

My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I am tempted this evening to borrow a phrase from Scripture, and to say—viewing myself in reference to that great conflagration which our honored friend, Mr. Thompson, crossed the Atlantic to assist in quenching—I am a brand plucked from the burning. For it was the knowledge gained, amid discouraging difficulties, that there were such men as William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Frederick Douglass, and George Thompson, that first tempted my feet to stray out of the orthodox path of agony and anguish in slavery, and to find my way first to freedom in the North, and then to the shores of Great Britain, where I have found equality before the law, and where no wicked prejudice denies me the enjoyment of the obligations and privileges of a man. As our honored guest came a great distance to aid my people in the darkest hour of their anguish and despair, so I may say I have come a long distance to make my acknowledgments, in the name of four million slaves, for the eminent services which he has rendered to us by his resistless eloquence, and his manly consistency, through the sufferings and opposition of thirty years. He told the slaves, thirty years ago, that the heart of England sympathized with their sufferings; and I tell him now that the heart of Africa throbs with a warm and inextinguishable gratitude at the mention of the name of George Thompson; and when they have heard the mention of that name, they have felt and said, “By this sign we shall conquer!”

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lence. Before slavery became an idol, and the American nation became dumb in its worship, the voice of Washington, the father of his country, was heard declaring: "I can only say that there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do to see some plan adopted for the abolition of slavery; but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished, and that is by legislative authority; and this, as far as my vote can contribute to it, shall never be wanting." But from the death of Washington until the days of Garrison, this noble testimony slept beneath the infatuation which interest and ambition had created. In the early vigor of national independence, when slavery begged quarter of even politicians, the father of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson, said, "In the event of a conflict between master and slave, there is no attribute of the Almighty that can take sides with the oppressor. I tremble for my country when I remember that God is just." But this warning, which has outlived the din of battle and the noise of civil strife, had died away amid the luxuries wrung from human blood, and the softening licentiousness of secret places in slavery. And even as late as the establishment of the Constitution of the nation, James Madison, its father, said, "The dictates of the humane principles of the people—the national safety and happiness, and a prudent policy—require the abolition of slavery." But in the sudden and unlooked-for success in binding the States together, both the North and the South had buried this valuable testimony, until the labors of the abolitionists brought it to light. I have given you the opinions of these men to show you the strength of slavery. If it could si-

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lence the warnings of men like these, then no wonder if it scorned the labors of men like Garrison and Thompson, who refused to dabble in the dirty waters of its politics. But in how clear a light do these facts set the magnificent labors of the abolitionists, and how fully does this light dispel the error that the North is as pro-slavery as the South! True, the North was infatuated by the selfish witchery of slavery, and it is equally true that it took the perseverance of Garrison, the eloquence of Phillips, and the philanthropy of George Thompson to awaken it. But, after all, they did awaken it; and the fact only proves how strong the Puritan conscience is. The awakening of the North only produced a deeper and more violent infatuation in the South. We meet, my lord, to-night, to celebrate the breaking of that infatuation which I have imperfectly described. When the negro, bent beneath his weight of woe, turned aside to the great house of his master for sympathy, and found the shrine of slavery set up, flashing forth the fires of cruelty and vulgar passion; when he fled from thence to the courthouse for justice, and found that the spirit of slavery had taken the balances from the hand of justice; and fled from thence to the temple of God, to find mercy, and found, in all the agony of despair, that there, too, slavery had usurped the place of the minister, and was offering his children as a sacrifice to irresponsible power, he gave one long wail of anguish, and drew the sword of insurrection—commissioned Nat Turner as his champion, and spared neither age nor sex among his oppressors. Then it was that Garrison heard his cry, and, walking forth as the great Iconoclast of the nation, he knocked down the images which

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Beelzebub had set up. The voice of his forerunner, crying in a wilderness of unpopularity, was uttered in such sincerity and power, that it reached even this far-off island, and sunk with the tenacity of righteousness into the ear of a young man, whose mind had been illuminated by the genius of Clarkson, whose philanthropic sympathies had been kindled by the eloquence of Wilberforce, and whose character had been energized and directed by the perseverance and moral courage of Buxton; and that young man was George Thompson. Fresh from the labors which had awakened England from her sleep of guilt, and compelled her to wash her garments—all bespattered with the blood of 800,000 slaves—in a bath of gold, he set sail for America. He went to tell the American supporters of slavery what English people thought of them. Nothing else could have aroused them from their silence. When people have their infatuations broken, the first thing they do is to turn against those who have disturbed them in their guilty silence. I have seen a serpent with his eyes fixed on a squirrel. The little animal was insensibly drawn towards the crawling reptile which was seeking to devour it; the sensations the intended victim experienced, in the meantime, no doubt were of a pleasurable character. When I threw a stone at the serpent, and made it run away, and saved the life of the squirrel, the instant return I met with was, that it rushed at and tried to bite me. So with the Americans; those who endeavored to break their infatuation were the objects of their hatred. When Mr. Thompson came over to do good to them, they received him with showers of stones and rotten eggs; and they did everything they

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could to make his advocacy of emancipation ineffective. Thank God, however, that during these times of deviltry they realized the truth of a proverb, which was always true with respect to their slaveholding policy. "The devil is an ass." The slaveholding devil proved himself an ass when he dragged Garrison through the streets of Boston with a rope around his person. The gentlemanly ruffians in Boston, in their zeal for slavery, did not see that the rope with which they dragged the anti-slavery apostle through the streets bound him to his black brethren in slavery with a bond that could never be broken. When, again, Mr. Thompson was received with these demonstrations of hostility, when the devil excited the people to do so, he did one of the best things in the world to make Mr. Thompson known. He took the very best plan to let the people know that there was a young Englishman, in whose heart the flame of liberty was burning, the aspirations of whose soul were beaming through his countenance, just as the sun is seen to shine out through the heavens. The bad men went to the meetings to keep Mr. Thompson from speaking, and the good men went to see how the bad men would do the thing; and so it turned out, as we have heard in other instances, that many who went to scoff remained to pray. The press poured out its venom upon Mr. Thompson, and sent its printers' devil to break up his meetings; but even those devils were converted, and turned into saints. The politicians, as they listened to him, felt that he was weakening their political ties and social connections, and so they clamored and broke up his meeting; but there is always a true heart in England, and therefore

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it was not surprising to find amongst the descendants of Britons in New England a latent love of fair play. Two thousand five hundred men undertook to attack one man, and five thousand became his advocates. These men cared little for the slave, but they could not stand to see a man mobbed merely because he was exercising what English people and their descendants regard as their most sacred privilege—the right of free speech. They considered it was a proof that the system was weak, and that the man who was attacking it was strong; they saw that he was doubly armed, because he was clad in the panoply of truth.

Thus they were led to investigate the matter, which they otherwise would not have done; and the result of this work was, that in a short time the American Church, which had so long manifested the most perfect indifference to the condition of four millions of slaves within their own land, became agitated and began to shake. The members inside that Church began to demand reform of the silent or slavery-abetting policy, or, at least, they insisted upon some protest from the pulpit against the outrageous wrong. Then men appeared in the pulpit to do what Garrison and others had been so long doing out of it—crying aloud, and sparing not this wrong. From mere agitation, the Church was thrown into convulsions upon the subject. The first evidence we had of the powerful working of this anti-slavery leaven was a separation in the great Methodist Church of the United States, and the establishment of a Methodist Church North and a Methodist Church South. The first manifestation we had of the working of the anti-slavery gospel in the great Wesleyan body was a split on the question of slavery.

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Then similar separations took place, respectively, in the Presbyterian and Baptist Churches; men were not permitted to take the Lord's Supper at many Northern tables, because they were slaveholders and men-stealers.

It has always been a principle by which the blessed Savior has carried on his work in this world, that, whenever the Church becomes awakened, men become more thoughtful and more earnest as citizens. It was no wonder, therefore, that the political parties, after the Church was moved, should begin to be agitated; no wonder that the new power began to manifest itself in all their party "caucuses," as they are called in America, or meetings to organize efforts for securing political office. Then, by-and-by, the political parties began to split upon the slavery question. At first, the anti-slavery body was but a minority, associated under the name of "Free-Soilers." Their principle was to prevent the extension of slavery into the territories, but not to interfere with it where it then existed. But, however limited their anti-slavery doctrine might have been at first, they gradually grew louder and stronger in its expression, as men will always when the principles of almighty truth are set before them. These principles will assert themselves, despite all the impediments that may be thrown in their way. I have great confidence, as I have said, in that love of fair play which is an inherent quality in Englishmen; of that entire sympathy which they have with the good and the true, when their eyes are opened to the real state of the case; but I have still greater confidence in the power of the principles of almighty truth, which will assert themselves at all times, and in every place,

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I know that there are a great many people in this country who question the sincerity of the anti-slavery feeling in the North. They say that when a cause become popular, it enlists under its banner those who would otherwise be indifferent to it. But such is not the case in the North; the present state of anti-slavery feeling has been the result of influences which have been working for many years. Who are the

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supporters of the South on this side of the Atlantic, and what are their motives? There is one class of men in England who have been induced to advocate the cause of the South through ignorance; having been misled by certain newspaper correspondents, or letter-writers, who have written short epistles, but in which they have expressed themselves very badly. It is always the case that men who have the least to say will most probably say it in the worst possible manner. There is an old story which well illustrates this fact. An actor was playing Richard the Third, and all he had to say was, "Stand back, my lord, and let the coffin pass"; but when he came to repeat the sentence, he said, "Stand back, my lord, and let the parson cough." The political letter-writers in England have been taught their lessons badly, and they have made similar blunders to that of the actor. Then there is another class of people in this country, who advocate the cause of the South from interested motives. (Hear, hear.) Although they may be Commissioners from the South, or ship-builders for the rebels, or large Southern bond-holders, they would fain delude themselves into the belief that they are quite disinterested in their Southern proclivities. Men like to believe, whatever tortuous course they may take, that they are actuated at all events by a grain of conscience. An Irishman in Massachusetts had taken the pledge of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks. One very cold day, he was asked whether he would take something to drink. He replied, that he would take a little lemonade, which was brought to him. He said to a person giving it to him, "Could you not get a drop of the 'crater' into it

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Then there is another class of men in England who advocate the cause of the South through political envy of the free institutions of the Northern States. These persons are more to be pitied, perhaps, than the other two classes. They say that America has carried the doctrine of popular suffrage too far. They tell us, "We do not believe in a ballot-box which receives everybody's vote." Then, again, they complain that the North has gone to an excess in the doctrine of popular religion. "We do not believe in a religion," say they, "entirely supported by voluntary contributions." Then it is alleged that the Americans have carried the theory of voluntary national defences too far. They say that they do not believe in a government which depends upon such means for raising armies. No wonder, if in this hour of America's trial, the lovers of that slave system, which you once held, as lovingly as she has held it, would like to see a nation founded solely on principles of freedom fail in its efforts. Napoleon used to say, "Wherever my enemy wants me to go, there I shall not go. Wherever my enemy wants me to be, there I am sure not to be." Those who are in favor of free religious and political institutions, of universal suffrage and voluntary national defences, will know precisely where to go, from finding out where their enemies want them to be. If, however, these persons have spoken

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enviously, they have also spoken deceptively. Said an old man to his son, "My son, you are going into the law; when you find that the law is on the side of your opponent, then do you dwell on the justice of your case; but when you have a suit in which the justice is on the side of your opponent, then do you contend for the law, and maintain that it should be carried out under all circumstances." "Well, but, father," replied the son, "suppose I have a case in which both law and justice are on the side of my opponent, what am I to do then?" "Oh," rejoined the old man, "then you must talk round it." We have recently had splendid exhibitions of that kind of advocacy of the American question. There has been no end of "talking round it." The opponents of the North have never stated the American question honestly. They say that it is a mere dispute concerning taxation, between one part of the republic and another, in which we, as Englishmen, have no interest. "A mere question of taxation!" is it?

"The South seceded because they would not submit to protective tariffs," say they. Did she? Well, then, she ought to have left protection behind her, when the separation had taken place. Has she done so? When they divided, the tariff ought to have been entirely in the North, and free trade entirely in the South; but is it so? No; the South has got the very same tariffs now which she had when she was in union with the North. That, I think, is a pretty conclusive proof that secession has not, as it is said it has, arisen from a mere dispute about inequality of taxation.

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"The South seceded because they would not submit to protective tariffs," say they. Did she? Well, then, she ought to have left protection behind her, when the separation had taken place. Has she done so? When they divided, the tariff ought to have been entirely in the North, and free trade entirely in the South; but is it so? No; the South has got the very same tariffs now which she had when she was in union with the North. That, I think, is a pretty conclusive proof that secession has not, as it is said it has, arisen from a mere dispute about inequality of taxation.

I am glad to know that the name of George Thompson which was identified with the great movements in America, has been as much beatified, as it were, by his adhesion to right principles on this side of the water, as it has been on the other. I will close with this thought: It is a great pleasure to any man to reflect upon the fact, that he should have had the privilege of laboring most beneficently during the short span of the life allotted to man, in three separate nations. It is a high honor to any man to have had the opportunity of working for God, in breaking the material fetters that bind the body, in breaking the political fetters that bind people socially and politically, and in breaking the commercial fetters that held people under unjust laws and an unequal distribution of property. Mr. Thompson has been to America, where he has had hold of the hand of the tender, sympathetic, and loving negro. He has been to India, where he has looked in the face of its dusky Hindoo and Mohammedan inhabitants. He has been in his native land, where he has been face to face with the great beating heart of the masses of his countrymen, who are demanding admission to the privileges of the British Constitution. Any man who has done this, whatever may have been the misconception and misrepresentation of his enemies, has given mankind the most splendid proofs that he did it altogether from conviction, from principle, and not from sordid motives. Men who have such motives worm into the ground. They stand still when there is no money to be got by moving. But men who are animated by a love of God and man are ready to go anywhere in the furtherance of the great principles they have espoused. Their motto is, "My

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country is the world; my countrymen are all mankind." Although Mr. Thompson, when he first went to America, was mobbed on the very anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the West India Islands, yet, thank God! when he went back to Massachusetts, in 1850, the old Cradle of Liberty—Faneuil Hall—was rocked by the enthusiastic plaudits of at least two thousand of his anti-slavery children, who were anxiously awaiting his coming; so that, whilst we have got such proofs of our honored guest's sincerity, and of his devotion to great principles, we have also abundant evidence of his vast intellectual powers, and of the marvellous efficacy of his advocacy of the anti-slavery movement. I am here to declare, that with the colored people of America there is no form, when they look beyond their own native land—and they have not often had to look in despair to other nations for help—there is no form that rises higher, or catches more of the halo of heavenly benediction in their estimation than does the form of George Thompson. The American slave, when he looks over the roll of English abolitionists, can take up the words of Goldsmith, and apply them to George Thompson:—

"As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and mid-way leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

And when I look at the people who are now coming out of the house of bondage, who are struggling through the wilderness of slavery, where they have been called on to tarry so long, and from whence they are seeking to make their way to the Canaan of universal freedom, I can, with reference to them, take up

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the language of the same author and say:—

“And there the positive fugitive bent beneath his woe,
To stop too fearful, and too faint to go;
Casts a long look where England’s glories shine,
And bids his bosom sympathize with mine.”

(Loud cheers.)

