

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: – I rise to offer a resolution expressive of our high satisfaction in the noble efforts of the abolitionists of Great Britain and France, who, although they are separated from us by the width of an ocean, and by distinct political institutions, are nevertheless united with us in sentiment and exertion in the sacred cause of immediate and universal emancipation: and, Sir, whether we look at their position amongst the nations of the earth, the principles by which they seem actuated, or the measures which, in this cause, they have adopted, we have abundant reason to rejoice, and cannot but be thankful to Him who hath raised up for us in our time of need such devoted and efficient coadjutors.

With these two nations we are connected by ties of the closest amity, and enjoy greater reciprocal influence than with any others upon the globe. To these nations our struggle for independence gave the first impulse to the path of liberty, which, if they have trod with slower, they have trod with more consistent steps than we: for every step they have advanced, each measure they have gained, has been an advantage not only to themselves, but to all who are dependant on them. And whenever the people of Great Britain or of France have attained any portion of civil liberty, their first exercise of it has been to extend the precious boon to their fellow-subjects, held in the galling chains of West Indian Slavery. In the last century, the first Convention elected by the French people, immediately abolished slavery in two French colonies: and in the present, the passing of the British Reform Bill, has rapidly been followed by the abolition of British West Indian slavery. France, indeed, set the first, the most glorious and most instructive example. It was the most glorious example, because liberty was conferred without stint or restriction, without any lengthened delay to sicken hope, or purgatorial state to blast expectation; it was sudden and entire: the man who until yesterday had toiled in the field, and had known no other incentive to labor than the cartwhip, was to-day raised to the dignity and privileges of a citizen of the republic; the woman who until yesterday had sobbed over her youngling, and besought the grave to snatch it from the horror of existence, to-day held it towards the skies, and shrieked, He is free!

The example has proved most instructive, for when France again bent her neck to the iron yoke of a ruthless tyrant, and suffered her sons to be slaughtered at the altar of ambitious despotism, the men whom she had so suddenly liberated [were] themselves worthy of their freedom; for, against the veterans of Europe's [annexation] against an armament sent out by the empire which overwhelmed Nations amidst the loathing and scorn of a neighboring republic, and the cold and [awful tempest] of all nations, they have maintained their freedom, until now, when [amiable] and consistent France, inspired with the genius of modern abolitionism, [acknowledging] the independence of Hayti, completes the triumph which revo-

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lutionary France began. France, then, has been the first to grant [immediate] and entire emancipation, and the first to acknowledge the right and capacity of a community of freemen to rank among the nations of the earth. And although she (France) still holds 260,000 slaves in some of her dependencies, yet recent movements nearly akin to her pristine efforts, promise these a speedy liberation. At the session of 1837, M. Passy gave notice to the French Chamber of Deputies, that he would, in the ensuing session, bring forward, and take occasion to discuss, the question of emancipation of those slaves. When the next session arrived, that gentleman, in the fulfilment of his promise, brought forward a resolution to the effect that the children of slaves born after the promulgation of an act for the purpose should be free. After an able and interesting debate, which involved the whole question of slavery, not only was this resolution adopted, but the Deputies seemed very desirous that the gentleman should go still further, and propose a measure that might strike nearer to the root of the evil. M. Passy is the Vice President of the French Abolition Society, an association, by the way, which almost owes its existence to the remonstrances of the Glasgow Emancipation Society; and who can imagine the joy of his heart, when in presenting the resolution to the Legislature, doubtful whether they would even discuss the question to which it related, he found them not only willing for discussion, not only adopting his motion, but actually desirous to go beyond it! There was some opposition, certainly; and this, as usual, came from the ministry. Strange what a link there seems to be between ministry and slavery, that men in the possession of political power are such warm advocates for the continuance of slavery – yet the resolution passed, and the next session will probably witness a still more glorious movement in favor of abolition. Sir, this transaction is one of the most cheering that has occurred in the history of abolitionism. For we here find a legislative body, without any recurrence to the primary assemblies of the people, without being urged by petitions or bound by pledges, without being incited by the tales of horror that always accompany slavery, – for it is a remarkable fact that the slaves of Catholics are better fed and better treated than those of Protestants: I say we find a legislative body without any of the ordinary inducements, at the first discussion of the subject, not only adopting the measure proposed by the most sanguine of the abolitionists, but actually desirous of advancing still further. This was a manifestation of principle at which we may blush as Americans, but rejoice as men: and unwilling as I am to utter any remark, or draw any comparison, reflecting even the slightest discredit on

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palling spectacle of a venerable man, hooted and howled at when he sought [even] the right to petition in behalf of the slave, the same year beheld the legislature of king-ridden, priest-ridden, and, as some say, infidel France, cheering on an abolitionist in his measures for emancipation.

Mr. President, if we next turn our eyes toward Great Britain, on whose [dominions] the sun never sets, whilst they extend through every clime, we find [but a] neighbor of almost every nation, and therefore capable of [influencing all and that] influence is regulated by those sound principles for which she is so [justly prepared,] which are her shelter in the hour of danger, and her glory in the day of prosperity. Sound as these principles are on all other questions, they are pre-eminently so on that question which we are this day met to forward. For if, unwittingly, the British people became deeply imbued in the blood-guiltiness of slavery and the slave trade, yet as soon as they became aware of the enormity of the crime, and possessed the power to remove it, they made signal and instantaneous atonement by the immediate emancipation of their 800,000 slaves. And this great movement was distinguished by none of the bitterness of a political contest, none of the selfishness of a political victory. And when the battle was over and the victory won, the men who had gained it – the dissenters of England and Scotland – still heard the clank of chains, the groans of men, and the wail of women held in slavery by other nations. They heard these sounds, and they felt the principles by which they had recently been stirred still glow within them, and expand their benevolence beyond the limits of a single empire: they felt the force of that sentiment uttered nearly a thousand years ago by an African slave – *Homo sum, humani nil alienum a me puto*. They felt that their country was the world, their countrymen mankind, and were urged by motives that they could not resist to make the attempt to disenthral all their countrymen: and they bound themselves by solemn compact to begin a moral agitation that shall not cease until the last fetter shall fall from the last slave upon our earth.

They formed the British Society for the immediate and universal emancipation of slaves, and the consequent destruction of the slave trade throughout the world.

Sir, what are the means by which they hope to obtain so glorious a result? – The means are simple, but with God's blessing, they will prove efficient. With the Bible in their hands, and its precepts for their guide, they are determined calmly, but earnestly and incessantly, to remonstrate with all slaveholders, and to beseech them to liberate their slaves.

Their first effort was directed against slavery and the slave trade in our republic. They subsequently determined, by means of the same gifted and devoted agent whom they had sent here, thoroughly to abolitionize Great Britain and Ireland, in order that remonstrances might be sent from the great body of Chris-

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tians of that empire, imploring the Christians of these United States to abolish American Slavery. Some of those remonstrances we have already received. — And although, at the present time, their efforts are devoted to another and more appropriate object, the entire abolition of the last vestige of slavery, which yet lingers in their colonies under the name of apprenticeship, yet as soon as they have abolished the apprenticeship system — and they will do so, even if it be but one hour sooner than its appointed expiration, yet they will obtain that hour, in order that the principles of immediate emancipation may, in their colonies, vanquish the chicanery of slavery in its very metamorphosis — then, sir, with the renewed zeal, the additional experience, and the force of the complete example which this victory will give them, they will bring all their energies to bear upon slavery as it exists in these states.

We may rejoice then, Sir, in the present efforts of the British abolitionists, on account of the principle for which they are made. It is a struggle for immediate instead of gradual emancipation, and must, therefore, merit the sympathies, the [grand] wishes and the co-operation of all who are in favor of immediate emancipation. We may rejoice in theirs efforts, on account of the proof which they give to the world of the superiority, nay, the necessity of immediate instead of gradual emancipation. Should the apprenticeship, which works so badly, be [permitted] to continue until 1840, the evils which have resulted, and the insurrection [which] might arise from it, would be, to the slaveholder, an argument against emancipation in any form, and to many friends of liberty, an argument for very [gradual] emancipation. The position in which the British abolitionists are now [placed] must convince slaveholders that they must grant, and abolitionists that they must obtain immediate emancipation, else they will be forced to “fight their battle o'er again.”

We may rejoice in these efforts, on account of the renewed zeal which they will infuse into the abolition party of Great Britain; for it is the peculiar glory of abolitionism, as well as of all moral enterprises, that contest whets the mind, and invigorates it for other and more difficult undertakings. One moral victory gained, raises the mind to an eminence whence it perceives others that must be achieved, and inspires it with new energies for the struggle. The British slave trade being abolished, the British Anti-Slavery Society for Gradual Emancipation was formed; from this, sprung the Society for Immediate Emancipation; this, as it was thought, being obtained in the British Colonies, their (the abolitionists') views grew larger, their benevolence embraced the globe, and the Society for Immediate and Universal Emancipation was the result — and since, in this manner, each step advanced has increased their zeal and enlarged their views, we cannot doubt that their present efforts will be attended with similar effects. Indeed, sir, their pre-

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sent exertions have not only increased the zeal of the abolitionists, but they have added new and invaluable auxiliaries to their ranks. The flame of abolitionism is no longer confined to the dissenters of Great Britain; it has even penetrated within the walls of the church established by law: and bishops of the church of England have at length discovered that the advocacy of the cause of God's suffering poor is not inconsistent with apostolic order. Men of every rank and of every sect are gathering around the standard of abolition, and they forget the rancor of party and the clashing of creeds in their common anxiety to disenthral the slave; and the great principle from which this anxiety grows – that of loving all men – is, imperceptibly to themselves, diffusing its healing influence over the hostile parties for once united; Dissenter and Churchman, Protestant and Papist, standing on the broad platform of humanity and covered with the mantle of charity, are beginning to love one another whilst united to manifest their common love towards the crushed and bleeding slave. And when the apprenticeship is abolished, this mass of mind, animated by the principle which now unites it, and in the exercise of the same, will devote its entire energies to the emancipation of our slaves. And the Christians of Great Britain will call upon those of these states in one long and loud and incessant series of remonstrances, entreating them to follow the British example.

Sir, I admire this method of remonstrance. Judging from those we have already received, they seem to be of the right tone, and calculated to effect much good. I deem the method of remonstrance right, because it is warranted by the usages of nations in past and at the present time. In our own time, one government has freely remonstrated with another on the destruction of the African slave trade; why, then, may not one people – who are the source of all governmental power – remonstrate with another for the abolition of slavery? The people of [these United] States, at least that very large and respectable portion of them which [perpetuated] the American Temperance Society, have remonstrated with the British people on the sin of intemperance; have not the people of Britain an equal [right to] remonstrate with us on the equally heinous sin of slavery? But, Sir, not [only] has remonstrance, in other words, moral interference, been sanctioned by [common] usage and our own practice, but British interference in our slave question has actually been solicited, and solicited too by all the good and the great of our land, who are at this moment receiving pecuniary assistance from a few of the British people for the abolition of American slavery by means of colonization. – Can the good and the great complain then, if other British subjects, once solicited by the same agent, see fit to strive for the self-same object by remonstrating with the slaveholder on the justice, safety and expediency of immediate eman-

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cipation?

But, Sir, common usage may be wrong, the Temperance and even the Colonization Society may be wrong in sanctioning national interference in national sins. I still plead for the right of remonstrance on higher grounds than common usage, or the sanction of moral reforming associations. Christians are governed by the laws peculiar to the commonwealth of Christ, and which are independent of mere human laws imposed by human communities; the citizens of the Church Catholic of the Redeemer may be spread through many climes and subject to various forms of political government, but no difference in clime, no diversity in form of political creed can break the links which makes them fellow-citizens in Christ, or free them from obedience to the precepts of the Saviour. One of these precepts is, that they may rebuke one another in love; and another is, that they may exhort each other to "good works." Reposing on these precepts and obedient to them, the Christians of Britain have a right to call upon the Christians of these Untied States to desist from the sin of slaveholding. I have thus, Sir, imperfectly laid before you a few reasons why we may rejoice in the noble efforts of the Abolitionists of France and Great Britain. Of the latter, after five years' residence among them, during all which time I was favored with a seat in their counsels and marked their every movement, I may state it as my deliberate conviction that they are actuated in this cause by the purest benevolence, and the most sound discretion. And it is my firm belief that could their hearts be laid bare to inspection of any southern slaveholder, he would find nothing there but Christian love toward the master himself as well as toward his slave.

Mr. President, the resolution which I hold in my hand, states that we not only rejoice in the efforts of the trans-atlantic Abolitionists, but also pledge them our co-operation in the cause. Sir, in order to co-operate with them, we must not only acknowledge their principles, we must also adopt their practice. If we look at the British example, we find that in their pursuit of the universal, they omit no one of the particulars of which that universal is made up. Their abolitionism is thorough. It began at home. They first consecrated their own soil to liberty – so that "slaves cannot breathe" thereon. They next purified their colonies from the stain of slavery. Their principles now compel them, before they can call upon other sovereign people for immediate emancipation, first to practice immediate emancipation themselves by abolishing the apprenticeship. Mr. President, are there no apprentices around you? Are there not five hundred thousand apprentices to liberty not for one year or six years, but for a time not yet defined, scattered throughout this and other states in which abolitionism almost reigns? How then can we co-operate with Great Britain, how can we emulate her example, unless we abolish the last vestiges of slavery in our own states before we send our remonstrances to other sovereign states? Or, how can we call upon the

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of the Executive Committee of the
American Anti-Slavery Society, pp. 24-30*

South for immediate and entire emancipation, whilst we permit gradual emancipation in the North? It may be said, Sir, that this Society is pursuing the great general object of the emancipation of all the slaves, and that when this is obtained, the elevation of the colored people of the North will follow of course. Sir, it was a similar train of reasoning and of conduct that has entailed upon the American people the necessity of forming an American Anti-Slavery Society. Our ancestors – for they were mine as well as yours – fought for and obtained the precious boon of republican liberty – of equal rights – but they omitted to extend the same to those who had been slaves at the South, believing that the great object being obtained for all, liberty would as a matter of course be given to these unfortunate bondsmen. Sir, we now behold the consequences of that omission. Let us beware of following so disastrous a precedent, else we shall entail on the present generation, or those who may come after us, the necessity of a still more radical Anti-Slavery movement. Let us then, Sir, thoroughly do the work. Let us begin at home. Let us first purify our own soil and then may we call upon the South to follow the example. An eloquent gentleman who addressed you this morning observed, that if the whole moral and intellectual power of the North be brought to bear upon the South, it must accomplish the abolition of slavery. Sir, the North cannot collect nor concentrate its moral and intellectual power whilst there is slavery at the North – for semi-emancipation is slavery still – and it is my firm belief, a belief which springs from the deepest and strongest conviction, that that which will tell most, and do most towards the abolition of southern slavery, will be the sight of freed colored men, elevated in these northern white communities to the dignities and privileges of citizens of the republic.

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