MR. DEAN'S DISCOURSE ON THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.
A DISCOURSE
DELIVERED BEFORE THE
AFRICAN SOCIETY,
AT THEIR MEETING-HOUSE,
IN BOSTON, MASS.
ON THE ABOLITION
OF THE
SLAVE TRADE

BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA, JULY 14, 1819.

BY PAUL DEAN,
PASTOR OF THE FIRST UNIVERSAL CHURCH IN BOSTON.

"The servant abideth not in the house forever."—Jesus Christ.

BOSTON,
PRINTED FOR NATHANIEL COVERLY.
1819.
NOTE.

The following address is printed from the copy as it was delivered, without being revised. Whatever imperfections it may contain, it is hoped will be viewed with candor, as the author had no view to its publication at the time it was written.
DISCOURSE, &c.

ST. JOHN, viii. 31.

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

O DEGRADING slavery! how hast thou triumphed over the sons of Adam. Long hast thou unfeelingly stretched thy awful sceptre over the agonizing heirs of freedom; and of all the enemies of human felicity, thou hast been the most obdurate. Thou hast heard with an unfeeling heart, the moving cry of bereaved mothers, and the deadly groans of her children, which the night-winds have wafted, from the face of the deep, to the ear of Heaven. Thou hast with an unshallowed hand robbed the sons and daughters of Jehovah of their liberty; and with an un pitying eye seen them writhe and smart beneath thy lash. But thanks be to Heaven, thy power is broken, thy sceptre is shortened, and thy terrors are fast diminishing, and now only appear as the distant remains of the storm, that has passed over to return no more! For the Son of God, moved with compassion, hath gra-
ciously espoused the cause of the oppressed, and never, never will he forsake it, till a most glorious jubilee shall declare every man to be free, and thy reign to be forever ended.

Among the many proofs of this, the important event we this day celebrate holds, and deservedly holds, a distinguished rank. Surely the abolition of the slave-trade by the American and British governments; two governments more devoted to the support of civil and religious liberty, than any others in the known world; and consequently more devoted to the defence of the great principles of the Christian religion, (which are the immortal charter of true freedom and liberty;) and whose examples have already, or will soon be followed by every nation, that reveres the name of Jesus, or acknowledges the being and providence of Jehovah. Surely, I say, this is a most grand proof, not only, that the work of exterminating slavery and oppression has been nobly begun, but that it will be successfully finished to the glory of God, the honor of Christ, and the joy of the world. This proof might be followed by an honorable train of witnesses from Scripture and reason, which would shed an unclouded day, and a tide of glory on the future destiny of the human race. But I forbear, at this time, to enter this field of treasures; and invite you to the contemplation of our text, which imports, that the Christian religion contains the principles of perfect and universal freedom, which will never cease to exert their mild influence in the cause of liberty,
till the inhabitants of the whole earth shall be free indeed; for "the servant abideth not in the house forever," saith its intimate connexion.

These principles, and their influence, claim our further attention.

It must be peculiarly pleasing to us as Christians to be able to trace the blessings of liberty, not only, but all the multiplied blessings of this, and the life to come, to the benign religion of our blessed Redeemer. That we may understandably do this, let us here inquire on what principles did Christ and his Apostles assert and establish the freedom and liberty of Man? Answer on the following sublime truths.

Sweeping away the thousand imaginary deities of the heathen, they taught with heaven descended dignity and clearness, that we have all one Father in heaven, even God, who hath created of one blood all nations of men, that dwell on all the face of the earth, and that he hath given them habitations, and set the bounds thereof in the earth—that we, however distinguished by nation, condition, or complexion, are all brethren of one family, loved by one Father, redeemed by one Saviour, protected by one Providence, and destined to one immortality; and all obligated to do by each other as we would be done by.

Though God has ordained that some should be princes and rulers, and others should be subjects; and that some should be rich, while others should be
poor; yet he requires them all to be mutual helpers of each other, striving together for the public good, by each one's cheerfully and faithfully contributing, according to his station and ability, his share to the support of order, government and peace in society; and this under the highest and most solemn responsibility to that God, who is good to all, and will surely avenge the oppressed, and to whom we must all give an account of ourselves at last. On these great and fundamental principles of revelation are founded the equal rights, and liberty of nations. Let these sentiments be deeply impressed upon the hearts, and felt powerfully operating upon the consciences of men universally, and every ruler would be the father of his subjects, and every master the friend of his servants—then would every man fear God, as their common Master in heaven, and love and honor each other as brethren, sharing together the common bounties of a good providence, and ardently cherishing with one consent the immortal hopes of salvation; yes, then indeed, would there be no masters but such as acted the part of fathers, and no servants but such as resembled those worthy Hebrews, who on the day of jubilee, chose to serve their good masters forever, as the safest and happiest freedom.

Already have these principles exerted a powerful and commanding influence on the hearts of many, and their fruits have been glorious; but it is important that we should inquire, in what way this has been done? When Christianity, as a celestial visitant
same to earth, she found the world slaves to sin, and
many of them slaves to each other, and compassion-
ated their sufferings; but how, we ask, did she com-
mence the good work of relieving them? Not by
forcibly dethroning every tyrant, and breaking the
shackles of oppression—not by suddenly disarming
the master, and bursting at once the chains of slavery.
No. This would have been making bad worse, and
introduced a state of anarchy and confusion, more to
be dreaded than despotism and slavery, where men
under the mistaken notion of being free, would have
been the voluntary slaves of passions and vices whose
rewards are death. But she commenced this vast
deriverance, by kindly instructing the understanding,
impressing the conscience, and gradually moulding
the dispositions of her subjects to give, and improve
the blessings, she was about to bestow, by the follow-
ing important lessons of instruction. To masters, she
said, with the mildness and majesty of the setting
sun, masters, give unto your servants that which is
just and equal, remembering that One is your Master
in heaven; with whom there is no respect of persons.
And to servants she said, servants, be obedient to
them that are your masters, according to the flesh,
with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart
as unto Christ, not with eye-service as men pleasers;
but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God
from the heart, with good will doing service, as to the
Lord; and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good
thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of
the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And by thus
rendering the master just and humane, and the servant diligent and faithful, she sought and effected, in a good degree, the remedy of the evils, attending the practise, which practice, she could not, or did not think it expedient suddenly to break up. Thus also she caused the master and the servant to approximate nearer to equals, and by degrees prepared them to continue together, or separate, by mutual consent, as circumstances might dictate, or duty require.

In this way, religion began and continued with her followers, her benign influence for the amelioration of the condition of slaves, during the twelve first centuries of her reign; at the close of which, liberty was so conspicuous in the west of Europe. But it was soon found that only the branches, of this deadly tree were as yet cut off, and in the seventeenth century it was found necessary to lay the axe at the very root of it. We allude to the shameful practice of trafficking in human flesh and blood, then recently adopted, by Christian nations, to their eternal infamy, and confirmed with the chiefs of the African tribes, by treaty, in defiance of the commandments of God, and the dictates of reason. This abominable traffic thus established, now proudly threatened in the very presence of Him, who came from heaven, to proclaim liberty to captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to perpetuate forever the chains and terrors of the most debasing slavery. Excited to the mingled emotions of indignity and compassion, by this daring threat, religion and humanity touched the
hearts of Emperors, Popes, Kings, and Queens, Ministers of religion, Statesmen, and Poets, who looked with compassion on the sufferings of the oppressed African, and were aroused to assert their just claims to liberty, all of whom, merit your faithful recollection, and the warmest gratitude. Of the first were Charles V. Pope Leo X. Queen Elizabeth of England, and Louis XV. of France. Of Divines, were Warburton, Baxter, Beattie, Wesley, Whitefield, Wakefield, and Paley. Among statesmen and others are Montesquieu, Hutchinson, Wallis, Burke, Postlethwaite, Day, Hartley, Miller, Granville, Sharp, Fox, Clarkson, Pitt, and Wilberforce, with many others in Europe, too numerous to be mentioned in this place. Among the Poets, are Pope, Thompson, Shenstone, and the pious Cowper. In America, were the venerated John Hancock, the pious James Pemberton of Pennsylvania, and those worthy citizens, Dr. Rush and Dr. Franklin, with numerous associations of benevolent persons, scattered through our whole country. These all pitied the sufferings of your unfortunate nation, groaning under the worst of human calamities, and from a thorough conviction, that all men were originally equal, that the Deity was no respecter of persons, and that all men were to give an account of their actions hereafter, and should, therefore, be free; and slavery is totally incompatible with the Christian religion, which requires us to love our neighbour as we do ourselves, they faithfully exerted their influence, piety, eloquence, and gifts, with courts, legislatures, and the people; and after a noble strug-
gle of many years, in which they were co-workers, they gloriously triumphed. On the ever memorable 2d of March, 1807, the Congress of these United States passed a solemn Act, abolishing the slave trade in this extensive country, from and after the 1st of January, 1808. And on the 25th of the same month, only twenty-three days after, an Act of Parliament, in Great Britain, was passed, abolishing this unholy traffic in her islands and dependencies. Previous to which, it was abolished by law in this Commonwealth, and since which time, it has been also abolished in France. The whole of this field has been disputed inch by inch, and was won at last by the arms of reason.

These names, these exertions, and these events, are worthy of our admiration, and deserve to pass down the current of time to other generations, that they may live forever in the grateful recollections, of all the most virtuous of the human race. But, above all, my friends, they ought ever live in the love and gratitude of your favored descendants.

My friends, on this occasion you cannot but rejoice, for yourselves, and for your children, in the freedom and liberty, which God hath given you and them. But here you will suffer me to remind you, that while you rejoice, you should also consider, and rejoice with solicitude, for in the same proportion that God multiplies your blessings and privileges, he also increases your duty and responsibility. Your privileges, good as they are, if they are not improved, will not only cease to be such, but will leave upon your hands an
awful responsibility for not having improved them. How to improve and preserve the blessings of liberty, therefore, is now to be considered. Your privileges are equal, in many respects, to any of the human race. You live under a mild, liberal, and popular government; you are protected, equally, with all other citizens of your country, by just and equal laws. You have the liberty of conscience, and enjoy unmolested the means of grace, and the means of religious instruction and worship. You have the means of support, for yourselves and families, the means of charity for your poor and aged; and the means of instruction for your children. Would you preserve these rights and privileges, and hand them unimpaired down to your children as an invaluable inheritance; then, as citizens, you must support with your lives and property, the government that protects you; and obey cheerfully those laws, which define and secure your rights and privileges: you must be diligent, faithful, peaceable, just, and good men, and good women. As christians you must reverence and love God who hath made, and made you free, you must cheerfully submit to his will, and trust to his providence and grace, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all your hearts, and obey his word and commandments, in all your lives and actions. You must listen to the pious and good instructions of your teacher in the Lord, and follow him, as he follows Christ; be strict and conscientious in your attendance on public worship, read your Bibles, and bring up your children in fear and the Knowledge of God. — Teach them to be kind, faithful
and good—that they may have friends, employment, and hope in the happiness of the eternal world.

In this way you will best express your love and gratitude to God, to Christ, and to your country, who have made you free and happy, while many of your fellow creatures are groaning in slavery—but you are not slaves, but freemen, for no citizen can be more free, than he that serves his God, his Country, and his employers, with his own free consent, and thus free are you. Be faithful and just, in whatever you undertake, and in so doing, you will have friends and employment, for without something to do, you cannot live; for since you are free citizens, you are under obligations to support your families; your wives and children have no others to go to, but you, for support. Repine not if you are not so rich and wealthy as you could wish, but seek first of all, to be rich in faith, and heirs of the promise; and remember that the diligent hand, with economy, maketh rich. With this assurance then, be cheerful and diligent in business, and frugal in the whole of your domestic concerns, and you will have enough of this world's goods, for your happiness and comfort; and by this also, you will learn your children after you, how to be free and happy. And, as to the rank or condition you hold in the scale of society, it is of little importance, so long as your persons are free, your characters virtuous, and your minds free from the slavery of passion and sin, by the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the grace of God. It is virtue and piety that constitute the true dignity of man, and not
elevated rank or wealth. And in the language of the poem, let me say to you, that

"Honour and shame from no condition rise,

"Act well your part, there all the honour lies,"

Therefore be content with your condition, as Providentially cast, prize your liberty, support and cherish your institutions, love the country in which you live, and be faithful Christians, good and peaceable citizens,—good and faithful husbands, and wives,—be kind and affectionate fathers, and mothers, to your children; then may you rejoice and be glad in the wonderful goodness of God to you, and to your suffering African brethren, in giving you liberty and freedom. And each return of this Anniversary, shall find you joyful and happy. But why this long exhortation? because this is not only a day for rejoicing, but for reflection—because I wish you to be truly happy—and because I desire you to satisfy the world, that Africans, oppressed as they have been, are nevertheless, capable of being worthy citizens, and valuable members of society; that they are able to take care of themselves, and support their families well; and thus show, that all that has been done, by your friends, for your liberation, has been justly, wisely, and well done; and enable them to give, by referring to you, a satisfactory answer to the last argument raised by the friends of slavery; viz. "that poor Africans are not capable of taking care of themselves."

My friends, look on your fellow-countrymen in Africa, and elsewhere, bound in chains, and pity their sufferings; bless and praise God, for your own freedom, and pray, fervently, for their deliverance.
little doubt remains, but that the same God, that hath done so much for you, will, by the means of Christianity, do much for them; so that gradually, and at no distant period, the remains of slavery in all nations will be destroyed; and not only the Africans, in every part of the world be free, but Africa herself be the delightful abode of liberty and happiness.

Brethren, on this, your joyful anniversary, and in view of the final extermination of slavery and oppression, accept my personal, and hearty congratulations, and my supplications to Heaven, that you, and your countrymen, may see many happy returns of this day, and by the grace of the Son of God, with all the redeemed, come into the full possession of the liberty of the sons of God, in heaven.