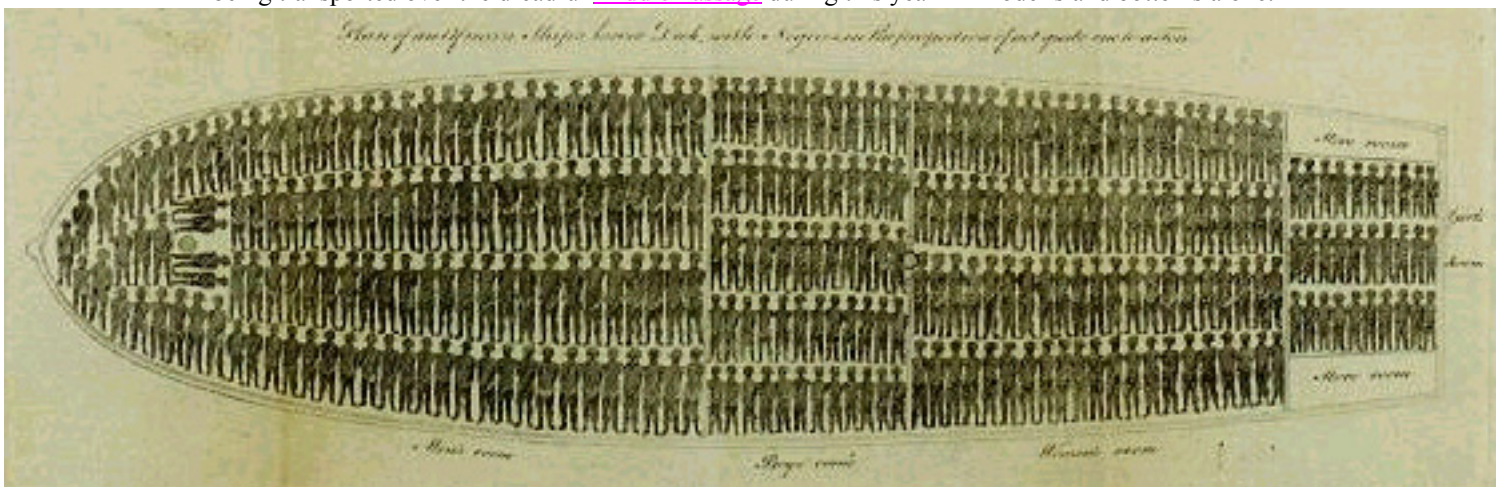
GO TO MASTER HISTORY OF QUAKERISM

FRIEND THOMAS CLARKSON

THOMAS CLARKSON

1748

In Rhode Island harbors alone, during this year alone, it has been estimated by Alexander Boyd Hawes, some 3 negreros were being fitted out for the international slave trade. If an average cargo of slaves was 109 –as we have estimated on the basis of a number of known cargos– then a total of more than 325 souls would have been being transported over the dreadful Middle Passage during this year in Rhode Island bottoms alone.



An invention important to the development of the cloth industry occurred during this year. Lewis Paul devised a carding machine. Because this development would have an impact on the demand for bales of cotton as a raw material for cloth, it would have an impact on the demand for field labor to grow this cotton, and therefore would have consequences in terms of human slavery — and in terms of the international slave trade.[1]

1. Bear in mind that in early periods the Southern states of the United States of America produced no significant amount of cotton fiber for export — such production not beginning until 1789. In fact, according to page 92 of Seybert's STATISTICS, in 1784 a small parcel of cotton that had found its way from the US to Liverpool had been refused admission to England, because it was the customs agent's opinion that this involved some sort of subterfuge: it could not have originated in the United States.

This was the year of the "grace" experience of John Newton. "Amazing Grace" therefore seems a most inappropriate title for a movie about the crusade against the British slave trade. The hymn would be written by the Reverend Newton (played in Michael Apted's film by Albert Finney) not about his belated awareness that the business in which he had been engaged was immoral, but about his famous religious "rebirth" experience years before he had become the captain of a negrero vessel. This religious experience was not what led him to abandon the slave trade, but rather, was part of the context that led him to enter upon this immoral way to make a living. The religious awakening he had experienced after a near-fatal illness and a dangerous shipwreck had caused him to seek to become a respectable person, turning away from a youth spent in general dissipation. It would be after getting right with God in this way that he would enter the slave trade and make quite a success of himself, rising to be a captain of a slaving ship and thereby winning the approval of his girlfriend's parents for their union. He would be writing hymns as his ship lay at anchor along West African shores, collecting its cargo of black slaves. For three decades after his experience of "grace" during this year, nothing would suggest to this man that there was anything wrong with how he was earning his living. It would not be until after he had retired from the slave trade (largely it seems for reasons of health, rather than due to any spiritual uneasiness) and taken up other employment on land, that he would gradually be brought to question the rightfulness of human enslavement. In short, "Amazing Grace" is a record of the religious experience that had turned Newton toward becoming a slavetrader, rather than of any mature reflection that had turned him away from it.

Also, although the script of this movie tells a pleasant enough personal story, it displays no awareness of the historical influences that had led to the opposition to the continuance of the international slave trade. In the movie, Friend Thomas Clarkson (played in Apted's film by Rufus Sewell), is portrayed as one who turned William Wilberforce's anti-slavery sentiments into action, but Friend Thomas did not originate these attitudes. Nor did Olaudah Equiano, himself a slavetrader (played in Apted's film by Youssou N'Dour). The preface to his ESSAY ON THE SLAVERY AND COMMERCE OF THE HUMAN SPECIES, written in 1785, acknowledges the priority of the writings of New Jersey's Friend John Woolman, whose ESSAY ON THE KEEPING OF NEGROES was first published in Philadelphia in 1754, and the priority of the writings of Pennsylvania's Friend Anthony Benezet, who published a number of anti-slavery works in Philadelphia during the same period, and acknowledges the stance of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting taken in 1754 to absolutely condemn all human slavery. This was not only before either Clarkson or Wilberforce had been born, but also while a saved-by-grace John Newton was still captaining his negrero vessel in the international slave trade.

The "Amazing Grace" movie was meant to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the passing of the bill that allowed the slave trade in the British Empire, an event that constitutes its climactic scene, but the movie leaves it unclear that this legislation did nothing to abolish slavery. The best source for Wilberforce's actual racial attitudes is Jack Gratus's 1973 THE GREAT WHITE LIE: SLAVERY, EMANCIPATION AND CHANGING RACIAL ATTITUDES (Hutchinson of London). Actually he was opposed to the immediate abolition of slavery, and this opposition would allow it to persist in Jamaica and other British colonies for another 30 long years, and one is entitled to one's ambivalence about such a track record. Wilberforce (played in Apted's film by Ioan Gruffudd) feared that enslavement had such an impact on the mind of an enslaved person, that it could not be so readily ended: "I look to the improvement of their minds, and to the diffusion among them of those domestic charities which will render them more fit, than I fear they now are, to bear emancipation."

> W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: The history of slavery and the slave-trade after 1820 must be read in the light of the industrial revolution through which the civilized world passed in the first half of the nineteenth century. Between the years 1775 and 1825 occurred economic events and changes of the highest importance and widest influence. Though all branches of industry felt the

impulse of this new industrial life, yet, "if we consider single industries, cotton manufacture has, during the nineteenth century, made the most magnificent and gigantic advances."[2] This fact is easily explained by the remarkable series of inventions that revolutionized this industry between 1738 and 1830, including Arkwright's, Watt's, Compton's, and Cartwright's epoch-making contrivances.[3] The effect which these inventions had on the manufacture of cotton goods is best illustrated by the fact that in England, the chief cotton market of the world, the consumption of raw cotton rose steadily from 13,000 bales in 1781, to 572,000 in 1820, to 871,000 in 1830, and to 3,366,000 in 1860.[4] Very early, therefore, came the query whence the supply of raw cotton was to come. Tentative experiments on the rich, broad fields of the Southern United States, together with the indispensable invention of Whitney's cotton-gin, soon answered this question: a new economic future was opened up to this land, and immediately the whole South began to extend its cotton culture, and more and more to throw its whole energy into this one staple.

Here it was that the fatal mistake of compromising with slavery in the beginning, and of the policy of *laissez-faire* pursued thereafter, became painfully manifest; for, instead now of a healthy, normal, economic development along proper industrial lines, we have the abnormal and fatal rise of a slave-labor large farming system, which, before it was realized, had so intertwined itself with and braced itself upon the economic forces of an industrial age, that a vast and terrible civil war was necessary to displace it. The tendencies to a patriarchal serfdom, recognizable in the age of Washington and Jefferson, began slowly but surely to disappear; and in the second quarter of the century Southern slavery was irresistibly changing from a family institution to an industrial system.

The development of Southern slavery has heretofore been viewed so exclusively from the ethical and social standpoint that we are apt to forget its close and indissoluble connection with the world's cotton market. Beginning with 1820, a little after the close of the Napoleonic wars, when the industry of cotton manufacture had begun its modern development and the South had

2. Beer, *GESCHICHTE DES WELTHANDELS IM 19TEN JAHRHUNDERT*, II. 67.
3. A list of these inventions most graphically illustrates this advance: —
1738, John Jay, fly-shuttle. John Wyatt, spinning by rollers.
1748, Lewis Paul, carding-machine.
1760, Robert Kay, drop-box.
1769, Richard Arkwright, water-frame and throstle. James Watt, steam-engine.
1772, James Lees, improvements on carding-machine.
1775, Richard Arkwright, series of combinations.
1779, Samuel Compton, mule.
1785, Edmund Cartwright, power-loom.
1803-4, Radcliffe and Johnson, dressing-machine.
1817, Roberts, fly-frame.
1818, William Eaton, self-acting frame.
1825-30, Roberts, improvements on mule.
Cf. Baines, HISTORY OF THE COTTON MANUFACTURE, pages 116-231; *ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA*, 9th ed., article "Cotton."
4. Baines, HISTORY OF THE COTTON MANUFACTURE, page 215. A bale weighed from 375 lbs. to 400 lbs.

definitely assumed her position as chief producer of raw cotton, we find the average price of cotton per pound, 8½*d.* From this time until 1845 the price steadily fell, until in the latter year it reached 4*d.*; the only exception to this fall was in the years 1832-1839, when, among other things, a strong increase in the English demand, together with an attempt of the young slave power to "corner" the market, sent the price up as high as 11*d.* The demand for cotton goods soon outran a crop which McCullough had pronounced "prodigious," and after 1845 the price started on a steady rise, which, except for the checks suffered during the continental revolutions and the Crimean War, continued until 1860.[5] The steady increase in the production of cotton explains the fall in price down to 1845. In 1822 the crop was a half-million bales; in 1831, a million; in 1838, a million and a half; and in 1840-1843, two million. By this time the world's consumption of cotton goods began to increase so rapidly that, in spite of the increase in Southern crops, the price kept rising. Three million bales were gathered in 1852, three and a half million in 1856, and the remarkable crop of five million bales in 1860.[6]

Here we have data to explain largely the economic development of the South. By 1822 the large-plantation slave system had gained footing; in 1838-1839 it was able to show its power in the cotton "corner;" by the end of the next decade it had not only gained a solid economic foundation, but it had built a closed oligarchy with a political policy. The changes in price during the next few years drove out of competition many survivors of the small-farming free-labor system, and put the slave *régime* in position to dictate the policy of the nation. The zenith of the system and the first inevitable signs of decay came in the years 1850-1860, when the rising price of cotton threw the whole economic energy of the South into its cultivation, leading to a terrible consumption of soil and slaves, to a great increase in the size of plantations, and to increasing power and effrontery on the part of the slave barons. Finally, when a rising moral crusade conjoined with threatened economic disaster, the oligarchy, encouraged by the state of the cotton market, risked all on a political *coup-d'état*, which failed in the war of 1861-1865.[7]

1760

Thomas Clarkson was born.

5. The prices cited are from Newmarch and Tooke, and refer to the London market. The average price in 1855-60 was about 7*d.*
6. From United States census reports.
7. Cf. United States census reports; and Olmsted, THE COTTON KINGDOM.

1787

May 22: The twelve founder members of the new nonsectarian Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade were three Anglicans (Granville Sharp, Philip Sansom, and Thomas Clarkson) and nine Quakers (William Dillwyn, Samuel Hoare, Jr, George Harrison, John Lloyd, Joseph Woods, John Barton, Joseph Hooper, James Phillips, and Richard Phillips).

INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE

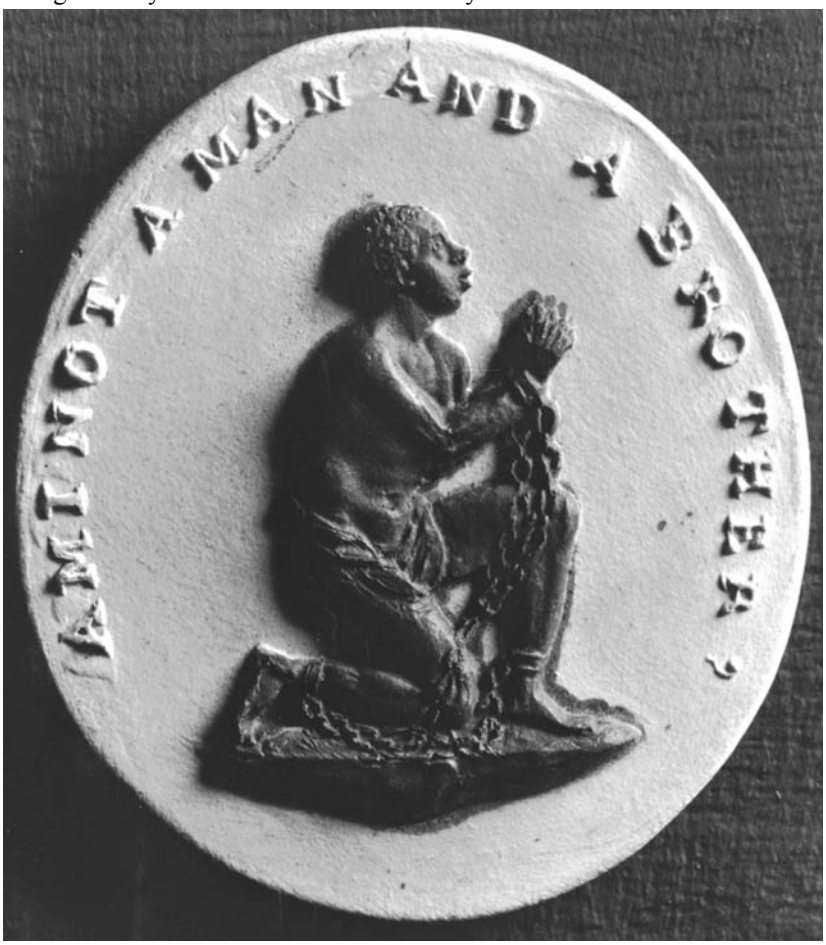
Influential figures such as John Wesley would give their support to the campaign. Later they would persuade William Wilberforce, the MP for Hull, to be their spokesman in the House of Commons. Thomas Clarkson initially took responsibility for collecting information to support the abolition of the slave trade. This included interviewing 20,000 sailors and obtaining equipment used on the slave-ships such as iron handcuffs, leg-shackles, thumb screws, instruments for forcing open slave's jaws, and branding irons. In this year he would be publishing a pamphlet, A SUMMARY VIEW OF THE SLAVE TRADE AND OF THE PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES OF ITS ABOLITION.

The work of this anti-slavery movement would continue beyond the ending of the English slave trade in 1807, as slavery still existed. The movement actually would grow substantially after the passing of the Emancipation Act which came into force in 1834. A group of Quakers, including Friend William Allen (not the same person as the William Allen of Concord, Massachusetts) and Friend Luke Howard, would form the African Institution. Recognizing that slavery had destroyed the whole basis of African society, the Institution would seek to improve the lives of African people by means of Christianity and education and would survive until 1827.

"EMANCIPATION IN THE ... INDIES....": All the great geniuses of the British senate, Fox, Pitt, Burke, Grenville, Sheridan, Grey, Canning, ranged themselves on its side; the poet Cowper wrote for it: Franklin, Jefferson, Washington, in this country, all recorded their votes.

Josiah Wedgewood, another influential member of the Society –which was, it must be noted, despite the best

efforts of the abolitionist Sharp in that direction, decidedly not a society the aim of which was to abolish slavery–, produced the jasperware cameo "an African in Chains in a Supplicating Posture" at his pottery factory. The design was by William Hackwood or Henry Webber:



Black servants or supplicants typically knelt in the art of this period, a period in which the upper classes did not kneel while praying, so the above image conflates themes of humility and of gratitude and of conversion from heathenism with the concept of emancipation from foreign servitude. Curiously, the primary impact of such a depiction would be to confirm the common white perception of Negro inferiority, and this supplicant

posture for black figures would persist long after the abolition of slavery as a standard feature of Western art.

In this year efforts began to repatriate black people back to Sierra Leone in Africa:

> Paul Cuffe likely heard of Sierra Leone as early as 1787. In that year, a British philanthropist, Granville Sharp, sent three shiploads of former American slaves, since living in London and known as the "black poor of London," to West Africa to establish a "Province of Freedom." Sharp spoke out strongly against the institution of slavery and the horrors of the famed "Middle Passage" through which most slaves destined for the colonies traveled. News of Sharp's endeavor spread quickly among the Society of Friends. Cuffe, however, did not initially agree with the idea of emigration. He believed that the United States, and particularly Massachusetts, was his province of freedom.
> It was not until 1808 that Cuffe began seriously entertaining the idea of traveling to West Africa.
>
> W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: In the individual efforts of the various colonies to suppress the African slave-trade there may be traced certain general movements. First, from 1638 to 1664, there was a tendency to take a high moral stand against the traffic. This is illustrated in the laws of New England, in the plans for the settlement of Delaware and, later, that of Georgia, and in the protest of the German Friends. The second period, from about 1664 to 1760, has no general unity, but is marked by statutes laying duties varying in design from encouragement to absolute prohibition, by some cases of moral opposition, and by the slow but steady growth of a spirit unfavorable to the long continuance of the trade. The last colonial period, from about 1760 to 1787, is one of pronounced effort to regulate, limit, or totally prohibit the traffic. Beside these general movements, there are many waves of legislation, easily distinguishable, which rolled over several or all of the colonies at various times, such as the series of high duties following the Assiento, and the acts inspired by various Negro "plots."
> Notwithstanding this, the laws of the colonies before 1774 had no national unity, the peculiar circumstances of each colony determining its legislation. With the outbreak of the Revolution came unison in action with regard to the slave-trade, as with regard to other matters, which may justly be called national. It was, of course, a critical period, — a period when, in the rapid upheaval of a few years, the complicated and diverse forces of decades meet, combine, act, and react, until the resultant seems almost the work of chance. In the settlement of the fate of slavery and the slave-trade, however, the real crisis came in the calm that succeeded the storm, in that day when, in the opinion of most men, the question seemed already settled. And indeed it needed an exceptionally clear and discerning mind, in 1787, to deny that slavery and the slave-trade in the United States of America were doomed to early annihilation. It seemed certainly a legitimate deduction from the history of the preceding century to conclude that, as the

> system had risen, flourished, and fallen in Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania, and as South Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland were apparently following in the same legislative path, the next generation would in all probability witness the last throes of the system on our soil.
> To be sure, the problem had its uncertain quantities. The motives of the law-makers in South Carolina and Pennsylvania were dangerously different; the century of industrial expansion was slowly dawning and awakening that vast economic revolution in which American slavery was to play so prominent and fatal a rôle; and, finally, there were already in the South faint signs of a changing moral attitude toward slavery, which would no longer regard the system as a temporary makeshift, but rather as a permanent though perhaps unfortunate necessity. With regard to the slave-trade, however, there appeared to be substantial unity of opinion; and there were, in 1787, few things to indicate that a cargo of five hundred African slaves would openly be landed in Georgia in 1860.

Strangely, there is no plaque to mark the spot in London –2 George Yard– at which this movement began:

2 GEORGE YARD

It is almost as if the matter were too shameful to mention:

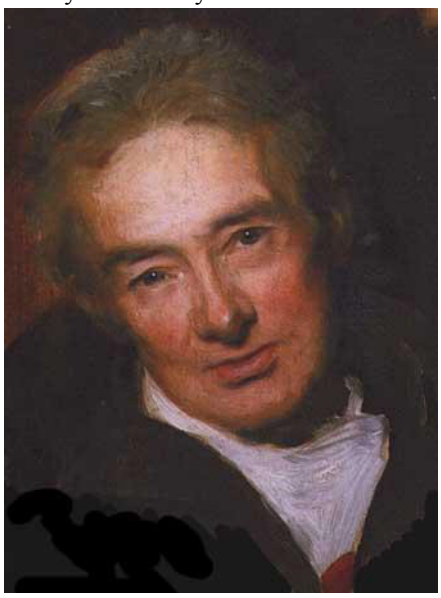
> We are now so used to thinking about English slavery from the vantage point of its abolition and the humanitarian discourse surrounding it that we have forgotten that at one point to oppose slavery was considered un-English and unpatriotic. As Eric Williams argued powerfully in the second chapter of CAPITALISM AND SLAVERY, from Quakers to cardinals and admirals, supporting the slave trade was at one point expected of every true English man and woman. There was a time when William Wilberforce, the abolitionist, was the most hated man in England, his cause considered to be anti-English. Lord Nelson, the hero of Trafalgar, couched his disdain for the abolitionists in the language of patriotism: "I was bred in the good old school, and taught to appreciate the value of our West Indian possessions, and neither in the field nor the Senate shall their just rights be infringed, while I have an arm to fight in their defence, or a tongue to launch my voice against the damnable doctrine of Wilberforce and his hypocritical allies." If Nelson was irritated by abolitionists, it is because the true, unsung heroes and patriots of England in the eighteenth century were slave traders, men like Thomas Golightly, owner of a slaving ship and the mayor of Liverpool, a city built on slave money. On February 14, 1788, Golightly and the slaving interest in Liverpool sent a petition to the House of Commons calling attention to the threat that abolitionism posed to British commerce. The petition is worth quoting in detail, because it illustrates how central slave trading had become to the identity

of nation and empire:

FEBRUARY 14, 1788

1791

April 20, Wednesday: When William Wilberforce presented his first bill in the House of Commons to abolish the international slave trade it was easily defeated by 163 votes to 88.[8]



"EMANCIPATION IN THE BRITISH WEST INDIES": In 1791, Mr. Wilberforce announced to the House of Commons, "We have already gained one victory: we have obtained for these poor creatures the recognition of their human nature, which, for a time, was most shamefully denied them." It was the sarcasm of Montesquieu, "it would not do to suppose that negroes were men, lest it should turn out that whites were not;" for, the white has, for ages, done what he could to keep the negro in that hoggish state. His laws have been furies.

The House of Commons has been prejudiced by the slave insurrection at Saint Domingue and by similar revolts in Martinique and Dominica. Most of Wilberforce's Tory colleagues were opposed to any restrictions on the slave trade and at first he and Friend Thomas Clarkson and Granville Sharp had to rely on the support

8. Anna Letitia Barbauld would write a poem entitled "Epistle to William Wilberforce, Esq. On the Rejection of the Bill for Abolishing the Slave Trade," which would in this year be published in London by J. Johnson. The bill would succeed in 1807.

READ THE FULL TEXT

of Whigs such as Charles Fox, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, William Grenville, and Henry Peter Brougham.

"EMANCIPATION IN THE BRITISH WEST INDIES": In 1788, the House of Commons voted Parliamentary inquiry. In 1791, a bill to abolish the trade was brought in by Wilberforce, and supported by him, and by Fox, and Burke, and Pitt, with the utmost ability and faithfulness; resisted by the planters, and the whole West Indian interest, and lost. During the next sixteen years, ten times, year after year, the attempt was renewed by Mr. Wilberforce, and ten times defeated by the planters. The king, and all the royal family but one, were against it. These debates are instructive, as they show on what grounds the trade was assailed and defended. Every thing generous, wise, and sprightly is sure to come to the attack. On the other part, are found cold prudence, barefaced selfishness, and silent votes. But the nation was aroused to enthusiasm. Every horrid fact became known.... In 1791, three hundred thousand persons in Britain pledged themselves to abstain from all articles of island produce. The planters were obliged to give way; and in 1807, on the 25th March, the bill passed, and the slave-trade was abolished.

1808

One of Waldo Emerson's sources for his lecture "EMANCIPATION IN THE BRITISH WEST INDIES", Friend Thomas Clarkson's THE HISTORY OF THE RISE, PROGRESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE ABOLITION OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE BY THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT,[9] was published.

> "EMANCIPATION IN THE BRITISH WEST INDIES": Thomas Clarkson was a youth at Cambridge, England, when the subject given out for a Latin prize dissertation, was, "Is it right to make slaves of others against their will?" He wrote an essay, and won the prize; but he wrote too well for his own peace; he began to ask himself, if these things could be true; and if they were, he could no longer rest. He left Cambridge; he fell in with the six Quakers. They engaged him to act for them. He himself interested Mr. Wilberforce in the matter. The shipmasters in that trade were the greatest miscreants, and guilty of every barbarity to their own crews. Clarkson went to Bristol, made himself acquainted with the interior of the slave ships, and the details of the trade. The facts confirmed his sentiment, "that Providence had never made that to be wise, which was immoral, and that the slave-trade — was as impolitic as it was unjust;" that it was found peculiarly fatal to those employed in it. More seamen died in that trade, in one year, than in the whole remaining trade of the country in two. Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox were drawn into the generous enterprise.... Mr. Clarkson, early in his career, made a collection of African productions and manufactures, as specimens of the arts and culture of the negro; comprising cloths and loom, weapons, polished stones and woods, leather, glass, dyes, ornaments, soap, pipe-bowls, and trinkets. These he showed to Mr. Pitt, who saw and handled them with extreme interest. "On sight of these," says Clarkson, "many sublime thoughts seemed to rush at once into his mind, some of which he expressed;" and hence appeared to arise a project which was always dear to him, of the civilization of Africa, — a dream which forever elevates his fame.

INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE

9. But Emerson would repudiate Friend Thomas Clarkson's religious and moral focus, in favor of a pretense, a pleasant fiction, that the elimination of oppression of slaves would be to the "advantage" of the oppressor, the slaveholder, or "for what the grossest calculation calls his advantage."
NOTE: There is a convenient new facsimile impression of the 1st edition of this in two volumes, published in London by Cass as of 1968, based upon the 1st edition by Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme as of 1808. I will include here the 1st of the volumes.

Click here for the full text of Volume One:

(Vol. 2 has not as yet been electronically captured.)

1809

March 12, Sunday: Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

> *1 day 12 of 3 M / Our Morning meeting was silent & I believe the flood gate of life was a little opened & flowed over the meeting generally & for myself I can say that I was favor'd with a small draught from it — In the Afternoon Our friend H Almy came to town with a concern to be at our meeting or as he said to eat this Passover with us he was livly in testimony & supplication & I believe his testimony was well adapted to the state of some present — In the eveng brother D R called to see us, after he retired we spent the remainder in reading the second Col of Clarksons History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
THOMAS CLARKSON

1823

Although Lord Sidmouth had rejected Friend Elizabeth Fry's criticism of the British prison system, his successor as Home Secretary, Sir Robert Peel, had introduced a series of reforms. In this year he sponsored a Gaols Act. Instead of a gaols being funded by exacting fees upon its prisoners, England began to pay a salary to its gaolers. Female prisoners were to be directly supervised by female rather than male gaolers. Arrangements were made for regular visits from prison chaplains. (These reforms did not, however, apply to debtors' prisons or local town and county gaols.)

England paid a £300,000 compensation to Portugal and extended Portugal's deadline for ending the international slave trade until February 1830. Thomas Fowell Buxton, Friend Thomas Clarkson, and William Wilberforce founded The Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions, and began publishing its influential Monthly Reporter. Parliament debated emancipation.[10] A slave uprising in Demerara polarized the factions.

Friend Thomas Clarkson's THOUGHTS ON THE NECESSITY OF IMPROVING THE CONDITION OF THE SLAVES IN THE BRITISH COLONIES, WITH A VIEW TO THEIR ULTIMATE EMANCIPATION; AND ON THE PRACTICABILITY, THE SAFETY, AND THE ADVANTAGES OF THE LATTER MEASURE was printed in London by R. Taylor.

10. In this year St. Stephen's Chapel –a sham Gothic pile where the Houses of Parliament were meeting– burned. Only a small portion of this structure now survives. The immense antique-looking structure with which we are now so familiar, that houses the present-day Parliament, and features Big Ben, would not be steel-framed until 1860. Buxton, who would retire from the House of Commons in 1825, would not play an important further part in persuading the Parliament to force an end to human enslavement.

1828

The negrero *Blue-eyed Mary*, of Baltimore, had been sold to Spaniards. It was captured with a cargo of 405 slaves by a British cruiser (Niles's Register, XXXIV. 346).

INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE

There was a great parade down Broadway Avenue in New-York, celebrating the New York Emancipation Act. As black women cheered from the sidewalks, the black men were led by the New York African Society for Mutual Relief, by the Clarkson Benevolent Society, and the Wilberforce Benevolent Society (named of course in honor of the famed English reformers Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce). The manumittees were marching along under banners on which was painted the word **AFRICAN**.
This was, in a sense, a veterans' march — for hundreds of people were in attendance who had personally experienced the Middle Passage.

MANUMISSION

In this year the white city fathers, fearing "civil discord," would shut down the African Grove Theater which had been entertaining the black community since 1821, where they had been segregating white visitors into the rear since they had not seemed in general to understand "how to conduct themselves at entertainments of ladies and gentlemen of color." The slaves of New York State having been emancipated, it had apparently become illegal to accumulate people into coffles, or nightclubs. (Or, it being pointless in the State of New York to protest that one was being held in the condition known as slavery, the official reason why this was pointless was changed: whereas previously it had been pointless to point out that one was enslaved because the authorities would respond "Yes, and you're a slave," as of this year this had become pointless because the authorities had come to be able to respond "No, you are quite mistaken, in fact slavery is illegal here. Now get back to work.") At an unknown date within this time period, Sojourner Truth's husband Thomas died free. Beginning roughly at this point and definitely continuing in the following year, Isabella Van Wagenen (Truth) was working as a free domestic servant in Kingston in Ulster County. Slightly to the south of this, however, living with the Auld family in a rented house on Philpot Street in Fells Point in Maryland near the facilities of the slave trader Austin Woolfolk, Frederick Douglass was lying at night, listening as slave coffles shuffled along from the pens to the port for transportation. He was learning about the enduring, obdurate nature of the world.[11]

1832

September 9, Sunday: "It is my desire ... to do nothing which I cannot do with my whole heart." What Waldo Emerson was after, in resigning from his pulpit over reluctance to administer the sacraments, as he made clear in his journal,[12] was nothing more or less than **power**.

> If he never spoke or acted but with the full consent of his understanding, if the whole man acted always, **how powerful** would be every act & every deed. Well then or ill then **how much power he sacrifices** by conforming himself to say & do in other folks' time instead of his own! ... & this accommodation is, I say, a loss of so much integrity & of course **so much power.**

"Emersonians are all alike; every Thoreauvian is Thoreauvian in his or her own way."
— Austin Meredith

11. This was the year of the United States's first touring "minstrel show," in which a white man with his face painted black,

Thomas D. Rice, presented himself as a character named "Jim Crow." By the time of the Civil War this would amount to a national industry of sorts, with more than 30 full-time white touring companies going from city to city putting on professional imitations of black comedians. (During the US Civil War a shortage of white comics would cause some of these troups to employ some black performers — who of course would perform, as did the whites, in blackface.)

12. JOURNALS AND MISCELLANEOUS NOTEBOOKS III:318-9.

I am the one, of course, who has supplied this boldface emphasis on the word "power," not Emerson. Of course the reason why this obsession with unitary power would bother someone now but did not bother Emerson then is, we've had an opportunity as Emerson had not, to hear Nazi talk about doing things with their "whole heart," Nazi talk about the "whole man" and his powerful integrity of purpose and function and being. Some Emersonians may take offense at my remarks here, but I will defend myself by pointing out that I am painting their Emerson in famous company for these remarks that I have made about the Sage of Concord hold with equal force for the Rector of Freiberg. It has been pointed out by Mary C. Turpie as long ago as 1944[13] that Emerson could not have been very serious about the various arguments he gave his congregation for why he needed to leave them, for he cribbed these reasons mostly from Friend Thomas Clarkson's A PORTRAITURE OF QUAKERISM

(see the article review on the next screen)

some time after he became disaffected and shortly before resigning. Note also that Emerson did not resign from the ministry, but only from his contractual obligation to minister to a particular congregation for a salary, and that he did not do this until he expected to be relieved for the rest of his life from financial need, and that he did this almost immediately after forming this expectation, and that he promptly went off as a tourist to the Continent.

13. "A Quaker Source for Emerson's Sermon on The Lord's Supper," New England Quarterly 17.

Turpie, Mary C. "A Quaker Source for Emerson's Sermon on the Lord Supper."
New England Quarterly 17:1 (March 1944): 95-101:

"A Review From Professor Ross's Seminar"

Richard Grusin cites this essay as an important one regarding Emerson's source for his June 1832 proposal for the modification of the communion rite. According to Turpie, this piece of writing is the only one in which Emerson uses exegesis and the last time that he acknowledged "orthodox custom" to such an extent. He borrowed Volumes 1 and 2 of Thomas Clarkson's PORTRAITURE OF QUAKERISM from the local lyceum before journeying to the White Mountains and he gave his sermon soon after his return. His sermon on the Lord Supper is, in effect, a rewriting of Clarkson's version.

Turpie notes that Emerson's motive for making the sermon goes beyond a kinship he evidently felt for the Quaker text. However, her concern is with his source rather than his reasons for using it. During the course of her article, she includes segments from both works side-by-side and they are surprisingly close in their development. Emerson's beginning helps to prove Turpie's theory:

> That he was led to this conclusion by the Quakers is suggested by the close of his introductory paragraph: "It is now near two hundred years since the Society of Quakers denied the authority of the rite altogether, and gave good reasons for disusing it." But neither the extent to which he employs Quaker reasons nor the existence of his debt to the particular account of them has been recognized. (950)

Turpie emphasizes that Emerson's sermon is superior to his source because he edited it to get rid of unimportant details and repetitious passages.

(Kathryn C. Mapes, March 8, 1992)

THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.
— ROMANS XIV. 17.

In the history of the Church no subject has been more fruitful of controversy than the Lord's Supper. There never has been any unanimity in the understanding of its nature, nor any uniformity in the mode of celebrating it. Without considering the frivolous questions which have been lately debated as to the posture in which men should partake of it; whether mixed or unmixed wine should be served; whether leavened or unleavened bread should be broken; the questions have been settled differently in every church, who should be admitted to the feast, and how often it should be prepared. In the Catholic Church, infants were at one time permitted and then forbidden to partake; and, since the ninth century, the laity receive the bread only, the cup being reserved to the priesthood. So, as to the time of the solemnity. In the fourth Lateran Council, it was decreed that any believer should communicate at least once in a year — at Easter. Afterwards it was determined that this Sacrament should be received three times in the year — at Easter, Whitsuntide, and Christmas. But more important controversies have arisen respecting its nature. The famous question of the Real Presence was the main controversy between the Church of England and the Church of Rome. The doctrine of the Consubstantiation taught by Luther was denied by Calvin. In the Church of England, Archbishops Laud and Wake maintained that the elements were an Eucharist or sacrifice of Thanksgiving to God; Cudworth and Warburton, that this was not a sacrifice, but a sacrificial feast; and Bishop Hoadley, that it was neither a sacrifice nor a feast after sacrifice, but a simple commemoration. And finally, it is now near two hundred years since the Society of Quakers denied the authority of the rite altogether, and gave good reasons for disusing it.

I allude to these facts only to show that, so far from the supper being a tradition in which men are fully agreed, there always been the widest room for difference of opinion upon this particular.

Having recently given particular attention to this subject, I was led to the conclusion that Jesus did not intend to establish an institution for perpetual observance when he ate the Passover with his disciples; and, further, to the opinion, that it is not expedient to celebrate it as we do. I shall now endeavor to state distinctly my reasons for these two opinions.

I. The authority of the rite.

An account of the last supper of Christ with his disciples is

given by the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. In St. Matthew's Gospel (Matt. XXVI. 26-30) are recorded the words of Jesus in giving bread and wine on that occasion to his disciples, but no expression occurs intimating that this feast was hereafter to be commemorated.

In St. Mark (Mark XIV. 23) the same words are recorded, and still with no intimation that the occasion was to be remembered.

St. Luke (Luke XXII. 15), after relating the breaking of the bread, has these words: This do in remembrance of me.

In St. John, although other occurrences of the same evening are related, this whole transaction is passed over without notice.

Now observe the facts. Two of the Evangelists, namely, Matthew and John, were of the twelve disciples, and were present on that occasion. Neither of them drops the slightest intimation of any intention on the part of Jesus to set up anything permanent. John, especially, the beloved disciple, who has recorded with minuteness the conversation and the transactions of that memorable evening, has quite omitted such a notice. Neither does it appear to have come to the knowledge of Mark who, though not an eye-witness, relates the other facts. This material fact, that the occasion was to be remembered, is found in Luke alone, who was not present. There is no reason, however, that we know, for rejecting the account of Luke. I doubt not, the expression was used by Jesus. I shall presently consider its meaning. I have only brought these accounts together, that you may judge whether it is likely that a solemn institution, to be continued to the end of time by all mankind, as they should come, nation after nation, within the influence of the Christian religion, would have been established in this slight manner — in a manner so slight, that the intention of commemorating it should not appear, from their narrative, to have caught the ear or dwelt in the mind of the only two among the twelve who wrote down what happened.

Still we must suppose that the expression, "*This do in remembrance of me,*" had come to the ear of Luke from some disciple who was present. What did it really signify? It is a prophetic and an affectionate expression. Jesus is a Jew, sitting with his countrymen, celebrating their national feast. He thinks of his own impending death, and wishes the minds of his disciples to be prepared for it. "When hereafter," he says to them, "you shall keep the Passover, it will have an altered aspect to your eyes. It is now a historical covenant of God with the Jewish nation. Hereafter, it will remind you of a new covenant sealed with my blood. In years to come, as long as your people shall come up to Jerusalem to keep this feast, the connection which has subsisted between us will give a new meaning in your eyes to the national festival, as the anniversary of my death." I see natural feeling and beauty in the use of such language from Jesus, a friend to his friends; I can readily imagine that he was willing and desirous, when his disciples met, his memory should hallow their intercourse; but I cannot bring myself to believe that in the use of such an

expression he looked beyond the living generation, beyond the abolition of the festival he was celebrating, and the scattering of the nation, and meant to impose a memorial feast upon the whole world.

Without presuming to fix precisely the purpose in the mind of Jesus, you will see that many opinions may be entertained of his intention, all consistent with the opinion that he did not design a perpetual ordinance. He may have foreseen that his disciples would meet to remember him, and that with good effect. It may have crossed his mind that this would be easily continued a hundred or a thousand years — as men more easily transmit a form than a virtue — and yet have been altogether out of his purpose to fasten it upon men in all times and all countries.

But though the words, *Do this in remembrance of me*, do occur in Matthew, Mark, or John, and although it should be granted us that, taken alone, they do not necessarily import so much as is usually thought, yet many persons are apt to imagine that the very striking and personal manner in which this eating and drinking is described, indicates a striking and formal purpose to found a festival. And I admit that this impression might probably be left upon the mind of one who read only the passages under consideration in the New Testament. But this impression is removed by reading any narrative of the mode in which the ancient or the modern Jews have kept the Passover. It is then perceived that the leading circumstances in the Gospels are only a faithful account of that ceremony. Jesus did not celebrate the Passover, and afterwards the Supper, but the Supper *was* the Passover. He did with his disciples exactly what every master of a family in Jerusalem was doing at the same hour with his household. It appears that the Jews ate the lamb and the unleavened bread, and drank wine after a prescribed manner. It was the custom for the master of the feast to break the bread and to bless it, using this formula, which the Talmudists have preserved to us, "Blessed be Thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who hast produced this food from the earth," — and to give it to every one at the table. It was the custom of the master of the family to take the cup which contained the wine, and to bless it, saying, "Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who givest us the fruit of the vine," — and then to give the cup to all. Among the modern Jews who in their dispersion retain the Passover, a hymn is also sung after this ceremony, specifying the twelve great works done by God for the deliverance of their fathers out of Egypt.

But still it may be asked, why did Jesus make expressions so extraordinary and emphatic as these — "This is my body which is broken for you. Take; eat. This is my blood which is shed for you. Drink it." — I reply they are not extraordinary expressions from him. They were familiar in his mouth. He always taught by parables and symbols. It was the national way of teaching and was largely used by him. Remember the readiness which he always showed to spiritualize every occurrence. He stooped and wrote on the sand. He admonished his disciples respecting the leaven

of the Pharisees. He instructed the woman of Samaria respecting living water. He permitted himself to be anointed, declaring that it was for his interment. He washed the feet of his disciples. These are admitted to be symbolical actions and expressions. Here, in like manner, he calls the bread his body, and bids the disciples eat. He had used the same expression repeatedly before. The reason why St. John does not repeat his words on this occasion, seems to be that he had reported a similar discourse of Jesus to the people of Capernaum more at length already (John VI. 27). He there tells the Jews, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." And when the Jews on that occasion complained that they did not comprehend what he meant, he added for their better understanding, and as if for our understanding, that we might not think his body was to be actually eaten, that he only meant, *we should live by his commandment*. He closed his discourse with these explanatory expressions: "The flesh profiteth nothing; the *words* that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life."

Whilst I am upon this topic, I cannot help remarking that it is not a little singular that we should have preserved this rite and insisted upon perpetuating one symbolical act of Christ whilst we have totally neglected all others — particularly one other which had at least an equal claim to our observance. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and told them that, as he had washed their feet, they ought to wash one another's feet; for he had given them an example, that they should do as he had done to them. I ask any person who believes the Supper to have been designed by Jesus to be commemorated forever, to go and read the account of it in the other Gospels, and then compare with it the account of this transaction in St. John, and tell me if this be not much more explicitly authorized than the Supper. It only differs in this, that we have found the Supper used in New England and the washing of the feet not. But if we had found it an established rite in our churches, on grounds of mere authority, it would have been impossible to have argued against it. That rite is used by the Church of Rome, and by the Sandemanians. It has been very properly dropped by other Christians. Why? For two reasons: (1) because it was a local custom, and unsuitable in western countries; and (2) because it was typical, and all understand that humility is the thing signified. But the Passover was local too, and does not concern us, and its bread and wine were typical, and do not help us to understand the redemption which they signified.

These views of the original account of the Lord's Supper lead me to esteem it an occasion full of solemn and prophetic interest, but never intended by Jesus to be the foundation of a perpetual institution.

It appears however in Christian history that the disciples had very early taken advantage of these impressive words of Christ to hold religious meetings, where they broke bread and drank wine as symbols.

I look upon this fact as very natural in the circumstances of the church. The disciples lived together; they threw all their property into a common stock; they were bound together by the memory of Christ, and nothing could be more natural than that this eventful evening should be affectionately remembered by them; that they, Jews like Jesus, should adopt his expressions and his types, and furthermore, that what was done with peculiar propriety by them, his personal friends, with less propriety should come to be extended to their companions also. In this way religious feasts grew up among the early Christians. They were readily adopted by the Jewish converts who were familiar with religious feasts, and also by the Pagan converts whose idolatrous worship had been made up of sacred festivals, and who very readily abused these to gross riot, as appears from the censures of St. Paul. Many persons consider this fact, the observance of such a memorial feast by the early disciples, decisive of the question whether it ought to be observed by us. For my part I see nothing to wonder at in its originating with them; all that is surprising is that it should exist among us. There was good reason for his personal friends to remember their friend and repeat his words. It was only too probable that among the half converted Pagans and Jews, any rite, any form, would find favor, whilst yet unable to comprehend the spiritual character of Christianity.

The circumstance, however, that St. Paul adopts these views, has seemed to many persons conclusive in favor of the institution. I am of opinion that it is wholly upon the epistle to the Corinthians, and not upon the Gospels, that the ordinance stands. Upon this matter of St. Paul's view of the Supper, a few important considerations must be stated.

The end which he has in view, in the eleventh chapter of the first epistle is, not to enjoin upon his friends to observe the Supper, but to censure their abuse of it. *We* quote the passage now-a-days as if it enjoined attendance upon the Supper; but he wrote it merely to chide them for drunkenness. To make their enormity plainer he goes back to the origin of this religious feast to show what sort of feast that was, out of which this riot of theirs came, and so relates the transactions of the Last Supper. *"I have received of the Lord,"* he says, *"that which I delivered to you."*

By this expression it is often thought that a miraculous communication is implied; but certainly without good reason, if it is remembered that St. Paul was living in the lifetime of all the apostles who could give him an account of the transaction; and it is contrary to all reason to suppose that God should work a miracle to convey information that could so easily be got by natural means. So that the import of the expression is that he had received the story of an eye-witness such as we also possess.

But there is a material circumstance which diminishes our confidence in the correctness of the Apostle's view; and that is, the observation that his mind had not escaped the prevalent error of the primitive church, the belief, namely, that the

second coming of Christ would shortly occur, until which time, he tells them, this feast was to be kept. Elsewhere he tells them, that, at that time the world would be burnt up with fire, and a new government established, in which the Saints would sit on thrones; so slow were the disciples during the life, and after the ascension of Christ, to receive the idea which we receive, that his second coming was a spiritual kingdom, the dominion of his religion in the hearts of men, to be extended gradually over the whole world.

In this manner we may see clearly enough how this ancient ordinance got its footing among the early Christians, and this single expectation of a speedy reappearance of a temporal Messiah, which kept its influence even over so spiritual a man as St. Paul, would naturally tend to preserve the use of the rite when once established.

We arrive then at this conclusion, *first*, that it does not appear, from a careful examination of the account of the Last Supper in the Evangelists, that it was designed by Jesus to be perpetual; *secondly*, that it does not appear that the opinion of St. Paul, all things considered, ought to alter our opinion derived from the evangelists.

One general remark before quitting this branch of the subject. We ought to be cautious in taking even the best ascertained opinions and practices of the primitive church, for our own. If it could be satisfactorily shown that they esteemed it authorized and to be transmitted forever, that does not settle the question for us. We know how inveterately they were attached to their Jewish prejudices, and how often even the influence of Christ failed to enlarge their views. On every other subject succeeding times have learned to form a judgment more in accordance with the spirit of Christianity than was the practice of the early ages.

But it is said: "Admit that the rite was not designed to be perpetual. What harm doth it? Here it stands, generally accepted, under some form, by the Christian world, the undoubted occasion of much good; is it not better it should remain?"

II. This is the question of expediency.

I proceed to state a few objections that in my judgment lie against its use in its present form.

1. If the view which I have taken of the history of the institution be correct, then the claim of authority should be dropped in administering it. You say, every time you celebrate the rite, that Jesus enjoined it; and the whole language you use conveys that impression. But if you read the New Testament as I do, you do not believe he did.

2. It has seemed to me that the use of this ordinance tends to produce confusion in our views of the relation of the soul to God. It is the old objection to the doctrine of the Trinity, — that the true worship was transferred from God to Christ, or that such confusion was introduced into the soul, that an undivided worship was given nowhere. Is not that the effect of the Lord's Supper? I appeal now to the convictions of

communicants — and ask such persons whether they have not been occasionally conscious of a painful confusion of thought between the worship due to God and the commemoration due to Christ. For, the service does not stand upon the basis of a voluntary act, but is imposed by authority. It is an expression of gratitude to Christ, enjoined by Christ. There is an endeavor to keep Jesus in mind, whilst yet the prayers are addressed to God. I fear it is the effect of this ordinance to clothe Jesus with an authority which he never claimed and which distracts the mind of the worshipper. I know our opinions differ much respecting the nature and offices of Christ, and the degree of veneration to which he is entitled. I am so much a Unitarian as this: that I believe the human mind cannot admit but one God, and that every effort to pay religious homage to more than one being, goes to take away all right ideas. I appeal, brethren, to your individual experience. In the moment when you make the least petition to God, though it be but a silent wish that he may approve you, or add one moment to your life, — do you not, in the very act, necessarily exclude all other beings from your thought? In that act, the soul stands alone with God, and Jesus is no more present to the mind than your brother or your child.

But is not Jesus called in Scripture the Mediator? He is the mediator in that only sense in which possibly any being can mediate between God and man — that is an Instructor of man. He teaches us how to become like God. And a true disciple of Jesus will receive the light he gives most thankfully; but the thanks he offers, and which an exalted being will accept, are not *compliments* — commemorations, — but the use of that instruction.

3. Passing other objections, I come to this, that the *use of the elements*, however suitable to the people and the modes of thought in the East, where it originated, is foreign and unsuited to affect us. Whatever long usage and strong association may have done in some individuals to deaden this repulsion, I apprehend that their use is rather tolerated than loved by any of us. We are not accustomed to express our thoughts or emotions by symbolical actions. Most men find the bread and wine no aid to devotion and to some, it is a painful impediment. To eat bread is one thing; to love the precepts of Christ and resolve to obey them is quite another.

The statement of this objection leads me to say that I think this difficulty, wherever it is felt, to be entitled to the greatest weight. It is alone a sufficient objection to the ordinance. It is my own objection. This mode of commemorating Christ is not suitable to me. That is reason enough why I should abandon it. If I believed that it was enjoined by Jesus on his disciples, and that he even contemplated making permanent this mode of commemoration, every way agreeable to an eastern mind, and yet, on trial, it was disagreeable to my own feelings, I should not adopt it. I should choose other ways which, as more effectual upon me, he would approve more. For I choose that my remembrances of him should be pleasing, affecting, religious. I will love him as a glorified friend, after the free way of

friendship, and not pay him a stiff sign of respect, as men do to those whom they fear. A passage read from his discourses, a moving provocation to works like his, any act or meeting which tends to awaken a pure thought, a flow of love, an original design of virtue, I call a worthy, a true commemoration.

4. Fourthly, the importance ascribed to this particular ordinance is not consistent with the spirit of Christianity. The general object and effect of this ordinance is unexceptionable. It has been, and is, I doubt not, the occasion of indefinite good; but an importance is given by Christians to it which never can belong to any form. My friends, the apostle well assures us that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy, in the Holy Ghost." I am not so foolish as to declaim against forms. Forms are as essential as bodies; but to exalt particular forms, to adhere to one form a moment after it is out-grown, is unreasonable, and it is alien to the spirit of Christ. If I understand the distinction of Christianity, the reason why it is to be preferred over all other systems and is divine is this, that it is a moral system; that it presents men with truths which are their own reason, and enjoins practices that are their own justification; that if miracles may be said to have been its evidence to the first Christians, they are not its evidence to us, but the doctrines themselves; that every practice is Christian which praises itself, and every practice unchristian which condemns itself. I am not engaged to Christianity by decent forms, or saving ordinances; it is not usage, it is not what I do not understand, that binds me to it — let these be the sandy foundations of falsehoods. What I revere and obey in it is its reality, its boundless charity, its deep interior life, the rest it gives to my mind, the echo it returns to my thoughts, the perfect accord it makes with my reason through all its representation of God and His Providence; and the persuasion and courage that come out thence to lead me upward and onward. Freedom is the essence of this faith. It has for its object simply to make men good and wise. Its institutions, then, should be as flexible as the wants of men. That form out of which the life and suitableness have departed, should be as worthless in its eyes as the dead leaves that are falling around us.

And therefore, although for the satisfaction of others, I have labored to show by the history that this rite was not intended to be perpetual; although I have gone back to weigh the expressions of Paul, I feel that here is the true point of view. In the midst of considerations as to what Paul thought, and why he so thought, I cannot help feeling that it is time misspent to argue to or from his convictions, or those of Luke and John, respecting any form. I seem to lose the substance in seeking the shadow. That for which Paul lived and died so gloriously; that for which Jesus gave himself to be crucified; the end that animated the thousand martyrs and heroes who have followed his steps, was to redeem us from a formal religion, and teach us to seek our well-being in the formation of the soul. The whole world was full of idols and ordinances. The Jewish was a religion of

forms. The Pagan was a religion of forms; it was all body — it had no life — and the Almighty God was pleased to qualify and send forth a man to teach men that they must serve him with the heart; that only that life was religious which was thoroughly good; that sacrifice was smoke, and forms were shadows. This man lived and died true to this purpose; and now, with his blessed word and life before us, Christians must contend that it is a matter of vital importance — really a duty, to commemorate him by a certain form, whether that form be agreeable to their understandings or not.

Is not this to make vain the gift of God? Is not this to turn back the hand on the dial? Is not this to make men — to make ourselves — forget that not forms, but duties; not names, but righteousness and love are enjoined; and that in the eye of God there is no other measure of the value of any one form than the measure of its use?

There remain some practical objections to the ordinance into which I shall not now enter. There is one on which I had intended to say a few words; I mean the unfavorable relation in which it places that numerous class of persons who abstain from it merely from disinclination to the rite.

Influenced by these considerations, I have proposed to the brethren of the Church to drop the use of the elements and the claim of authority in the administration of this ordinance, and have suggested a mode in which a meeting for the same purpose might be held free of objection.

My brethren have considered my views with patience and candor, and have recommended unanimously an adherence to the present form. I have, therefore, been compelled to consider whether it becomes me to administer it. I am clearly of opinion I ought not. This discourse has already been so far extended, that I can only say that the reason of my determination is shortly this: — It is my desire, in the office of a Christian minister, to do nothing which I cannot do with my whole heart. Having said this, I have said all. I have no hostility to this institution; I am only stating my want of sympathy with it. Neither should I ever have obtruded this opinion upon other people, had I not been called by my office to administer it. That is the end of my opposition, that I am not interested in it. I am content that it stand to the end of the world, if it please men and please heaven, and I shall rejoice in all the good it produces.

As it is the prevailing opinion and feeling in our religious community, that it is an indispensable part of the pastoral office to administer this ordinance, I am about to resign into your hands that office which you have confided to me. It has many duties for which I am feebly qualified. It has some which it will always be my delight to discharge, according to my ability, wherever I exist. And whilst the recollection of its claims oppresses me with a sense of my unworthiness, I am consoled by the hope that no time and no change can deprive me of the satisfaction of pursuing and exercising its highest functions.

NOTE: There are a number of situations in the Kouroo database in which we can examine what happens when a congregation disapproves of one of its pastor's beliefs. We can, for instance, study the situation in which the Reverend Moncure Daniel Conway spoke out to his congregation from his pulpit in Washington DC in opposition to human slavery, whereupon he was dismissed from his post. The fact is that the congregation in Boston had expressed no problem whatever with their assistant pastor Waldo Emerson's beliefs. They thought he was doing just fine. They were happy as clams with him. It is therefore an interesting question why this assistant pastor, soon after becoming wealthy, elected to step forward and announce the existence of doctrinal disagreements. Was he looking for a face-saving way to quit his job, one that would make other people wrong? Why not just slip out the back, Jack? Why not just make a new plan, Stan?

The problem is all inside your head, she said to me
The answer is easy if you take it logically
I'd like to help you in your struggle to be free
There must be fifty ways to leave your lover

She said its really not my habit to intrude
Furthermore, I hope my meaning won't be lost or misconstrued
But I'll repeat myself at the risk of being crude
There must be fifty ways to leave your lover
Fifty ways to leave your lover

Just slip out the back, Jack
Make a new plan, Stan
You don't need to be coy, Roy
Just get yourself free
Hop on the bus, Gus
You don't need to discuss much
Just drop off the key, Lee
And get yourself free

Just slip out the back, Jack
Make a new plan, Stan
You don't need to be coy, Roy
Just get yourself free
Hop on the bus, Gus
You don't need to discuss much
Just drop off the key, Lee
And get yourself free

She said it grieves me so to see you in such pain
I wish there was something I could do to make you smile again
I said I appreciate that and would you please explain
About the fifty ways

She said why don't we both just sleep on it tonight
And I believe in the morning you'll begin to see the light
And then she kissed me and I realized she probably was right
There must be fifty ways to leave your lover
Fifty ways to leave your lover

Just slip out the back, Jack

Make a new plan, Stan
You don't need to be coy, Roy
Just get yourself free
Hop on the bus, Gus
You don't need to discuss much
Just drop off the key, Lee
And get yourself free

You just slip out the back, Jack
Make a new plan, Stan
You don't need to be coy, Roy
Just get yourself free
Hop on the bus, Gus
You don't need to discuss much
Just drop off the key, Lee
And get yourself free

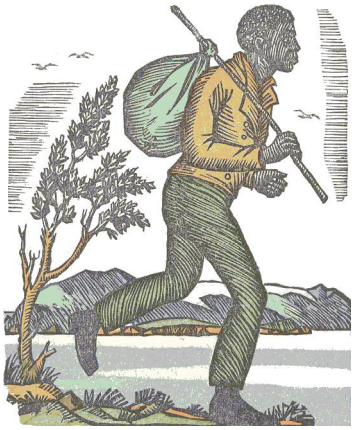
1833

August 28, Wednesday: Subsequent to the passage of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act by Parliament, British captains who had been being caught continuing in these international business activities had been being fined £100 for every slave found on board their vessel. However, this 1807 law had by no means been effective in halting British participation in the international slave trade — because, when slavers were in danger of being overtaken by the British navy, their captains could sometimes reduce the fines by having the cargo of blacks shoved off the other side of the vessel, to be dragged under the waves by their chains.

THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

Some involved in the anti-trade campaign found themselves therefore arguing that to end this cruel practice the entire traffic in humans must be outlawed, and in 1823 a new Anti-Slavery Society had been formed. Members had included Friend Thomas Clarkson, Henry Peter Brougham, William Wilberforce, and Thomas Fowell Buxton. On this day Parliament passed the Slavery Abolition Act. This act manumitted all slaves

anywhere in the British Empire (such as, for instance, in our neighbor to the north, Canada) under the age of



six years with the British government itself to pay full compensation to the deprived slavemasters. All slaves in the West Indies already above the age of six were by this act to be bound as apprentices for a term of 5 to 7 years (this would be reduced to 2 years), to be followed by their manumission. Said liberation was scheduled to begin on August 1, 1834 with the last batch of slaves to receive their manumission papers by August 1, 1838. As a condition of their cooperation the white "owners" of these 700,000 black and red workers were to receive some £20,000,000 sterling in compensation. (For instance, the Bishop of Exeter alone, with 665 slaves to manumit, would receive £12,700 in compensation out of the government's tax revenues.)

ABOLITIONISM
SLAVERY

1839

Friend Thomas Clarkson's THE HISTORY OF THE RISE, PROGRESS, AND ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE-TRADE, BY THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT:

THE TRAFFIC IN MAN-BODY

> That foreign states continue shamefully to carry it on, is no less certain. There are yearly transported to Cuba and Brazil, above 100,000 unhappy beings, by the two weakest nations in Europe, and these two most entirely subject to the influence and even direct control of England. The inevitable consequence is, that more misery is now inflicted on Africa by the criminals, gently called Slave-traders, of these two guilty nations, than if there were no treaties for the abolition of the traffic. The number required is always carried over, and hence, as many perish by a miserable death in escaping from the cruisers, as reach their destination. The recitals of horror which have been made to Parliament and the country on this dreadful subject, are enough to curdle the blood in the veins and heart of any one endued with the common feelings of humanity. The whole system of prevention, or rather of capture, after the crime has been

committed, seems framed with a view to exasperate the evils of the infernal traffic, to scourge Africa with more intolerable torments, and to make human blood be spilt like water. Our cruisers are excited to an active discharge of their duty by the benefit of sharing in the price fetched when the captured ship is condemned and sold; but this is a small sum, indeed, compared with the rich reward of head-money held out, being so much for every slave taken on board. It is thus made the direct interest of these cruisers, that the vessels should have their human cargoes on board, rather than be prevented from shipping them. True, this vile policy may prove less mischievous where no treaty exists, giving a right to seize when there are no slaves in the vessel, because here a slave ship is suffered to pass, how clear soever her destination might be; yet, even here, the inducement to send in boats, and seize as soon as a slave or two may be on board, is removed, and the cruiser is told, "only let all these wretched beings be torn from their country, and safely lodged in the vessel's hold, and your reward is great and sure." Then, whenever there is an outfit clause, that is a power to seize vessels fitted for the traffic, this mischievous plan tends directly to make the cruiser let the slaver make ready and put to sea, or it has no tendency or meaning at all. Accordingly, the course is for the cruiser to stand out to sea, and not allow herself to be seen in the offing –the crime is consummated –the slaves are stowed away –the pirate-captain weighs anchor –the pirate-vessel freighted with victims, and manned by criminals fares forth –the cruiser, the British cruiser, gives chace –and then begin those scenes of horror, surpassing all that the poet ever conceived, whose theme was the torments of the damned and the wickedness of the fiends. Casks are filled with the slave, and in these they are stowed away; or to lighten the vessel, they are flung overboard by the score; sometimes they are flung overboard in casks, that the chasing ship may be detained by endeavours to pick them up; the dying and the dead strew the deck; women giving birth to the fruit of the womb, amidst the corpses of their husbands and their children; and other, yet worse and nameless atrocities, fill up the terrible picture, of impotent justice and triumphant guilt. But the guilt is not all Spanish and Portuguese. The English Government can enforce its demands on the puny cabinets of Madrid and Lisbon, scarce conscious of a substantive existence, in all that concerns our petty interests: wherever justice and mercy to mankind demand our interference, there our voice sinks within us, and no sound is uttered. That any treaty without an outfit clause should be suffered to exist between powers so situated, is an outrage upon all justice, all reason, all common sense. But one thing is certain, that unless we are to go further, we have gone too far, and must in mercy to hapless Africa retrace our steps. Unless we really put the traffic down with a strong hand, and instantly, we must instantly repeal the treaties that pretended to abolish it, for these exacerbate the evil a hundred fold, and are ineffectual to any one purpose but putting money into the

pockets of our men of war. The fact is as unquestionable, as it is appalling, that all our anxious endeavours to extinguish the Foreign Slave Trade, have ended in making it incomparably worse than it was before we pretended to put it down; that owing to our efforts, there are thrice the number of slaves yearly torn from Africa; and that wholly because of our efforts, two thirds of these are murdered on the high seas and in the holds of the pirate vessels.

VIEW THE PAGE IMAGES

1844

August 1, Thursday: At the Festival de l'Industrie in Paris, Hector Berlioz led 1,000 performers in the premiere of his Hymne à la France for chorus and orchestra to words of Barbier. By intermission, the conductor had developed cold sweats. He was induced to change clothes, and drink some punch. He was then attended by a former teacher, Dr. Amussat, who diagnosed typhoid fever, bled the composer, and prescribed a vacation.

Frederick Douglass, whose location and activities have been a mystery to us during the last half of June and all of the month of July, resurfaced in order to return to Concord and speak during the annual fair of the Anti-

Slavery Society of Middlesex County celebrating the 1st of August liberation of the slaves of the British West Indies, with Waldo Emerson, William A. White,[14] the Reverend Samuel Joseph May, Moses Grandy, and Headmaster Cyrus Pierce of the normal school in Lexington LEXINGTON.[15]

JAMAICA

Emerson had agreed to deliver an address on the "Emancipation in the ... Indies...." Henry Thoreau would soon

14. This White was the white abolitionist who had in the previous year been traveling with Frederick Douglass as he lectured in Indiana. Would he be related to the Massachusetts abolitionist who is credited with being one of the four known presently known and recognized local conductors in the Underground Railroad, William S. White?

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

15. The John W. Blassingame volume I of THE FREDERICK DOUGLASS PAPERS does not mention the presence of Thoreau — but then I notice even Sojourner Truth is not significant enough to have received a mention anywhere in the index to this volume).

persuade James Munroe & Company of Boston to issue Emerson's address in the form of a pamphlet, and see it through the press of Thurston, Torry, and Company at 31 Devonshire Street in Boston.

EMANCIPATION DAY
THE LIST OF LECTURES

This abolitionist group had been refused permission to hold their meeting in any of the local churches, but Nathaniel Hawthorne had invited them to use the grounds of the Old Manse. However, it was rainy, so at the last minute Thoreau got permission to use the auditorium of in Concord's courthouse. The audience at the lecture was small, and consisted mostly of visitors from outside Concord, and evidently those attending found the topic a difficult one for the Concord resident Frederic May Holland, in the first full-length biography of this American figure Frederick Douglass,[16] has stated that when these attendees had assembled afterward for a collation,[17]

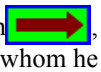
> they said to each other, "Can you eat? I cannot." Douglass was among the listeners that morning, and also among the speakers in the afternoon.

We may note that the mulatto speaker was present on this occasion only because he had been scheduled to take part in a mass rally in Hingham MA, with the Reverends John Pierpont and James Freeman Clarke, and that rally had been postponed for one day on account of the rain. After Thoreau's death Emerson would make a minute in his journal which would deal with the events of this day:

> I have never recorded a fact which perhaps ought to have gone into my sketch of "Thoreau," that, on the 1 August, 1844, when I read my Discourse on Emancipation, in the Town Hall, in Concord, and the selectmen would not direct the sexton to ring the meeting-house bell, Henry went himself, & rung the bell at the appointed hour.

It was the bell in the Unitarian church of Concord which Thoreau had rung. Evidently he was intercepted by the church authorities, for Holland stated that Thoreau had gotten off only "two or three unauthorized strokes" of the bell. In reading up on the subject of the emancipation, which had happened on this date ten years before, in 1834, Emerson had made "the most painful comparisons" with the present situation for the free blacks of New England. He had noted, for instance, that if any free black man of New England should take service aboard a ship, and should enter the harbor of Charleston, or Savannah GA, or New Orleans, he would be imprisoned ashore for "so long as the vessel remained in port, with the stringent addition, that if the shipmaster fails to pay the costs of this official arrest and the board in jail, these citizens are to be sold for slaves, to pay that expense."

16. Frederic May Holland. FREDERICK DOUGLASS: THE COLORED ORATOR, original edition 1891, revised edition prepared by the author in 1895 and reprinted by Haskell House Publishers of New York in 1969. In typical Concordian style, to the point that the author appears unwilling to use Thoreau's full name, the politics of this treatment is to minimize Thoreauvian attitudes. We are dealing here with a town that even today spreads invidious stories among its high school students, which have been passed on by several of them directly to me, that Thoreau was a local sneak thief, taking pies off of windowsills. If hypocrisy were gold, Fort Knox would be on Concord common.
17. The mulatto speaker Frederick Douglass would of course not have been able to be present while these white people of his audience were thus eating and drinking.

On this day (or perhaps at the meeting at the Unitarian church on June 12th  , or perhaps on both occasions) Emerson found that he was so impressed by the mulatto visitor whom he identified as "Douglas" with one "s," that he wondered whether perhaps he should attribute this person's obvious excellence to purity of his bloodlines (pure although purely Negroid, which would lead his analysis of his admiration in the direction of the Jungian trope "the genius of this race, to be honored for itself") or whether perhaps he should consider this person's obvious excellence to be the result of an admixture of improving European blood (which would apparently have led his analysis of his admiration in the direction of a quite different set of tropes, presumably that white bloodlines are superior to black bloodlines and that this speaker was superior to other blacks evidently due to having a greater share of this superior white ancestry).

When at last in a race a new principle appears, an idea, that conserves it. Ideas only save races. If the black man is feeble & not important to the existing races, not on a par with the best race, the black man must serve & be sold & exterminated. But if the black man carries in his bosom an indispensible element of a new & coming civilization, for the sake of that element no wrong nor strength nor circumstance can hurt him, he will survive & play his part. So now it seems to me that the arrival of such men as Toussaint Louverture if he is pure blood, or of Douglas [Frederick Douglass] if he is pure blood, outweighs all the English & American humanity. The Antislavery of the whole world is but dust in the balance, a poor squeamishness & nervousness; the might & the right is here. Here is the Anti-Slave. Here is Man; & if you have man, black or white is an insignificance. Why at night all men are black. The intellect, that is miraculous, who has it has the talisman, his skin & bones are transparent, he is a statue of the living God, him I must love & serve & perpetually seek & desire & dream on: and who has it not is superfluous. But a compassion for that which is not & cannot be useful & lovely, is degrading & maudlin, this towing along as by ropes that which cannot go itself. Let us not be our own dupes; all the songs & newspapers & subscriptions of money & vituperation of those who do not agree with us will avail nothing against eternal fact. I say to you, you must save yourself, black or white, man or woman. Other help is none. I esteem the occasion of this jubilee to be that proud discovery that the black race can begin to contend with the white; that in the great anthem of the world which we call history, a piece of many parts & vast compass, after playing a long time a very low & subdued accompaniment they perceive the time arrived when they can strike in with force & effect & take a master's part in the music. The civilization of the world has arrived at that pitch that their moral quality is becoming indispensable, & the genius of this race is to be honoured for itself. For this they have been preserved in sandy desarts [sic], in rice swamps, in kitchens & shoeshops so long. Now let them emerge clothed & in their own form. I esteem this jubilee & the fifty years' movement which has preceded it to be the announcement of that fact & our anti-slavery societies, boastful as we are, only the shadow & witness to that fact. The negro has saved himself, and the white man very patronisingly says, I have saved you. If the negro is a fool all the white men in the world cannot save him thought they should die.... He who does his own work frees a slave. He who does not his own work, is a slave-holder. Whilst we sit here talking & smiling, some person is out there in field & shop & kitchen doing what we need, without talk or smiles.... The planter does not want slaves: give him money: give him a machine that will provide him with as much money as the slaves yield, & he will thankfully let them go: he does not love whips, or usurping overseers, or sulky swarthy giants creeping round his house & barns by night with lucifer matches in their hands & knives in their pockets. No; only he wants his luxury, & he will pay even this price for it.

Thoreau also heard Frederick Douglass, but it is not known that this encounter with the impressive mulatto orator sent any equivalent racist concerns going in Thoreau's gourd at that time — probably not, as Thoreau

was never so concerned with issues of relative ascendancy as was the higher-caste Emerson. We can be utterly confident, for instance, that no literary researcher will ever be able to uncover, in any pile of unprocessed remarks in **Thoreau's** handwriting, any remark even **remotely** similar to the following blazing amazing one which is in Emerson's handwriting:Quite to the contrary![18] Because Thoreau's spirit was so utterly different

> I think it cannot be maintained by any candid person that the African race have ever occupied or do promise ever to occupy any very high place in the human family. Their present condition is the strongest proof that they cannot. The Irish cannot; the American Indian cannot; the Chinese cannot. Before the energy of the Caucasian race all the other races have quailed and done obeisance.

ALFRED ROSENBERG

WALDO EMERSON

from the blind prejudice displayed above, what we might confidently expect to uncover in any new pile of unprocessed remarks in **Thoreau's** handwriting would be more remarks similar to this **lovely** one anent the

18. I do drip with sarcasm, don't I? Well, when I come across stuff like this, I can't help myself, a demon takes over my keyboard and the screen echo comes across this way even if what I am typing is the alpha string "Hail Mary full of grace." The point is that if Thoreau had ever been guilty of writing something like this phrase from Emerson's miscellaneous notebooks, we would long ago have burned every existing copy of WALDEN and none of us in this generation would ever have heard of the guy. And that would be only right. Emerson, however, is invulnerable, is teflon, nothing ever sticks to him. Or, perhaps, it is the Emerson scholars who are invulnerable, or heedless or something. That quote I attributed to Emerson, repeated below, needn't be characterized as a piece of Emersoniana at all! It could be characterized, instead, as Emerson in the 19th Century merely –somehow– "channeling" the geist of Alfred Rosenberg (the philosopher of the Nazis in our 20th Century).

> I think it cannot be maintained by any candid person that the African race have ever occupied or do promise ever to occupy any very high place in the human family. Their present condition is the strongest proof that they cannot. The Irish cannot; the American Indian cannot; the Chinese cannot. Before the energy of the Caucasian race all the other races have quailed and done obeisance.

Irish interlopers in Walden Wood:

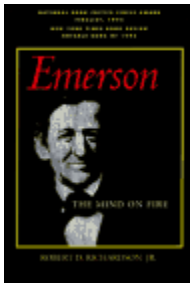
> Methinks I could look with equanimity upon a long street of Irish cabins and pigs and children revelling in the genial Concord dirt, and I should still find my Walden wood and Fair Haven in their tanned and happy faces.

Note that historical revisionism has rendered Frederick Douglass's arrival in Concord that summer utterly transparent,[19] with all the stir and ferment of that annual fair of the Anti-Slavery Society of Middlesex County being nicely explained away as nicely white Concordians interacting with other nicely white Concordians, and Emerson's journal entry above has been attributed to mere musings made earlier –spontaneously, *à propos de* nothing– during the spring or earlier summer of this year, rather than to the unthinkable: an actual relevant encounter with a mulatto relevant interloper in nice polite white Concord.

19. "That transparent black man over there can't be seen and therefore hasn't come to be heard by us, and therefore we're not not polite in not not listening to him."

It has been revisionist scholarship subsequent to that point which has almost totally erased Douglass from the Concord scene, with all the stir and ferment of that Anti-Slavery Fair coming to be nicely explained away in more recent history books as merely a few of the nice white Concordians having an argument of some sort with a few other of the nice white Concordians. This almost total erasure has made it possible for Emerson scholars to attribute his lengthy "if he is pure blood" journal musing (exhibited nearby as a full separate page) about Douglass to irrelevant jottings done within the half-year timeframe rather than to the unthinkable: a specifically locatable and quite actual encounter with a black relevant interloper in nice polite white Concord. But here is the event as fantasized by a historian of this tradition[20] — who, inheriting a tradition which has so conveniently forgotten the black speaker, proceeds to fantasize Emerson as having been being deeply impressed by the **abstract idea** of the abilities of Douglass the black man when that man, actually, was sitting before him staring him full in the face as he orated:

20. Robert D. Richardson, Jr. EMERSON: THE MIND ON FIRE. Berkeley CA: U of California P, 1994



(pages 396-9)

Emerson had been asked to speak on the tenth anniversary of the British emancipation of all slaves in the British West Indies; the sponsor was the Women's Anti-Slavery Association, to which both Lidian and Cynthia Thoreau belonged. Because abolition was a controversial subject on which the people of Concord were divided, none of the local churches would open their doors to them. The event was scheduled for the courthouse. Henry Thoreau went from door to door urging Concord residents to attend. When the sexton of the First Parish Church refused to ring the bell to announce the meeting, Henry rushed to the church and rang the bell himself.

The speech itself was a departure from Emerson's usual style in three ways. It is mainly a long chronological narrative, it is full of the oratorical devices the young Emerson had learned from Everett, and it is intended as agitprop, like Antony's speech over the body of Caesar. Emerson intended to arouse, to inflame, to move his audience to action: "If any cannot speak, or cannot hear the words of freedom, let him go hence, — I had almost said, creep into your grave, the Universe has no need of you." He recounted the horrors of slavery, "pregnant women set in the treadmill for refusing to work," "men's necks flayed with cowhide, and hot rum poured on, superinduced with brine or pickle, rubbed in with a cornhusk, in the scorching heat of the sun." He told of "a planter throwing his negro into a copper of boiling cane-juice." He adds heavy irony to the horrors: "The sugar they raised was excellent. Nobody tasted blood in it." Emerson continued for page after page, giving the history of slavery and the history of efforts to stop it, culminating in the act of Parliament of August 1, 1834, by which "slavery shall be and is hereby utterly and forever abolished and declared unlawful throughout the British colonies, plantations and possession abroad." The reason for celebrating this British act was, of course, to shame the Americans who had no such act on their books.

Emerson was very much alive to the economic argument against slavery by which British manufacturers were encouraged to regard the West Indian blacks as so many potential customers. But he was also aware of the insidious psychology of slavery, and he commented on "the love of power, the voluptuousness of holding a human being in his absolute control." For those who feared emancipation might unleash a terrible retribution and bring massive civil disorder, Emerson stressed the mild and orderly transition to freedom that occurred in the West Indies. Then, at last, he turned from the British to the Americans, who were now seen to be lagging woefully behind the times. At this point Emerson turns from his warm historical survey to the present moment and to a tone of plain anger. He was personally shocked and outraged by reports of northern blacks arrested on the docks of Massachusetts ships lying in southern ports.

> I have learned that a citizen of Nantucket Island, walking in New Orleans, found a freeborn citizen of Nantucket, a man, too, of great personal worth, and, as it happened, very dear to him, as having saved his own life, working chained in the streets of that city, kidnapped by such a process as this.

Waldo Emerson was outraged that Massachusetts seemed to be able to do nothing to help its citizens, and he said so in blunt, provocative language: "If such a damnable outrage can be committed on the person of a citizen with impunity, let the Governor break the broad seal of the state; he bears the sword in vain." The congressional delegation from Massachusetts felt that unilateral action by Massachusetts or by the North would endanger the Union. Emerson's reply was, "The Union is already at an end when the first citizen of Massachusetts is thus outraged."

The solution was not to be sought in further compromise and political juggling. America must follow England's lead and free the slaves. And if Emerson had been able in his private life until now to accept some of the condescending and muddy racism that undercut the urgency of abolition by declaring the blacks an inferior race, he now explicitly broke with that rationale. He declared to his audience that "the negro race is, more than any other, susceptible of rapid civilization." He also saw that abolition was not simply something conceded by white people, which was the view of Thomas Clarkson's book [which one of the three??]. "I add," said Emerson, "that in part it is the earning of the blacks." He was deeply impressed by the abilities of Toussaint Louverture and of Frederick Douglass. His private journal comments are just as strong as his public language. Referring specifically to his own conviction of the sufficiency of the individual, he said, "Here is the Anti-Slave. Here is Man; and if you have man, black or white is an insignificance. Why, at night all men are black." It was also in his journal that he said, "The negro has saved himself, and the white man very patronizingly says I have saved you." To his Concord audience Emerson said, "The black man carries in his bosom an indispensable element of a new and coming civilization." And he ended the speech not with a graceful appeal to history or good will but with a stiff and polarizing insistence that "there have been moments, I said, when men might be forgiven who doubted. Those moments are past."

The speech delighted the friends of abolition in the North. Thoreau helped with arrangements to publish the address. Soon the Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier was writing to solicit Emerson's further help at an antislavery convention. A letter from William Lloyd Garrison a few years later suggests what Emerson's conversion meant to the cause: "You exercise a strong influence over many minds in this country which are not yet sufficiently committed to the side of the slave.... You are not afraid publicly and pointedly to testify against the enslavement of three million of our countrymen." Emerson was solidly committed to abolition both personally and publicly from now on. His speeches on the subject would, if gathered together, fill a good-sized volume. He appeared on many platforms, but he was not now or ever comfortable as an activist, an advocate. As in the matter of the Cherokee removal, he would speak because he must, because no one else would, because he had

The above act of historical revisionism by Robert D. Richardson, Jr. reminds us of nothing so much as of the alteration of Chinese photographs subsequent to the 1971 fall from grace of Lin Biao, the government official who had suggested the idea of "Mao's Little Red Book," from favor in Beijing. For many years the Chinese Communist Party would go to great expense to remove the presence of that inconvenient yellow man from every historic official photograph it could get its hands on (below is a copy from the 1960s that they simply couldn't get their hands on, one that still shows Lin Biao standing beside Mao Tse-tsung, holding up his little red book).

Robert Richardson has altered the history of this significant 1844 Concord meeting in much the same manner, by entirely erasing that inconvenient black man. This doesn't just happen in totalitarian countries! We're so good here at self-censorship, that we don't have any need for official censorship — we can get the job done all by ourselves.

Why did this history need to be so altered? Because if you listen to the Emerson oration, not with white ears

but with black ears, it sounds very different. To white ears Emerson has seemed to have been benignly embracing the cause of anti-slavery. To black ears it is obvious that Emerson is acting as an *agent provocateur*, and attempting to goad Douglass, in his audience, to initiate the sort of servile insurrection that will get him killed — and the white backlash from which will solve America's race problem once and for all, by removing all the black pawns from the American game.

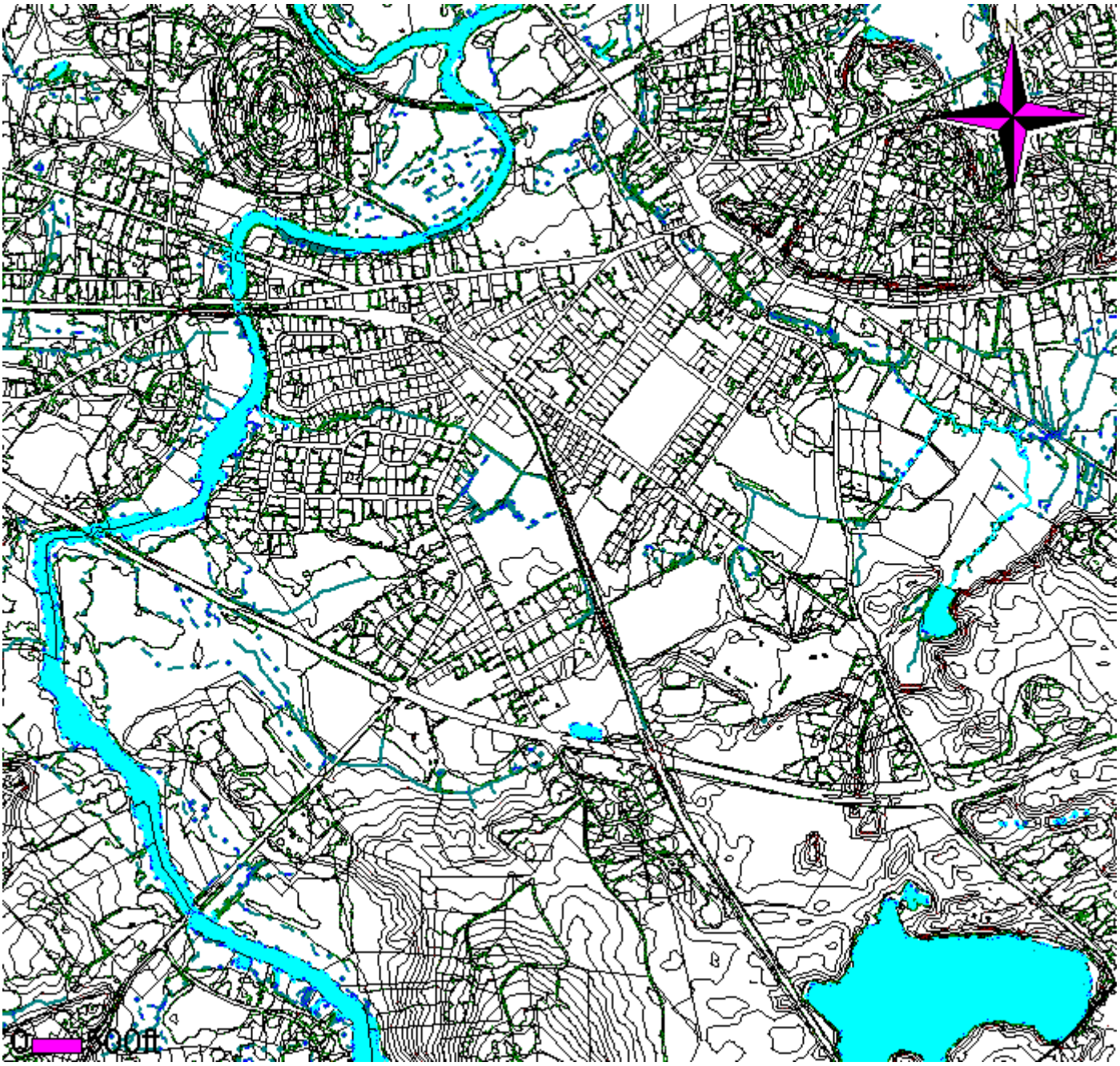
How are we to understand Emerson? Although the man had advocated total emancipation of the American slaves after fair compensation to their owners, when someone brought him a petition to add his name to, calling for a national convention to get the ball rolling in support of total emancipation of slaves with fair compensation to the owners –precisely what he had advocated– he refused to take the pen in his hand.

"There is only one way to accept America and that is in hate; one must be close to one's land, passionately close in some way or other, and the only way to be close to America is to hate it; it is the only way to love America."

— Lionel Trilling

Early in his life George William Curtis had spent two years at the Brook Farm community and school. then, in order to continue their association with Emerson, George and his older brother James Burrill Curtis had gone to live on a farm a mile north of Concord. The brothers worked for Captain Nathan Barrett and had a cottage adjoining his farmhouse, atop Punkatasset Hill. After spending part of a day with Hawthorne, George noted in his diary that the writer's actual life was harmonious with the picture-perfect antique repose of his house, redeemed into the present by his and Mrs. Hawthorne's infant and the wife's tenderness and respect for her husband. His note in his diary in regard to Mr. Emerson's address before the Antislavery Friends on this day August 1st, commemorating the 10th anniversary of emancipation in the British West Indies, was merely to

the effect that the address had been very commanding despite being nearly two hours long.



So Waldo began by pointing out that, actually, the institution of human slavery was in the best interest of no-one, for wage-labor is more efficient and far safer:

> WE are met to exchange congratulations on the anniversary of an event singular in the history of civilization; a day of reason; of the clear light; of that which makes us better

> than a flock of birds and beasts: a day, which gave the immense fortification of a fact, — of gross history, — to ethical abstractions. It was the settlement, as far as a great Empire was concerned, of a question on which almost every leading citizen in it had taken care to record his vote; one which for many years absorbed the attention of the best and most eminent of mankind.... If there be any man who thinks the ruin of a race of men a small matter, compared with the last decoration and completions of his own comfort, — who would not so much as part with his ice-cream, to save them from rapine and manacles, I think, I must not hesitate to satisfy that man, that also his cream and vanilla are safer and cheaper, by placing the negro nation on a fair footing, than by robbing them. If the Virginian piques himself on the picturesque luxury of his vassalage, on the heavy Ethiopian manners of his house-servants, their silent obedience, their hue of bronze, their turbaned heads, and would not exchange them for the more intelligent but precarious hired-service of whites, I shall not refuse to show him, that when their free-papers are made out, it will still be their interest to remain on his estate, and that the oldest planters of Jamaica are convinced, that it is cheaper to pay wages, than to own the slave.

Simultaneous with Emerson and Douglass delivering these noteworthy speeches in Concord, in Pennsylvania Emerson's friend, the Reverend William Henry Furness, was also taking the dangerous step of announcing himself as being in opposition to human slavery.

By way of radical contrast with Robert D. Richardson, Jr.'s putrid 1994 nobody-here-but-us-white-men account (reprinted above), here is how a more recent, much more reliable, and racially inclusive source, Gregory P. Lampe[21] has analyzed this Concord meeting (the material appears on pages 236-9, and has been lightly edited to make it slightly less convoluted, and for conformity with the punctuation and spelling conventions of this Kouroo database):

> Frederick Douglass's activities from mid-June to the end of July are difficult to determine. Neither the Liberator nor the National Anti-Slavery Standard advertised any of his lectures or documented his participation in any antislavery meetings during this period. According to Blassingame, ed. DOUGLASS PAPERS, SERIES ONE, 1:xciii, on June 28th Douglass attended the Essex County Anti-Slavery Society meeting in Methuen, Massachusetts. However, Douglass's name does not appear in the minutes of the meeting, published in the Liberator of July 12th, and it is probable that he was not in attendance. Douglass was invited to attend an antislavery meeting in Nashua, New Hampshire from July 26th to 29th, but there is no indication of his presence in the accounts of the proceedings published in the Liberator of September 27th. Douglass had also been invited to be the chief speaker at the August 1st celebration in Providence, Rhode Island, but he did not attend, an outcome that greatly

21. Gregory P. Lampe. FREDERICK DOUGLASS: FREEDOM'S VOICE, 1818-1845. East Lansing MI: Michigan State UP, 1998

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

disappointed the organizers and left many of Providence's blacks "much grieved" (Liberator of August 16th). On August 17th, Douglass wrote to the Liberator that he "deeply regretted" missing the meeting at Providence and explained his absence (Liberator of August 31st). On Thursday, August 1st, Douglass returned to Concord to participate in the commemoration of the anniversary of the emancipation of 800,000 slaves in the British West Indies. Despite a rain storm and troubles with securing a meeting place, reported a correspondent to the Liberator, the occasion was one "of deep and thrilling interest." The meeting, initially scheduled for out-of-doors, convened at eleven o'clock in the Court House. Ralph Waldo Emerson, the featured speaker of the celebration, addressed the "large and spirited meeting" for more than two and a half hours, during which time "the whole audience gave the most undivided attention." In the afternoon, Douglass was one of five speakers to appear before the meeting (Liberator of July 12th; National Anti-Slavery Standard of July 18th; Liberator of August 9th; National Anti-Slavery Standard of August 15th). The others speakers were William A. White, Samuel Joseph May, Moses Grandy, and Cyrus Pierce (National Anti-Slavery Standard of August 15th). Although there is no full text of Douglass' speech, we do have a sketch of it by Laura Hosmer, a member of the committee of arrangements for the celebration. Because this is the sole account of Douglass's address, it is worth printing in full. From it, we gain a sense both of Douglass's message and the power of his delivery. According to Hosmer's report in the National Anti-Slavery Standard, Frederick Douglass

> had spoken with the deep feeling which a man of his strong mind, who had felt all the dread horrors of Slavery, must have on such an occasion; he rejoiced with a joy that was truly unspeakable, over the resurrection of so many thousands from that living grave in which they had lain buried for so many long, dreary years; he told of the unutterable joy which must have been felt by those poor bondsmen, when they received the boon of liberty —a joy which, he said, could only be conceived of by those who had, like himself, suffered as they had suffered —a joy which might be felt, but never could be told; and, said he, I *rejoice* with them, I rejoice with them, I REJOICE with them." As he uttered these words, his every look and gesture showed how utterly inadequate language was to express the intensity of his feeling; his whole frame quivered with emotion, as he stood silent for a moment. "But," said he, "while I rejoice with them, my thoughts *will* revert to my own country, and to the millions who are here suffering miseries from which *they* are now delivered." He then depicted the state of things in our country, in language which I cannot remember to repeat, and with a power which I cannot imitate. When he had done speaking, the house was silent as if there were not a living being in it.

> As Hosmer's account testifies, Douglass's address made a powerful impression on the audience. The correspondent to the Liberator may have had Douglass's speech in mind when he wrote, "We have been strengthened, we have been refreshed, and all I doubt not who participated with us on that day, will look back upon it as one of the bright spots on their anti-slavery course." Certainly, Douglass's masterful address had been one of the day's "bright spots" (Liberator of August 9th and of August 23rd).

In the oration Emerson referenced an unprovenanced tale, that "the Great Spirit, in the beginning, offered the black man, whom he loved better than the buckra or white, his choice of two boxes, a big and a little one. The black man was greedy, and chose the largest. 'The buckra box was full up with pen, paper, and whip, and the negro box with hoe and bill; and hoe and bill for negro to this day.'" For information, since fortunately we aren't as close to this material as once we were — here are images of a hoe plate, used primarily for chopping weeds from cultivated fields, and of a billhook, used primarily for chopping brush from uncultivated fields:

If Frederick Douglass was unacquainted with this unprovenanced tale of Emerson's, he would surely have been acquainted with the use of the tools it mentioned. Imagine how he must have chuckled at this point in the Sage of Concord's oration!

Imagine how the black man reacted, when Emerson characterized nice polite negroes and how they would nicely, politely hold themselves back in order to let the white man "go ahead," and would modestly remind one another not to be pushy, never to dare to irritate The Man — "social position is not to be gained by pushing."

Imagine how the black man reacted, when the white man pointed up the fact that the genius of the Saxon race, his own race, was friendly to liberty; that the enterprise, the very muscular vigor of his nation, was inconsistent with slavery — that the salient difference between the white race and the black race, which had resulted in the white race enslaving the black race rather than vice versa, was that the white race would never permit itself to be enslaved.

Imagine how the black man reacted, when the white man predicted that if the black man continued to be feeble, and not important to the existing races, not on a parity with the best race, then the black man was fated to continue to serve — and was fated to "be exterminated."

Imagine how the black man reacted, when the white man suggested that only if the black man carried in his bosom an indispensable element of a new and coming civilization, would he be able to "survive and play his part."

Imagine how the black man reacted, when the white man described the occasion of this annual celebration of the emancipation of the negroes of the British West Indies as reminding us all, that after playing for such a long time such a very low and subdued accompaniment, in the future "the black race can contend with the white [and] can strike in with effect, and take a master's part in the music."

Imagine how the black man reacted, when the white man spoke of "the arrival in the world of such men as Toussaint, and the Haytian heroes, or of the leaders of their race in Barbadoes and Jamaica," and how important this was for the future success of the black race!

What a mixed message the black man received on that day! Here's the message, in loud black letters:

IF YOU DON'T GET PUSHY YOU'LL GET EXTERMINATED

— BUT GET PUSHY AND YOU'LL GET EXTERMINATED.

This was the shadow side of the coin which the white American worshiped:

"It is difficult to describe the rapacity with which the American rushes forward to receive the immense booty which fortune proffers to him. He is goaded onward by a passion more intense than love of life. Before him lies a boundless continent, and he urges onward as if time pressed, and he was afraid of finding no room for his exertions."

— Alexis de Tocqueville

1846

September 26, Saturday: Thomas Clarkson died in Playford, Suffolk.

From records of the Donner party kept by Hiram Miller and James F. Reed, it would appear that they made camp along the Humboldt River near present-day Hunter Siding, Nevada, at the junction with the California Trail about 7 miles west of modern Elko: "Sat 26 this day made 2 miles in the Cannon and traveled to the Junction of Marys River in all about 8." For the next two weeks they would be traveling along the Humboldt River.

1847

In Boston, the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar had out for sale a printing entitled THE LIBERTY BELL, as a fund-raising effort of the "Friends of Freedom":

- Madden, R. R. "The Liberty Bell"
- Jackson, Edmund. "The Fugitive"
- Bowring, John. "To our American Brethren"
- Phillips, Wendell. "Disunion"
- Atkinson, William P. "To the Abolitionists"
- Phillips, Stephen C. "Speech in Faneuil Hall"
- Flemming, Paul. "Sonnet [Be brave in spite of all! Do not give up the fight!]" Trans. Charles Follen.
- Anonymous. "An English Child's Notion of the Inferiority of the Colored Population in America"
- Armstrong, George. "Lecture on Slavery"
- Follen, Eliza Lee. "On Hearing of the Death of Thomas Clarkson"
- Burton, Warren. "An Illustration of Character"
- An English Lady. "Voices from the Old World to the New"
- George Combe. "Letter"

- Plumer, William Jr. “Kindness to Slaves”
- Davy, John. “Effects of Emancipation in Barbados”
- Adams, John Quincy. “Fragments From an Unfinished Manuscript”
- Cabot, Susan C. “The True Picture”
- Hall, Louisa J. “Justice and Mercy”
- Weiss, John. “Death of Toussaint L’Ouverture”
- Brooks, Charles T. “Lines on Being Reminded that Clarkson was Dead”
- Stone, Thomas T. “An Equation”
- Clarke, James Freeman. “Resolution and Temptation”
- Dall, Caroline W. Healey. “A Sketch from Maryland Life”
- Jones, Benjamin S. “Why Stand Ye Here all the Day Idle?”
- Quincy, Edmund. “Mount Verney: Or, An Incident of Insurrection”
- Hurnard, James. “Lines Addressed to Andrew J. Stevenson on his Arrival as Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States to Great Britain”
- Mazzini, Joseph. “Prayer to God for the Planters”
- Lowell, James Russell. “Extreme Unction”
- Snodgrass, J. E. “The Childless Mother”
- Jules. “The Last Words of Marie Roland”
- Jones, Jane Elizabeth. “A True Tale of the South”
- Sanford, Sarah. “Poem, on Seeing Biard’s Picture of a Slave-Mart”
- Pillsbury, Parker. “The Destiny of the Nation”
- Lowell, Maria. “A Twilight Vision”
- David Lee Child. “A Pocket-Piece”
- Chapman, Maria Weston. “Edward S. Abdy”
- Thomas Clarkson. “Last Thoughts of Thomas Clarkson”
- William Lloyd Garrison. “To My Birth-Place”

1853

In Boston, the National Anti-Slavery Bazaar had out for sale a printing entitled THE LIBERTY BELL, as a fund-raising effort of the "Friends of Freedom":

THE LIBERTY BELL, 1853

- Harriet Martineau. "Henrietta, the Bride"
- Foxton, E. "Petra; or, a Song of the Desert"
- Dall, Caroline W. Healey. "A Breeze from Lake Ontario"

  Report on a Canadian community of former slaves, followed by an argument that "it will not do to have a Constitution which is not opposed to Freedom; we must have one that claims it with emphasis...."
- Chapman, Edwin. "The Slave Mother"
- Whipple, Charles K. "Personality"
- Sanford, Lucy. "The Cathedral"
- Bowditch, William Ingersoll "Liberty, Sectional: Slavery, National"
- Friend Daniel Ricketson. "True Greatness–Thomas Clarkson"
- Lafayette, O. "Lettre: A Monsieur V. Schoelcher"
- ---. "Letter: To M. Victor Schoelcher"
- Thomas Wentworth Higginson. "The Morning Mist"
- Richard Hildreth. "The Approaching Crisis"
- Hurnard, James. "Sonnet [As I was gathering strawberries to-day]"
- Talbot, George F. "Webster"
- Sargent, Henrietta. "The Prayer of Moses granted"
- Thomas Wentworth Higginson. "Am I my Brother's Keeper?"
- Weston, Anne Warren. "In Memory of C.S."
- Frothingham, Octavius Brooks. "Pauperism and Slavery"
- Dorvelas-Dorval. "Statement respecting the Commerce of Hayti"
- Martineau, Harriet. "Nan's Lot in Life, A Tale"
- Chapman, Maria Weston. "The Young Sailor"

- Chapman, Maria Weston. “Russia and the Russians”

  Editorial note introducing Tourgueneff, a Russian noble imprisoned and sentenced to death for supporting the serfs. Chapman suggests the connections between anti-slavery work and other struggles against oppression.

- Tourgueneff, N [Ivan]. “Lettre”

  In French.

- May, Samuel Jr. “A more excellent Way”
- Waterston, R. C. “The Voice of Freedom”
- Chapman, Maria Weston. “The Sculptor of the Torrid Zone”
- Legouve, Ernest. “La Religion de l’Abolition”
- Phillips, Wendell. “Daniel Webster”
- Anonymous. “Lines written after a Winter of severe Storms”
- Remusat. “L’Inconsequence Republicaine”
- Quincy, Edmund. “Fetichism [sic]”
- William Lloyd Garrison. “To Louis Kossuth”
- Lesley, J. P. “The Bell”

"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

– Remark by character "Garin Stevens" in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST

Prepared: November 5, 2013

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE

This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, upon someone's request we have pulled it out of the hat of a pirate that has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (depicted above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of data modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture. This is data mining. To respond to such a request for information, we merely push a button.

Commonly, the first output of the program has obvious deficiencies and so we need to go back into the data modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and do a recompile of the chronology — but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary "writerly" process which you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place your requests with <Kouroo@brown.edu>.
Arrgh.