DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS
AND
CONSTITUTION
OF THE
AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY;
TOGETHER WITH ALL THOSE PARTS OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE
UNITED STATES WHICH ARE OPPOSED TO SLAVERY AND RELATING TO SLAVERY.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."—Declaration of American Independence.

NEW-YORK,
PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY,
14 NASSAU STREET, NEW-YORK.
1833.
The American Anti-Slavery Society was organized by a Convention, which met in Philadelphia on the 4th of December, 1830. The Declaration of Sentiments, drawn up and signed by that Convention, and the Constitution of the Society, formed by them, are here presented to the public. Then the reader may judge of the constitutionality of the object and measures of this Society, portions of all those passages in the Constitution of the United States, which refer to slavery and the freedom of speech, and of the press, are refuted; also, an Address to the Public, from the Officers of the American Anti-Slavery Society, published September 26, 1835.
DECLARATION
Of the Anti-Slavery Convention, assembled at Philadelphia,
December 4, 1833.

The Convention, assembled in the city of Philadelphia, to organize
a National Anti-Slavery Society, promptly seize the opportunity to
proclaim the following DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS, as
enunciated by them in relation to the enslavement of one-sixth portion
of the American people.

More than fifty-seven years have elapsed since a band of patriot8
convened in this place, to devise measures for the deliverance of this
country from a foreign yoke. The corner stone upon which they
founded the Temple of Freedom was broadly this—"that all men are
created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain
inalienable rights; that among these are life, LIBERTY, and the pur-
suit of happiness." At the sound of their trumpet-call three millions
of people rose up as from the sleep of death, and rushed to the strife of
blood; deeming it more glorious to die instantly as freemen, than de-
derable to live one hour as slaves. They were few in number—poor in
resources; but the honest conviction that THUTH, JUSTICE,
and RIGHT, were on their side, made them invincible.

We have met together for the achievement of an enterprise, without
which that of our fathers is incomplete; and which, for its magnitude,
solemnity, and probable results upon the destiny of the world, as far
transcends them, as moral truth does physical force.

In purity of motive, in earnestness of zeal, in decision of purpoze, in
intrepidity of action, in steadfastness of faith, in sincerity of spirit, we
would not be inferior to them.

Their principles led them to wage war against their oppressors, and
to spill human blood like water, in order to be free. Ours forbid the
doing of evil that good may come, and lead us to reject, and to entreat
the oppressed to reject, the use of all carnal weapons for deliverance
from bondage; relying solely upon those which are spiritual, and
mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.

Their measures were physical resistance—the marshaling in arms—
error by the potency of truth—the overthrow of prejudice by the power
of love—and the abolition of slavery by the spirit of repentance.

Their grievances, great as they were, were rising in comparison
with the wrongs and sufferings of those for whom we plead. Our
fathers were never slaves—never bought and sold like cattle—never shut out from the light of knowledge and religion—never subjected to the hand of earthly tyrants. For the pangs of hunger, the toil of labor, the words of oppression is unequalled by any other on the face of the earth. Therefore, we maintain— that it is bound to every man, to every brother, to hold or acknowledge him, for one moment, as a piece of merchandise—to keep back his hire by fraud—or to brutalize his mind by denying him the means of intellectual, social, and moral improvement. The right to enjoy liberty is inalienable. To invade it is to transgress the precepts of Jehovah. Every man has a right to his own body— to the products of his own labor— in the protection of law, and to the common advantages of society. It is proper to buy or sell a native African, and subject him to servitude; simply the act is no great to render an African a slave. Therefore we believe and profess— that there is no difference, in principle, between the African slave and American slavery. That every African slave—who possesses a human mind—is still the property, as according to scripture—STAND: thine God, and brought under the protection of law.
That they had lived from the time of Pharaoh down to the present period, and had been enslaved through successive generations, that right to be free could never have been abandoned, but their claims would have constantly grown in magnitude.

That all those laws which now in force, admitting the right of slavery, are therefore before God utterly null and void; being an undeniable infringement of the Divine commandments; a daring infringement on the law of nature, a base renunciation of the very foundations of the social compact, a complete violation of all the relations, and obligations, and stipulations of mankind, and a presumptuous transgression of all the holy commandments—and that therefore they ought to be immediately abrogated.

We further believe and affirm—that all persons of color who possess the qualifications which are demanded of others, ought to be admitted with the same privileges, and the exercise of the same prerogatives, no exception that the paths of preferment, of wealth, and of intelligence, should be opened as widely to them as to persons of a white complexion.

We maintain that no compensation should be given to the planters emancipating their slaves, because it would be a surrender of the great fundamental principle, that man cannot hold property in man; because slavery is a crime, and therefore it is not a proper or legal property; because the holders of slaves are not the just proprietors of what they claim; because the slave is not depriving them of property, but retaining it in its entirety; it is not wronging the master, but wronging the slave—enslaving him to himself; because immediate and general emancipation only destroys semblance, not real property; it would not amount to a limit or break a bond of the slave, but by inducing motives into their breasts, would make them doubly valuable to the masters as free laborers; and because, if compensation is to be given at all, it should be given to the outraged and golden owners, and not to those who have plundered and abused them.

We regard all delusive, cruel, and dangerous, any schemes of expatriation which pretend to aid, assist directly or indirectly, in the vindication of the slave, or to be a substitute for the immediate and total abolition of slavery.

We fully and unanimously recognize the sovereignty of each state, to legislate exclusively on the subject of slavery which is tolerated within its limits; we recede that Congress, under the present national con-
and measures. To uplift, the voice of remonstrance, of the pulpit and the in the cause of the church and a purification of the churches from all participation in the guilt of slavery.

We shall encourage the labor of freemen, rather than that of slaves, by giving preference to their productions and exertions no means to bring the whole nation to trust for victory is solely if we defeat, but our principles, never. Already a host is coming up to the help of the Lord against the mighty, and the prospect before us is full of danger, yet more we advance.

Those are our views and principles—these, our design and measures. With entire confidence in the overseeing justice of God, we plant ourselves upon the Declaration of our Independence and the truths of divine revelation to open the Everlasting Rock.

We shall organize Anti-Slavery Societies, if possible, in every city, town and village, in our land. We shall send forth agents to lift up the voice of remonstrance, of warning, of outcry, and vigilance. We shall circulate, unperturbably and extensively, anti-slavery tracts and periodicals.

We shall enlist the pulpit and the press in the cause of the suffering and the freed. We shall aim at a purification of the churches from all participation in the guilt of slavery.

We shall encourage the labor of freemen rather than that of slaves, by giving a preference to their productions; and we shall spare no exertion nor means to bring the whole nation to openly oppose.

Our cause for victory is made in GOD. It may be personally dis- favored, but in principle never. Trust, justice, reason, humanity, must and will gloriously triumph. Already a host is coming up to the help of the Lord against the mighty, and the prospect before us is full of encouragement.
Submitting this DECLARATION to the candid consideration of the people of this century, and of the friends of liberty throughout the world, we hereby offer our signatures to it; promising, under the guidance and by the help of Almighty God, we will do all that in us lies, consistently with this Declaration of our principles to overthrow the most execrable system of slavery that has ever been witnessed upon earth—to deliver our land from its deadly curse—to wipe out the heaviest stain which tears upon our national escutcheon—and to secure to the colored population of the United States all the rights and privileges which belong to them as men, and as Americans—whether we live to witness the triumph of liberty, loving, and amiable, or perish untimely as martyrs in this great, benevolent, and holy cause.

Done in Philadelphia, the sixth day of December, A. D. 1833.

CONSTITUTION
OF THE
AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

PREAMBLE.

WHEREAS the Most High God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath commanded them to love their neighbors as themselves; and whereas our national existence is based upon this principle, as recognized in the Declaration of Independence, "that all mankind are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;" and whereas, after the lapse of nearly sixty years, since the faith and honor of the American people were pledged to this avowal, before Almighty God, and the world, nearly one-third part of the nation are held in bondage by their fellow-citizens; and whereas slavery is contrary to the principles of natural justice, of our republican form of government, and of the Christian religion, and is dangerous to the prosperity of the country, while it is undermining the peace, safety and liberties of the free; and whereas we believe it the duty and interest of the masters, immediately to emancipate their slaves, and that no scheme of expatriation, either
CONSTITUTION.

Art. I.

This Society shall be called the American Anti-Slavery Society.

Art. II.

The object of this Society is the entire abolition of slavery in the United States. While it admits that each State in which slavery exists, has, by the Constitution of the United States, the exclusive right to legislate in regard to its abolition at will, since, it shall aim to convince all our fellow-citizens, by arguments addressed to their understanding and conscience, that the holding is a heinous crime in the sight of God, and that the duty, safety, and interest of all concerned, require its immediate abolition, without compensation. The Society will also endeavor, in a most just method, to influence Congress to put an end to the domestic slave trade, and to abolish slavery in all those portions of our common country which come under its control, especially in the District of Columbia, and likewise to prevent the extension of it to any state that may be hereafter admitted to the Union.

Art. III.

This Society shall aim to elevate the character and condition of the people of color, by encouraging their intellectual, moral, and religious advancement, and, by removing public prejudices, that they may, according to their intellectual and moral worth, share an equality with the whites of this and religious privileges; but this Society will never, in any way, countenance the oppressed in violating their rights by resorting to physical force.

Art. IV.

Any person who consents to the principles of this Constitution, who
The officers of this Society shall be a President, Vice Presidents, a Secretary of Foreign Correspondence, a Secretary of Domestic Correspondence, a Recording Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Board of Managers, composed of the above, and not less than ten other members of the Society. They shall be annually elected by the members of the Society, and five shall constitute a quorum.

The Board of Managers shall annually elect an Executive Committee, to consist of not less than five, nor more than twelve members, which shall be located in New-York, who shall have power to enact their own by-laws, fill any vacancy in their body, employ agents, determine what remuneration shall be paid to agents, and to the Corresponding Secretaries, direct the Treasurer in the application of all monies, and call special meetings of the Society. They shall make arrangements for all meetings of the Society, make an annual written report of their doings, the income, expenditures, and funds of the Society, and shall hold stated meetings, and make the most energetic exertions in their power to advance the objects of the Society.

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Society, or in his absence one of the Vice Presidents, or, in their absence, a President pro tem. The Corresponding Secretaries shall conduct the correspondence of the Society. The Recording Secretary shall notify all meetings of the Society, and of the Executive Committee, and shall keep records of the same in separate books. The Treasurer shall collect the subscriptions, make payments at the direction of the Executive Committee, and present a written and audited account to accompany the annual report.

The annual meeting of the Society shall be held each year at such time and place as the Executive Committee may direct, when the accounts of the Treasurer shall be presented, the annual report read, appropriate addresses delivered, the Officers chosen, and such other business transacted as shall be deemed expedient. A special meeting shall always be held on the Tuesday immediately preceding the second Thursday in May, in the city of New-York, at ten o'clock, A.M., provided the annual meeting be not held there at that time.
Any Anti-Slavery Society, or association, founded on the same principles, may become auxiliary to this Society. The Officers of each Auxiliary Society shall be ex-officio members of the Parent Institution, and shall be entitled to sit and vote in the transactions of its business.

This Constitution may be amended, at any annual meeting of the Society, by a vote of two thirds of the members present, provided the amendments proposed have been previously submitted, in writing, to the Executive Committee.

ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC.

In behalf of the American Anti-Slavery Society, we solicit the attention of the public to the following declaration of our principles and objects. Were the charges which are brought against us, made only by individuals who are interested in the continuance of Slavery, and by such as are influenced solely by unreserved motives, such criticism would be unnecessary. But there are those who merit and possess our esteem, who would not voluntarily do us injury, and who have been led by gross misrepresentations to believe that we are pursuing measures at variance not only with the constitutional rights of the South, but with the precepts of humanity and religion. To such we offer the following explanation and assurances.

1st. We hold that Congress has no more right to abolish slavery in the Southern States than in the French West Indies. Of course we desire no national legislation on the subject.

2d. We hold that slavery can only be lawfully abolished by the Legislative bodies of the several States in which it exists, and that the exercise of any other than moral influence, to induce such legislation, is unconstitutional.

3d. We believe that Congress has the same right to abolish Slavery in the District of Columbia, as the State governments have within their respective jurisdictions, and that it is their duty to efface this foul blot from the national escutcheon.

4th. We have uniformly deprecated all forcible attempts on the part of
the slaves to procure their liberty. And in our power to address
them, we would exert them to choose a quiet and peaceful insurrection, and
would assure them that no insurrectionary movement on their part,
would render them in the slightest degree of consideration.

6th. We would make the principal instrument, both in account of the
credibility which would attend it, and on account of the occasion which
it might demand of solemnity and approbation.

7th. We are charged with sending incendiary publications to the North.
If by the term "incendiary" is meant publications containing suggestions
and facts to procure slavery to be moral and political evil, and that duty
and policy secure its immediate abolition, the charge is true. But if
the term is used to imply publications menacing revolution, and brings
measures to secure the slaves to break their chains, the charge is entirely
unjustifiably raised. We lay our publication to move, that the slaves
would receive from us "it is not or countenance.

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8th. We are accused of sending our publications to the Slaves, and it is
asserted that their tendency is to
excite
insurrections.

Both the charges
are false. These publications are not intended for the Slaves; and woe
they may be read on, they would find in these no encouragement to
insurrection.

9th. We are accused of employing Agents in the Slave States to
distribute our publications. We have never had one such Agent. We have
sent no packages of any papers to any person, in these States for distri-
bution, except to five respectable colored citizens, at their own request.
But we have sent, by mail, single papers addressed to public officers, editors
of newspapers, clergymen, and others. If therefore, our object is to
secure the slaves to insurrection, the Martians are our Agents.

10th. We believe Slavery to be an evil, against to it, and to every
other country in which it prevails; we believe immediate insurrection
is by the duty of every slaveholder, and that the immediate abolition
of slavery, by those who have the right to abolish it, would be safe and
wise. These opinions we have freely expressed, and we seriously
have no intention to substane or expressing them in future, and urging
them upon the conscience and hear of our fellow-citizens who hold slaves
or apologists for slavery.

11th. We believe that the extension of the war is urged by duty,
and by a zeal for the perpetuity of our republican institutions.
These are documents, and ideas of testimonials of our fellow-citizens, even
in the free States, which object proper, and who, in account of their
condition, are morally held in question, and whose testimony in sup-

We are accused of attempting to dissolve the Union, and even of wishing to dissolve it. We have never "calculated the value of the Union," because we believe it to be inestimable; and the abomination of slavery will move it as certainly as one of the many reasons why we cherish, and will endeavor to preserve the Constitution, is, that it restricts Congress from passing any law "abridge the freedom of speech or of the press!" Such, fellow-citizens, are our principles. Are they unworthy of Republican and of Christian hearts? Or are they in truth so atrocious, that in order to prevent their diffusion, you are willing to surrender, in the division of others, the invaluable privilege of free discussion, the very birthright of Americans? We will, in order that the abominations of slavery may be concealed from public view, and that the capital of your Republic may continue to be, as it now is, under the sanction of Congress, the great slave mart of the American continent, consent that the General government, in acknowledged defiance of the Constitution and laws, shall appoint, throughout the length and breadth of your land, ten thousand censores of the press, of whom each shall have the right to inspect every document you may commit to his post-office, and to suppress every pamphlet and newspaper, whether religious or political, which he may judge to contain an incendiary article? Surely we need not remind you, that if you submit to such an encroachment on your liberties, the days of our Republic are numbered, and that although abstention may be the first, they will not be the last victims offered at the shrine of arbitrary power.

JOHN RANKIN, Speaker.

WILLIAM J. RAY, Clerk of the House.

HAMILTON, 

WASHINGTON, &c.

Abraham Lincoln, President.

Levi Lincoln, Treasurer.

Wm. J. Brown, Secretary of the Interior.

A. B. Conklin, Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

New-York, September 30, 1852.
UNITED STATES.

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or south of the river Ohio, under the laws thereof, shall attempt any other of the said crimes or offenses, the part in which said crime or offense may be done, or attempt, or be guilty of, any of the said crimes or offenses, shall be punished the same as if he had been in the State before any judge of the State where the crime may be committed.

The rights of the inhabitants of the said State, or of any part of the same, to liberty of speech, press, and public record, shall be secure, and the free exercise thereof shall not be restrained in any manner whatever.

The liberty of the press is essential to the security of liberty in every free country; and the free communication of information and opinion is one of the watchwords of the Declaration of Independence.

Thus, the right to freedom of speech and the press is a fundamental right in the United States, protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

To ensure this freedom, the government must not interfere with the peaceful exercise of this right, which is a cornerstone of democratic society.
New Hampshire.
The liberty of the press is essential to the security of liberty in a state; it ought, therefore, to be inviolably preserved.

Vermont.
The people have a right to a free and unabridged exercise of the rights of conscience and the right of the public to be fully apprised of the transactions of government, and disfranchise the powers of the press ought not to be restrained.

Connecticut.
Every citizen may freely speak, write, and publish his sentiments on all subjects concerning the state, being responsible for the abuse of that liberty.
The law shall ever be passed to restrain the liberty of speech or the press.

New York.
Every citizen may freely speak, write, and publish his sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that liberty; and no law shall be passed to restrain or abridge the liberty of speech, or the press.

Pennsylvania.
The printing press shall be open to every person who undertakes to examine the proceedings of any branch of government, and no law shall be enacted to restrain the right thereof. The right of the people to keep and carry arms in common is part of the freedom of the subject, and no law shall be made to abridge this right.

Delaware.
The press shall be free to every citizen who endeavors to maintain the public conduct of men among ourselves, and enemies, may print on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that liberty.

Maryland.
The liberty of the press ought to be inviolably preserved.

Virginia.
The freedom of the press is one of the great bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained but by desperate tyrants.

North Carolina.
The freedom of the press is one of the great bulwarks of liberty, and therefore ought never to be restrained.

South Carolina.
The vigil of liberty is hereditary and in this state, and the liberty of the press, shall be for ever inviolably preserved.
GEORGIA.

The jury, as heretofore used in this state, shall remain inviolable; and no ex parte law shall be passed.

KENTUCKY, TENNESSEE, INDIANA, LOUISIANA, AND ILLINOIS.

The printing presses shall be free to every citizen who wishes to examine the proceedings of any branch of government, or the conduct of any public officer; and no law shall ever restrain the right thereof. Every citizen has an independent right to speak, write, or print upon any subject, as he thinks proper, being liable for the abuse of that liberty.

MISSISSIPPI.

No law shall ever be passed to restrain the liberty of the press. Every citizen may freely speak, write, and publish his sentiments on all subjects being responsible for the abuse of that liberty.

MISSOURI.

The free communication of thoughts and opinions is one of the invaluable rights of man; and every citizen may freely speak, write, and print on any subject, as he thinks proper, being responsible for the abuse of that liberty.

The Slave Trade Declared to be Piracy by the Law of the United States.

If any citizen of the United States, being of the crew or ship's company of any foreign ship or vessel engaged in the slave trade, or any person whatever, being of the crew or ship's company of any ship or vessel engaged in the Negro or slave trade, or engaged in or belonging to any manner of trade or business, or trading or making war on any person, or persons, being of any nation or race, on any foreign ship or vessel, or on any foreign shore near any port or harbor, not held in possession of the laws of either the United States or territories of the United States, with intent to make such capture or seizure a slave, shall die, or, if bodily dying or being killed, or shall become mad again or insane, or be reduced into such condition, shall suffer death.