

# Grasping Reality with Both Hands

The weblog of Brad DeLong. Comments (mostly) welcome, or email me at [delong@hey.com](mailto:delong@hey.com) with "delong-weblog" as the subject.  
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## Patrick Henry: 'Would Any One Believe That I Am Master Of Slaves by My Own Purchase?'—Noted

Via Steve Marglin, Patrick "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death!" Henry: **Patrick Henry:** *To Antislavery Activist Joseph Alsop:* 'Is it not amazing that at a time when the rights of humanity are defined and understood with precision, in a country, above all others, fond of liberty—that in such an age and such a country we find men professing a religion the most humane, mild, meek, gentle and generous, adopting a principle [slavery] as repugnant to humanity as it is inconsistent with the Bible and destructive to liberty? Every thinking, honest man rejects it in speculation. How few, in practice, from conscientious motives!... Would any one believe that I am master of slaves by my own purchase? I am drawn along by the general inconvenience of living without them. I will not—I cannot justify it, however culpable my conduct. I will so far pay my devoir to Virtue, as to own the excellence and rectitude of her precepts, and to lament my want of conformity to them. I believe a time will come when an opportunity will be afforded to abolish this lamentable evil. Everything we can do, is to improve it, if It happens in our day; if not, let us transmit to our descendants, together with our slaves, a pity for their unhappy lot, and an abhorrence of Slavery. If we cannot reduce this wished-for reformation to practice, let us treat the unhappy victims with lenity. It is the furthest advancement we can make toward justice. It is a debt we owe to the purity of our religion, to show that it is at variance with that law which warrants Slavery... .#noted #2020-07-19

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