

American Anti-Slavery Society

Tabernacle—Tuesday Morning.

The services of the Twelfth Anniversary of the American Anti-Slavery Society (old organization) were held in the Tabernacle, in the presence of a large audience. Mr. GARRISON was in the chair; and the meeting was opened with prayer by Rev. Mr. GREW, of Kentucky. An abstract of the Report was read by FRANCIS JACKSON, the adoption of which was moved in a short speech by Mr. SANDERSON, a colored man, who spoke with fluency and effect.

After which, WENDELL PHILLIPS, Esq., of Boston, addressed the audience, in offering a resolution, in a speech of some length, but replete with sentiments, however repugnant to general opinion, were expressed with a clear and lofty eloquence, and extraordinary felicity and beauty of illustration. Mr. Phillips' resolution was to the effect that, inasmuch as the only exodus of the slave from his house of bondage must be over the ruins of the present political and sectarian organizations, this Society rejoices in the history of the year past, in which we have seen the madness of Southern championship for slavery overleap itself, and the various religious sects, yielding, if not to the force of principle, at least to a decent respect for the opinions of mankind, are slowly but surely coming to sunder the covenant which they have so long maintained with death. Mr. P. remarked that his resolution included the principles on which the Society is based, and on which the anti-slavery movement proceeds; and as the Society has latterly taken the position, that no consistent abolitionist could support the Constitution, the friend of the slave could have no other feeling than gratitude that events were so rapidly and surely tending to bring around the results in which he believed the highest interests of humanity were involved; and that before his *nunc demittis* was sung, he might witness the convulsions of a sundering Union and a dissolving church. It was grateful to know that the tendency of religious associations in this country is to dis sever, divide, dissolve; and that that public contempt is felt, which the church has excited, by her failure to answer the just expectations of the world, who look to her as an expression of the spirit and temper of Christianity, and who, finding that every movement of the age, affecting the interests of humanity, has originated out of the church, have come to look upon her as a stranded vessel, past which the great waters of progress and reform sweep to the parched souls of the suffering and the oppressed. The Union, which it was once treason to calculate the value of, is now calmly estimated in its real bearings, by thousands of citizens at the North; and men are everywhere crying out, not with the old cry of Liberty and Union, but Liberty with or without the Union—Liberty at any rate. The position of this Society, that there must be no union, either in church or state, with slaveholders, is undoubtedly a startling one; but to him who looks at the state of things existing in this country, and notices the real obstacles which lie in the way of ultimate attainment of universal liberty, will see that it is just. We have our civil polity, and the representations of religious feeling, in the midst of which the system of slavery has grown from a comparatively small beginning to its present colossal, overshadowing stature; and the unwelcome conviction is forced upon us, that that system can never be destroyed except by the destruction of those institutions in which it has entrenched itself, and of which it has become a component part.

This, I say, is our reluctant conviction—it was never once sought for by the abolitionists, but was forced upon them by the experience of years of difficulty, and reproach, and misrepresentation, while endeavoring to evoke from that church the voice of Christian remonstrance against the system which the spirit of Christ and of humanity both united to condemn. It was only after having found out, by long and bitter experience, that the church would not move, and that if ever an influence should be brought against slavery, it must not only originate without the church, but be put forth in spite of the church, that the conviction was adopted that there was no hope for the slave but in the agitation and jostling of the religious institutions. All other influences in this land are but the dust of the balance, compared with that which is exerted by the religious feeling of the country. We have no other source of power to which we can appeal. What in this country are the impulses of fashion, the power of literature, the influence of the press, the authority of select and powerful classes, to which resort might be, so effectually had in other lands? They are all wanting here—they are chilled and blighted before the power of what, believer though I am, and adherent of the Calvinistic faith, I must call a superstitious reverence for the clergy. Twenty thousand pulpits summon the people to prayer; and from the germ of infancy to the days of decrepitude and decay, in every season of trial or joy, in teaching, action, festivity or grief, at all seasons, and in all circumstances, the New-Englander turns first to his religious teacher. His voice directs the course of literature—gives tone and form to education; and it is his presence in every scene that makes it pec-

uliarly New-England. The heart dares not beat, except its pulsations be directed according to the type of the religious feeling. And this sentiment characterizes New-England's sons wherever they have wandered.

Now it is amidst such people, and in such times, that we find ourselves called upon to attack an overgrown, powerful system, which has imbedded itself in the very foundations of our social and political and religious life. What else can we do but regard the religious feelings and arrangements of the people? Where can the foundation of any structure rest but on the firm granite of the religious element of the national character? That man does not know the strength of the element in which he lives, moves and has his being—who does not see that so long as representations of the religious feeling are arrayed against him, he can do nothing. And the dilemma in which the friend of the slave finds himself is, either to give over all hope of success, or else secure the direction of the overwhelming current of religious feeling towards the object he desires. To breast the wave is impossible; and therefore, so long as existing organizations, humanly constructed church systems, are so identified with slavery, and so ramified with its various interests as to stand its greatest bulwark, there is no hope that that system will be overthrown, until by convulsion, and disruption and jostling, it becomes disentangled, and the religious sentiment of the country, free from sinister and sectarian control, can flow in the direction it naturally tends. To overlook the power of the religious sentiment would be the extremest folly. Why, that little knot of infidels who are now counseling in the obscure places of the city how to beat it out of the human soul, might as well consult how to strike the sun from the heavens. The glorious Creator of that beautiful mechanism, the human soul, placed it at the fountain head of everything beautiful, noble, impulsive, or powerful. There never yet was a people who were not religious, in their sense of religion.

But that religious sentiment may be far other than Christian. It is so here. The religious movement of the present time is not animated by a spirit akin to that of the Master. When he descends and knocks at the door of his professed people, requiring them to go down to the depths of human misery and degradation, and offer one hand to the drunkard and the other to the slave; and when the response to that knock is the voice of curses within, closed doors within, indifference without; when every movement at which the heart of humanity leaps for joy, comes not from the church, but out of the church, whatever others may do, I will seek for my representations of Christianity in those meetings, or those places, or those men and women from whom bubbles up the purest expression of that feeling which animated the Master in his career of mercy, and which most resembles those eternal principles of charity, of right and love which find a response in the universal human heart. It is by these principles that the church must be judged. If it be deficient in these great characteristics, which mainly distinguished the Redeemer; if it be recreant to the work which it was the business of his life and death to promote, we must write Ichabod upon its gates.

Mr. Phillips proceeded at some considerable length to show the obstacles which the existing political organizations placed in the way of emancipation, by the terms of the compact between the North and the South, and the overpowering influence which slavery always has and must exert, so long as it forms an acknowledged element of the civil polity. The hopelessness of confining or destroying that power by means of party organizations, was also dwelt upon. We have not time for even a sketch of this portion of his speech, and we feel that we have done poor justice to the finely expressed and eloquent periods of that which we attempted to present.

Miss JANE HITCHCOCK followed with a lengthy speech, characterised by great earnestness of manner, and displaying considerable talent. She would offer no apology for appearing before the audience. None was needed. Whether competent or incompetent, self should be lost sight of in the dignity and importance of the subject. By the Constitution of the United States, the people had entered into a compact with slavery and the slaveholder. This prevents the slaves of the South from rising to assert their liberties; not that they lack the manly courage so to do. Were it not that the military strength of the North as well as the South is pledged to sustain the slaveholder, and keep the slave in chains, they would be free. This pledge is renewed every year at the ballot-box. Slavery is thus made the stepping-stone to political power; the climax of villainy. It is urged that it was the object of the framers of the Constitution to establish a union. A union with what? A union between righteousness and unrighteousness, between freedom and slavery. I know there can be union between thieves and robbers, pirates and murderers. They also say it is their object to establish justice. It is such justice as the cannibal savage displays when he serves up an Englishman for breakfast and a Frenchman for supper. The African slave trade was next alluded to in pathetic language. Finally, the framers of the Constitution by which slavery is tolerated were exceedingly guilty. Language could not describe the character of those who had made this covenant with hell. The crime grew darker and darker as it was viewed. Had it been committed in the heat of the moment, the veil of charity should be thrown around them; but the Constitution was not formed under such circumstances. There was, indeed, hesitation about the adoption of the articles which so firmly rivet the chains of the slave. There was hesitation about signing the compact: there was hesitation about pledging the entire military strength of the nation. They hesitated again and again in regard to the article giving increased political power to him who should hold slaves as chattels: but they hesitated as the thief hesitates when he is about to plunder his brother—as the murderer hesitates when he is about to thrust the dagger into the bosom of his friend—aye, friend. The framers knew full well that the slaves were their friends. They knew that they would help them fight their battles, and obtain liberty. But they had not power to enter into the compact: what was to be done? Benjamin Franklin proposed prayer. To whom did they pray? Certainly not to God; for God had not a single attribute which could take part with the oppressor. They prayed to Satan, the father of lies, and fumes from the bottomless pit enveloped them in their deliberations. But however dark and fiendish the spirit which then reigned, this people at the present day are far more guilty, because they sin against greater light.

After Miss H. had concluded her thrilling address, which created quite a sensation with the audience, Wm. Lloyd Garrison arose, and in the name of union, in behalf of the women of this country, of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and of every lover of liberty, thanked her for the same.

Mr. BELL, of Kentucky, next made a few remarks, encouraging the friends of the slave with his belief that slavery would not long be tolerated in Kentucky.

HENRY GREW, of Philadelphia, then made a brief address, sustaining previous speakers in the views which they had expressed in regard to the apathy of the church. He believed that the church as a body were opposed to righteousness, to the holiness and benevolence of Christianity. Their course in reference to slavery showed this.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS, a slave, was next introduced to the audience, and spoke for half an hour with much warmth and manly energy. He commenced with diffidence, observing that his early

rabbits had done much to unfit him for public speaking; but before he sat down he showed that he was not wanting in that experience which inspires genuine eloquence. He said he ran away from the South about seven years ago, since which period he has resided in Massachusetts. He would unite with the gentleman from Kentucky in saying, that the picture which had been drawn of slavery came far short of the reality. He would tell what he had seen with his own eyes, felt upon his own person, and known to have occurred in his immediate neighborhood. He came not from those States in which the slaves are said to be in the most degraded condition; but from Maryland, where slavery is said to exist in its mildest form; yet he could relate atrocities which would make the blood boil. He had lived on the plantation of Col. Lloyd, in the eastern part of Maryland, an owner of a thousand slaves. He said he was still a slave, and could mention names in this public manner only at the hazard of being hurled back into interminable bondage; but for the sake of humanity he was willing to risk his own freedom. If he should fall into the hands of his master in the utterance of the truth, he had the gratification to know that every drop of blood which he should shed, every pain which should rack his frame, every sob in which he would indulge, should be the instrument, under God, of tearing down the bloody pillar of slavery, and of hastening the day of deliverance for three millions of his brethren in bondage. The individuals of whom he should speak had dipped their hands in blood from necessity. It was impossible to hold the slave in bondage without resorting to measures of violence. His overseer on the plantation was one Austin Gore, a proud, ambitious, cruel man, who was a terror to his slaves, and whose eye flashed confusion amongst them. He never spoke but to command, and never commanded but to be obeyed. The speaker had seen women stretched upon the limbs of trees, and their bare backs made bloody by the lash. One slave having committed some trifling offense, refused to be whipped, and ran into a creek near by, refusing to come out. Gore told him he would shoot him if he did not come out. Three calls were to be given him. He stood firmly. Gore, equally determined, raised his musket, and in an instant poor Derby was no more. He sank beneath the waves, and nought but the crimsoned waters marked the spot. Mr. Lloyd asked why such a deed had been resorted to, and on being told that it was necessary to enforce obedience in order to keep the slaves submissive, was fully satisfied. The murderer earned renown by the deed, and still lives in Maryland, as much respected as ever. Other circumstances could be adduced of a similar kind, if time would permit. In conclusion, he had a word to say to those friends at the North, who ask why the slaves do not rise and shake off their iron chains. Who are those that are asking for manhood in the slave? The very men who are ready by the Constitution to bring the strength of the nation to put them down. To such he would say, stand aloof. Leave us to take care of our masters, and we'll be free.

Mr. Douglass closed with a stirring appeal in behalf of his brethren in bondage, and in their name thanked the American Anti-Slavery, and its President, for their faithful labors in behalf of the slave.

The meeting then adjourned.