SPEECH

OF MR. GOLDSBOROUGH, OF MARYLAND,

On the Abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia.

Delivered in the Senate of the United States, March 3, 1836.

Mr. President: It was my wish to have declined saying any thing upon the petitions on your table, but the deep interest involved in them forbids that course The People of Maryland and the People of ten other States in this Union have a great common stake at risk—not of property alone, but of tranquility, of peace, and of security. Under such circumstances, I should have been remiss in being silent, and I should have felt self-reproach in not adding my efforts to those of others to arrest the general misfortune.

It has been charged upon some Senators here from the South that they have exhibited a most excited feeling on this occasion, and that they have yielded to it. Sir, I am not surprised at this feeling—it is no dissembled excitement. If they who make the criticism could only translate themselves into the position which those gentlemen hold, and feel, with them, and all around them, the stake and risk which they have depending on the issue, they would not, they could not, feel less; and, if they could extend their views to the various and vast communities from which those gentlemen come, they would witness a thrilling state of anxiety that no tongue can describe.—At this moment, and from the early part of this session, the whole slave-holding country is and has been moved by a most intense anxiety—it is an anxiety that looks to a destiny to be produced by your decision; and whether that decision is to leave them in the peaceful enjoyment of domestic security and comfort, or to involve them wrongfully in all the horrors of an awful calamity, is the suspense which gives rise to that solicitude. Sir, there is not a mail or a messenger arriving at this day within their borders—not a door opened in their domicils, but the ready interrogatories are propounded. What is the news from Washington? Is the question of abolition settled—and how? A country, and the representatives of a country, agitated by such causes, cannot be expected to present an appearance or tone of much calmness or apathetic contentedness. Abolition in the District of Columbia would be a greater evil, far greater, than any protracted foreign war that could be waged with any nation or country. In the latter case we could trust, and well trust, to the united resources of the whole country—mind, shew, wealth; but, in the former, there would be no peace, no hope, but a recourse to a state of things at which the mind revolts, and which would rob both peace and hope of every charm

The proposition immediately before the Senate regards the mode of disposal that you are to adopt as to this and other petitions of a like nature, which pray for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. The source from which this proposition springs (Mr. Calhoun) always commands my respect; & if I differ with him on this occasion, my dissent is founded upon the opinion that the course suggested, under all circumstances, is not the best course. My object is to keep the question of abolition insulated and unmixed with every other subject. I desire to place it in no situation that it can gain any extraneous aid, my wish is that it should neither impart nor receive force or strength to or from any thing else. When we see Senators on this floor entertaining and animatedly defending their opinions that "*not to receive these petitions*" would not only be unconstitutional, but would be a violation of the birthright privilege of every freeman—the right of petition, how many may we justly suppose there are out of the doors of this Capitol who entertain like opinions? And if an impression gets abroad, right or wrong, that this Senate has disposed of these petitions in a way or by means in which they have disregarded the guaranties of the Constitution, and robbed the People of a privilege that has been the characteristic of freemen in all ages, can we conceive of any thing more calculated to produce a state of mind and feeling abroad that would add sympathy and numbers to the abolition cause? Could any thing be done here that would enable the friends of abolition to impress a belief generally that the right of petition had been contumaciously denied the People, (it matters not whether that impression is attempted to be made either from misapprehension or misconstruction, the effect would be the same,) new efforts would be made with redoubled ardor by quadrupled numbers, when the petitioners would give strength to their cause by uniting it with a vindication of their supposed violated rights. Yes, sir; and the same presses that are now teeming with every species of publication so deleterious to our peace, to aid the cause of abolition, would, in that case, spread as far and as widely abroad, through their thousands of agents, denunciations against Congress for trampling down the great safeguard of popular freedom—the right of petition.

In a few remarks which I made some weeks ago, when this subject was before us in a mere transient form, I then indicated the course that I should prefer; and that was a calm and more silent one My judgment directed me to think that the better course would have been to have received the petitions, and to have laid them upon the table, until some proposition could have been either formally or informally suggested and prepared, in form of resolution or otherwise, under which we could have disposed of them, assigning a reason for so doing; or, if preferred by others, that the petitions should have gone to a committee, and that they should have made a brief report of the grounds of rejecting the prayer of the petitioners: for I am happy in the belief that there is not a Senator on this floor who is not opposed to the object of the petitioners. And I would have done this, sir, under a hope and with the design of rationally influencing a large portion of the signers to these petitions, however enthusiastic the other portion of them may be; as I am persuaded they are rational, though mistaken and misguided men; and such men I would wish to propitiate by truth and reason. My design would have gone further, too; I wished to have waylaid the ear and the understanding of the rest of the world, who were not influenced by the spirit of propogating this destroying system into the midst of the slaveholding country, and I would have appealed to their unpledged judgments, to their sense of philanthropy for us, to have erected them as a mound to prevent a further rise of the troubled waters that threaten to overwhelm us.

On this, and on all trying occasions, we must appeal to public opinion; it is the great arbiter at last; it is the only sovereign acknowledged in our land; we cannot resist its power if we would. It is true that this monarch is sometimes maddened with the fervor of the moment, and it becomes our duty to compose it; if it is subject to delusion, we hope, as we believe, that it is capable of being recalled to reason.

One of the most productive sources of the evil against which we are contending, and the chief impediment to successful resistance, is, I am persuaded, to be found in the misapprehensions which are entertained both by the slaveholding and non-slaveholding States, in relation to the real state of things existing in each. Under the exciting circumstances in which the People in the slaveholding States are placed, it is not to be wondered at that they should regard every man who signs one of these petitions as an enthusiast, or a foe to their peace. Yet, surely, in life, many of these men are considered and known to be of good intelligence and inoffensive habits. So, on the other hand, there are very many in the non-slaveholding States, who, untaught by any practical views of their own as to the real state and condition of things generally existing in the slaveholding States, have indulged themselves, abstractly, in reflections on slavery, and have thrown around it all the glooms and horrors that heated imaginations could depict, or the fancies of others could furnish; and thus they find themselves led on to a crusade to do that to which a wounded sensibility prompts, without the power or the thought to calculate the greater miseries that must result from their interference. In no instance, and I have known many, where an intelligent man from the North has come to the South, without any other impressions of negro slavery than those formed in his own fancy at a distance, have I ever known him to be otherwise than completely astonished and gratified at the real condition of things. Instead of meeting with his supposed squalid, trembling, ill-treated set of beings, he finds a cheerful, well conditioned, laboring people with a body of lively and kindly treated domestic servants; in fact, instead of abject and tyrannically abused slaves, he finds a happy, well-trained peasantry, who divide with their masters a good portion of the products of their labor, and who, unlike other peasantry, are not left to chances and accident for their support, but, through all accident & chance, are sustained & protected by the means the care, and the favor of their masters.

In this state of things, I desire to address myself particularly to the honorable Senators upon this floor from the non-slaveholding States, and, through them, to the People themselves, if what I say here shall be deemed worthy to reach their ear, on this all-absorbing question; and I need not declare how much I crave their pardon and their favor for this direct appeal.

Upon the constitutional question involved in this subject, it is not my purpose particularly to dwell; but I may occasionally advert to it in my progress, since the views I entertain on that point have been so ably enforced and finely illustrated by others, as to render any thing more unnecessary and superfluous; besides, that part of the question does not, at this time, enter into my views; I mean to appeal to another powerful director in matters of this sort—the social tie as cemented between us by mutual interests, sound common sense, and love of justice; and with this intent I will refer to the origin and character of the Government over this little District of Columbia, whose agency is invoked by the petitioners to establish a system, that would, if adopted, inevitably spread disquiet and destruction in the proximate neighborhoods, and through them into the whole South.

It is a part of the history of this Federal Government of ours, that is familiar to all who hear me, that the clause in the Constitution which establishes the seat of the General Government in this District of Columbia, ten miles square, was not contained in the original draught of that instrument, but was inserted afterwards upon the suggestion of the expediency of the matter, founded upon a fact which had taken place in Philadelphia towards the latter end of the revolutionary war, when the old Congress was insulted, and their deliberations threatened to be overawed by a turbulent mob; and the police of Philadelphia, at that time, being either too weak or too timid to afford them the necessary protection, Congress found it necessary to remove to Trenton, in Jersey, and afterwards to Annapolis, in Maryland, for security from disturbance. This goes to show that the exclusive object of extending this Government over the District of Columbia was for the single purpose of enabling Congress to protect its members & to guard their deliberations upon the national concerns from interruption and all-overawing influence, and for no other purpose.

The site for this District was selected by the great founder of the Republic, embracing a portion of country on either bank of the Potomac, within those portions of the States of Virginia and Maryland that were then among the most slaveholding parts of those two slaveholding States, and which have since undergone no material change.—The cession was made by those States, and agreed to by the persons holding the territory ceded, no doubt from motives of patriotism and pride, as well as from the hopes of various future advantages. Bringing with them their own laws as a part of the compact of cession, subject to such future changes as they might find useful for their local and other circumstances, and stipulating for the security of property, they looked to nothing else, they never had a thought of any thing else, than that all changes that might be made by Congress that would affect their domestic relations, their property, their habits, would alone proceed from their own suggestion, dictated by their own wants and their own judgment in relation to their own exclusive concerns; they never dreamed that they were to be subject to a legislation dictated by others on whom the effect of that legislation was not to fall.—Could it be presumed that the independent citizens of independent States would ever have consented to have exchanged a legislation over their personal rights and property, by representatives chosen by and responsible to themselves for the exclusive legislation of a Congress, irresponsible to them, if subject to be directed by the petitions and wishes of others, who had neither a common residence nor a common interest with them? It could not have been expected. They never, never had an idea about external interference to introduce laws and systems to bind them and their property, foreign to their habits, conflicting with their established interests, and inconsistent with the happiness and comfort of which they felt themselves secure in the enjoyment; nor did the probability of such a thing ever occur to others. Upon this plain view of the state of things I turn to the intelligence of the North and of the West, and of the whole non slaveholding country, and I put it to their generous social feeling, and I ask them is it right, is it just, is it friendly in them, merely for the indulgence of a feeling upon the abstract question of slavery, to try to influence Congress, who have the exclusive legislation over this District, to force upon their fellow citizens in this District a system of things uncongenial with their habits, inconsistent with their wishes and interests, and adverse to their views, which at the same time spreads alarm, excites dissatisfaction, and hostile feeling through all the neighboring and similarly situated States? When they see that the People of the [illegible] to affect, are averse to it; and when they see hundreds of thousands of their intelligent fellow citizens, who must be inevitably mediately affected by it, thrown into consternation and agitated to desperation at the very demonstration of their designs, what motive can they find in charity, in benevolence, or in any of all the Christian virtues, to justify a perseverance in a cause that is to be a hateful source of strife fed by blood? Let me entreat them to pause and to forbear They have nothing to risk or to pledge on the result, whilst we risk every thing; they desire to gratify a sentiment, whilst we have all at risk that is dear to the heart of man—our country, our wives, our children, friends and home, and, what would be insupportable in the loss of these, our lives; weigh these stakes and risks in the balance, and then let their calmed Christian spirit speak. I cannot doubt their intelligence; I will not distrust their generous moral sentiment, nor their pious benevolence.

Allow me to propound a case to their consideration, as we sometimes are enabled to bring things home to our understandings and our hearts more strongly by the illustration of a converse proposition.

Suppose the site for the District, in which the seat of Government was to have been placed, had been selected in Pennsylvania, or in some other neighboring non-slaveholding State, and after Congress had been long established there, and the inhabitants of the District had become fixed in their habits, with every thing adjusted to their own taste and wishes, and to those of the proximate and neighbouring States; that the People of the South should have taken up the opinion that it would be much more agreeable to them, much more suitable to their habits and mode of life, if slavery could be introduced into that District; and that they were, in consequence of this sentiment, to send in petitions to Congress, year after year, from all quarters of the South to establish slavery in that District: would the Senators and Representatives from the non-slaveholding States, or the People themselves in those States, give ear for a moment to such petitions? Certainly not. And why? Because their object would be to interfere with the established system of things already existing, with which those immediately to be affected, and those around them, were content, and which they preferred; and because it would produce a change that they deprecated, as unsuited to their views as it would be contrary to their wishes. Yet, this is but the converse of the state of things that the petitioners desire to bring about, when, to gratify a sentiment that they have imbibed, in contemplating slavery at a distance, as it is supposed to exist among us, they endeavored to prevail upon Congress to force us against our will and against our best judgment as to our own security and peace, to derange our whole social system by a revolution that we are morally certain will be pregnant with calamities that make the heart sicken to contemplate.

Peculiar opinions may be found to exist in various parts of our extended country, arising from education, habits, local position, or other causes, for which we may entertain a predilection founded in early impressions, and strengthened by association; and perhaps it might be quite natural that, under the influence of this devotion, we might feel a strong disposition to transplant such opinions elsewhere, where we might suppose they would become as useful and satisfactory to others as they are to ourselves.—This design may be innocent in its conception, and perhaps benevolent; yet, before we attempt to press it upon others, we ought, at least, to consult their wishes, and to consider all the circumstances with which they are surrounded. Sentiments like these may probably have worked up a zealous sort of sense of duty to eradicate a system in the District of Columbia, and, through its influence there, in the adjoining Southern States, that is regarded at a distance, by those who have but little practical acquaintance, with it, as an evil and a wrong, and, looking upon Congress as the Legislature of the Union, to which all have access, for the purpose of making known their wishes, they think they may claim a right to give effect to their wishes through the course of proceeding in that body. But if the exercise of this supposed right, thus claimed, is destined, in the belief of all who are to be affected by it, to disturb the rights of property as sanctioned by law and long-established usage, to break up most inconveniently and injuriously an established state of things, and to spread abroad just causes for alarm and danger to personal peace and safety, can it be consistent with sound discretion, or with a benevolent fellow-feeling, or is it legal to attempt a revolution that is calculated to produce such effects? Why is it that I am prohibited by law from exercising my full right of ownership and of absolute right over my property in a house which adjoins my neighbor's, by putting it out of the way, by burning it down, with a view to my improvements? The house is my own absolutely, but it is not suited to my taste, and is an impediment to the indulgence of what I think would greatly add to the embellishment and value of all around Is not the answer ready and obvious? Because I must exercise my own rights consistently with the rights of others. Thus we say to our fellow-citizens in the non slaveholding States, exercise your absolute and indetensible right of petition so as not to impair or endanger our absolute rights and personal security.

I wish, sir, to continue my appeal to the People of the non-slaveholding States, by calling their attention to another historical record of high authority, to show what the sound intelligence of those States did in the early period of our political history through their representatives in Congress, at a time when they who petitioned were as earnest and as honest as any making similar petitions at this day can possibly be, and when there was more sedateness of purpose, and less of that active zeal and enthusiasm which mark the proceedures of the present time. I refer, sir, to the proceedings of Congress in the year 1790, upon various petitions from the abolition societies in Pennsylvania, where they first originated, praying Congress to interfere, to produce a system of gradual emancipation of slaves. These petitions were received by Congress, and referred to a committee, in usual course, consisting of seven members, six of whom represented non-slaveholding States, and one represented a slaveholding State.—Mr. Foster, of New Hampshire; Mr. Gerry, of Massachusetts; Mr. Huntington of Connecticut; Mr. Lawrence, of New York; Mr. Sinnickson, of New Jersey; Mr. Hartly, of Pennsylvania; and Mr. Parker of Virginia. The report of this committee was discussed and deliberated on in a Committee of the Whole House, and, after it had passed through the various forms of proceeding, it resulted in three distinct propositions, expressing the power and want of power in Congress over the question of slavery, as declared by the Constitution of the Union. First, that Congress could not, prior to the year 1808, prohibit the migration or importation of such persons as any of the States then existing should think proper to admit;' which was no more than an affirmation of what the Constitution itself declares. Secondly, that Congress have no authority to interfere in the emancipation of slaves, or in the treatment of them within any of the States—it remaining with the several States alone to provide any regulations therein which humanity and true policy may require. Thirdly, that Congress have authority to restrain the citizens of the United States from carrying on the African trade, for the purpose of supplying foreigners with slaves, and of providing, by proper regulations, for the humane treatment, during the passage, of slaves imported by the said citizens in to the States admitting such importation.

This part of the recorded journal of congressional proceedings has been cited heretofore on this floor for somewhat different purposes, but I recall it to view for the express design of showing the true line of demarcation of the constitutional power of Congress over the question of slavery in this country, as declared and laid down by the non-slaveholding States themselves—a decision founded upon a full view of all the powers in the Constitution in relation to slavery, strengthened by the lapse of more than forty years, and fortified up to this time by tranquil acquiescence and unprecedented prosperity. It is true that Congress held its session at that time in the city of Philadelphia, and the question was more particularly applicable to the States; yet as this was the deliberate result of the view of the *whole powers of Congress over the question of slavery*, as vested in them by the Constitution, and as the appropriation of a district not exceeding ten miles square for the seat of the General Government is contained in that Constitution, with the powers of Congress over it, and the selection of the site had then been made in parts of two slaveholding States, it does not seem to be quite fair to contend that, after a decision upon so dispassionate and thorough a view of the whole ground, there was any particle of power omitted to be considered, that had any existence under the Constitution. It is then with increased confidence that I appeal to the intelligence and love of justice in the non-slaveholding States, when I point out to them the metes and bounds, set by themselves, as to the interference of Congress with our institutions of slavery.—Here are your own boundaries set by yourselves—here are your own lines of power run by yourselves. Do not disturb these ancient, these established holdings, but leave us, as we leave you, to regulate all those internal concerns which so deeply affect all that is desirable in life.

Whatever may be the views of the petitioners in this case, be they born of benevolence or what, I am persuaded they are little aware of the real practical effect that must ensue from the pursuit of this object—abolition. Instead of promoting the happiness of the bond and the welfare of their masters, they will insure the misery of both. If they would but be contented to forbear to intermeddle in this subject, and leave it to work its own way, the progress to that state of things, which they profess to desire to bring about, would become more accelerated and more sure. The sentiment which they want abruptly to force upon us has already a cherished existence amongst us all, and it has been gradually growing more and more effective as circumstances arise to permit it. Nothing so certainly checks its growth as this ill judged interference. Yielding in sentiments of philanthropy to none, and desiring to extend its influence when we may, we must hush its voice upon the approach of danger, and bend all our thoughts and might to protection.* The propagation of the doctrines of abolition among the slaves of the South produces discontent, restlessness, and insubordination, that has been and must be put down by any restrictions or punishment necessary to the end. To prey upon and poison the minds of these people is but to cause their fetters to be riveted more closely, and hands them over to suffering or to death. If the danger is imminent, summary justice takes the place of established law, & an excited state of feeling pronounces the judgment that an excited state of feeling executes Could the design be, which it cannot be, to light the torch of servile discord, and to drench the land in blood, these mistaken and misguided benevolent efforts would fend, if persisted in, unerringly to that result. How mistaken is this zeal; how ill adapted to its professed end! If they who are leading on to such things, could only witness the return of these Southern gentlemen with their families to their homes, and see their meeting with their slaves, as they call them, and as they really are, they would not only be astonished, after all they have heard or thought, but I believe sincerely they would desist. Instead of the 'crouching creatures in the forms of men,' coming with doubting fear into the presence of a tyrant, as the scene is ever falsely represented, they would see the gladdened countenances of *a well taken care of people*, hastening with joy to greet their friends' return; and the rustic laborers from the field, when they come in from their employments, are no less anxious to bid the hearty welcome; then ensue the inquiries for health and cares, and all is satisfaction and joy around. Sir, I present no fancied picture. I give the scenes that are prevalent and usual.

My object is to place things in the true point of view, to prevent these scenes from being changed into scenes of sadness and horror

It ought to be known, but it is not known, that there is no portion of the inhabitants of this country who have been more benefited, whose condition has been more ameliorated by the independence of this country; established by the war of the Revolution, than the slave population. Anterior to that time, and for a short period after, the system of negro slavery in the Colonies, and in the new States, was pretty much the same as in the British West Indies—not a great deal better. But no sooner had our dependence upon, & close connexion with, the mother country become severed, and the new system of things had time to diffuse abroad its beneficent influences, than we saw their effects the happy amelioration of every est in life. It is a law in socia life, thas the condition of dependents will always keep pace with the liberalized views and sentiments of their superiors, produced by mental culture and refined association; and in no instance has it been more happily illustrated than in our negro population. In no part of the whole slave-holding country can we find any exception, unless, possibly, in Louisiana.

[Here Mr Porter prayed the Senator from Maryland to yield the floor for a moment; which request being complied with, Mr. P. said he had interrupted the Senator for the purpose of correcting an error into which he had fallen in regard to the treatment of the slave population in Louisiana. Mr. Porter assured the honorable Senator that the treatment of the slaves there would compare advantageously with any portion of the Union, If the honorable Senator would only visit that section, he would be as convinced of his mistake as he is satisfied that the People of the North would be of their misconceptions if they would go into Maryland.]

Mr. Goldsborough resumed the floor, and proceeded. I should not, probably, have made the disparagement so great as the honorable Senator (Mr. Porter) might have been led to believe. I only designed to say, that as Louisiana had much more recently emerged from the colonial state than most of the other parts of our slaveholding country, it was to be expected that she retained more of the old colonial usuages than the elder sister states, who had been longer freed from the thraldom of colonial subserviency. However, sir, I rejoice to be corrected by the honorable Senator, and thank him for the correction; and I shall endeavor to use it to good account, by offering it is another evidence to show how easily men are led into error, who trust to their theories in relation to the state and condition of things at a distance from them.

Yes, sir, the American Revolution has produced no happier change in the state of any of our people than in the negro population: the general sentiment and treatment, in regard to them, has undergone a great revolution, and they have been progressively advancing to an improved condition. That spirit, engendered by the character of our government, which has liberalized and elevated the minds of the white race of men, has been the cause of extending to the slave a full portion of its ameliorating influence. To check this improving state of things will be no voluntary act of our own, it must be forced upon us by those at a distance, who interfere in our concerns, or it will not be arrested. It is not that we fear the influence of individuals so much, who may come amongst us with the views of inculcating doctrines adverse to our institutions, that delude our slaves, and render them dissatisfied—men are tangible and responsible, and we can therefore guard against them—but it is the silent circulation of poisonous principles that are diffused, by means of every channel that presents itself, throughout our country; and whilst we are unsuspicious of their operation, they are corrupting all around us, and spreading turbulence and blind vengeance in our very households. Inflammatory and insubordinate doctrines, that tend directly to sever all the ties between master and dependent servants, that pervert all their feelings, and stimulate them to restlessness and revellion, are the secret sources of whatever calamities may befall ourselves or our slaves. These are what we dread. It is against their intrusion upon us that we complain. And to guard against their introduction into our communities, our utmost vigilance must always be directed. In such a state of things there can be no peace within our borders, all is agitation and anxiety When men are bent on schemes of disorder, they first infect the minds of those on whom they design to operate, with doctrines adapted to lead on to it; and then, by the means of that contamination, the way is opened, and the impulse is given to tumult and revolt. The effect of corrupting principles is more to be dreaded than arms, as they secretly discipline those that are to be turned loose, at an unguarded moment, to spread abroad the horrors of devastation and carnage.

We ought not to be regardless of the lessons of experience. When regicide France, in the early period of her Revolution, zealous in the cause of republicanizing the world, had proclaimed war against all crowned heads, and against all Governments of law and order, and had particularly marked out the neighboring empire of Great Britain as the chief object of her emancipating designs—unable to reach her object through fleets and armies, she resolved to accomplish it by the agency of her destroying revolutionary principles. Against these Great Britain kept up the war for years. The cannon and the bayonets of France she could meet on the ocean or in the field, without fear and with equal chances; but the corroding principles of her revolutionizing schemes fought always in ambuscade, their force it was difficult if possible to elude, when once they had gained admittance. Yet the leaders in France, in these glowing schemes for the deliverance of nations from the bondage of monarchy, of aristocracy, of established law, and of usuages that were denounced as corroded by the rust of time, were then held by multitudes to be the apostles of liberty and equality, who professed themselves as aiming at equal rights, to aid the mind in its progress to perfectibity, and to establish universal happiness by universal liberty.

Fortunately, the profound and patriotic intelligence that directed the councils of the British empire did not become enlisted among the proselytes of this fatal imposture. That intelligence knew its origin, and saw its inevitable tendency, and, in the undaunted spirit of resistance forced up to defiance, established the maxim as the rule of action, "that with revolutionary France and her principles there was no safety but in war." France in arms could be met, and she could be resisted; but the all-subverting influence of her false philosophy her atheism, her jacobinism, and her dissolute course of anarchy, spread terror and dismay throughout the world.

Similar to this is the condition of our slaveholding country in respect to the doctrines of emancipation that are now attempted to be introduced among us. Capable of resisting men even with arms, we only dread the secret influence of principles, which is most active when we are asleep, and which may awaken us to become the victims of its maddened proselytes.

Mr. President, the happy Government under which we live, in its very nature dissuades from and interdicts all this sort of interference. Formed to regulate our foreign concerns, to defend us from without, and to preserve peace and security within our borders, it leaves the States themselves to manage their own concerns within their own limits, without interference and without hindrance. Our government is national in all its character, and cannot be made an engine to transplant the feelings and opinions of one section into another more distant, to work revolution and change. We look to it for the general protection, and we demand that it be not made to intrude upon or intermeddle with our domestic interests, our com-

*See Bishop Bowen's pastoral letter by order of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, 1835, pages 21 & 22

'The subject of our slaves is one which circumstances have made of so much delicacy, it is in consequence of an ill-informed, unwise, and even a reckless philanthropy affecting it in other parts of our Union, surrounded by so much sensibility of alarm and offence, and where the moral interest of it is concerned, is, under the supposition of even the best dispositions entertained among us to promote it, incumbered confessedly with so much difficulty that the ministers of religion cannot approach it with too great caution and circumspection.

"There are schemes respecting them [the slaves] now, and for some years past, on foot among the pious, and on every account respectable, of our fellow citizens, in which I own myself unable to see it to be the duty or wisdom of the Christian to bear the part which is so loudly urged on him, as in a peculiar manner to be his. Both the duty and the wisdom of the Christian seem to me, in a manner greatly paramount, to consist in giving them [the slaves] in the condition in which they are, the knowledge of God, according to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and cheerfully committing the event of this course, prudently, intelligently observingly, and conscientiously persued, to the disposal of an all-wise and benignant Providence."

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