

LEMUEL HAYNES (1753–1833)

“Liberty Further Extended: Or Free Thoughts on the Illegality of Slave-Keeping” (1776)

We hold these truths to be self-Evident, that all men are created Equal, that they are Endowed By their Creator with Certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Congress.

The Preface. As *tyranny* had its Origin from the infernal regions: so it is the Duty, and honor of Every son of freedom to repel her first motions. But while we are Engaged in the important struggle, it cannot Be tho't impertinent for us to turn one Eye into our own Breast, for a little moment, and See, whether thro' some inadvertency, or a self-contracted Spirit, we Do not find the monster Lurking in our own Bosom; that now while we are inspir'd with so noble a Spirit and Becoming Zeal, we may Be Disposed to tear her from us. If the following would produce such an Effect the author should rejoice.

It is Evident, by ocular demonstration, that man by his Depravity, hath procured many Corrupt habits which are detrimental to society; And altho' there is a way prescrib'd Whereby man may be reinstated into the favor of god, yet these corrupt habits are Not Extirpated, nor can the subject of renovation Boast of perfection, 'till he Leaps into a state of immortal Existence. Yet it hath pleas'd the majesty of Heaven to Exhibit his will to men, and Endow them With an intellect Which is susceptible of speculation; yet, as I observ'd before, man, in consequence of the fall is Liable to digressions. But to proceed,

Liberty, & freedom, is an innate principle, which is unmovably placed in the human Species; and to see a man aspire after it, is not Enigmatical, seeing he acts no ways incompatible with his own Nature; consequently, he that would infringe upon a man's Liberty may reasonably Expect to meet with opposition, seeing the Defendant cannot Comply to Non-resistance, unless he Counter-acts the very Laws of nature.

Liberty is a Jewel which was handed Down to man from the cabinet of heaven, and is Coeval with his Existence. And as it proceeds from the Supreme Legislature of the universe, so it is he which hath a sole right to take away; therefore, he that would take away a man's Liberty assumes a prerogative that Belongs to another, and acts out of his own domain.

One man may boast a superiority above another in point of Natural privilege; yet if he can produce no convincive arguments in vindication of this preeminence his hypothesis is to Be Suspected. To affirm, that an Englishman has a right to his Liberty, is a truth which has Been so clearly Evinced, Especially of Late, that to spend time in illustrating this, would be but Superfluous tautology. But I query, whether Liberty is so contracted a principle as to be Confin'd to any nation under Heaven; nay, I think it not hyperbolical to affirm, that Even an African, has Equally as good a right to his Liberty in common with Englishmen.

I know that those that are concerned in the Slave-trade, Do pretend to Bring arguments in vindication of their practice; yet if we give them a candid Examination, we shall find them (Even those of the most cogent kind) to be Essentially Deficient. We live in a day wherein *Liberty & freedom* is the subject of many millions' Concern; and the important Struggle hath already caused great Effusion of Blood; men seem to manifest the most sanguine resolution not to Let their natural rights go without their Lives go with them; a resolution, one would think Every one that has the Least Love to his country, or future posterity, would fully confide in, yet while we are so zealous to maintain, and foster our own invaded rights, it cannot be tho't impertinent for us Candidly to reflect on our own conduct, and I doubt not But that we shall find that subsisting in the midst of us, that may with propriety be styled *Oppression*, nay, much greater oppression, than that which Englishmen seem so much to spurn at. I mean an oppression which they, themselves, impose upon others.

It is not my Business to Enquire into Every particular practice, that is practiced in this Land, that may come under this Odious Character; But, that I have in view, is humbly to offer some free thoughts, on the practice of *Slave-keeping*. Oppression, is not spoken of, nor ranked in the sacred miracles, among the Least of those sins, that are the procuring Cause of those signal Judgments, which god is pleas'd to bring upon the Children of men. Therefore let us attend. I mean to write with freedom, yet with the greatest Submission.

And the main proposition, which I intend for some Brief illustration is this, Namely, That an *African*, or, in other terms, *that a Negro may Justly Challenge, and has an undeniable right to his Liberty: Consequently, the practice of Slave-keeping, which so much abounds in this Land is illicit.*

Every privilege that mankind Enjoy have their Origin from god; and whatever acts are passed in any Earthly Court, which are Derogatory to those Edicts that are passed in the Court of Heaven, the act is *void*. If I have a particular privilege granted to me by god, and the act is not revoked nor the power that granted the benefit vacated, (as it is imposible but that god should Ever remain immutable) then he that would infringe upon my Benefit, assumes an unreasonable, and tyrannic power.

It hath pleased god to *make of one Blood all nations of men, for to dwell upon the face of the Earth.* Acts 17, 26. And as all are of one Species, so there are the same Laws, and aspiring principles placed in all nations; and the Effect that these Laws will produce, are Similar to Each other. Consequently we may suppose, that what is precious to one man, is precious to another, and what is irksome, or intolerable to one man, is so to another, consider'd in a Law of Nature. Therefore we may reasonably Conclude, that Liberty is Equally as precious to a *Black man*, as it is to a *white one*, and Bondage Equally as intolerable to the one as it is to the other: Seeing it Effects the Laws of nature Equally as much in the one as it Does in the other. But, as I observed Before, those privileges that are granted to us By the Divine Being, no one has the Least right to take them from us without our consent; and there is Not the Least precept, or practice, in the Sacred Scriptures, that constitutes a Black man a Slave, any more than a white one.

Shall a man's Color Be the Decisive Criterion whereby to Judge of his natural right? or Because a man is not of the same color with his Neighbor, shall he Be Deprived of those things that Distinguisheth him from the Beasts of the field?

I would ask, whence is it that an Englishman is so far Distinguished from an African in point of Natural privilege? Did he receive it in his original constitution? or By Some Subsequent grant? Or Does he Boast of some higher Descent that gives him this preeminence? for my part I can find no such revelation. It is a Lamentable consequence of the fall, that mankind, have an insatiable thirst after Superiority one over another: So that however common or prevalent the practice may be, it Does not amount, Even to a Circumstance, that the practice is warrantable.

God has been pleas'd to distinguish some men from others, as to natural abilities, But not as to natural *right*, as they came out of his hands.

But sometimes men by their flagitious practice forfeit their Liberty into the hands of men, By Becoming unfit for society; But have the *Africans* Ever as a Nation, forfeited their Liberty in this manner? What Ever individuals have done; yet, I Believe, no such Challenge can be made upon them, as a Body. As there should be Some rule whereby to govern the conduct of men; so it is the Duty, and interest of a community, to form a system of *Law*, that is calculated to promote the commercial interest of Each other: and so Long as it produces so Blessed an Effect, it should be maintained. But when, instead of contributing to the well Being of the community, it proves baneful to its subjects over whom it Extends, then it is high time to call it in question. Should any ask, where shall we find any system of Law whereby to regulate our moral Conduct? I think there is none so Explicit and indefinite, as that which was given By the Blessed Savior of the world. *As you would that men should do unto you, do you Even so to them.* One would think, that the mention of the precept, would strike conviction to the heart of these Slavetraders; unless an avaricious Disposition governs the Laws of humanity.

If we strictly adhere to the rule, we shall not impose anything upon Others, But what we should Be willing should Be imposed upon us were we in their Condition.

I shall now go on to consider the manner in which the Slave-trade is carried on, By which it will plainly appear, that the practice is vile and atrocious, as well as the most inhuman. it is undoubtedly true that those that Emigrate slaves from *Africa* Do Endeavor to raise mutinies among them in order to procure slaves. Here I would make some Extracts from a pamphlet printed in Philadelphia, a few years ago: the veracity of which need not be scrupled, seeing it agrees with many other accounts.

N. *Brue*, Directory of the *French* factory at *Senegal*, who Lived twenty-seven years in that country says, "that the *Europeans* are far from desiring to act as peace-makers among the *Negroes*, which would Be acting contrary to their interest, since the greater the wars, the more slaves are procured." *William Bosman*, factor for the Dutch at *Delmina*, where he resided sixteen years, relates, "that one of the former Commanders hired an army of the *Negroes*, of *Jefferia*, and *Cabesteria*, for a Large Sum of money, to fight the *Negroes* of *Commanry*, which occasioned a Battle, which was more Bloody than the wars of the *Negroes* usually are: and that another Commander gave at one time five *hundred* pounds, and at another time Eight hundred pounds, to

two other Negro nations, to induce them to take up arms against their Country people." This is confirmed by *Barbot*, agent general of the French African company, who says, "The *Hollanders*, a people very zealous for their Commerce at the Coasts, were very studious to have the war carried on amongst the Blacks, to distract, as Long as possible, the trade of the other Europeans and to that Effect, were very ready to assist upon all occasions, the Blacks, their allies, that they might Beat their Enemies, and so the Commerce fall into their hands." And one *William Smith*, who was sent By the *African* company, to visit their settlements in the year 1726, from the information he receiv'd from one, who had resided ten years, viz. "that the Discerning Natives accounted it their greatest unhappiness that they were Ever visited by the *Europeans*:— that we Christians introduced the traffick of Slaves, and that Before our coming they Lived in peace; But, say they, it is observable, that Wherever Christianity comes, there comes with it a Sword, a gun, powder, and Ball." And thus it Brings ignominy upon our holy religion, and makes the Name of Christians sound Odious in the Ears of the heathen. O Christianity, how art thou Disgraced, how art thou reproached, By the vicious practices of those upon whom thou dost smile! Let us go on to consider the great hardships, and sufferings, those Slaves are put to, in order to be transported into these plantations. There are generally many hundred slaves put on board a vessel, and they are Shackled together, two by two, worse than Criminals going to the place of Execution; and they are Crowded together as close as possible, and almost naked; and their sufferings are so great, as I have Been Credibly informed, that it often Carries off one third of them on their passage; yea, many have put an End to their own Lives for very anguish; And as some have manifested a Disposition to rise in their Defense, they have Been put to the most Cruel tortures and Deaths as human art could inflict. And O! the Sorrows, the Grief, the Distress, and anguish which attends them! and not only them But their friends also in their Own Country, when they must forever part with Each Other? What must be the plaintive notes that the tender parents must assume for the Loss of their Exiled *Child*? Or the husband for his Departed wife? and how Do the Cries of their Departed friends Echo from the wat'ry Deep! Do not I really hear the fond mother Expressing her Sorrows, in accents that might well pierce the most obdurate heart? "O! my Child, why, why was thy Destiny hung on so precarious a thread! unhappy fate! O that I were a captive with thee or for thee! . . . Cursed Be the Day wherein I Bear thee, and Let that inauspicious Night be remembered no more. Come, O King of terrors. Dissipate my grief, and send my woes into oblivion."

But I need Not stand painting the Dreary Scene. Let me rather appeal to tender parents, whether this is Exaggerating matters? Let me ask them what would be their Distress. Should one of their Dearest *Children* Be snatch'd from them, in a Clandestine manner, and carried to *Africa*, or some other foreign Land, to be under the most abject Slavery for Life, among a strange people? would it not embitter all your Domestic Comforts? would he not Be Ever upon your mind? nay, Doth not nature Even recoil at the reflection?

And is not there many ready to say, (unless void of natural Affections) that it would not fail to Bring them Down with sorrow to the grave? And surely, this has Been the awful fate of some of those *Negros* that have been Brought into these plantations; which is not to be wondered at, unless we suppose them to be without natural Affections: which is to rank them Below the very Beasts of the field.

O! what an Immense Deal of African Blood hath Been Shed by the inhuman Cruelty of Englishmen! that reside in a Christian Land! Both at home, and in their own Country? they being the fomenters of those wars, that is absolutely necessary, in order to carry on this cursed trade; and in their Emigration into these colonies? and By their merciless masters, in some parts at Least? O ye that have made yourselves Drunk with human Blood! altho' you may go with impunity here in this Life, yet God will hear the Cries of that innocent Blood, which cries from the Sea, and from the ground against you, Like the Blood of Abel, more pealful than thunder, *vengeance! vengeance!* What will you Do in that Day when God shall make inquisition for Blood? he will make you Drink the phials of his indignation which Like a potable Stream shall Be poured out without the Least mixture of mercy; Believe it, Sirs, there shall not a Drop of Blood, which you have Spilt unjustly, Be Lost in forgetfulness. But it Shall Bleed afresh, and testify against you, in the Day when God shall Deal with Sinners.

We know that under the Levitical Oeconomy, *man-stealing* was to Be punished with Death; so we Esteem those that Steal any of our Earthy Commodity guilty of very heinous Crime:

What then must Be an adequate punishment to Be inflicted on those that Steal men?

Men were made for more noble Ends than to be Drove to market, like Sheep and oxen. "Our being Christians, (says one) Does not give us the Least Liberty to trample on heathen, nor Does it give us the Least Superiority over them." And not only are they guilty of man-stealing that are the immediate actors in this trade, But those in these colonies that Buy them at their hands, are far from Being guiltless: for when they saw the thief they consented with him. If men would forbear to Buy Slaves off the hands of the Slave-merchants, then the trade would of necessity cease; if I buy a man, whether I am told he was stolen, or not, yet I have no right to Enslave him, Because he is a human Being: and the immutable Laws of God, and indefeasible Laws of nature, pronounced him free.

Is it not exceeding strange that mankind should Become such mere vassals to their own carnal avarice as Even to imbrue their hands in innocent Blood? and to Bring such intolerable oppressions upon others, that were they themselves to feel them, perhaps they would Esteem Death preferable—pray consider the miseries of a Slave, Being under the absolute control of another, subject to continual Embarrassments, fatigues, and corrections at the will of a master; it is as much impossible for us to bring a man heartily to acquiesce in a passive obedience in this case, as it would be to stop a man's Breath, and yet have it cause no convulsion in nature. Those negroes amongst us that have Children, they, viz. their *Children* are brought up under a partial Discipline: their white masters having but Little, or no Affection for them. So that we may suppose, that the abuses that they receive from the hands of their masters are often very considerable; their parents Being placed in such a Situation as not being able to perform relative Duties: Such are those restrictions they are kept under By their task-masters that they are render'd incapable of performing those moral Duties Either to God or man that are infinitely binding on all the human race; how often are they Separated from Each other, here in this Land at many hundred miles Distance, Children from parents, and parents from Children, Husbands from wives, and wives from Husbands? those whom God hath Joined together, and pronounced one flesh, man assumes a prerogative to put asunder. What can be more abject than their condition? In short, if I may so speak 'tis a hell upon Earth; and all this for filthy Lucre's sake:

Be astonished, O ye Heavens, at this! I believe it would Be much Better for these Colonies if there was never a Slave Brought into this Land: thereby our poor are put to great Extremities, by reason of the plentifulness of Labor, which otherwise would fall into their hands.

I shall now go on to take under Consideration some of those *arguments* which those that are Concern'd in the Slave-trade Do use in vindication of their practice; which arguments, I shall Endeavor to Show, are Lame, and Defective.

The first argument that I shall take notice of is this viz. *that in all probability the Negroes are of Canaan's posterity, which were Destined by the almighty to Slavery: therefore the practice is warrantable.* To which I answer, Whether the Negroes are of Canaan's posterity or not, perhaps is not known By any mortal under Heaven. But allowing they were actually of Canaan's posterity, yet we have no reason to think that this Curse Lasted any Longer than the coming of Christ: when that Sun of righteousness arose this wall of partition was Broken Down. Under the Law, there were many External Ceremonies that were typical of Spiritual things; or which Shadowed forth the purity, & perfection of the Gospel: as Corporeal *blemishes*, Spurious *Birth*, flagitious *practices*, debarr'd them from the congregation of the Lord: thereby Showing, the intrinsick purity of heart that a Conceal'd Gospel requir'd as the prerequisite for heaven, and as *Ham* uncovered his father's nakedness, that is, Did not Endeavor to Conceal it, but gaz'd perhaps with a Lascivious Eye, which was repugnant to the Law which was afterwards given to the Children of Israel: So it was most Necessary that god Should manifest his Signal Disapprobation of this heinous Sin, By making him and his posterity a publick Example to the world, that thereby they might be set apart, and Separated from the people of God as unclean. And we find it was a privilege Granted to God's people of old, that they might Enslave the *heathen, and the Stranger that were in the Land*; thereby to Show the Superior privileges God's people Enjoy'd above the rest of the world: So that we, Gentiles were then Subject to Slavery, Being then heathen; So that if they will keep Close to the Letter they must own themselves yet Subject to the yoke; unless we Suppose them *free* By Being Brought into the same place, or having the same privileges with the Jews: then it follows, that we may enslave all Nations, be they White or Black, that are heathens, which they themselves will not allow. We find, under that Dispensation, God Declaring that he would *visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the Children, unto the third, and fourth generation, &c.* And we find it so in the case of *Ham*, as well as many others; their posterity Being Extrinsically unclean.

But now our glorious high priest hath visibly appear'd in the flesh, and hath Establish'd a more glorious Oeconomy. He hath not only visibly Broken Down that wall of partition that interposed Between the offended majesty of Heaven and rebellious Sinners and removed those tedious forms under the Law, which savored so much of servitude, and which *could never make the comers thereunto perfect*, By rendering them obsolete: But he has removed those many Embarrassments, and Distinctions, that they were incident to, under so contracted a Dispensation. So that whatever *Bodily imperfections*, or whatever *Birth* we sustain, it Does not in the Least Debar us from Gospel privileges. Or whatever heinous practice any may be guilty of, yet if they manifest a gospel repentance, we have no right to Debar them from our Communion. And it is plain Beyond all Doubt, that at the coming of Christ, this curse that was upon *Canaan*, was taken off; and I think there is not the Least force in this argument than there would Be to argue that an imperfect Contexture of *parts*, or Base *Birth*, Should Deprive any from Gospel

privileges; or Bring up any of those antiquated Ceremonies from oblivion, and reduce them into practice.

But you will say that Slave-keeping was practiced Even under the Gospel, for we find *Paul*, and the other apostles Exhorting *Servants to be obedient to their masters*. To which I reply, that it might be they were Speaking to Servants in *minority* in General; But Doubtless it was practiced in the Days of the Apostles from what *St. Paul* Says, *1 Corin. 7 21. art thou called, being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest Be made free, use it rather*. So that the Apostle seems to recommend freedom if attainable, q.d. “if it is thy unhappy Lot to be a slave, yet if thou art Spiritually free Let the former appear so minute a thing when compared with the Latter that it is comparatively unworthy of notice; yet Since freedom is so Excellent a Jewel, which none have a right to Extirpate, and if there is any hope of attaining it, use all Lawful measures for that purpose.” So that however Extant or prevalent it might Be in that or this age; yet it does not in the Least reverse the unchangeable Laws of God, or of nature; or make that Become Lawful which is in itself unlawful; neither is it Strange, if we consider the moral Depravity of man’s nature, thro’ out all ages of the world, that mankind should Deviate from the unerring rules of Heaven. But again, another argument which some use to maintain their intolerable oppression upon others is this, viz., *that those Negroes that are Brought into these plantations are Generally prisoners, taken in their wars, and would otherwise fall a sacrifice to the resentment of their own people*. But this argument, I think, is plainly confuted By the forecited account which *Mr. Bosman* gives, as well as many others. Again, some say they *Came honestly By their Slaves, Because they Bought them of their parents*, (that is, those that Brought them from Africa) *and rewarded them well for them*. But without Doubt this is, for the most part false; But allowing they Did actually Buy them of their parents, yet I query, whether parents have any right to sell their Children for Slaves: if parents have a right to Be free, then it follows that their Children have Equally as good a right to their freedom, Even *Hereditary*. So, (to use the words of a Learned writer) “one has no Body to Blame But himself, in case he shall find himself Deprived of a man whom he tho’t By Buying for a price he had made his own; for he Dealt in a trade which was illicit, and was prohibited by the most obvious Dictates of Humanity. For these reasons Every one of those unfortunate men who are pretended to be Slaves, has a right to Be Declared free, for he never Lost his Liberty; he could not Lose it; his prince had no power to Dispose of him. Of course the Sale was *ipso Jure* void.”

But I shall take notice of one argument more which these Slave-traders use, and it is this, viz. *that those Negroes that are Emigrated into these colonies are brought out of a Land of Darkness under the meridian Light of the Gospel; and so it is a great Blessing instead of a Curse*. But I would ask, who is this that Darkneth counsel By words with out knowledge? Let us attend to the great apostle Speaking to us in *Rom. 3.8*. where he reproves some slanderers who told it as a maxim preached By the apostles that they said *Let us Do Evil that Good may come, whose Damnation* the inspired penman pronounces with an Emphasis *to Be Just*. And again *Chap. 6* verse 1. where By way of interrogation he asks, *Shall we continue in Sin that grace may abound?* The answer is obvious, *God forbid*. But that those Slavemercants that trade upon the coasts of Africa do not aim at the Spiritual good of their Slaves, is Evident By their Behavior towards them; if they had their Spiritual good at heart, we should Expect that those Slave-mercants that trade upon their coasts, would, instead of Causing quarrelings, and Blood-Shed among them, which is repugnant to Christianity, and below the Character of humanity, Be Solicitous to

Demean Exemplary among them, that By their wholesome conduct, those heathen might be Induced to Entertain high and admiring tho'ts of our holy religion. Those Slaves in these Colonies are generally kept under the greatest ignorance, and Blindness, and they are scarcely Ever told by their white masters whether there is a Supreme Being that governs the universe; or whether there is any reward, or punishments Beyond the grave. Nay such are those restrictions that they are kept under that they Scarcely know that they have a right to Be free, or if they Do they are not allowed to Speak in their defense; Such is their abject condition, that that *genius* that is peculiar to the human race, cannot have that Cultivation that the polite world is favor'd with, and therefore they are styled the ignorant part of the world; whereas were they under the Same advantages to get knowledge with them, perhaps their progress in arts would not be inferior.

But should we give ourselves the trouble to Enquire into the grand motive that indulges men to concern themselves in a trade So vile and abandon, we Shall find it to Be this, Namely, to Stimulate their Carnal avarice, and to maintain men in pride, Luxury, and idleness, and how much it hath Subserv'd to this vile purpose I Leave the Candid publick to Judge: I speak it with reverence yet I think all must give in that it hath such a tendency.

But altho god is of Long patience, yet it does not Last always, nay, he has *whet his glittering Sword, and his hand hath already taken hold on Judgement*; for who knows how far that the unjust Oppression which hath abounded in this Land, may be the procuring cause of this very Judgement that now impends, which so much portends *Slavery*?

For this is God's way of working, Often he brings the Same Judgements, or Evils upon men, as they unrighteously Bring upon others. As is plain from *Judges* 1 and on.

But Adoni-bezek fled, and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs, and his great toes.

And Adoni-bezek said, threescore and ten kings having their thumbs and their great toes cut off gathered their meat under my table: as I have Done, So god hath requited me.

And as wicked *Ahab*, and *Jezebel* to gratify their covetousness caused *Naboth* to be put to Death, and as *Dogs* licked the Blood of *Naboth*, the word of the Lord was By the prophet *Elijah*, *thus Saith the Lord, in the place where Dogs Licked the Blood of Naboth, Shall Dogs Lick thy Blood Even thine. See 1 Kings 21.19. And of Jezebel also Spake the Lord, Saying, The Dogs Shall Eat Jezebel By the walls of Jezreel. verse 23.*

And we find the Judgement actually accomplished upon *Ahab* in the 22. Chap. & 38. verse.

And upon *Jezebel* in the 9 chap. 2 of *Kings*.

Again *Rev. 16.6. for they have Shed the Blood of Saints and prophets, and thou hast given them Blood to Drink; for they are worthy. And chap. 18.6. Reward her Even as She rewarded you. I say this is often God's way of Dealing, by retaliating Back upon men the Same Evils that they unjustly Bring upon others. I Don't Say that we have reason to think that Oppression is the alone cause of this Judgement that God is pleas'd to Bring upon this Land, Nay, But we have the*

greatest reason to think that this is not one of the Least. And whatever some may think that I am instigated By a false zeal; and all that I have Said upon the Subject is mere Novelty: yet I am not afraid to appeal to the conscience of any rational and honest man, as to the truth of what I have just hinted at; and if any will not confide in what I have humbly offer'd, I am persuaded it must be such Short-Sighted persons whose Contracted Eyes never penetrate thro' the narrow confines of Self, and are mere Vassals to filthy Lucre.

But I Cannot persuade myself to make a period to this Small Treatise, without humbly addressing myself, more particularly, unto all such as are Concern'd in the practice of *Slave-keeping*.

Sirs, Should I pursue the Dictates of nature, resulting from a sense of my own inability, I should be far from attempting to form this address: Nevertheless, I think that a mere Superficial reflection upon the merits of the Cause, may Serve as an ample apology, for this humble attempt. Therefore hoping you will take it well at my hands, I presume, (tho' with the greatest Submission) to Crave your attention, while I offer you a few words.

Perhaps you will think the proceeding pages unworthy of Speculation: well, Let that be as it will; I would Solicit you Seriously to reflect on your conduct, whether you are not guilty of unjust Oppression. Can you wash your hands, and say, I am Clean from this Sin? perhaps you will Dare to Say it Before men; But Dare you Say it Before the tremendous tribunal of that God Before Whom we must all, in a few precarious moments appear? Then whatever fair glosses we may have put upon our Conduct, that god whose Eyes pervade the utmost Extent of human tho't, and Surveys with one intuitive view, the affairs of men; he will Examine into the matter himself, and will set Everything upon its own Basis; and impartiality Shall Be Seen flourishing throughout that Solemn assembly. Alas! Shall men hazard their precious Souls for a little of the transitory things of time. *O Sirs!* Let that pity, and compassion, which is peculiar to mankind, Especially to English-men, no Longer Lie Dormant in your Breast: Let it run free thro' Disinterested Benevolence. Then how would these iron yokes Spontaneously fall from the galled Necks of the oppress'd! And that Disparity, in point of Natural privilege, which is the Bane of Society, would Be Cast upon the utmost coasts of Oblivion. If this was the impulsive Exercise that animated all your actions, your Consciences would Be the only Standard unto which I need appeal. Think it not uncharitable, nor Censorious to say, that whenever we Erect our Battery, so as it is Like to prove a Detriment to the interest of any, we Lose their attention. Or, if we Don't Entirely Lose that, yet if true Christian candor is wanting we cannot Be in a Suitable frame for Speculation: So that the good Effect that these Otherwise might have, will prove abortive. If I could once persuade you to reflect upon the matter with a Single, and an impartial Eye, I am almost assured that no more need to be Said upon the Subject: But whether I shall Be so happy as to persuade you to Cherish such an Exercise I know not: yet I think it is very obvious from what I have humbly offer'd, that so far forth as you have Been Concerned in the *Slavetrade*, so far it is that you have assumed an oppressive, and tyrannic power. Therefore is it not high time to undo these heavy Burdens, and Let the Oppressed go free? And while you manifest such a noble and magnanimous Spirit, to maintain inviolably your own Natural rights, and militate so much against Despotism, as it hath respect unto yourselves, you do not assume the Same usurpations, and are no Less tyrannic. Pray let there be a congruity amidst you Conduct, Least you fall amongst that Class the inspir'd penman Speaks of. *Rom. 2.21* and on. *thou therefore which*

teacheth another, teachest thou not thy Self? thou that preachest a man Should not Steal, Dost thou Steal? thou that sayest, a man Should not Commit adultery, Dost thou Commit adultery? thou that abhorreth idols, Dost thou Commit Sacrilege? thou that makest thy Boast of the Law, through Breaking the Law Dishonorest thou God? While you thus Sway your tyrant Scepter over others, you have nothing to Expect But to Share in the Bitter pill. 'Twas an Excellent note that I Lately read in a modern piece, and it was this. "O when shall America be consistently Engaged in the Cause of Liberty!" If you have any Love to yourselves, or any Love to this Land, if you have any Love to your fellow-men, Break these intolerable yokes, and Let their names Be remembered no more, Least they Be retorted on your own necks, and you Sink under them: for god will not hold you guiltless.

Sirs, the important Cause in which you are Engag'd in is of an Excellent nature, 'tis ornamental to your Characters, and will, undoubtedly, immortalize your names thro' the Latest posterity. And it is pleasing to Behold that patriotick Zeal which fires your Breast; But it is Strange that you Should want the Least Stimulation to further Expressions of so noble a Spirit. Some gentlemen have Determined to Contend in a Consistent manner: they have *Let the oppressed go free*; and I cannot think it is for the want of such a generous principle in you, But thro' some inadvertency that . . . [end of extant manuscript]