

MR. CHAIRMAN: The occasion presents itself, not simply, I take it, to drag from the obscurity of his daily life that moral and intellectual imbecile, who, by some 'hook or by crook,' occupies the place made vacant by the death of the notorious slave-catching Commissioner, Ingraham. It is no marvel, sir, that Paul Brown, Jr., should be made the puppet to be moved by another hand upon the chess-board upon which our rights are seemingly staked. Mr. Purvis here stated the fact that Brown, Sr., appeared during the trial of the case before the 'boy' Commissioner, countenancing the proceedings, and replied to an expression of regret that his son should occupy the place of Commissioner for such a purpose, that 'you will have an *honest man to administer the law.*' I hold responsible, as deserving largely of our condemnation, our *once* distinguished friend, David Paul Brown, *formerly* the able defender of the victim to American oppression, and who could boastingly say that 'no fee or reward,' other 'than the smiles of an approving conscience,' retained his services or efforts in his behalf. Mr. P. here went into a lengthened account of the services of Mr. B., giving him great credit for the noble services rendered to the black man and speaking of the generous returns of the coloured people by the presentation of some valuable plate, by unbounded patronage in his profession, and other evidences of grateful appreciation of what they deemed the promptings of a pure philanthropy. But, added Mr. P., we deal not with the Brown of the past, but with him of the present. Judas Iscariot was of the faithful twelve, who served his Master; the tempter came and he betrayed him. Benedict Arnold—a name which excites everywhere but one feeling of unmingled execration—stood

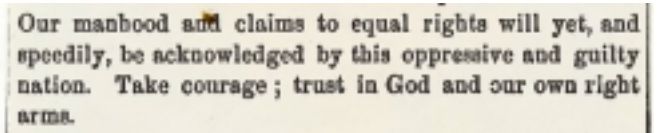
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high in the confidence of the American people, as an officer, a man and a patriot; a base purpose possessed him, and he bartered away the fair fame of a spotless reputation. The treachery of a Judas and an Arnold disclosed their infamy at once; speedy and lasting the reward that followed. That of Brown may be slower, but it is settled and determined. Mr. P. here alluded to Brown's indifference and refusal to attend slave cases—the disgraceful part he took in the late Presidential campaign—his abuse of the Republican candidate, and, finally, the use of his son as an instrument to execute that most diabolical enactment, the Fugitive Slave bill. After some other remarks, treating of the general aspects of the cause of freedom in our country, Mr. P. closed by saying: After all, Mr. Chairman, no betrayal of trusting confidence in any man should discourage us. We should be animated by the cheering signs of the times, not the least of which is to be found in the developed spirit of the black man, determined to be free. For my own part, I declare it to be the duty of the slave, when arrested, to settle the question of his God-given right to his liberty by a sacrifice of his life, allowing no man, however clothed by human authority, be he a poltroon U. S. Marshal or a contemptible, puerile Commissioner, to decide that question for him. The right to be free is his against all the powers upon earth. The idea of equal rights cannot be wrested from the soul of any man; no power so omnipotent as can destroy this essence of Divinity, which is inseparable from his nature. The holy ardour of inspiration may be smothered, lofty desires for valorous deeds annihilated, the spirit of the man may lie bruised, bleeding, humbled at the feet of a remorseless despotism; but still the living, ethereal spark which God has placed in the heart of man is there. The time for its full development is at hand.

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February 14, 1857
Purvis, Robert
National Anti-Slavery Standard

Our manhood and claims to equal rights will yet, and speedily, be acknowledged by this oppressive and guilty nation. Take courage; trust in God and our own right arms.



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