticism' against the abolitionists, would have been more remarkable then. The FRIENDS were the only sect to whom the criminality of oppression, in the form of slaveholding appeared, even sixty or seventy years ago, as it is now beginning to be seen by others. By treating it as a violation of religious duty, they succeeded in banishing it entirely from their connection.

"The able moral and political discussion to which the disagreements of the colonies with the mother country gave rise, for many years previous to the Declaration of Independence, brought into general recognition thoughout this country, the doctrines of *inalienable rights*, as they have been distinctively termed. Their influence on the most intelligent and patriotic minds, is shown in the fact, that the first Congress, held in 1774, Resolved, *That they would neither import, nor purchase any slave imported after the first day of the next December; after which time they would discontinue the slave-trade, and neither be concerned in it themselves, nor hire their vessels, nor sell their commodities to such as should be concerned in it.*

"In the Congress of 1776, the Declaration of Independence was published—commending itself to the liberal minded every where, by asserting, in opposition to the theory and practice of all existing governments, that *all men were created free, and entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*

"And afterwerds, when forming the Articles of Confederation, 1778, they refused to insert any provision for protecting the power of masters over their slaves, or authorising a master to follow a runaway slave into another State. In the debates, it was said, that 'the slaves ought to be dismissed, that freemen might fill their places.'

"As soon as the colonies had thrown off the British yoke, their legislative assemblies began their efforts to remove this odious institution. In the northern States, general acts of emancipation were passed—in the southern, acts authorizing individuals to manumit. Massachusetts had asserted in her Declaration of Rights, that *all men were created free and equal.* This was constructed by her courts as putting an end—and it did, in fact, put an immediate end to slavery within her limits. The other New England States with New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, pursued more gradual measures for its extinction.

"So strong and rapid had been the influence of the doctrine of 'inalienable rights,' as set forth in the Declaration of Independence, that Pennsylvania and all the States north of it—making more than half the whole number—prior to 1787, when the present Constitution was formed, had entered on measures leading to the entire extermination of slavery from among themselves. It was this state of things that (it was erroneously supposed) rendered it *expedient* to adopt the provision, that has been construed to authorize the slaveholder to recapture his slave who has escaped into a free State. Whilst this provision was admitted, shame prevented the framers of the Constitution from expressing the odious grant of power in direct terms. It is conveyed under an ambiguous form of expression, whilst the word *slave* is not to be found in that instrument. Neither is *slavery*, the subject matter of the guaranty, by which it is so often, yet so erroneously asserted, that the 'system' of the South is secured to her, to be found in the Constitution. No 'guaranty' by the general government could have been thought necessary to the slaveholders—because the validity of the tenure by which they held their slaves had never been drawn in question, and they themselves looked on it as

equally strong, and as unassailable, as the title by which they held any other property. Besides the Southern politicians, who, especially, have regarded the general government as secondary to the State governments, and derivative from them, would not, on this account, have asked from the former a guaranty which the latter were more competent to give. From these considerations, it is believed, that at the formation of the present government, no guaranty of southern 'slavery,' either constitutional or implied, was once seriously thought of—none was demanded—none was offered. And it is not at all improbable, had any such guaranty been offered, in the structure of the general government, it would have been looked upon by the South as not only inefficacious, but insulting, and calling for the haughtiest rejection.

"Soon after the adoption of the present national Union. abolition societies were formed in several of the States Their avowed object was the total extinction of slavery in the United States. The leaders in those societies were the same men whose hands had just laid the foundations of our national institutions. Their principles coincided entirely with the principles adopted by the abolitionists of the present day. They denounced slavery as an unjust and wicked system—one that all good men should endeavor to overturn. Their acts agreed with their principles. They wrote tracts against slavery—they petitioned Congress to go to the very 'verge' of its Constitutional powers for its final extinction. On these petitions, Congress in the first session, held under the present Constitution, acted, and a series of resolutions was adopted, in which the Constitutional powers of Congress in relation to slavery were accurately defined. The doctrines contained in these resolutions are the doctrines of the abolitionists of the present day, namely:—That until 1808, the importation of slaves could not be prohibited by Congress. That the States possess individually the sole power to emancipate their slaves—That Congress possesses the authority to regulate the slave-trade, and the authority to prohibit it, even prior to 1808, in regard to the supply of foreign nations;—and during the discussion of these resolutions, the right and the duty of Congress to use all means for the abolition of slavery, not expressly prohibited by the Constitution, was strongly urged by the leading members of Congress, (particularly by Messrs. Madison and Gerry,) who had taken part in the formation of the Constitution.

"Now if the institution of slavery was, by mutual com-

promise, to remain inviolate and immovable, would these illustrious men, such as Jay, Franklin, Rush, Madison, and Gerry, have conducted in this manner? Could a compact like the one in question have been formed, without John Jay being informed of it? Had such been the understanding of a compromise between the different States, is it possible, that the sagacious Franklin, who assisted in making the compromise, should never have understood it? Yet Jay and Franklin, in their day, were as undoubted abolitionists, and as active in the formation of abolition societies, as any that can be found in modern times; and it was not owing to any lack of zeal on their part, that their labors were not equally as efficacious as those of abolitionists now, in awakening public attention to this momentous subject. John Jay, during the war of the Revolution, held this memorable language—'Till America comes into this measure, (the abolition of slavery) her prayers to heaven for liberty will be impious.' When addressing the Legislature of New York, then a slave State, he told them, that 'the slaves, though held in bondage by the laws of man were free by the laws of God.' Franklin and Jay and Rush, in 1787, united in an abolition society, 'to extend the blessings of freedom to every part of our race.' The writings published by this society and which contain the identical doctrines of 'modern abolitionism' are still circulated by the Anti-Slavery Societies, and form a prominent part of the publications now proscribed as 'incendiary.' Through their influence, slavery was abolished in many of the present non-slaveholding States. The foreign slave-trade was prospectively abolished. Washington, previous to his manumission of his own slaves, expressed his conviction that slavery ought to be abolished by the legislative power—a sentiment, the expression of which is now thought a sufficient provocation for dissolving the Union. William Pinkney of Maryland, in the House of Delegates of that State, forty-seven years ago, predicted the very crisis to which we are now arrived. If slavery was to be continued, the principles of liberty, he said, would be corrupted and undermined. 'The resistance of freemen against oppression,' said he, 'will become a struggle of pride and selfishness, not of principle.' 'The stream of general liberty will have flown so long through the mire of partial bondage, that it will have become polluted.' 'The habit of thinking that the great *rights of human nature* are not so sacred but that they may with impunity be trampled upon, will have prepared men for usurpation; *and those who have*

been habituated to lord it over others, will become base enough to let others lord it over them.'

"From these facts, and from all the examination we have had it in our power to make, we have no hesitation in pronouncing the supposed 'compact,' or 'compromise,' to be a groundless fiction, and one, too, of no ordinary malignity. It is nothing less than a libel on the illustrious dead, invented to deprive the living of their dearest and most invaluable rights. It represents the founders of our republican empire, but recently engaged in a most severe conflict for the preservation of those rights which they claimed under the laws of God and nature, in common with all mankind, in assuming their rank among nations, forming a government for a free people, according to the principles of freedom, and for the preservation of those principles, as solemnly contracting that the institution of slavery, every where odious and detestable, should forever remain sacred and inviolable. For the honor of these great and good men—for the honor of human nature itself—we are happy in believing, that a charge involving such gross inconsistency, is utterly groundless. On the contrary, if there is any reliance to be placed on past history, it is certain, at the commencement of our present political system, there was a general belief and expectation, that slavery in these United States would be abolished, and that speedily."

Whose cheek does not burn—who does not feel within him a relentless and exterminating hostility to slavery, while he reads such words as these: "It is thought necessary to recur to circumstances, which, in the order of time, preceded our appointment as members of the Executive Committee. When the REIGN OF TERROR was introduced into the South, last summer, by the sudden and public execution, without trial, of five American citizens, charged with being '*professional*' gamblers—whilst it was kept up by the open plundering of the national mail—by the pretense of slave insurrections—by the most degrading inflictions—by numberless cruel and unauthorized *scourgings* of such as had either removed from the free States to the South, or were temporarily called thither on business—by the offering of REWARDS for the forcible abduction of peaceable and inoffensive citizens, with the avowed purpose of handing them over to the tender mercies of infuriated slaveholders—by the unconcealed, the open and illegal *hangings* of many of our countrymen in the South, on whom popular suspicion had fastened the obnoxious sentiment, that they were opposed to

the system of slavery as it existed there;—whilst, we say, this thirst for blood, and for the demolition of every safeguard heretofore established for the protection of individual right, was raging among our southern neighbors, the city of Cincinnati was not altogether exempt from the disgraceful infection. Our principal daily newspapers, with, it is believed, but a single exception, sympathized with the flagellators, and tormentors, and murderers of the South, and by their loud shouts cheered them on to further deeds of cruelty and blood. Whilst *one* of them was bestowing unqualified applause on the public scourging of our fellow citizen, young Mr. Dresser, although the perpetrators of the outrage themselves, acknowledged he had violated no law of the State where he suffered—*another*, as if to render forever unnecessary any further proof of plenary consecration to the interests of slaveholders, exultingly advised, that the Reign of Terror—more technically known as 'Lynch Law'—be set up here in Cincinnati.

"One of our number, who, before the explosion of southern violence, had projected the establishment of a journal in Kentucky, his native State, to be devoted to a full and impartial discussion of the whole subject of slavery as connected with emancipation, was thwarted in his object by the devices of the neighboring slaveholders, and ultimately compelled, by their persecutions, to remove with his family from the State. Looking at the *Constitution* of Ohio, he there saw the fullest, the most honorable, and at the same time, the most solemn condemnation that men who love liberty could pass upon slavery—and that to every one was secured the right—pronounced '*indisputable*'—of *speaking*, *writing*, or *printing on any subject*, to the investigation of which he might choose to apply the powers of his mind. With this view of *rights* intended to be secured to him, in common with every other citizen, by you, the PEOPLE OF OHIO; and this, too, by the solemn sanction of the highest, the very organic law, which constitutes you a PEOPLE, it was not to be supposed that any one—especially such as were using the same rights in their most wanton latitude—would be found of a temper so unjust, so treasonable, as to deny him also the enjoyment of them. In this he was mistaken; for before he had himself come to the conclusion to transfer the publication of his paper to this city, the newspapers before alluded to, were roused to opposition—were encouraged in their outrageous menaces, and animated to their work of villification and abuse; and this, too, as it was said, and as

subsequent events have proved, by persons who are reckoned as of 'the most respectable class in society,'—owning large real estate in the city—speculators in property, stocks, &c.—merchants, who have commercial connections with southern slaveholders—and artisans, who are mostly employed in manufacturing household furniture, or steamboat, sugar-house, or other heavy machinery, for the South. So highly excited had the several descriptions of people just mentioned become against the proposed publication, and so effectually had they plied their efforts to alarm the great mass of peaceable and law-abiding citizens, who otherwise, would have felt but little concern on the subject; and so desirous was the intended editor to remove even the *occasion* of any disgraceful popular explosion, that he determined to commence the publication *out* of the city, and to continue it there till a fair, and impartial, and generous character could be established for the paper.

"To establish such a character was considered desirable, not only because it is right in itself—but because it would tend to allay an objection often made to the discussion of the slavery question—*that it was conducted in a fierce and uncharitable spirit.* With this object in view—and further, that all occasion of exciting the disorderly of whatever standing and condition, to any illegal outburst might be taken away, the Philanthropist (the paper alluded to) was commenced at the village of New Richmond, twenty miles above Cincinnati. But this concession, made at no small sacrifice of convenience and pecuniary means, to the spirit of misrule, was followed by but small mitigation of its fury. Although the editor, in the temper of conciliation that he felt, and in the most respectful language he could use, offered to *slaveholders* the use of his columns for the defense of slavery, and gave, in his own manner of treating the subject, satisfactory proof of moderation and fairness—still this did not shield him from a deliberately concerted attempt, set on foot and prosecuted chiefly by the description of persons before mentioned, to *put down his press.* On the first appearance of the Philanthropist, the editor, and those who concurred with him in sentiment, were assailed in terms signally abusive, through two of the business papers of this place, (the Republican and Whig) although they differed widely in their views as political partisans. These journals were, on that occasion, as they have been on a more recent and more remarkable one, the instruments busily set to work by the 'wealthy and respectable,' to excite the ignorant and

disorderly to such deeds of mischief as the supposed necessities of the case might call for."

Here we have, what is beyond all price, a fair specimen of the arguments by which our *gentlemen* of property and standing, in different parts of the country, have been accustomed to justify themselves in trampling under swinish hoofs the authority of God and the rights of mankind. The thing is so instructive; we can not afford to lose a syllable. "The note of the day before addressed to James G. Birney, was not received until an answer had been almost prepared to be sent to that addressed to the Corresponding Secretary. It was then concluded, as the time had nearly arrived, for the afternoon meeting of the Market House Committee to send by Christian Donaldson, a message, that we would hold the desired 'conference' with them that evening, at the house of Dr. Colby. At the time appointed all the members of the Executive Committee who lived in the city, with the exception of Dr. Colby who was called off by a professional emergency, met, it is believed, *twelve* out of *thirteen* who composed the Market House Committee. Judge Burnet, the chairman, commenced by giving a long explanation of the manner in which he had been brought into the position he at present occupied. This being disposed of, he spoke of the high degree of excitement which pervaded a large portion—nineteen-twentieths we believe—of the inhabitants of the city. In proof of it he related a conversation he had held with a man apparently of low condition in life, who had accosted him in the street—though altogether unknown to the judge—in tone and phrase dark and mysterious. We will not undertake to give it in the graphic manner in which it was related by the chairman who seemed still to feel the impression, that the mysterious stranger had made on him. We will give only the result—which was that the stranger on parting with the judge said in reference to the destruction of the Philanthropist press, as it was understood, *make haste—(we)—or I am ready to help you.* Judge Burnet professed himself alarmed at the excitement which he believed was in the city—and we do not in the least call in question the sincerity of the declaration, for his whole manner and language gave proof of it. He further stated, that by report, the excitement pervaded not only the city, but that it had gone some distance into the neighborhood; that there were, between Cincinnati and Columbia (6 miles above on the river) 160 men who were banded together, to destroy the Philanthropist establishment—who had their

officers appointed—were fully drilled, and ready, at the first signal, to make the onset. He also stated that for four or five miles the excitement had passed into Kentucky, and that the three towns (Covington, Newport, and Cincinnati) were ready, at any moment, to rise for the same purpose. He further represented that the mob were becoming impatient —were beginning, from what they supposed was the dilatory conduct of the Committee, to lose confidence in that body, and to suspect them of rather a favorable leaning towards the object of their hate. Other gentlemen of the Market House Committee were called on to give their views as to the state of the public mind. There was no material difference among them. One, or more of them spoke of the excitement, already nearly irrepressible, that prevailed, among the workmen employed in the iron foundries and boat yards situated generally near the river—of one of which, with a large number of hands, he himself was the proprietor. Judge Burke said the abolitionists were beginning to be regarded as intending to effect their object by *revolution* and in no other way—all other ways being set down as utterly impracticable.—Rev. Mr. Spencer rose from his seat, when he made *his* speech—apparently a *set* one :— He commenced by saying, there were those present in whose veins flowed the blood of our revolutionary patriots, and who were as desirous *as any other men*, to see no longer in our country the track of a *slave*. He then recited a stanza of poetry condemning slavery,—winding up with taunting the abolitionists for not going to the South, and preaching their doctrines where they might have an opportunity of closing the scene with a glorious martyrdom. Much more was said, in relation to the excitement than we can take room to narrate.

"The next point mooted was the *business of the city*. It was on this ground—and on this solely—that the *merits* of the question seemed to be placed. It was asked by us, if rents were not high—houses to rent scarce, real property on the advance—commercial business brisk for the season of the year, and every body—artisan or common laborer—who would work, employed at high wages? All this was admitted—and it did appear to our plain judgments to be evidence of at least as much prosperity as ought to satisfy reasonable men. But it was insisted on the other hand, that this state of things *(in which all were employed at good wages,)* was not the true criterion of prosperity. All this might be true—yet if abolitionism in Cincinnati had prevented the

South from sending her orders for even more work than could be executed by the mechanics now here, it had injured the city,—because these very orders would be the means of introducing among us more artisans from other places. In the solidity of this reasoning the gentlemen on the other side, no doubt had entire confidence—but it seemed to us not more conclusive, than that of the Kentucky farmer who undertook to prove to a neighbor that he had lost a hundred calves that spring, by not having, *as he might have had*, a hundred cows to produce them.

"It was asked by us, what evidence there was, that the South was withdrawing her business from us because of the existence of abolitionism here? To this it was replied, that it was to be found in various communications and letters from the South. One of the Market House Committee, (Mr. Buchanan) an extensive and prosperous merchant, who has large connections, in the way of business, with the South, said the subject had been frequently mentioned to him by his southern correspondents, and that they were now beginning to present the alternative to this city, either to suppress the abolition discussion, or to be content to lose their southern business. He was asked if the Philanthropist or its editor had ever been specified, as items in the complaint. Mr. B. said they had not—he did not know that either of them was particularly known at the South—but the complaint was one of general character, *that the anti-slavery discussion was entertained in Cincinnati.*

"On Judge Burnet's remarking, that abolitionists were injuring the property-holders of Cincinnati, he was asked to specify how *he* was injured. He stated, in reply, that four or five years ago—[*this was between two and three years before the commencement of the abolition question in this place*] it was customary for thirty or forty families from the South, attended by their servants who were indispensable to them in their excursions, to spend a great part of the summer in Cincinnati. That, since the abolitionists had commenced their operations, the people of color had become so bold in enticing away the servants of the southern visiters that they would no longer venture among us; [Compare this with the following from the Cincinnati Republican of August 2. 'Our hotels and boarding houses are always crowded, and hundreds of southern families who contemplate a sojournment of some weeks in the Queen City of the West, have been compelled to relinquish their intentions for want of accommodations,'] and that the abolitionists had contributed to

make the people of color much more impudent to the *whites* than formerly. *Now*, if a man was wise, when he saw four or five of them on the pavement, he would diverge into the street to pass around them to avoid their insolence in not giving the way—and that *he* had been jostled by them on the side-walks. This was the account, the chairman gave of the injury, *he* was suffering from abolitionists.

"The chairman having professed satisfactory knowledge of the measures and objects of the anti-slavery societies—and stated that there was no one who was more a friend of emancipation than he was, and after alledging that African colonization was the only feasible way of accomplishing the extirpation of slavery amongst us, and having uttered sentiments in reference to the principles and results of abolitionism that seemed unusually crude for one of his station in society—and being seconded in his opinion by another of the Market House Committee,—it was remarked by one of our number, that the entertainment of *such* sentiments by *such* men convinced him more forcibly than he had yet been, of having the whole subject *discussed*. He then proposed, that, if the members of the Market House Committee would give the influence of their recommendation to a meeting, to be held in some church of the city for that purpose, he [the member alluded to] would give an exposition of anti-slavery principles, and be willing to hear any arguments that might be offered against them. It was at once replied, that such a meeting could not be held in the city, that the people would hear no public discussion on slavery, and that the speaker would lose his life in attempting to discuss it. No change was produced on the Market House Committee by the assurance of the member that with their sanction for the call of such a meeting, he was willing to hazard all personal peril to himself.

"The conversation was at length turned to the main object of the meeting—the *discontinuance of the Philanthropist*. The first suggestions were, that it should be 'postponed,' or 'suspended for a time.' All such modified propositions, however, were at length, put aside as useless—and the demand made, of an *absolute discontinuance*, with the certain alternative in case of refusal, of a mob unusual in its numbers, determined in its purpose, and desolating in its ravages. The chairman expressed it as his opinion, that it would be one of unprecedented character—that it would consist of *four or five thousand persons*, bent on the wide destruction of property, and that *two-thirds of the property-holders* of the

city would join it. That it would be utterly vain for any man or set of men to attempt to restrain it—it would destroy any one who would set himself in opposition to it.

"In order to ascertain what was the temper of the Market House Committee gentlemen, themselves, they were asked, whether *if a mob could be averted* THEY *would be content that the publication of the Philanthropist should be continued?* The question was scarcely uttered, when the chairman and several of the other members replied unhesitatingly, *they would not.* One of them qualified what he said, by saying he would be content, if he could be satisfied that it would produce *no injury to the city in any way.* It was next asked, if they had read the Philanthropist, and if they had, whether the objection to its continuance was made on the ground of there being any thing exceptionable in the *manner and spirit* of conducting it. The answer on the part of one of the Committee was, that he had read several of the latter numbers—another said that *he* had read portions of the last three or four numbers—another, that he had read a column or two, or an article or two, in some one of the first numbers. This was the whole amount of knowledge, on the part of the Committee, as to the *manner* in which the Philanthropist conducted the slavery discussion. But it was further added on their part—that the *manner* and *spirit* of the paper had nothing to do with the question—it was the *discussion of slavery here*, that was thought to be injuring the business of the city. That the paper was believed to be a prominent instrument in carrying on this discussion—that therefore, its *absolute discontinuance* was called for—that the public sentiment would be satisfied with nothing short of this, and that it was in such a condition that it could not be reasoned with."

The reply which Mr. Birney and his friends returned, must not be withheld. "Whilst we feel ourselves constrained altogether to decline complying with your request, as submitted last evening, *to discontinue the Philanthropist*, we think it but just to ourselves, and respectful to our fellow citizens generally, to offer a brief exposition of the reasons that persuade us to this course.

"1. We decline complying—not so much from the fear that the particular cause in which our press is employed may be injured—but because compliance involves a tame surrender of the FREEDOM OF THE PRESS—THE RIGHT TO DISCUSS.

"2. The Philanthropist is the acknowledged organ of some twelve thousand, or more, of our fellow citizens of Ohio, who believe that slavery, as it exists in our country, is

altogether incompatible with the permanency of her institutions; who believe that the *slavery* of the *South* or the *liberty* of the *North* must cease to exist; and who intend to do, what in them lies, to bring about a happy and a peaceful termination of the former—and this as speedily as facts, and arguments, and appeals to the consciences and understandings of the slaveholders can be made instrumental to effect it.

"3. The Philanthropist is the only journal in this city or neighborhood, through which these facts, and arguments, and appeals can be fully addressed to the community. It has been conducted with fairness and moderation, as may be abundantly proved by the acknowledgements of those who are opposed to its objects. It has invited the slaveholders themselves to the use of its columns for the defense of slavery, and has given up to a republication of their arguments a large share of its space.

"To discontinue such a paper under existing circumstances, would be a tacit submission to the exorbitant demand of the South, that *slavery* shall never more be mentioned among us.

"4. We decline complying with your request—because if it has originated among our own citizens, it is an officious and unasked for intrusion on the business of others—If among the citizens of other States, it is an attempt at dictation as insolent and high-handed on their part, as a tame submission to it would be base and unmanly on ours.

"5. We decline complying with your request—because we would not preclude ourselves, and others, from discussing in the most advantageous manner a subject, which, by the acknowledgement of all is of momentous consequence, and which is now occupying the minds of the whole nation.

"6. We decline complying—because the demand is virtually the demand of slaveholders, who, having broken down all the safeguards of liberty in their own States, in order that slavery may be perpetuated, are now, for the fuller attainment of the same object, making the demand of us to follow their example.

"[The two remaining reasons were omitted—unintentionally, we have no doubt—in the published report of the Market House Committee. They were part of the letter sent to the Market House Committee, and are here supplied.]

"7. We decline complying—because the attempt is now first made in our case, formally and deliberately to put down the freedom of speech and of the Press. *We* are, to be sure, the object of the attack—but there is not a freeman in the State whose rights are not invaded, in any assault which

may be made upon us, for refusing to succumb to an imperious demand to surrender our rights.

"8. We believe that a large portion of the people of Cincinnati are utterly opposed to the prostration of the liberty of the Press—and that there is among us—whatever may be said to the contrary—enough of correct and sober feeling to uphold the laws, if our public officers faithfully discharge their duty.

"With these reasons—to which many more might be added, did time permit—we leave the case with you;—expressing, however, our firm conviction, should any disturbance of the peace occur, that you, gentlemen, must be deeply, if not almost entirely, responsible for it, before the bar of sober and enlightened public opinion."

The following is a truly striking and impressive view of this negotiation: "Thus terminated one of the most singular negotiations—whether we regard the *subject matter*—*the causes leading to it*—or *the parties*—that has yet been recorded in the annals of our country. 1. The *subject matter* was, *the right to investigate and discuss truth*—a right bestowed by the CREATOR on man as his intelligent creature, to use as freely as he walks the earth, or breathes the air—the exercise of which is required of him as a *duty*—a right which, as an accountable being, he has no power voluntarily to relinquish, any more than he has voluntarily to sell his liberty, or to part with his life—a right so clear that the *people* of Ohio have, in their Constitution, pronounced it "INDISPUTABLE"—so inestimable, they have adopted it as one of the ELEMENTS of their government, and so liable to be invaded by *power*, that they have attempted to secure its freest exercise by the most stable, the most solemn sanctions. 2. The reasons for demanding its surrender—slaveholders called for it—*oppression* in the South having prostrated there, all legal barriers of individual right and personal safety; having overthrown within her own limits the freedom of the Press and of speech—*the right to discuss*—in order that her reign might be perpetuated, demanded it; a mob of three or four hundred—a mere fragment of our population—the very feculence of the city, countenanced and encouraged to the deed by leading and influential men among us, to whom the exercise of the right of discussion was displeasing, demanded it. 3. The parties to it—on the one hand, ten thousand of our fellow citizens, not, to be sure [with but few exceptions] *leading* and *influential*, but yet of the freemen, the plain and honest yeomanry of Ohio, who

within the limits of the Constitution are contending for its very citadel—who are fighting, only with the weapons of truth, for that liberty which becomes the more precious the more it is endangered by the assaults of its enemies. On the other—there are merchants and manufacturers, closely united with the slaveholder—lawyers and judges—officers of the government, and ministers of the gospel—there are wealth and influence, slaveholding servility and aristocratic pride—all, marshaling into their service for the *work*, a band fearless of God and regardless of man. Surely, such an attempt to trample under foot the liberties of our people—so deliberate—so carefully matured, and backed by such an amount of moral, intellectual, and pecuniary power, has rarely been made in this country!"

What a beautiful specimen have we here of those RULERS, who are *such* "a terror to evil-doers," and *such* "a praise to them that do well!" The following, taken down by a gentleman who was present, has been furnished as an accurate report of the Mayor's speech.

"Gentlemen—It is now late at night, and time we were all in bed—by continuing longer, you will disturb the citizens, or deprive them of their rest, besides robbing yourselves of rest. No doubt, it is your intention to punish the guilty, and leave the innocent. But if you continue longer, you are in danger of punishing the innocent with the guilty, which I am convinced no one in Cincinnati would wish to do. *We* have done enough for one night. ['Three cheers for the Mayor.'] The abolitionists themselves, must be convinced themselves by this time, what public sentiment is, and that it will not do any longer to disregard, or set it at naught. [Three cheers again.] As you can not punish the guilty without endangering the innocent, I advise you all to go home. [Cries of home! home! from the crowd drowned the balance of his harangue."]

The narrative concludes with the following weighty words: Surely "the inspiration of the Almighty" is not yet withdrawn from mankind. "In the foregoing pages we have endeavored to present to you an impartial account of an attack, the most formidable—because of the *character* of the persons concerned, and of the *deliberation* with which it was planned—that has yet been made on our common liberties. A few words more, and we have done. Notwithstanding the *right to discuss* belongs to MAN, as indisputably as the right to use his senses, or the organs of his body in their appropriate functions—and the exercise of it is, as it ought ever to be,

free from all foreign control, save that which makes us responsible for the use of it in invading other's rights no less sacred than our own—yet have we been, again and again, held up by the slavery presses of this city as *obstinate, contumacious*, for not at once surrendering it on the demand of the Market House Committee. This charge has been so confidently preferred, and so often reiterated, that, we believe, the impression is made on many, that our conduct *has* been actuated by the spirit to which it is ascribed. They have been led to judge of our course, rather by the fury of the onset to which we have been exposed, than by the calm steadfastness with which it has been met. We ask, if *any* property can be more rightfully ours, than that which the Market House Committee demanded of us to lay down? *The right to discuss* is granted to us by God, and secured to us by the highest law of the land. Had the Market House Committee seen proper to demand, in the name of their constituents, the absolute surrender of our *houses* and our *goods* —backing their demand by the menace, that if they were not *voluntarily* yielded, they would be *forcibly* taken—would their demand been less unreasonable? Have we any higher title to *these* subjects of property, than the gift of God and the security of the Constitution? Ought we, then, to have rendered a servile compliance? Or ought we not rather (as we did) to have firmly repelled the unjust demand, choosing to suffer the consequences, however disastrous to ourselves, in order that you, the proper correctors, by legal modes, of all public wrongs, might be made fully acquainted with the dishonor in which the majesty of the LAW was held, and the dangers with which our most precious rights were threatened, by a lawless and fierce aristocracy?

"These same organs of the South charge the undersigned with answering the Market House Committee in terms of '*insult and defiance.*' Whilst we fully believe that no Committee ever came on an errand more surcharged with wrong, and one which furnished on its very face stronger grounds of palliation for the treatment complained of, yet are we persuaded, on a review of our communications addressed to them, that they contain nothing but a firm and respectful expression of a lawful and patriotic determination. The controversy to which we were called was too high—the principles for which we contended were of a dignity too lofty, to be stained by any resort to insult or abuse. And that our plainness of speech should be construed into '*insult and defiance*' shows that our editorial upholders of slavery

begin already to demand from us that servility to their aristocratic instigators which, as republicans yet free, we can render to no man or set of men, however influential, and which ought no where in this country to be looked for, except it be in the South, and under that 'system,' to the support of which they would seem so entirely to have consecrated their labors.

"Notwithstanding the unusual outburst of lawless aristocratic violence to which our peaceful, yet decided support of the *freedom of the Press—of liberty of speech—of the right to discuss*—has exposed us, we have lost no confidence in the rectitude of our principles, nor in the judgment which you, and those which may succeed us, will pass on our conduct. Unconvinced by the *force* with which our arguments have been replied to, we shall still continue fearlessly to maintain, and publicly to inculcate, the great principles of liberty incorporated in the Constitutions of our State and general governments—believing, that if ever there was a time, it is now come, when our republic, and with her the cause of universal freedom, is in a strait, where every thing that ought to be periled by the patriot should be freely hazarded for her relief."

The strong and elevated character—the genial and powerful influence of the Philanthropist may easily be inferred from the paragraphs from the pen of Mr. Birney, with which these pages are enriched. It is enough to say, that his image shone upon his editorial articles. And how well the paper has been conducted by the present editor, and what service it has rendered to the cause of Freedom, its readers are ready gratefully to acknowledge.

From Cincinnati, Mr. Birney removed, in the fall of 1837, to New York. He was most cordially welcomed by his brethren there, to whom the anti-slavery public confided special responsibilities. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and one of its Corresponding Secretaries. Here his wisdom was brought into full requisition; here his powers had free play. He occupied a commanding position, and did it honor.

While in New York, he held a correspondence in which thousands took a deep and lively interest—by which thousands were greatly instructed and refreshed—with the Hon. Mr. Elmore, member of Congress from South Carolina. The occasion is clearly described in the following words of Mr. Birney: "In January, (1838) a tract entitled '*Why work for the slave?*' was issued from this office by the agent

for the *Cent-a-week-Societies.* A copy of it was transmitted to the Hon. John C. Calhoun;—to *him,* because he has seemed, from the first, more solicitous than the generality of southern politicians, to possess himself of accurate information about the anti-slavery movement. A note written by me accompanied the tract, informing Mr. Calhoun why it was sent to him.

Not long afterwards, the following letter was received from the Hon. F. H. Elmore, of the House of Representatives in Congress. From this and another of his letters just now received, it seems, that the slaveholding representatives in Congress, after conferring together, appointed a committee, of their own number, to obtain authentic information of the intentions and progress of the anti-slavery associations, —and that Mr. Elmore was selected, as the *South Carolina* member of the Committee.

The inquiries of the Committee were reduced to fourteen particulars, bearing directly upon the designs, methods, hopes and resources of the American Anti-Slavery Society. To these, one by one, Mr. Birney returned particular and full replies. The following paragraph, adapted to the question, "Do your or similar societies exist in the colleges and other literary institutions of the non-slaveholding States, and to what extent?" awakens in the reader painful reflections. What an illustration of the extent to which the public mind had become infected with the spirit of slavery! "Strenuous efforts have been made and they are still being made, by those who have the direction of most of the literary and theological institutions in the free States, to bar out our principles and doctrines, and prevent the formation of societies among the students. To this course they have been prompted by various, and possibly, in their view, good motives. One of them, I think it not uncharitable to say, is to conciliate the wealthy of the South, that they may send their sons to the North, to swell the college catalogues. Neither do I think it uncharitable to say, that in this we have a manifestation of that aristocratic pride, which, feeling itself honored by having entrusted to its charge the sons of distant, opulent, and distinguished planters, fails not to dull every thing like sympathy for those whose unpaid toil supplies the means so lavishly expended in educating southern youth at northern colleges. These efforts at suppression or restraint, on the part of Faculties and Boards of Trustees, have heretofore succeeded to a considerable extent. Anti-slavery societies, notwithstanding, have been formed in a

few of our most distinguished colleges and theological seminaries. Public opinion is beginning to call for a relaxation of restraints and impositions; they are yielding to its demands; and *now*, for the most part, sympathy for the slave may be manifested by our generous college youth, in the institution of anti-slavery societies, without any downright prohibition by their more politic teachers. College societies will probably increase more rapidly hereafter; as, in addition to the removal or relaxation of former restraints, just referred to, the murder of Mr. Lovejoy, the assaults on the freedom of speech and of the Press, the prostration of the right of petition in Congress, &c. &c., all believed to have been perpetrated to secure slavery from the scrutiny that the intelligent world is demanding, have greatly augmented the number of college abolitionists. They are, for the most part, the diligent, the intellectual, the religious of the students, United in societies, their influence is generally extensively felt in the surrounding region; *dispersed*, it seems scarcely less effective."

In illustrating the "means and the power," by which the friends of Freedom "proposed to carry their views into effect," the following words of Mr. Birney can hardly fail to impress the reader deeply. "Our 'means' are the Truth—the 'Power' under whose guidance we propose to carry our views into effect, is, the Almighty. Confiding in these means, when directed by the spirit and wisdom of Him, who has so made them as to act on the hearts of men, and so constituted the hearts of men as to be affected by them, we expect, 1. To bring the CHURCH of this country to repentance for the sin of OPPRESSION. Not only the southern portion of it that has been the oppressor—but the northern, that has stood by, consenting for half a century, to the wrong. 2. To bring our countrymen to see, that for a nation to persist in injustice, is but to rush on its own ruin; that to do justice is the highest expediency—to love mercy its noblest ornament. In other countries, slavery has sometimes yielded to fortuitous circumstances, or been extinguished by physical force. We strive to win for truth the victory over error, and on the broken fragments of slavery to rear for her a temple, that shall reach to the heavens, and toward which all nations shall worship.

"It has been said, that the slaveholders of the South will not yield, nor hearken to the influence of the truth on this subject. We believe it not—nor give we entertainment to the slander that such an unworthy defense of them implies.

We believe them *men*,—that they have understandings that arguments will convince—consciences to which the appeals of justice and mercy will not be made in vain. If our principles be true—our arguments right—if slaveholders be men—and God have not delivered over our guilty country to the retributions of the oppressor, not only of the STRANGER but of the NATIVE—our success is certain."

And when the demand is made: "Are your hopes and expectations of success increased or lessened by the events of the last year, and especially by the action of this Congress? And will your exertions be relaxed or increased?" The following reply is urged. We hardly need ask our readers to weigh it well. Where shall we look for words more alive with significance? "The events of the last year, including the action of the present Congress, are of the same character with the events of the eighteen months which immediately preceded it. In the question before us, they may be regarded as one series. I would say, answering your interrogatory generally, that none of them, however unpropitious to the cause of the abolitionists they may appear to those who look at the subject from an opposite point to the one *they* occupy, seem, thus far, in any degree to have lessened their hopes and expectations.—The events alluded to have not come altogether unexpected. They are regarded as the legitimate manifestations of slavery—necessary, perhaps, in the present dull and unapprehensive state of the public mind as to human rights, to be brought out and spread before the people, before they will sufficiently revolt against slavery itself.

"1. They are seen in the CHURCH, and in the practice of its individual members. The Southern portion of the American church may now be regarded as having admitted the dogma, that *slavery is a divine institution*. She has been forced by the anti-slavery discussion into this position—either to cease from slaveholding, or, formally to adopt the only alternative, that slaveholding is right. She has chosen the alternative—reluctantly, to be sure, but substantially, and within the last year almost unequivocally. In defending what was dear to her, she has been forced to cast away her garments, and thus to reveal a deformity, of which she herself before was scarcely aware, and the existence of which others did not credit. So much for the action of the Southern church as a body. On the part of her MEMBERS, the revelation of a time-serving spirit, that not only yielded to the ferocity of the multitude, but fell in with it, may be reckoned among the events of the last three years. In-

stances of this may be found in the attendance of the 'clergy of all denominations,' at a tumultous meeting of the citizens of Charleston, S. C., held in August, 1835, for the purpose of reducing to *system* their unlawful surveillance and control of the post-office and mail; and in the alacrity with which they obeyed the popular call to dissolve the Sunday schools for the instruction of the colored people. Committees, (tribunals organized in opposition to the laws of the States where they exist,) are uniting with the merciless and profligate in passing sentence consigning to infamous and excruciating, if not extreme punishment, persons, by their own acknowledgement, innocent of any unlawful act. Out of sixty persons that composed the Vigilance Committee which condemned Mr. Dresser to be scourged, TWENTY-SEVEN were members of churches, and one of them a professed *teacher* of Christianity. A member of the Committee stated afterwards, in a newspaper of which he was the editor, that Mr. D. *had not laid himself liable to any punishment known to the laws.* Another instance is to be found in the conduct of the Rev. W. S. Plumer, of Virginia. Having been absent from Richmond, when the ministers of the gospel assembled together, formally to testify their abhorrence of the abolitionists, he addressed the chairman of the Committee of Correspondence a note in which he uses this language :—'If abolitionists will set the country in a blaze, it is but fair that they should have the first warming at the fire. Let them understand that they will be caught, if they come among us, and they will take good heed to keep out of our way.' Mr. P. has no doubtful standing in the Presbyterian church with which he is connected. He has been regarded as one of its brightest ornaments. To drive the slaveholding church and its members from the equivocal, the neutral position from which they had so long defended slavery—to compel them to elevate their practice to an even height with their avowed principles, or to degrade their principles to the level of their known practice, was a preliminary, necessary in the view of abolitionists either for bringing that part of the church into the common action against slavery, or as a ground for treating it as confederate with oppressors. So far, then, as the action of the church, or of its individual members, is to be reckoned among the events of the last two or three years, the abolitionists find in it nothing to lessen their hopes or expectations.

"2. The abolitionists believed from the beginning, that the slaves of the South were (as slaves are every where)

unhappy, *because of their condition.* Their adversaries denied it, asserting that as a class they were 'contented and happy.' The abolitionists thought that the arguments against slavery could be made good so far as this point was concerned, by either *admitting* or *denying* the assertion.

"*Admitting* it, they insisted that nothing could demonstrate the turpitude of any system more surely than the fact that MAN—made in the image of God—but a little lower than the angels—crowned with glory and honor, and set over the works of God's hands—his mind sweeping in an instant from planet to planet, from the sun of one system to the sun of another, even to the great centre sun of them all—contemplating the machinery of the universe 'wheeling unshaken' in the awful mysterious grandeur of its movements 'through the void immense'—with a spirit delighting in upward aspiration—bounding from earth to heaven—that seats itself fast by the throne of God, to drink in the instructions of Infinite Wisdom, or flies to execute the commands of Infinite Goodness—that such a being could be made 'contented and happy' with 'enough to eat, and drink, and wear,' and shelter from the weather—with the bare provision that satisfies the brutes, is (say the abolitionists) enough to render superfluous all other arguments for the *instant* abandonment of a system whose appropriate work is such infinite wrong.

"*Denying* that 'the slaves are contented and happy,' the abolitionists have argued, that, from the structure of his moral nature—the laws of his mind—man can not be happy in the fact, that he is *enslaved.* True, he may be happy in slavery, but it is not slavery that makes him so—it is virtue and faith, elevating him above the afflictions of his lot. The slave has a will, leading him to seek those things which the Author of his nature has made conducive to its happiness. In these things, the will of the master comes in collision with his will. The slave desires to receive the rewards of his own labor; the power of the master wrests them from him. The slave desires to possess his wife, to whom God has joined him, in affection; to have the superintendence, and enjoy the services, of the children whom God has confided to him, as a parent to train them by the habits of the filial relation, for the yet higher relation that they may sustain to him as their heavenly Father. But here he is met by the opposing will of the master, pressing *his* claims with irresistible power. The ties that heaven has sanctioned and blessed—of husband and wife, of parent and child—are all sundered in a moment

by the master, at the prompting of avarice, or luxury, or lust; and there is none that can stay his ruthless hand, or say unto him, 'What doest thou?' The slave thirsts for the pleasures of refined and elevated intellect; the master denies to him the humblest literary acquisition. The slave pants to know something of that still higher nature that he feels burning within him; of his present state, his future destiny, of the Being who made him, to whose judgment-seat he is going. The master's interests cry, 'No! Such knowledge is too wonderful for you; it is high; you can not attain unto it.' To predicate *happiness* of a class of beings, placed in circumstances where their will is everlastingly defeated by an irresistible power, the abolitionists say, is to prove them destitute of the sympathies of *our* nature—not *human*. It is to declare with the atheist, that man is independent of the goodness of his Creator for his enjoyments; that human happiness calls not for any of the appliances of his bounty; that God's throne is a nullity, himself a superfluity.

"But, independently of any abstract reasoning drawn from the nature of moral and intellectual beings, FACTS have been elicited in the discussion of the point before us, proving slavery every where, (especially southern slavery, maintained by enlightened Protestants of the nineteenth century,) replete with torments and horrors; the direst form of oppression that upheaves itself before the sun. These facts have been so successfully impressed on a large portion of the intelligent mind of the country, that the slaves of the South are beginning to be considered as those whom God emphatically regards as the 'poor,' the 'needy,' the 'afflicted,' the 'oppressed,' the 'bowed down;' and for whose consolation he said, 'Now will I arise; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.'

"This state of the public mind has been brought about within the last two or three years; and it is an event which, so far from lessening, greatly animates, the hopes and expectations of abolitionists.

"3. The abolitionists believed from the first, that the tendency of slavery is to produce, on the part of the whites, looseness of morals, disdain of the wholesome restraints of law, and a ferocity of temper, fou[illegible]ly in solitary instances, in those countries where [illegible]very is unknown. They were not ignorant of the fact that this was disputed; nor that the 'CHIVALRY OF THE SOUTH' had become a cant phrase, including all that is high-minded and honorable among men; nor, that it had been formerly asserted in our national legis-

lature, that slavery, as it exists in the South, 'produces the highest toned, the purest, best organization of society, that has ever existed on the face of the earth.' Nor were the abolitionists unaware that these pretensions, proving any thing else but their own solidity, had been echoed and re-echoed so long by the unthinking and the interested at the North, that the character of the South had been injuriously affected by them, till she began boldly to attribute her *peculiar* superiority to her *peculiar* institution, and thus to strengthen it. All this the abolitionists saw and knew. But few others saw and understood it as they did. The revelations of the last three years are fast dissipating the old notion, and bringing multitudes in the North to see the subject as the abolitionists see it. When *southern chivalry*, and the *purity* of southern society are spoken of now, it is at once replied, that a large number of the slaves show, by their *color*, their indisputable claim to white paternity; that, notwithstanding their near consanguineous relation to the whites, they are still held and treated in all respects as *slaves*. Nor is it forgotten now, when the claims of the South to 'hospitality' are pressed, to object, because they are grounded on the unpaid wages of the laborer; on the robbery of the poor. When 'southern generosity' is mentioned, the old adage, 'be just before you are generous,' furnishes the reply. It is no proof of generosity, (say the objectors,) to take the bread of the laborer to lavish it in banquetings on the rich. When 'southern chivalry' is the theme of its admirers, the hard-handed but intelligent working men of the North asks, if the espionage of southern hotels, and of ships and steamboats, on their arrival at southern ports; if the prowl, by day and by night, for the solitary stranger, suspected of sympathizing with the enslaved, that he may be delivered over to the mercies of a vigilance committee, furnishes the proof of its existence; if the unlawful importation of slaves from Africa, furnished the proof; if the abuse, the scourging, the hanging on suspicion, without law, of friendless strangers, furnish the proof; if the summary execution of slaves and of colored freemen, almost by the score, without legal trial, furnish the proof; if the cruelties and tortures to which *citizens* have been exposed, and the burning to death of slaves by slow fires, furnish the proof. All these things, says he, furnish any thing but proof of *true* hospitality, or generosity, or gallantry, or purity, or chivalry.

"Certain it is, that the time when southern slavery derived countenance at the North, from its supposed connection with 'chivalry,' is rapidly passing away. 'Southern chivalry' will

soon be regarded as one of the by-gone fooleries of a less virtuous age. It will soon be cast out—giving place to the more reasonable idea, that the denial of wages to the laborer, the selling of men and women, the whipping of husbands and wives in each other's presence, to compel them to unrequited toil, the deliberate attempt to extinguish mind, and consequently to destroy the soul—is among the highest offenses against God and man—unspeakably mean, despicable and ungentlemanly.

"The impression made on the minds of the people as to this matter, is one of the events of the last two or three years that does not contribute to lessen the hopes or expectations of abolitionists.

"4. The ascendancy that slavery has acquired and exercises in the administration of the government, and the apprehension now prevailing among the sober and intelligent, irrespective of party, that it will soon overmaster the Constitution itself, may be ranked among the events of the last two or three years that affect the course of abolitionists. The abolitionists regard the Constitution with unabated affection. They hold in no common veneration the memory of those who made it. They would be the last to brand Franklin and King and Morris and Wilton and Sherman and Hamilton with the ineffaceable infamy of attempting to engraft on the Constitution, and therefore to *perpetuate*, a system of oppression in absolute antagonism to its high and professed objects, one of which their own practice condemned,—and this, too, when they had scarcely wiped away the dust and sweat of the Revolution from their brows. Whilst abolitionists feel and speak thus for our Constitutional fathers, they do not justify the dereliction of principles into which they were betrayed, when they imparted to the work of their hands *any* power to contribute to the continuance of such a system. They can only palliate it, by supposing that they thought slavery was already a waning institution, destined soon to pass away. In their time, (1787,) slaves were comparatively of little value—there being then no great slave labor staple (as cotton is now) to make them profitable to the holders.

"Had the circumstances of the country remained as they then were, slave labor,—always and every where the most expensive—would have disappeared before the competition of free labor. They had seen too, the principles of liberty embodied in most of the State Constitutions; they had seen slavery utterly forbidden in that of Vermont—instantaneous-

ly abolished in that of Massachusetts—and laws enacted in the other New England States and in Pennsylvania, for its gradual abolition. Well might they have anticipated, that Justice and Humanity, now starting forth with fresh vigor, would, in their march sweep away the whole system; more especially, as freedom of speech and the Press—the legitimate abolisher not only of the acknowledged vice of slavery, but of every other that time should reveal in our institutions or practices—had been fully secured to the people. Again; power was conferred on Congress to put a stop to the African slave trade, without which it was thought at that time, to be impossible to maintain slavery, as a system, on this continent—so great was the havoc it committed on human life. Authority was also granted to Congress to prevent the transfer of slaves as articles of commerce, from one State to another; and the introduction of slavery into the territories. All this was crowned by the power of refusing admission into the Union, to any new State, whose form of government was repugnant to the principles of liberty set forth in that of the United States. The faithful execution, by Congress, of these powers, it was reasonably enough supposed, would, at least, prevent the growth of slavery, if it did not entirely remove it. Congress did, at the set time, execute *one* of them—deemed, then, the most effectual of the whole; but as it has turned out, the least so.

"The effect of the interdiction of the African slave trade was, not to diminish the trade itself, or greatly to mitigate its horrors; it only changed its name from African to American—transferred the seat of commerce from Africa to America—its profits from African princes to American farmers. Indeed, it is almost certain, if the African slave trade had been left unrestrained, that slavery would not have covered so large a portion of our country as it now does. The cheap rate at which slaves might have been imported by the planters of the South, would have prevented the rearing of them for sale, by the farmers of Maryland, Virginia, and the other slave-selling States. If these States could be restrained from the *commerce* in slaves, slavery could not be supported by them for any length of time, or to any considerable extent. They could not maintain it, as an economical system, under the competition of free labor. It is owing to the *non-user* by Congress, or rather to their unfaithful application of their power to the other points, on which it was expected to act for the limitation or extermination of slavery, that the hopes of our fathers have not been realized; and

that slavery has, at length, become so audacious, as openly to challenge the principles of 1776—to trample on the most precious rights secured to the citizen—to menace the integrity of the Union and the very existence of the government itself.

"Slavery has advanced to its present position by steps that were, at first gradual, and, for a long time, almost unnoticed; afterwards, it made its way by intimidating or corrupting those who ought to have been forward to resist its pretensions. Up to the time of the 'Missouri Compromise,' by which the nation was defrauded out of its honor, slavery was looked on as an evil that was finally to yield to the expanding and ripening influences of our Constitutional principles and regulations. Why it has not yielded, we may easily see, by even a slight glance at some of the incidents in our history.

"It has already been said, that we have been brought into our present condition by the unfaithfulness of Congress, in not *exerting* the power vested in it, to stop the domestic slave trade, and in the *abuse* of the power of admitting '*new States*' into the Union. Kentucky made application in 1792, with a slaveholding Constitution in her hand. With what a mere *technicality* Congress suffered itself to be dragged into torpor:—*She was part of one of the 'original States'—and therefore entitled to all their privileges.*

"One precedent established, it was easy to make another. Tennessee was admitted in 1796, without scruple, on the same ground.

"The next triumph of slavery was in 1803, in the purchase of Louisiana, acknowledged afterwards, even by Mr. Jefferson who made it, to be unauthorized by the Constitution—and in the establishment of slavery throughout its vast limits, actually and substantially under the auspices of that instrument which declares its only object to be—'to form a more perfect union, establish JUSTICE, insure DOMESTIC TRANQUILLITY, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of LIBERTY to ourselves and our posterity.'

"In this case, the violation of the Constitution was suffered to pass with but little opposition, except from Massachusetts, because we were content to receive in exchange, multiplied commercial benefits and enlarged territorial limits.

"The next stride that slavery made over the Constitution was in the admission of the State of Louisiana into the Union. *She* could claim no favor as a part of an 'original

State.' At this point, it might have been supposed, the friends of Freedom and of the Constitution according to its original intent would have made a stand. But no: with the exception of Massachusetts, they hesitated and were persuaded to acquiesce, because the country were just about entering into a war with England, and the crisis was unpropitious for discussing questions that would create divisions between different sections of the Union. 'We must wait till the country was at peace.' Thus it was that Louisiana was admitted without a controversy.

"Next followed, in 1817 and 1820, Mississippi and Alabama—admitted after the example of Kentucky and Tennessee, without any contest.

"Meantime, Florida had given some uneasiness to the slaveholders of the neighboring States; and for their accommodation chiefly, a negotiation was set on foot by the government to purchase it.

"Missouri was next in order in 1821. She could plead no privilege, on the score of being part of one of the original States; the country too, was relieved from the pressure of her late conflict with England; it was prosperous and quiet; every thing seemed propitious to a calm and dispassionate consideration of the claim of slaveholders to add props to their system, by admitting indefinitely new slave States to the Union. Up to this time, the 'EVIL' of slavery had been almost universally acknowledged and deplored by the South, and its termination (apparently) sincerely hoped for. By this management its friends succeeded in blinding the confiding people of the North. They thought for the most part, that the slaveholders were acting in good faith. It is not intended by this remark to make the impression, that the South had all along pressed the admission of new slave States, simply with a view to the increase of its own relative power. By no means: slavery had insinuated itself into favor because of its being mixed up with (other) supposed benefits—and because its ultimate influence on the government was neither suspected nor dreaded. But on the Missouri question, there was a fair trial of strength between the friends of slavery and the friends of the Constitution. The former triumphed; and by the prime agency of one whose raiment, the remainder of his days, ought to be sackcloth and ashes,—because of the disgrace he has continued on the name of his country, and the consequent injury he has inflicted on the cause of Freedom throughout the world. Although all the different administrations, from the first organ-

ization of the government, had, in the indirect manner already mentioned, favored slavery,—there had not been on any previous occasion, a direct struggle between its pretensions and the principles of liberty engrafted on the Constitution. The friends of the latter were induced to believe, whenever they should be arrayed against each other, that *theirs* would be the triumph. Tremendous error! Mistake almost fatal! The battle was fought. Slavery emerged from it unhurt—her hands made gory—her bloody plume still floating in the air—exultingly brandishing her dripping sword over her prostrate and vanquished enemy. She had won all for which she fought. Her victory was complete—THE SANCTION OF THE NATION WAS GIVEN TO SLAVERY.

"Immediately after this achievement, the slaveholding interest was still more strongly fortified by the acquisition of Florida, and the establishment of slavery there, as it had already been in the territory of Louisiana. The Missouri triumph, however, seems to have extinguished every thing like a systematic or spirited opposition, on the part of the free States, to the pretensions of the slaveholding South.

"Arkansas was admitted but the other day, with nothing that deserves to be called an effort to prevent it—although her Constitution attempts to *perpetuate* slavery, by forbidding the master to emancipate his bondmen without the consent of the Legislature, and the Legislature without the consent of the master. Emboldened, but not satisfied, with their success in every political contest with the people of the free States, the slaveholders are beginning now to throw off their disguise—to brand their former notions about the '*evil*, political and moral' of slavery, as 'folly and delusion,'—and as if to 'make assurance doubly sure,' and defend themselves forever, by territorial power, against the progress of free principles and the renovation of the Constitution, they now demand openly—scorning to conceal that their object is, to *advance and establish their political power in the country*,—that Texas, a foreign State, five or six times as large as all New England, with a Constitution dyed as deep in slavery as that of Arkansas, shall be added to the Union.

"The abolitionists feel a deep regard for the integrity of the union of the government *on the principles of the Constitution*. Therefore it is, that they look with earnest concern on the attempt now making by the South, to do, what, in the views of multitudes of our citizens, would amount to good cause for the separation of the free from the slave States. Their concern is not mingled with any feelings of

despair. The alarm they sounded on the 'annexation' question has penetrated the free States; it will, in all probability, be favorably responded to by every one of them; thus giving encouragement to our faith, that the admission of Texas will be successfully resisted; that this additional stain will not be impressed on our national escutcheon, nor this additional peril brought on the South.

"This, the present condition of the country, induced by a long train of usurpations on the part of the South, and by unworthy concessions to it by the North, may justly be regarded as one of the events of the last few years affecting in some degree the measures of the abolitionists. It has certainly done so. And whilst it is not to be denied that many abolitionists feel painful apprehensions for the result, it has only roused them up to make more strenuous efforts for the preservation of the country.

"It may be replied—if the abolitionists are such firm friends of the Union, why do they persist in what must end in its rupture and dissolution? The abolitionists, let it be repeated, *are* friends of *the* Union that was intended by the Constitution; but not of a Union from which is eviscerated, to be trodden under foot, the right to SPEAK—to PRINT—to PETITION—the rights of CONSCIENCE; not of a Union whose ligaments are whips, where the interest of the oppressor is the *great* interest—the right to oppress the *paramount* right. It is against this distortion of the glorious Union our fathers left us—into one bound with despotic bands—that the abolitionists are contending. In the political aspect of the question, they have nothing to ask, except what the Constitution authorizes; no change to desire, but that the Constitution may be restored to its pristine republican purity.

"But they have well considered the 'dissolution of the Union.' There is no just ground for apprehending that such a measure will ever be resorted to by the *South*. It is by no means intended by this, to affirm that the South, like a spoiled child, for the first time denied some favorite object, may not fall into sudden frenzy, and do herself some great harm. But knowing, as I do, the intelligence and forecast of the leading men of the South—and believing that they will, if ever such a crisis should come, be judiciously influenced by the *existing* state of the case, and by the *consequences* that would inevitably flow from an act of dissolution—they would not, I am sure, deem it desirable or politic. They would be brought, in their calmer moments, to coincide with one who has facetiously, but not the less truly remarked,

that it would be as indiscreet in the slave South to separate from the free North, as for the poor to separate from the parish that supported them. In support of this opinion, I would say:

"First—A dissolution of the Union by the South would, in no manner, secure to her the object she has in view. The *leaders* at the South, both in the church and in the State, must, by this time, be too well informed as to the nature of the anti-slavery movement, and the character of those engaged in it, to entertain fears that violence of any kind will be resorted to, directly or indirectly. The whole complaint of the South is neither more nor less than this—THE NORTH TALKS ABOUT SLAVERY. Now, of all the means or appliances that could be devised, to give greater life and publicity to the discussion of slavery, none could be half so effectual as the dissolution of the Union *because of the discussion*. It would astonish the civilized world—they would inquire into the cause of such a remarkable event in its history: the result would be not only enlarged *discussion* of the whole subject, but it would bring such a measure of contempt on the guilty movers of the deed, that even with all the advantages of 'their education, their polish, their munificence, their high honor, their undaunted spirit,' so eloquently set forth by the Hon. Mr. Hammond, they would find it hard to withstand its influence. It is difficult for men in a *good* cause, to maintain their steadfastness in opposition to an extensively corrupt public sentiment; in a *bad* one, against public sentiment purified and enlightened, next to impossible, if not quite so.

"Another result would follow the dissolution: *Now*, the abolitionists find it difficult, by reason of the odium which the principal slaveholders and their friends have succeeded in attaching to their *name*, to introduce a knowledge of their principles and measures into the great mass of southern mind. There are multitudes at the South who would coöperate with us, if they could be informed of our aim. Now, we can not reach them; then, it would be otherwise. The united power of the large slaveholders would not be able longer to keep them in ignorance. If the Union were dissolved, they *would* know the cause, and discuss it, and condemn it.

"A second reason why the South will not dissolve the Union, is, that she would be exposed to the visitation of *real* incendiaries, exciting her slaves to revolt. Now, it would cover any one with infamy, who would stir them up to vindicate their rights by the massacre of their masters. Dissolve

the Union, and the candidates for 'GLORY' would find in the plains of Carolina and Louisiana as inviting a theatre for their enterprise, as their prototypes, the Houstons, the Van Rensselaers, and the Sutherlands did, in the prairies of Texas, or the forests of Canada.

A third reason why the South will not dissolve is, that the slaves would leave their masters, and take refuge in the free States. The South would not be able to establish a *cordon* along her wide frontier sufficiently strong to prevent it. Then, the slaves would not be reclaimed, as they now are, under the Constitution. Some may say, the free States would not permit them to come in and dwell among them. Believe it not. The fact of separation on the ground supposed, would abolitionize the whole North. Besides this, in an economical point of view, the *demand for labor* in the western States would make their presence welcome. At all events, a passage through the northern States to Canada would not be denied them.

"A fourth reason why the South will not dissolve is, that a large number of her most steady and effective population would emigrate to the free States. In the slave-*selling* States especially, there has always been a class who have consented to remain there with their families, only in the hope that slavery would, in some way or other, be terminated. I do not say they are abolitionists, for many of them are slaveholders. It may be, too, that such would expect compensation for their slaves, should they be emancipated, and also that they should be sent out of the country. The particular mode of emancipation, however crude it may be, that has occupied their minds, has nothing to do with the point before us. *They look for emancipation; in this hope they have remained, and now remain where they are.* Take away this hope, by making slavery the *distinctive bond of union* of a new government, and you drive them to the North. These persons are not among the rich, the voluptuous, the effeminate, nor are they the despised, the indigent, the thriftless—they are men of moderate property, of intelligence, of conscience—in every way the 'bone and sinew' of the South.

"A fifth reason why the South will not dissolve, is her *weakness.* It is a remarkable fact, that in modern times, and in the Christian world, all slaveholding countries have been united with countries that are free. Thus, the West Indian and Mexican and South American slaveholding colonies were united to England, France, Spain, Portugal, and other

States of Europe. If England (before her emancipation act) and the others had at any time withdrawn the protection of their power from their colonies, slavery would have been extinguished almost simultaneously with the knowledge of the fact. In the West Indies there could have been no doubt of this, from the disparity in numbers between the whites and the slaves, from the multiplied attempts made from time to time by the latter to vindicate their rights by insurrection, and from the fact, that all their insurrections had to be suppressed by the *force* of the mother country. As soon as Mexico and the South American colonies dissolved their connection with Spain, slavery was abolished in every one of them. This may, I know, be attributed to the necessity imposed on these States, by the wars in which they engaged to establish their independence. However this may be—the fact still remains. The free States of this Union are to the slave, so far as the maintenance of slavery is concerned, substantially, in the relation of the European States to their slaveholding colonies. Slavery, in all probability, could not be maintained by the South disjoined from the North, *a single year*. So far from there existing any reason for making the South an exception, in this particular, to other slave countries, there are circumstances in her condition that seem to make her dependence more complete. Two of them are, the superior intelligence of her slaves on the subject of human rights, and the geographical connection of the slave region in the United States. In the West Indies, in Mexico and South America the great body of slaves were far below the slaves of this country in their intellectual and moral condition—and (in the former) their power to act in concert was weakened by the insular fragments into which they were divided.

"Again, the depopulation of the South of large numbers of its white inhabitants, from the cause mentioned under the fourth head, would, it is apprehended, bring the two classes to something like a numerical equality. Now, consider the present state of the moral sentiment of the Christianized and commercial world in relation to slavery; add to it the impulse that this sentiment acknowledged by the South already to be wholly opposed to her, would naturally acquire by an act of separation on her part, with a single view to the perpetuation of slavery; bring this sentiment in all its accumulation and intensity to act upon a nation where one half are enslavers, the other the enslaved—and what must be the effect? From the nature of mind; from the laws of

moral influence, (which are as sure in their operation, if not so well understood, as the law of physical influence,) the party 'whose conscience with injustice is oppressed,' must become dispirited, weakened in courage, and in the end unnerved and contemptible. On the other hand, the sympathy that would be felt for the oppressed—the comfort they would receive—the encouragement that would be given them to assert their rights, would make it an impossibility to keep them in slavish peace and submission.

"This state of things would be greatly aggravated by the peculiarly morbid sensitiveness of the South to every thing that is supposed to touch her *character*. Her highest distinction would then become her most troublesome one. How, for instance, could her chivalrous sons bear to be taunted, whereever they went, on business or for pleasure out of their own limits, with the cry, 'The knights of the lash!' 'Go home and pay your laborers!' 'Cease from the scourging of husbands and wives in each other's presence—from attending the shambles, to sell or buy as slaves those whom God has made of the same blood as yourselves—your brethren—your sisters! Cease, high-minded sons of the ANCIENT DOMINION, from estimating your revenue by the number of children you rear, to sell in the flesh market!' 'Go home and pay your laborers!' 'Go home and pay your laborers!' This would be a trial to which 'southern chivalry' could not patiently submit. Their 'high honor,' their 'undaunted spirit' would impel them to the field—only to prove that the 'last resort' requires something more substantial than mere 'honor' and 'spirit' to maintain it. Suppose there should be a disagreement—as in all likelihood there soon would, leading to war between the North and the South? The North would scarcely have occasion to march a squadron to the field. She would have an army that could be raised up by the million, at the fireside of her enemy. It has been said, that during the late war with England, it was proposed to her cabinet, by some enterprising officer, to land five thousand men on the coast of South Carolina and proclaim liberty to the slaves. The success of the scheme was well thought of. But then the example! England herself held nearly a million of slaves at no greater distance from the scene of action than the West Indies. Now, a restraint of this kind on such a scheme does not exist.

"It seems plain beyond the power of argument to make it plainer, that a slaveholding nation—one under the circum-

stances in which the South separated from the North would be placed—must be at the mercy of every free people; having neither power to vindicate a right nor avenge a wrong.

"A sixth reason why the South will not dissolve the Union, would be found in the difficulty of bringing about an *actual* separation. Preparatory to such a movement, it would seem indispensable, that *Union* among the seceding States themselves should be secured. A General Convention would be necessary to adjust its terms. This would, of course, be preceded by particular conventions in the several States. To this procedure the same objection applies, that has been made, for the last two or three years, to holding an anti-abolition convention in the South. It would give to the question such notoriety, that the object of holding the convention could not be concealed from the slaves. The more sagacious in the South have been opposed to a convention; nor have they been influenced solely by the consideration just mentioned—which, in my view, is but of little moment—but by the apprehension, that the diversity of sentiment which exists among the slave States, themselves, in relation to their *system*, would be disclosed to the country; and that the slaveholding interest would be found deficient in that harmony which, from its perfectness heretofore, has made the slaveholders so successful in their action on the North.

"The slaveholding region may be divided into the *farming* and the *planting*—or the slave-*selling* and slave-*buying* districts. Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri and East Tennessee constitute the first. West Tennessee is somewhat equivocal. All the states south of Tennessee belong to the slave-*buying* district. The first, with but few exceptions, have from the earliest times, felt slavery a reproach to their good name—a drawback on their advancement at some period to be cast off. Had this sentiment, been at all encouraged by the action of the General Government, in accordance with the views of the convention that formed the Constitution, it would in all probability, by this time, have brought slavery in Maryland and Virginia to an end. Notwithstanding the easy admission of slave States into the Union, and the yielding of the free States whenever they were brought in collision with the South have had a strong tendency to persuade the farming slave States to continue their system, yet the sentiment in favor of emancipation in some form, still exists among them. Proof, encouraging proof of this, is found in the present attitude of Kentucky. Her Legislature has just passed a law, proposing to the

people, to hold a convention to alter the Constitution. In the discussion of the bill, slavery as connected with some form of emancipation, seems to have constituted the most important element. The public journals too, that are opposed to touching the subject at all, declare that the main object for recommending a convention was, to act on slavery in some way.

"Now, it would be in vain for the planting South to expect, that Kentucky or any other of the *farming* slave States would unite with her, in making slavery the *perpetual bond* of a new political organization. If they feel the inconveniences of slavery *in their present condition*, they could not be expected to enter on another, where these inconveniences would be inconceivably multiplied and aggravated, and, by the very terms of their new contract, *perpetuated*.

"This letter is already so protracted, that I can not stop here to develop more at large this part of the subject. To one acquainted with the state of public sentiment, in what I have called, the *farming* district, it needs no further development. There is not one of these States embraced in it, that would not, when brought to the test, prefer the privileges of the Union to the privilege of perpetual slaveholding. And if there should turn out to be a single *desertion* in this matter, the whole project of secession must come to nought.

"But laying aside all the obstacles to union among the seceding States, how is it possible to take the first step to *actual* separation! The separation, at the worst, can only be *political*. There will be no chasm—no rent made in the earth between the two sections. The natural and ideal boundaries will remain unaltered. Mason and Dixon's line will not become a wall of adamant that can neither be undermined nor surmounted. The Ohio river will not be converted into flame, or into another Styx, denying a passage to every living thing.

"Besides this stability of natural things, the multiform interests of the two sections would, in the main, continue as they are. The complicate ties of commerce could not be suddenly unloosed. The bread-stuffs, the beef, the pork, the turkies, the chickens, the woollen and cotton fabrics, the hats, the shoes, the stocks, the '*horn flints and bark nutmegs*,' the machinery, the sugar-kettles, the cotton-gins, the axes, the hoes, the drawing-chains of the North, would be as much needed by the South, the day after the separation as the day before. The newspapers of the North—its magazines, its quarterlies, its monthlies, would be more sought

after by the readers of the South than they now are; and the Southern journals would become doubly interesting to us. There would be the same lust for our northern summers and your southern winters, with all their health-giving influences; and last, though not least, the same desire of marrying and of being given in marriage that now exists between the North and South. Really it is difficult to say *where* this long threatened separation is to *begin*; and if the place of beginning could be found, it would seem like a poor exchange for the South, to give up all these pleasant and profitable relations and connections for the privilege of enslaving an equal number of their fellow creatures.

"Thus much for the menace, that the 'UNION WILL BE DISSOLVED' unless the discussion of the slavery question be stopped.

"But you may reply, 'Do you think the South is not in earnest in her threat of dissolving the Union?' I rejoin, by no means;—yet she pursues a perfectly reasonable course (leaving out of view the justice or morality of it)—just such a course as I should expect she would pursue, emboldened as she must be by her multiplied triumphs over the North by the use of the same weapon. 'We'll dissolve the Union!' was the cry, 'unless Missouri be admitted!' The North were frightened, and Missouri was admitted with SLAVERY engraved on her forehead. 'We'll dissolve the Union! unless the Indians be driven out of the South!' The North forgot her treaties, parted with humanity, and it is done—the defenseless Indians are forced to 'consent' to be driven out, or they are left, undefended, to the mercies of southern land-jobbers and gold-hunters. 'We'll dissolve the Union! if the tariff' [established at her own suggestion] 'be not repealed or modified so that our slave labor may compete with free labor.' The Tariff is accordingly modified to suit the South. 'We'll dissolve the Union! unless the freedom of speech and the Press be put down in the North!'—With the promptness of commission-merchants, the alternative is adopted. Public assemblies met for deliberation are assailed and broken up at the North; her citizens are stoned and beaten and dragged through the streets of her cities; her presses are attacked by mobs, instigated and led on by men of influence and character: whilst those concerned in conducting them are compelled to fly from their homes, pursued as if they were noxious wild beasts; or, if they remain to defend, they are sacrificed to appease the southern divinity. 'We'll dissolve the Union' if slavery be abolished in the

District of Columbia! The North, frightened from her propriety, declares that slavery ought not to be abolished there NOW.—'We'll dissolve the Union!' if you read petitions from your constituents for its abolition, or for stopping the slave trade at the Capital, or between States. FIFTY NORTHERN REPRESENTATIVES respond to the cry 'down, then, with the RIGHT OF PETITION!!' All these assaults have succeeded because the North has been frightened by the war-cry, 'WE'LL DISSOLVE THE UNION!'

"After achieving so much by a process so simple, why should not the South persist in it when striving for further conquests? No other course ought to be expected from her, till this has failed. And it is not at all improbable, that she will persist, till she almost persuades herself that she is serious in her menace to dissolve the Union. She may in her eagerness, even approach so near the verge of dissolution, that the earth may give way under her feet and she be dashed in ruins in the gulf below.

"Nothing will more surely arrest her fury, than the firm array of the North, setting up anew the almost forgotton principles of our fathers, and saying to the 'dark spirit of slavery,'—'thus far shalt thou go, and no farther,' This is the best—the only—means of saving the South from the fruits of her own folly—folly that has been so long, and so strangely encouraged by the North, that it has grown into intolerable arrogance—down right presumption."

Mr. Birney was for about three years a Corresponding Secretary of the American Anti-Slavery Society. In this sphere, his opportunities for exerting himself in the cause of Freedom were multiplied. He had access to great numbers of his fellow citizens, upon whom he was enabled to urge the claims of the enslaved. The influence he exerted was as benign as it was powerful. His intelligence, truthfulness and candor—his magnanimity and fidelity—all who had the privilege of an acquaintance with him, were not a little struck with. They were admitted to be note-worthy traits of his character. He was generally listened to with respectful attention. If his doctrines were not subscribed to, his character was admired. We well remember that an old lawyer from New England, after a discussion with him on points on which they were at variance, exclaimed, He is the most candid man I ever saw! On those who were often in his presence, and enjoyed his confidence, his words and deeds made the impression of great wisdom. They looked up to him for counsel. Whereever he applied his hand, they expected well advised plans and valuable results.

About this time it was, that Mr. Birney's father closed his earthly career. The father and the son, an only son, seem to have regarded each other with a true and tender love.—The great enterprize, to which the latter was devoted and which could not be endured in Kentucky, had for a long time withdrawn them from each other's presence. Just before his father's death, Mr. Birney visited him, and was received by him as well as by other friends, with all cordiality. He was intent on making such arrangements as would bring his son into the bosom of his old age, where he might feel the soothing and sustaining influence of his many virtues. But all such designs, however warmly cherished, death defeated. In the division of his father's estate, his slaves, twenty-one in number, were at Mr. Birney's request, all set off to him; and set off to him, that to their benefit, he might apply the principles by which he was controlled. Accordingly, he at once restored them the freedom of which they had been robbed. The deed, through which their emancipation was effected—a substantial and ever-enduring monument of his philanthropy—a decisive and emphatic proof of his wisdom and integrity—can not be read without the most grateful emotions, and the most healthful impressions. Here it is:—

"KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS,

That I, James G. Birney, late of Kentucky, but now having my residence in the city of New York, believing that slaveholding is inconsistent with natural justice, with the precepts and spirit of the Christian religion, and with the declaration of American Independence, and wishing to testify in favor of them all, do hereby emancipate, and forever set free, the following named slaves, which have come into my possession, as one of the heirs of my father, the late JAMES BIRNEY, *of Jefferson county, Kentucky*, they being all the slaves held by said JAMES BIRNEY, deceased, at the time of his death."

Then follow their names and descriptions, and the deed concludes: "In testimony of the above I have, hereunto set my name and affixed my seal, this third day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-nine. JAMES G. BIRNEY." (Seal.)

He was in 1840 a member of the "World's Convention," which met in London. Here abolitionists were drawn together from different parts of Christendom, to interchange mutual greetings, relate facts, express their convictions, offer counsel, devise plans, afford mutual encouragement,

and in a thousand ways assist each other in the work of Emancipation. In this assembly, Mr. Birney occupied a prominent place, and rendered much assistance. After the Convention had adjourned, he spent several months in visiting different parts of England, where on various occasions he labored to promote the cause in which his heart was so thoroughly enlisted. The estimation in which he was held in England may be inferred from the following testimony of the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society: "That this committee are deeply sensible of the services renderd to the anti-slavery cause by their esteemed friend and coadjutor, James Gillepsie Birney, Esq., whilst in this country, in a course of laborious efforts, in which his accurate and extensive information, his wise and judicious counsels, and his power of calm and convincing statement, have become eminently conspicuous."—During his residence in England, Mr. Birney prepared and published his "*American Churches the Bulwarks of American Slavery;*" a paper, replete with facts as instructive as they are afflictive, which has gone through several editions in this country. In this work, he declares that it was his "single view to make the British Christian public acquainted with the real state of the case—in order that it may in the most intelligent and effective manner exert the influence it possesses with the American churches, to persuade them to purify themselves from a sin that has greatly debased them, and that threatens in the end wholly to destroy them." The pamphlet consists of facts, well selected and judiciously applied, and though of great value, is not easy of analysis. The bearing of the subject on human rights and the general welfare is altogether vital; it must not be disposed of with a passing notice merely.

The extent to which the American churches are directly involved in slavery, may be inferred from statements like the following. A Mississippi divine, of the Presbyterian connection, Rev. James Smylie, A. M., does not hesitate to publish the following declaration: "If slavery be a sin, and advertising and apprehending slaves, with a view to restore them to their masters is a direct violation of the divine law, and if *the buying, selling, or holding a slave,* FOR THE SAKE OF GAIN, is a heinous sin and scandal, then, verily, THREE FOURTHS OF ALL THE EPISCOPALIANS, METHODISTS, BAPTISTS, and PRESBYTERIANS, in ELEVEN STATES OF THE UNION, are of the devil. They 'hold,' if they do not buy and sell slaves, and, *with few exceptions,* they hesitate not to 'apprehend and

restore' runaway slaves, when in their power." "In some of the older slave States, as Virginia and South Carolina, churches, in their *corporate* character, hold slaves, who are generally hired out for the support of the minister. The following is taken from the Charleston Courier, of Feb. 12, 1835.

"'FIELD NEGROES, *by Thomas Gadsden.*

"'On Tuesday, the 17th instant, will be sold, at the north of the Exchange, at 10 o'clock, a prime gang of ten *negroes*, accustomed to the culture of cotton and provisions, belonging to the INDEPENDENT CHURCH, in *Christ's Church Parish.* .... Feb. 6.'"

Of the condition of slaves, as well the slaves of those who do as of those who do not profess to be Christians, the following paragraph furnishes a painful illustration: "In 1834, the Synod of Kentucky appointed a committee of twelve to report on the condition, &c., of the slaves. This passage occurs in the report:—

"Brutal stripes and all the various kinds of personal indignities, are not the only species of cruelty which slavery licenses. The law does not recognize the family relations of the slave; and extends to him no protection in the enjoyments of domestic endearment. The members of a slave family may be forcibly separated, so that they shall never more meet until the final judgment. And cupidity often induces the masters to practice what the law allows. Brothers and sisters, parents and children, husbands and wives are torn asunder, and permitted to see each other no more. *These acts are daily occurring in the midst of us.* The shrieks and the agony, often witnessed on such occasions, proclaim with a trumpet-tongue, the iniquity and cruelty of our system. The cries of these sufferers go up to the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. There is not a village or road that does not behold the sad procession of manacled outcasts, whose chains and mournful countenances tell that they are exiled by force from all that their hearts hold dear. Our church, years ago, raised its voice of solemn warning against this flagrant violation of every principle of mercy, justice, and humanity. Yet we blush to announce to you and to the world, that this warning has been often disregarded, even by those who hold to our communion. *Cases have occurred in our own denomination, where professors of the religion of mercy, have torn the mother from her children, and sent her into a merciless and returnless exile.* Yet acts of discipline have rarely [*never*] followed such conduct."

The system, out of which such evils naturally grow—to which they necessarily belong, the tallest ecclesiastics among us, both North and South, pronounce consistent with the genius of Christianity. Bishop Hedding finds its foundation in the Golden Rule! "The right to hold a slave is founded on this rule, 'Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.'"

Rev. Prof. Simms, of Randolph Macon College, makes "Extracts from HOLY WRIT," which "UNEQUIVOCALLY ASSERT THE RIGHT OF PROPERTY IN SLAVES, together with the usual incidents of that right; such as the power of acquisition and disposition in various ways, according to municipal regulations. The right to buy and sell, and to transmit to children by way of inheritance, is clearly stated. The only restriction on the subject, is in reference to the *market*, in which slaves or bondsmen were to be purchased.

"Upon the whole, then, whether we consult the Jewish polity, instituted by God himself; or the uniform opinion and practice of mankind in all ages of the world; or the injunctions of the New Testament and the Moral Law; we are brought to the conclusion, that slavery is not immoral.

"Having established the point, that the first African slaves were legally brought into bondage, the right to detain their children in bondage, follows as an indispensable consequence.

"Thus we see, that the slavery which exists in America, was *founded in right.*"

And those ecclesiastics, who profess to be "as much opposed to slavery as any body," contrive cunningly to dodge the point, when it is urged on their attention. When with speechless eloquence, the slave entreats them to come to his assistance, all crushed and bleeding as he is;—to come to his assistance against members of their own communion, who are remorselessly throttling him, these divines, in a fit of excessive modesty, exclaim, We have no jurisdiction in such cases. We can not say a word in behalf of crushed Humanity, though talking is their vocation! The sword belongs to Cæsar. Just as if the friends of Freedom had "petitioned" them to wield some such carnal weapon! Mr. Birney sets this matter in a clear light in the following paragraph:—

"When ecclesiastical councils excuse themselves from acting for the removal of slavery from their respective communions by saying, they can not *legislate* for the abolition of slavery; that slavery is a *civil* or *political* institution—that it 'belongs to Cæsar,' and not to the church to put an end to it, they

shun the point at issue. To the church member who is a debauchee, a drunkard, a seducer, a murderer, they find no difficulty in saying, 'we can not indeed proceed against your person, or your property—*this* belongs to Cæsar—to the *tribunals* of the country—to the *legislature*;—but we can suspend or wholly cut you off from the communion of the church, with a view to your repentance and its purification.' If a white member should by force or intimidation, day after day, deprive another white member of his property, the authorities of the churches would expel him from their body, should he refuse to make restitution or reparation, although it could not be *enforced* except through the tribunals over which they have no control. There is then, nothing to prevent these authorities from saying to the slaveholder—'cease being a slaveholder and remain in the church, or continue a slaveholder and go out of it; You have your choice.'"

But the modesty of these ecclesiastics vanishes the instant an abolitionist appears. "Tooth and nail" they assail him, as if they would rend him in pieces. Take the following illustration. "The Rev. William S. Plumer, D. D., of Richmond,"—a "leader of the Old School party"—"was absent from Richmond at the time the clergy in that city purged themselves in a body, from the charge of being favorably disposed to abolition. On his return, he lost no time in communicating to the 'Chairman of the Committee of Correspondence,' his agreement with his clerical brethren. The passages quoted occur in his letter to the chairman.

"'I have carefully watched this matter from its earliest existence, and every thing I have seen or heard of its character, both from its patrons and its enemies, has confirmed me, beyond repentance, in the belief, that, let the character of abolitionists be what it may in the sight of the Judge of all the earth, this is the most meddlesome, impudent, reckless, fierce, and wicked excitement I ever saw.

"'If abolitionists will set the country in a blaze, it is but fair that they should receive the first warming at the fire.

"'Let it be proclaimed throughout the nation, that every movement made by the fanatics (so far as it has any effect in the South) does but rivet every fetter of the bondsman—diminish the probability of any thing being successfully undertaken for making him either fit for freedom, or likely to obtain it. We have the authority of Montesquieu, Burke, and Coleridge, three eminent masters of the science of human nature, that of all men slaveholders are the most jealous

of their liberties. One of Pennsylvania's most gifted sons has lately pronounced the South, the *cradle of liberty.*

"'Lastly—Abolitionists are like infidels, wholly unaddicted to martyrdom for opinion's sake. Let them understand that *they will be caught* [Lynched] if they come among us, and they will take good heed to keep out of our way. There is not one man among them who has any more idea of shedding his blood in this cause, than he has of making war on the Grand Turk.'"

We know not however where to look for so fine a specimen of the spirit we are trying to illustrate, as is preserved in the following address. Such a mixture of canting hypocrisy, with brazen impudence and blood-thirsty ferocity! Rev. Robert N. Anderson, of Virginia, thus addresses "the Sessions of the Presbyterian Congregations within the bounds of the West Hanover Presbytery:—

"At the approaching stated meeting of our Presbytery, I design to offer a preamble and string of resolutions on the subject of the use of wine in the Lord's Supper; and also a preamble and string of resolutions on the subject of the treasonable and abominably wicked interference of the northern and eastern fanatics, with our political and civil rights, our property and our domestic concerns. You are aware that our clergy, whether with or without reason, are more suspected by the public than the clergy of other denominations. Now, *dear Christian brethren,* I humbly express it as my earnest wish, that you *quit yourselves like men.* If there be any stray goat of a minister among you, tainted with the blood-hound principles of abolitionism, let him be ferreted out, silenced, excommunicated, and left to the *public to dispose of him in other respects.*

"Your affectionate brother in the Lord,

"ROBERT N. ANDERSON."

Mr. Birney is far enough from thinking lightly of the institutions and arrangements, through which Christianity asserts its authority and extends its influence. He regards them with a hearty love—they have his countenance and support. In the exertions he feels impelled as a philanthropist to make, he relies upon Christianity for encouragement and success. He has no hope, that his country will forsake the sins, renounce the follies, and escape the miseries, he so deeply deplores, through any other influence than the power of the gospel. Upon this, therefore, his strongest and most cherished hopes are fastened. But it is the substance and not the shadow, on which he so affectionately and confidently

relies. The living energy of Truth, embodied and applied in Christian institutions—expressed in forms adapted to the various relations of life;—this, *this* it is, that amidst his labors and trials, he reverently invokes,—upon this, *this alone* he gratefully depends. When, therefore he sees, as with his open eye he can not but see, a lifeless Sham usurping the name and the place of a live-giving Reality, his indignation is aroused, he is filled with painful apprehensions. He resolutely strips the baptized fiction of its disguises, that his countrymen may see how ugly and how impotent it is, and betake themselves at once and earnestly to the power, from which alone they are entitled to expect redemption. Hence the pages from which we have been making a few extracts.

On his return recently from England, President Kellogg, of Illinois, briefly described the impression, which was left there by Mr. Birney's visit. Mr. Kellogg's words afford a gratification, to which our readers are entitled.

"It was truly refreshing to me while I was in Great Britain, amid the many complaints against my countrymen to which I was obliged to listen, to hear our excellent friend, James G. Birney so frequently spoken of, and always in terms of unqualified approbation and respect. The mention of his name in those circles in which he was known, and they were both numerous and extensive, invariably imparted pleasure, and many were the inquiries which were made in respect to his welfare. I could not but observe that intelligent men both in England and Scotland very highly appreciated him for that trait in his character, which I have always from my first acquaintance with Mr. Birney, regarded as exhibited by him in a remarkable degree. You will doubtless understand me as referring to his candor. He never deals in exaggeration or sophistry. In his public addresses and discussions, which were numerous, in that country, as well as in his private conversations, by the sobriety of his own views, by the fairness and fullness with which he stated the positions and arguments of his opponents, and by the manliness with which he met and refuted them, he ever impressed his auditors with a conviction of the soundness of his sentiments and of the perfect reliance which might be placed upon his statements. The visits of such men to foreign lands, are an honor to our country, and leave behind them a savor which is grateful to an American citizen."

Within the sphere of politics, the abolitionists had belonged to no one party, exclusively. In their views and measures and cherished preferences, they differed widely from

each other on many points in political economy and the science of government. But the regard, which they cherished, one and all, for the fundamental principles, to which our government is professedly adjusted, bound them together in one brotherhood. The principles, which united them, they regarded as every way superior in significance and power, to the opinions which divided them. In promoting the sublime objects, to which as the friends of Freedom they were all devoted, they felt, that they had the strongest claims on each other's sympathy and assistance;—claims, which must be yielded to, whatever might become of the comparatively petty things, which characterized the political parties, with which they had respectively acted. They resolved, therefore, to give their suffrages only to such candidates for office, as would pledge themselves to subserve at any position, to which they might be elevated, the welfare of the oppressed—as would exert themselves to remove from the necks of our unhappy countrymen the yoke of slavery. And where this pledge was given by one candidate and withheld by others, all seeking the same office, he was looked upon as entitled to the support of the abolitionists around him, though belonging to a party to which they had been opposed. Hence arose the habit, maintained for some time by the abolitionists, of questioning the various candidates for office.

In occupying such ground, it is obvious, the abolitionists became a distinct party in politics. Without overlooking other subjects, to this also they were now intent on making an application of the principles, which lie at the basis of the anti-slavery enterprise. They no longer belonged to the parties, with which they had been connected. They had principles—they had a policy of their own—strongly characteristic—clearly distinguishing. They really, though somewhat indirectly, set up the candidates, whom, as a party they might be expected to support. These were to be selected from other parties; but selected with a marked and avowed reference to the principles, aims and measures, which characterized the abolitionists. They were then, and were admitted to be, a distinct political party.

Experiment and reflection, however, forced upon the abolitionists the painful conclusion, that they had adopted a mistaken and ill-advised policy. There was no want of answers to their questions. The music of fair promises was continually in their ears. This candidate and that;—O yes, if he were once elected to the office, for which his ambition

gaped, he would be sure *to do all he could* for the slaves. The word *could*, however, it was presently found, must be interpreted in the light of his party obligations! The characteristic policy of his party, must at whatever hazard or expense be adhered to; if consistently with that, any thing could be done for the cause of Freedom, he was willing to attempt it. *And it clearly entered deeply into the policy of every party, from which candidates for office were to be selected, to propitiate the favor—to secure the support of slaveholders.* Thus the conditions, on which the abolitionists offered their suffrages *were not*—COULD NOT BE *complied with.* The moment any one in office acted on their principles, he abandoned the party, by which he was elevated and to which he had sworn fidelity. Could he officially exert himself for the abolition of slavery, without offending every slaveholder in his party, and bringing down upon himself and upon his fellows a storm of wrath? What could come of urging questions on men, thus crippled and embarrassed? What were their pledges good for? What could be expected of one—OF ANY ONE, who was identified with a party, which *as a party* was confessedly under the control of the dark spirit of slavery? Instructed by experience, and enlightened by reflection, the abolitionists could not have held on to the policy of questioning candidates without betraying gross stupidity or deep hypocrisy.

The embarrassments, in which the abolitionists were thus involved, were the occasion of frequent and earnest discussions. The question to be answered was; shall we so change our policy, as to choose our candidates for office, not from slavery-ridden parties, but from among ourselves. On these shall our votes instead of being scattered abroad be concentrated? Shall we insist upon it, that those, who are to have our suffrages, shall fairly represent us—shall be controlled by our principles, hold our aims, employ our measures? Great numbers of *professed* abolitionists were too closely wedded to their parties to abandon them, thus decisively and openly, in honor of any principle, however sacred;—of any object, whatever might be its magnitude. Others were crippled with various apprehensions. They feared, that the abolitionists were too few and feeble, to enter with any prospect of success on a design, so comprehensive in its import, and demanding such unwearied activity, such large resources, and powers so vigorous and varied. They feared, that such a change in its characteristic policy would introduce dissention into the ranks of Freedom, and thus

reduce, and depress, and discourage. They feared, that ambition might kindle its fires in many a bosom, which had hitherto been free from its influence. Others again had lost their confidence in the institution of civil government, however it might be organized and maintained. They were disposed therefore rather to throw off the political responsibilities, they had hitherto sustained, than to add any thing to their weight and extent. Into this discussion the late MYRON HOLLEY entered with great earnestness. He brought his manly and well trained powers to bear upon it with marked effect. He was a wise and strong man; ready to obey the God's voice, which required him to let the light of his principles shine through his conduct, as clearly in politics as in any other sphere of responsibility. His was a logical mind, and his an eloquent tongue; he was able, therefore, to convince and persuade. He was thoroughly enlisted in the cause of Humanity, and therefore indefatigable in wielding his powers in so high a service. In a local convention in western New York, where his influence was deeply felt, James G. Birney was nominated as Freedom's candidate for President of the United States. In the spring of 1840, a general convention was held by the abolitionists in Albany, where the policy of independent nominations was fully determined on. Here, such men as Myron Holley, Elizur Wright, Jr., and Joshua Leavitt, were active and efficient in conducting their fellows to the conclusion, that a Liberty Party was the dictate of Wisdom — was imperiously demanded by the voice of Freedom. Here, James G. Birney was nominated to fill the highest station in the Republic.

How Mr. Birney would be likely to regard such a movement, might have been inferred from such paragraphs as the following, which flowed from his pen a few months before. "Our political movement, heretofore, may be compared to the wake of a vessel at sea—never increasing in length, no matter how many thousands of miles she may sail. But the present movement shows that we have discovered our mistake—that there is enough of life and spirit among us to attempt its correction—that we are willing to act as well as talk—to overshadow, with this great question, minor ones that have for a long time distracted portions of our friends and alienated them from each other—and that instead of resting satisfied with still longer committing our sacred cause to the hands of its enemies, or of mere partizans who, almost uniformly thus far, have either baffled, or befooled, or betrayed us, we have confidence enough in it and in our-

selves to take the *political*, as we have the other parts of it, into our own keeping and under our own management. I look on the independent party movement as proof, not only of the greater force and energy of the anti-slavery cause, but of its greater expansion; and I am not more surprised at it, than I would be, at seeing the young of a noble bird, grown too large for the nest, and feeling its strength and courage equal to the attempt, committing itself to the bosom of the air, and training its powers in the region of thunders and lightnings and storms."

In the month of May, just before he set sail for England, Mr. Birney signified his acceptance of the nomination, in a letter replete with wisdom, well worthy of the candidate for the office, for which he had been named. See how he disposes of the plea, so often urged and so widely effective, of "*other interests*," to justify the choice of unjust rulers—so unjust as impudently and remorselessly to sacrifice the dearest rights, and trample on the highest prerogatives of our common Humanity. "The 'other interests' here meant are such as relate to the pecuniary, commercial, agricultural and manufacturing condition of the country. It is not denied, that these are important interests, well meriting the protection of the government. But they are not the *highest* concerns of a government. The security of life—of liberty—of civil and religious privileges—of the rights of conscience—of the right to use our own faculties for the promotion of our own happiness—of free locomotion,—all these, together with the defense of the barriers and outposts thrown around them by the laws, constitute the highest concerns of a government. These, for the last six years, we have seen invaded one after another—the administration aiding in the onset—till the *feeling of security* for any of them has well nigh expired. A censorship of the mail is usurped by the deputy postmasters throughout more than half the country, and approved by the administration under which it takes place. The pillage of the Post-Office is perpetrated in one of our principal cities, and its contents made a bonfire of in the public square;—no one is brought in question for the outrage. Free speech and debate on the most important subject that now agitates the country, is rendered impossible in our national legislature; the *right* of the people to petition Congress for a redress of grievances is formally abolished by their own servants! And shall we sit down and dispute about the currency, about the sub-treasury or no sub-treasury, a bank or no bank, while such

outrages on constitutional and essential *rights* are enacting before our eyes? Shall we imitate the two wiseacres who disputed about the hire of the house till they were driven out of doors by the flames which were consuming it?

"The truth is, the government of the country is in the hands of the slave power. This has been the case ever since the triumph of that power on the 'Missouri question.' Since that fatal event, its dominion has been asserted with greater boldness, and it has been yielded to by the free States with the requisite submission. The North, in relation to the South, is as a conquered province—conquered by a power whose intrinsic strength in every respect is comparatively contemptible, but whose weakness is made strength by *union*. With united councils and concentrated vigor it has acted, and continues to act on the confiding and divided North. It has claimed every thing—the North has yielded every thing. Yet does the slave power fear the superior energies of the North; for well does it know, that if the North by any sudden and imperious act of domination should be aroused to *rebel*, the reign of the conquerors must be short. But they practice, and successfully too, the political tactics of the tyrant Lysander; where the lion's skin is too short, they eke it out with the fox's tail. Does the North become restive, and show signs of insisting on occasionally supplying the country with the first officer of the government. The slave power does not flatly refuse to grant what is thus half *demanded*. She only imposes the condition, that the candidate or candidates be such as she can *approve*—such as have given indubitable proof of their attachment to Southern institutions—such as are shameless enough, with the Declaration of Independence before their eyes, and a coffle of hand-cuffed slaves in view, to bow down to the dark spirit of slavery and swear eternal fidelity on its altars. Will she contend with the North at the hazard of losing her sway over it, for the empty honor of supplying a President from her own territory, as long as she can *choose her men* at the North? No: she has too much wisdom to engage in a game so foolish and unprofitable."

In alluding to the sacrifice of "inherent and constitutional rights" by "the most pernicious administration, with which the Republic had been cursed," Mr. Birney traces "the intolerable evil" to the pressure of a state necessity, which had chained the nation to the car of slavery. "It is not denied that Mr. Van Buren, in keeping faith with the slave power, has disregarded and trampled under foot the inherent and

constitutional rights of the people. Nor is it intended by any thing that has been said to plead for his re-election. Far from it. His administration has been decidedly the most pernicious with which the Republic has been cursed. But the fact that it has been so, only proves the greater ascendancy of the slave power, in the control of the government. A power whose chief interest (the slave system) is in direct antagonism to free institutions every where—whose Agriculture is desolation—whose Commerce is mainly confined to a crazy wagon and half fed team of oxen or mules as the means of carrying it on—whose manufacturing 'Machinery,' is limited to the bones and sinews of reluctant slaves—whose currency is individual notes always *to be* paid, (it may be at some broken bank,) and mortgages on men and women and children who may run away or die, and on land, which without them is of little value: such a power is certainly not the most competent to manage the affairs of a government based on the everlasting truth, that all men are created free and entitled to their liberty, and to whose prosperity no bounds could be assigned if the elements of it were but left free and unfettered."

The folly of persisting in the effort to unite Freedom and slavery into a living, self-consistent unit, he thus pointedly exposes. "The conclusion of the whole matter is, that, as a people, we are trying an experiment as unphilosophical in theory, as it has been, and ever will be, found impossible in practice: to make a harmonious whole out of parts that are, in principle and essence, discordant. It is in vain to think of a sincere union between the North and the South, if the first remain true to her republican principles and habits, and the latter persist in her slaveholding despotism. They are incapable, from their natures, of being made *one*. They can no more be welded together into one body of uniform strength and consistency, than clay and brass. They may, it is true, be pressed together and made to cohere by extraneous appliances; and the line of contact may be daubed over and varnished and concealed: but the first shock will make them fall asunder and disclose the fact, that there never was any real incorporation of the substance. A huge oligarchy, as the South is, made up of a multitude of petty despotisms, acting on the principle that men are *not* created equal—that a favored *few* are born, ready booted and spurred, to leap into the saddles with which the backs of the *many* are furnished by nature—such a government, I say, when brought by circumstances into close juxtaposition

and incessant intercourse with republics acting on principles diametrically opposite, must soon be brought to modify, and eventually to relinquish its principles and practices—or, *vice versa*, the republics must undergo a similar change, and assimilate themselves to the practices of the despotisms. One or the other must, in the end, gain the entire ascendancy."

Again. "The same system of legislation never can be successfully applied to two communities, or parts of a nation, differing as widely in principle and practice, as the North and the South. Legislation *intends* to act beneficially on the *labor* of a country. Where that labor is partly free and partly slave, the same legislation can not be made beneficial to both. The protective Tariff is an instance of this. The proposition for the Tariff came first from the South. The efficiency of slave labor—the only labor to which southern politicians were accustomed—was doubtless one of the data, by which its benefits were estimated. But when the impulse of the Tariff legislation was given—as it necessarily was—to the *whole* of the labor of the country, what was the consequence? Just this—that the *free labor* so far outstripped the *slave labor*, as utterly to dishearten those who had looked to the latter, and make them believe that the system which seemed so replete with benefits, *before it was tried*, was absolutely injurious to them: whereas it was but relatively so. The South then cried out for its repeal or modification. This was accorded to them of course. Such must be the issue of all legislation which gives a new impulse to the mass of labor, in a country where that labor is partly free and partly slave. Ill success in the competition produces discontent, and clamors arise on the part of the monopolists of slave labor for a repeal of the laws—although they may have accomplished all that was expected of them, so far as the free labor of the country was concerned."

The secret of the derangement in our "monetary affairs" is thus laid bare. "Mr. Van Buren is greatly blamed for the low and deranged condition of the monetary affairs of the country, for the last three years. But this is to place the blame on one of the *consequences* and not on the *cause*. The blame has not been fixed at the right point; it ought to be, placed to his consenting, as a citizen of a republic, to become the instrument of the slave power. For what can a free, republican and commercial State look for, but confusion and ruin, when they entrust their affairs to a people without commerce, without manufactures, without arts, without industry; whose whole system of management is one of ex-

pense, waste, credit, and procrastination? Look at the Florida war for proof. Nearly $40,000,000 has already been expended in this enterprise, the object of which, (*to break up a refuge for runaway slaves,*) is as useless to us as a nation, as the manner in which it has been conducted is disgraceful to our honor. How far the power, which impels the administration, respects commerce, may be seen in the case of Hayti. That Island the largest of the West India group except one, teeming with the most valuable products, and wanting what we can furnish, has heretofore yielded us a valuable trade, and is still ready to do so, provided our commercial intercourse can be conducted on terms of mutual benefit and dignity. Hayti now contains a rapidly increasing population of about 1,200,000, and is capable of easily sustaining four or five times that number.—All the commercial advantages which we might now enjoy, and the increase of which hereafter we might secure by the most ordinary civility, are about to be sacrificed to the slave power. The Haytians achieved their Independence as our forefathers did ours—by *rebellion*. They have, at sacrifices and self-denial almost incredible, maintained it; but they are black, and to treat a nation of blacks as *free*, would lead the slave of the South into some knowledge of his dignity as a man. Therefore it is that this valuable channel of commerce is about to be closed."

In the ensuing election, it is not to be denied, that great numbers, who had been reckoned abolitionists, were borne away by the popular frenzy to the support of names, pledged to the support of slavery, and, of course, most unworthy of the suffrages of freemen. Why describe the expedients, which were employed to secure the election of General Harrison? What else could the recital awaken in any generous bosom than shame, sorrow, indignation? But amidst the wide-spread defections, by which the ranks of professed abolitionists were thinned, some seven thousand voters refused to "bow the knee to Baal."

In the spring of 1841, the nomination of Mr. Birney was renewed.—During his residence at New York and before his visit to England, Mr. Birney was called to close the eyes of his wife. We have seen from the pen of one of her sons —a son, worthy of the name, he bears—a touching testimony to the excellence and beauty of her character. She was the mother of eleven children, six of whom remain to cherish as a sacred thing her memory. Her health was feeble for many years; but trusting in God, as she did, she carried

about with her a brave heart, which sustained her amidst her multiplied trials. For could the wife of James G. Birney, beset as he often was with perils, be a stranger to tribulation? "Her husband," so her son gratefully testifies, "ever found in her a helper in every noble work. And in all the experience of domestic life, he always addressed her in the language of respect mingled with affection." To this he adds; "among her last words to me when I parted with her for the last time was an admonition to stand by my father in the cause of the slave."—In the spring of 1841, Mr. Birney became connected with his present wife—a lady of great worth—a cherished member of the family of Fitzhugh. After visiting his native State, he took up his residence at Saginaw, his present home, in the State of Michigan.

Mr. Birney was nominated anew by the Convention, greatly distinguished for its numbers and dignity, held in the summer of 1843 at Buffalo. In reply to the official notice of this, which he received in a letter from Judge King, of Ohio, he had occasion to examine the claims of John Q. Adams to the confidence of the abolitionists. He disposes of these claims with his accustomed candor, courage and power. The course of Mr. Adams in relation to the "anti-slavery agitation in Congress," he thus characterizes. "His course, in my judgment, has been eccentric, whimsical, inconsistent; defended in part by weak and inconclusive, not to say frivolous arguments; and taken as a whole thus far, is unworthy of a statesman of large views and a right temper in a great national conjuncture." He then proceeds by an induction of particular facts to illustrate and confirm this general judgment. He shows clearly enough, that while Mr. Adams on various occasions had professed a deep and lively sympathy with the abolitionists, he had opposed their designs at every point where they were distinguished from other classes of their fellow-citizens. On grave occasions they had in violation of their own established rules put confidence in his *words* in the face and eyes of *deeds*, which flatly contradicted them! Those for whose especial benefit they were intended will not be likely soon to forget the lessons, which the following paragraphs were designed to inculcate.

"This departure from the rule in Mr. Adams' case, has been followed by the consequences that usually attend, either directly or indirectly, departures from rules that have been deliberately adjusted for the management of large affairs. The abolitionists, in electing Mr. Adams, made him *their*

own witness—hoping like an eager but an inexperienced litigant; that his testimony would be favorable to them, because he was heard to speak freely of the general bad character of their adversary. But the upshot of the matter is, that every thing that is *substantial* in his testimony is favorable to their adversary.

"To *them* he gives 'words—words—words!' The effect has been as it always is in such cases.

"Do the abolitionists assault slavery in Florida—in the District of Columbia?—*there* is Mr. Adams, the main reliance of their adversary, placed in his position of power by abolitionists—playing 'fast and loose,' at pleasure, between the contending parties—amusing the one with speeches and letters against slavery, all very interesting and eloquent to be sure, but *serving* the other day and night, defending the 'Citadel' of their abominations.

"Do the abolitionists labor so to correct public sentiment that Congress possessing unlimited discretionary power in the premises, shall be persuaded to refuse Florida admission into the Union as a slave State? Mr. Adams is unceasingly impressing on the public mind, that this would be a breach of the national faith.

"Do they toil to produce the general conviction that slavery can not long withstand the influence of a fast rising public sentiment against it? Mr. Adams, in his cold response to the warm greetings of the colored population of Cincinnati, assures us that 'as long as Africa encourages slavery, it is impossible to put an end to it in America.' And, as if to extinguish in the colored people all hope of an event in which they more than any other class of our population, are especially interested, adds:

"'How this can be done I do not pretend to say. It is not the nature nor the right of our government to interfere with the right of any foreign country, not even the government of Africa.'

"The abolitionists insist on *immediate* emancipation as the most practicable and safest mode of emancipation for all parties. Mr. Adams despatches it as 'a moral and physical impossibility.'

"They affirm at a convention, the largest and most deliberately called together of any they have yet held, that the law of God is the Supreme law; that whenever human laws, no matter with whatever solemnities enacted, come in conflict with it, or aim to set it aside, they carry with them no obligatory force; are VOID. Mr. Adams, on the heel of

that convention, and on the most public occasion he could make, affirms that 'the force of moral principle is and must be transgressed by the conventional rules of human society' —thus superseding the laws of the Creator by the enactments or usages of his creatures.

"For the logic by which Mr. Adams, after asseverating in almost every variety of form our language can supply, that no laws can confer or sanction *property in human beings*, has arrived at the conclusion, that this barbarian, brutal usurpation ought to be endured at the heart of the government until the wrong-doers voluntarily relinquish their hold on their victims; that Florida ought to be admitted into the Union, with a slaveholding constitution—as if an immunity to annihilate the inalienable rights of the weaker portion of society were an essential element in our republican forms of State government; that immediate emancipation in this country is a moral and physical impossibility—in view of the instances of its success on this continent, with which Mr. Adams must be familiar—that slavery must first be abolished among the Mahomedan and Pagan chiefs of Africa, before it can be possible to put an end to it in Christian America—for such logic, I say I can entertain but little respect.

"And believing as I do, that 'there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord,' that no people can be permanently prosperous or happy who in heart or practice deny His right to reign on earth among men; and that all attempts to persuade them that they are but types of politico-infidel empiricism—believing this, I can entertain no higher respect for the ethics of Mr. Adams than I have expressed for his logic; but do wholly repudiate any and every code founded on the pernicious error that the commandments of God may innocently or advantageously be 'transgressed by the conventional rules of human society.'

"Mr. Adams owes much of his present popularity—may I not say, nearly all—to his connection with the anti-slavery agitation. Abolitionists have contributed more than any other class of persons, to swell the tide of his influence. That influence is now active in fortifying against them every practicable point at which they have attacked slavery in this country; and his *quasi* sympathy with them gives to it an independent and unusual force. There is no one who is doing so much—I assume not to say, it is so *intended*—to deaden the awakening sensibilities of our countrymen against the private iniquity and public disgrace of slavery, as Mr. Adams—so much to reconcile them to forbearance with a sys-

tem which that gentleman oftener and more vehemently than any other statesman among us, has branded as against justice —humanity—nature—the laws of God; and as 'deadly disease,' before which the Union will fall, if *it* fall not before the Union."

Last winter, "a large meeting was held in Pittsburgh, to consider the subject of the annexation of Texas. A committee was appointed to correspond with *all* those citizens, whose names are before the public as candidates for the Presidency, and ask of them an explicit declaration of their views on the subject of annexation." The reply of Mr. Birney is eminently characteristic. It is directly and wholly to the purpose. The convictions of the writer are described definitely and clearly;—without ambiguity or disguise.—The argument is as beautiful as it is compact and conclusive. The whole paper is a just and striking specimen of genuine statesmanship;—such as is alone adapted to the exigencies, on which our country is thrown.—The bearing of the question on the Constitution is thus happily disposed of. Surely if Mr. Birney is a "man of one idea," it sheds a clear and certain light on a great variety of objects, in the sphere of our relations.

"In complying, as I cheerfully do, with the request—to your first interrogatory, '*Would the proposed annexation be constitutional?*' I answer in the negative.

"Our government is strictly one of delegated authority. The 'powers' imparted to it are carefully described and embodied in the Constitution. None of them authorizes the government, in any way, to accept of a cession of foreign territory. So far from it, they bear no relation, nor do they contain the slightest allusion to such an event.

"I do not forget that Louisiana and Florida, once foreign territory, were annexed to the Union; but the President who projected and consummated the purchase of the former, both knew and acknowledged whilst he was negotiating it, that it was unauthorized by the Constitution.

"Nor am I unaware that some among us, of high authority in such matters, maintain that, as the Constitution confers on the government the power of making treaties, it consequently confers the power to acquire territory by treaty. This is a two edged sword: for if the power to make treaties carry with it the incidental power to *acquire* without stint, territory of other nations, equally does it carry with it the power to *cede* without stint, the territory we already possess, to other nations. If we adopt the construction, that the treaty

making *department* is not to be limited by the 'powers' imparted by the people to the *government*—then may whole States be transferred to other sovereignties—then is the integrity of the Union—nay, our political existence itself, in the hands of a President and two-thirds of a quorum of the Senate.

"I am not averse to a liberal construction of the powers of the government, whenever the objects sought are plainly allowed in the Constitution. But when they are unknown to the Constitution, the liberal construction which becomes necessary to authorize them, is but another name for usurpation.

"It ought never to be lost sight of, that in this country the sovereignty, in substance, as well as in name, abides with the people; that the powers of the government are but emanations or portions of that sovereignty imparted to such of the citizens as may be duly called to administrative functions; and that these powers, whilst they are to be exercised solely for the general welfare, must not be exercised at random, but within the limits marked out by the people themselves in the Constitution. Should experience prove that these limits are too narrow, the people on being duly resorted to, will, through their own instrumentality, the States, enlarge them as they may deem it expedient. Mean time, the inconveniences arising from powers thought to be too much restricted, but which are susceptible of so complete a remedy, ought to be patiently borne with; for they are as nothing, when compared with the uncertainties, the disorders, the perils, the oppressions attending a government all at loose ends, vacillating and distracted by the varying opinions and conflicting theories of those who may successively be called to administer it. Governments without number have been brought to nought by what is called a liberal construction of their powers; but few have suffered loss by a rigid one. The liberal construction of to-day is not unfrequently made the ground-work of a more liberal, if not a licentious one to-morrow."

Aside, however, from the Constitution, Mr. Birney has grave objections to the annexation. They imply, as he describes them, far-reaching and comprehensive views as well as true magnanimity and warm benevolence. "To your second question—'Supposing it constitutional, would you be favorable to annexation on any terms?' I reply, I would not.

"The permanent success of a government must have

some relation to the extent of its territorial limits. Whilst they may, doubtless, be too narrow for the highest development of national prosperity, so may they be too large. Without saying that *our* territory is too large, I say, it is large enough for all the just and useful purposes of government.

"I know no good reason why we should desire to have Texas united to us. The United States and Texas are not connected by large rivers watering both; nor are they separated from other nations by deserts, or by chains of mountains forming joint barriers of protection, and indicating that we ought to be ONE nation. If we desire annexation because she is conterminous with us, Texas once obtained, we shall, for the same reason burn for the annexation of Mexico; nor shall we be able wholly to quench our thirst but in the oceans which wash on all sides the continent we inhabit.

"So far am I from thinking the annexation of Texas would be beneficial to us, I wish she were re-united to Mexico, and that as one people, they were rapidly advancing to the highest grade of intellectual and political power. To have such a power on our borders—one whose character, and whose rights we could not help respecting—would most favorably affect us, as I think, in a variety of ways. One only I shall allude to; it would restrain that wild, buccanier spirit of adventure, unhappily existing to a great extent in our country; a spirit that is at war with all solid improvement and true civilization, and which, unless juster notions can be made to prevail, will soon begin to set at defiance the restraints of our own government, and render the condition of weak communities on our borders one of constant insecurity and alarm.

"As a private citizen, I would do all that I honorably could, to defeat the scheme of annexation. So would I in any other public station than the one to which your note refers. The President is a *department* of the government, and stands in an altogether peculiar relation to the country. 'Powers' are entrusted to him, not so much with a view to his dictating or even leading in any particular line of policy which wholly regards the ordinary pecuniary interests of the community, as to his being the conservator of the Constitution and of the honor of the government. Should he hesitate to use these powers to prevent a violation of the Constitution, or to resist the legislative bodies acting under the impulse of an inflamed constituency, misled and demand-

ing of the government what it would be manifestly unjust and dishonorable in the government to grant—as, for instance, the repudiation of a national debt, or a fraudulent evasion of the obligations of a treaty—he would prove himself unworthy of the high trust reposed in him. Such a President as Washington—caring much for his country, little for himself would in such cases, breast the torrent with *all* his constitutional might, trusting that, in due time, wisdom would be justified of her children. But, in matters *purely of expediency or policy*, the executive ought not to be expected to cherish the feeling, or manifest the pertinacity that is generally considered allowable, if not commendable, in individuals differently situated. His duty *then* is, to fall in with the wishes of the people, matured and embodied in the deliberations of their representatives, although their views may, in important respects, differ from his."

To the bearing of the question on *slavery*, Mr. Birney applies a powerful and practiced hand. The reader, who presuming that he already knows all about the matter, may be disposed to dismiss the following paragraphs with a hasty glance, we advise to pause a little. He may find himself greatly instructed and refreshed on ground, with which he had thought himself familiar. "My answer to your third and last inquiry—'*Would you be willing to receive it as a slave territory?*'—may be anticipated generally, from what I have said in answer to your second inquiry. But I trust you will receive indulgently a brief explication of my views on this subject:

"I allow not to human laws, be they primary or secondary, no matter by what numbers, or with what solemnities ordained, the least semblance of right to establish slavery, to make property of my fellow, created, equally with myself, in the image of God. Individually, or as political communities, men have no more right to enact slavery, than they have to enact murder or blasphemy, or incest or adultery. To establish slavery is to dethrone *right*, to trample on *justice*, the only true foundation of government. Governments exist not for the destruction of liberty, but for its defense; not for the annihilation of men's rights, but their preservation. Do they incorporate in their organic law the element of *injustice?*—do they live by admitting it in practice? Then do they destroy their own foundation, and absolve all men from the duty of allegiance. Is any man so besotted as, for a moment, to suppose that the slaveholder has an atom of right to his slave; or that the slave has rest-

ing on him an atom of obligation to obey the laws that enslave him, that rob him of every thing—of himself?—No one: else why do all just men of all countries rejoice, when they hear that the oppressed of any country have achieved their liberty, at whatever cost to their tyrants?

"On this ground, were there no other, I should say, we can not receive Texas as a slave territory. We have no right to *continue* chains which we have no right to forge or to impose.

"But there are other grounds:—the Constitution of the United States does not permit the organization or the continuance of slavery on domain brought within its exclusive jurisdiction. None of the specified powers authorize the establishment of slavery; nor is its establishment necessary or proper for carrying into execution any of these powers.

"Again: Two of the objects of the government set forth in the preamble of the Constitution are, *to establish justice, and to secure the blessings of liberty*, in the land. With justice and liberty, slavery is wholly incompatible. All men so regard it. What then, shall we do? Shall we so interpret the silence of the Constitution on this matter as to make it outweigh the establishment of justice, and the perpetuation of the blessings of liberty, those high aims of the Union, *expressed* in the directest terms? Surely not.

"But, admitting that, on constitutional grounds, no valid objection can be made against the acquisition of foreign territory; who does not know, that every institution, law, usage or custom existing in the acquired territory, inconsistent with the fundamental principles of the government making the acquisition, ceases at the moment of annexation, as a matter of course. This is so plainly the instruction of common sense as to call for nothing but the mere statement of it. Thus, when the District of Columbia was ceded to the United States, the slavery then existing within it, being irreconcilable with fundamental objects of the government, *the establishment of justice and the perpetuation of liberty*, became extinct the moment the transfer was made. There was not—there is not—there can not be, a slave within the District of Columbia, without totally disregarding not only the spirit but the letter of the Constitution. The legislative indirection by which slavery was continued in the District after the transfer, was a device wholly unworthy the representatives of a people who had just adopted such a Constitution as ours. Could the question of the *constitutionality* of slavery in the District be submitted to a competent tribunal

—one not made up of actual slaveholders and others under the bias of slavery—there could not be a moment's doubt as to the character of the decision. Before such a tribunal, the slavery side of the question would be too bald for argument.

"So, too, in regard to the slavery that existed in Louisiana and Florida, at the time of their transfer to the United States. But it was determined on by our rulers that *it* should be sustained.—With that view, as the most feasible device, provision was made in the treaties of purchase for securing to the then resident slaveholders of these territories their *right* (?) of continuing to hold their slave property. By what authority? No *power* had been imparted by the people, (admitting, for argument's sake, that they *could* impart such a power,) to the government itself, or to any department or office of it, to establish or continue slavery within her exclusive jurisdictional domain. To infer from the silence of the Constitution in regard to slavery as a national-government-concern, with full knowledge, too, that *deliberation* on this subject engaged the attention of the convention;—to infer, I say, from this silence, that the people intended to clothe the President and two thirds of a quorum of the Senate with authority to introduce slavery into the government, and this, too, knowing, as we do, that *justice* and *liberty* had been placed as sentinels in its vestibule, would not only be absurd, but eminently disrespectful to the very source of all constitutional authority. Had Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Monroe accepted treaties providing for securing their peculiar privileges and immunities to an order of nobility or a religious establishment that might have existed in Louisiana and Florida when they were respectively ceded, they would not, in so doing, have shown a more wilful disregard of the Constitution, and of the people, by whose authority it was made, than they did in spreading the mildew of this accursed system over the largest and fairest portion of our national domain.

"To this twofold violation of the Constitution, in the act of acquiring territory and in the provision made for the permanency of slavery, a third, of kindred complexion with the last, may be added. Instead of confining the operation of the treaties to the cases of the resident slaveholders of Louisiana and Florida, the only ones provided for, the slaveholders of the States were allowed, without restraint, to introduce their slaves into those territories. From the first, this was permitted under our slaveholding executives, and it has been persisted in so long without being interrupted or even

questioned, that Louisiana and Florida slavery, as parts of the whole system, are now considered to be as firmly established, ay, and as lawfully too, as is the slavery of Georgia or of South Carolina, under their respective black codes.

"The unauthorized purchase of Louisiana must be regarded as, in its consequences, the most disastrous event for our country to be found in its political history. In saying this, I neither forget nor underrate the advantages of the acquisition, in a merely territorial point of view. But might not those advantages have been as certainly secured, without bringing on ourselves the odium and the ills which we are now suffering, from having extended and strengthened the empire of slavery? Would not the people, on being properly appealed to, have so amended the Constitution as to have authorized the acquisition, whilst they carefully guarded against the continuance and diffusion of slavery in that vast region, out of which three slave States have already been carved?

"Next to the purchase of Louisiana, in calamitous consequences to the country, was the admission of Missouri into the Union, as a slave State. Into this struggle the slave-power entered with a fierceness that did not seem to characterize it in former times. But it did not forget—it never does—to eke out the lion's skin with the fox's tail. That struggle, in which, too, treachery in the North did its part but too well, issued in the complete triumph of the enemies of the Constitution. Its friends, vanquished, betrayed, retired discouraged from the field. From that time till the present, the government has been swayed by men who show, in the enslavement of their fellow-men, how heartily they despise the truths of the Declaration of Independence; by men whose lives are but the expression of the coarse, barbarian contempt with which every claim of humanity, and every principle of just and equitable government may be spurned and trampled on in the face of God and man.—Their power, too, has been exercised in the same insolent spirit of overseership that marks brutal rule at home over the ragged starvelings of their rapacity and avarice. The free States send their members of Congress to Washington to be overawed, corrupted and despised. The venal orators and declaimers of Athens, who sold themselves and their country to Philip, were not looked on with supremer contempt by their supercilious purchaser, than are the betrayers of the North by their slaveholding overseers, when driving them to their daily task of official meanness and servility.

"Such is the condition of our affairs now—one for which we have been prepared, mainly by the two annexations that have already taken place, and by the admission of Missouri into the Union. It is a sad condition—but not devoid of hope. For again are the friends of the Constitution and of universal liberty rallying, and fast swelling the ranks of a party in whose success lies, as I firmly believe, the only reasonable ground of hope for the rescue of the Republic from its most dangerous and most insidious foe. Already is it evident, that the constancy, and energy, and activity of the Liberty Party are not without some of their proper fruits. The sagacious begin to discover that the slave power has met with an adversary more formidable than any it has yet had to cope with—that confusion and despondency are showing themselves among the leaders of its battalia;—that the rescue of the government from that dark power, and the crowning blessing of our holy struggle, *its utter and everlasting overthrow*, shall, at no very distant period, cause the song of praise and thanksgiving to ascend from all the borders of the land to HIM in whose might we have fought, and who has given us the victory. At such a time, in such a crisis to receive Texas as a slave territory would be a grievous event to be added to the already unhappy catalogue of events of kindred character, that have been used to establish injustice in the land, and to perpetuate the evils of the most abominable tyranny that man has ever usurped over his fellow man."

We have said, that the selection of James G. Birney, by the Liberty Party as their candidate for the presidency, was marked by great wisdom. The more carefully his character is studied the more evident will that appear.

The *standard* to which he avowedly adjusts his aims and exertions, demands our earliest attention. If that be false, we have in no case a right to expect sound character. On what grounds can healthful legislation be expected of rulers, who unblushingly declare, that "the force of moral principle MUST be transgressed by the conventional rules of human society?" Who thus openly avow their allegiance to the grand usurper? And form themselves on the model of his character? For this clearly is a declaration of war in the name of the Devil against the "only Potentate"—the source and soul of all rightful authority. Whereever the arrangements of human society are adjusted to this declaration, and especially governmental arrangements, there loose reins are thrown upon the neck of passion, and evil under every form

may be expected to luxuriate.—But to no such declaration can Mr. Birney subscribe. The God, in whom he believes is no "rhetorical flourish," adorning his creed without touching his heart and controlling his conduct. *He* is a KING, wise and powerful, to whose authority it is our highest privilege to bow, not merely in the catechisms, we may recite; the sermons, we may preach; the psalms, we may sing, but especially in our aims, exertions, and expectations. Every demand of His law, Mr. Birney regards *as a duty*, to whatever relation it may be applied—on whatever occasion it may be asserted; and duty with him is a sacred thing, not merely to be eloquently discoursed of, but to be *faithfully done;* and this no more in private than in official life. It is his conviction —a conviction, which he is not ashamed on the gravest occasions to express, "'that there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord'—that no people can be permanently prosperous or happy, who in heart or practice deny His right to reign on earth among men. He wholly repudiates any and every code founded on the pernicious error, that the commandments of God may innocently or advantageously be 'transgressed by the conventional rules of human society.'"

An affectionate regard for the Divine authority, cherished in a manly soul, is the root of every human virtue. It is the secret of sound character. Wisdom, Strength, Beauty; these are the natural fruits. Where this is, there you may find veracity, simplicity, modesty, candor; united with courage, decision, fidelity;—there you may find disinterestedness, generosity, and magnanimity. And we demand of those, who are best acquainted with him; for which of these qualities is not James G. Birney remarkable? In the prominent and characteristic transactions of his life, these qualities are beautifully blended. When convinced that slaveholding was in opposition to the Divine authority, what course did he pursue? Did he, still holding on to his property in slaves, try to satisfy his convictions by loud professions and empty declamation? And while riveting the yoke on the negro's neck, did he prove his regard for Freedom by inveighing against the oppressors of the Greeks and Poles? And when pressed hard with the glaring inconsistencies, by which such a course must be marked, did he take refuge in the distinction, the offspring of shallow brains and stony hearts, so dear to every hypocrite, *between the abstract and the practical?* Not he. He embodied his convictions in his doings. He applied his principles to the rela-

tions and objects, which lay in his own sphere of responsibility. He yielded to his slaves at once and cheerfully—"without money and without price"—the God-given prerogatives, which they had been deprived of. No compensation, not even applause, did he think himself entitled to. Having set them free, he gave them in acts of substantial kindness, the benefit of his wisdom and power—offering them counsel, affording them employment—assisting them in acting well their part in the new world, where he was at home and they strangers. And after years of reflection did he repent of the sacrifices he had made to Justice and Humanity? No indeed. At the settlement of his father's estate he placed upon the same altar a still more costly sacrifice. At his own expense, he raised all his father's slaves to the dignity of freemen. THAT WAS JAMES G. BIRNEY.

The freedom of speech and the liberty of the Press were assailed, rudely and malignantly; and assailed just there where the welfare of the Republic was most vitally at stake—where of course their unembarrassed exercise was most imperiously demanded. All our fellow citizens were thus brought to a test, by which their regard for their country was fairly tried. No man, who had a drop of healthful blood in his veins, would in any such case care a fig through what medium the stab was aimed at the heart of the Republic. It would be to be expected, that the cunning and remorseless tyrants, who would thrust a gag into their neighbors' mouths, would select for the experiment such as had for some reason or another been exposed to popular odium—such as without means of defense might easily be set upon by the rabble. But a true man would not permit himself to be thrown off his guard by an artifice so stale and pitiful. However and whereever his country might be assailed, he would come to the rescue; though in so doing he might be brought to the side of men, whose characters and designs he regarded with abhorrence. But how was it with our fellow citizens when they saw the freedom of speech and the liberty of the Press assailed? How, especially with those, who occupied the high places of the Republic—who were generally thought to be entitled to the strongest expressions of popular esteem and confidence? *Did* they come to the rescue? *They?* They were but too generally the assailants—the very traitors, who had formed a conspiracy to dip their parricidal hands in their country's blood. They were for free speech and an unfettered Press *in the abstract;* but *practically*, and especially where their own selfishness and

folly were by such means likely to be exposed, they were against all such prerogatives. Where, therefore, they did not, as in multiplied instances they did, lead on the thoughtless rabble here and there, to such acts of violence as might wrest away from their fellow citizens these inestimable rights and privileges, they regarded such enormities with secret satisfaction—refusing to lift a finger to vindicate the majesty and honor of the Laws, which they saw trampled under foot. Such was their regard for what they themselves pronounced essential to the welfare of their country.—But so it was not with James G. Birney. He rushed in between his country and the knives, which assassins were aiming at her bosom. The rights, which he saw invaded, he was resolved to defend in the sphere of his responsibilities; and to defend at any price—at all hazards. Without the liberty of speech and of the Press, he knew full well, that Freedom would be an empty name and nothing more. If he might not *live* a freeman, a freeman he could *die*. That was a privilege, which the worst times could not wrest away. See how erect he stands amidst the cut-throats, by whom he was surrounded both in Kentucky and Ohio — wretches, who bade him hold his tongue or submit to lawless violence.— How calm, collected, dignified. He holds on his way impelled and sustained by conscious rectitude, and leaves his enemies to digest their spleen, and execute their threats according to their ability. To such men, and such men alone may we safely confide the keeping of those rights and privileges, which are the life-blood of the Republic.

With the shattered remains of an estate, greatly reduced by the sacrifices, which he had made to Justice and Humanity, Mr. Birney finds himself at home on a farm, on the very confines of civilization in Michigan. Many men there are, who speak well of *manual labor in the abstract*. What attitudes and gestures, when they open their eloquent lips, in praise, say of the *Ashland farmer!* But when did their hero ever touch manly toil in any form—when did he ever thus soil one of his lady-like fingers? He, and such as he, are farmers, who live daintily on the unrequited labors of the poor —who shamelessly force the sweat-drenched, heart-broken operative, to reap their fields without even a hope of remuneration!— The *farmer of Saginaw* honors manual labor after quite another fashion. He applies his own manly muscles to it, and "eats his bread through the sweat of his brow." Let his example in this respect attract general imitation and slavery must disappear at once and forever.

Hitherto our countrymen have committed *their financial interests* to those, who blast whatever they may touch in the whole sphere of Political Economy; who have reduced large portions of the soil to sterility and desolation; who have been the occasion of wide-spread bankruptcy; who are never more in their element than when busily engaged in making beggars and selling children. Their *liberties*, they have intrusted with those, who pronounce "slavery the corner-stone of the Republic;" decry the Declaration of Independence as a "rhetorical flourish;" and reduce to chattelship as many of their brothers and sisters, as they can lay their hands on! The *protection of their lives* they have expected at the hands of those, who commit murder on the slightest provocation and without the least symptoms of remorse; who would sacrifice hecatombs of men to a usage too absurd for any Bedlam to endure! They have all along been looking to see the interests of a sound morality a thriving under the influence of gross sensualists and shameless debauchees! As if a bad private character were the best of all pledges for good public conduct! What infatuation! When shall we, as a People, learn the lesson, which Wisdom itself has a thousand times repeated in our ears, that good men out of the good treasure of their hearts bring forth good things; and that evil men out of the evil treasure can be expected only to increase the power and extend the sway of evil? Thus taught, we shall be sure, whether we are many or whether we are few, so to wield the elective franchise as to promote our own improvement and our country's welfare. Thus taught, we shall welcome to our inmost hearts the claims, which men, distinguished for integrity, wisdom and power, are entitled to assert. This lesson once impressed upon the heart of this Republic, and such men as JAMES G. BIRNEY will occupy the high places of society, diffusing a healthful influence and scattering rich benefits all around. May the day soon dawn!