

BALTIMORE PLATFORMS—SLAVERY QUESTION

SPEECH OF HON. JOSHUA R. GIDDINGS, OF OHIO,

In the House of Representatives, June 23, 1852.

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, on the Deficiency Bill—

Mr. GIDDINGS said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The two great political parties of the nation have held their Conventions. From all parts of these United States delegates have assembled, deliberated upon their platform of principles, avowed their doctrines, nominated their candidates for President and Vice President, and now have entered upon the Presidential campaign. Preparatory to this state of things, many speeches were made here, to which the Free Democrats, the advocates of liberty, listened with commendable attention. And now, Mr. Chairman, I rise to occupy a brief hour in vindicating the position of the party to which I am attached. Often, during the last six months, the question has been propounded to me, whether we should vote for the candidates of the Whig or the Democratic party? This question, so far as I am concerned, will probably be answered satisfactorily before I take my seat.

It is not my purpose to examine very critically the principles of those parties. It may be sufficient for me to remark that they agree as to the policy which ought to control our Government. The Democrats first avowed their doctrines. Their confession of political faith having been two weeks before the public, and being read and duly considered before the assembling of the Whig Convention, that body took issue upon none of the doctrines avowed, nor upon the policy maintained by the Democrats.

I notice in some papers much is said in relation to "internal improvements." The Democrats say, "the Constitution does not confer upon the General Government power to commence and carry on a system of internal improvements." Do the Whigs take issue on this general and unmeaning assertion? Not at all. They answer, "the Constitution vests in Congress power to open and improve harbors, remove obstructions in navigable rivers, &c., said improvements being in every instance national and general in their character." Now, sir, no Democrat ever did; or ever will deny this doctrine. So, too, the Democrats make assertions about "fostering one branch of industry to the detriment of another," and the Whigs refuse the issue thus tendered, but, in answer, assert doctrines which no Democrat denies. The Democrats attempt to galvanize into existence the obsolete idea of a National Bank, to which the Whigs make no reply, admitting by their silence the Democratic faith. Neither advances a principle which is denied by the other; they stand on the record in perfect harmony. And

no other contest exists than a strife for office, for place and power; for the spoils, the loaves and fishes.

This is the first time, for many years, that these parties have each put forth an avowal of their doctrines. In the change of times, and the ordinary course of events, they now find themselves in perfect harmony with each other. The day of their contention and disagreement has passed away. The issues which once really existed between them have become obsolete, or have been given up. Their usefulness is at an end, and their history will soon be written. The increase of intelligence, the improvements of the age, demand new organizations and new parties. For years, the old parties have intermingled constantly, and no influence has been able to keep them separate. Here, and throughout the country, some Whigs act with the Democratic party, and some Democrats act with the Whig party. For the last four years there has been no matter of legislation before this body, on which the members have arrayed themselves according to their party character. On every question, a portion of Whigs have acted with the Democrats, and a portion of Democrats have acted with the Whigs. Indeed, sir, those who have watched the proceedings here for the past few years, could not fail to see that slavery constitutes the only question of interest before us.

Notwithstanding the Whigs and Democrats are acting in perfect harmony with each other, they have united in tendering to the friends of liberty important issues. One of those issues is so extraordinary, that it demands my first attention. The proposition is to stifle all further examination of chattel slavery, and is expressed by the Democrats in the following language:

"Resolved, That the Democratic party will resist all attempts at renewing, in Congress or out of it, the agitation of the slavery question, under whatever shape or color the attempt may be made."

The Whigs resolved—

"That * * * we will discountenance all efforts to continue or renew such agitation, whenever, wherever, and however made."

We, sir, the Free Democracy, will agitate the subject of slavery and its correlative freedom. Here, sir, is an issue formed between us. I, sir, am about to agitate this question. I intend to speak plainly of slavery, of its most revolting features. I will endeavor to use no offensive language, but I will talk of the practice followed by men in this District, of purchasing slave women, and then selling their own children into bondage. Now, when I do this, the Democrats are bound to resist, and the Whigs

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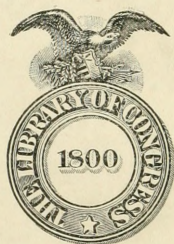
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Giddings, Joshua Reed.

Pacificus: the rights and privileges of the
several states with regard to slavery---
by a whig of Ohio.



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Book G 45

PACIFICUS:

THE

RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF THE SEVERAL STATES IN REGARD TO SLAVERY;

BEING

*A series of Essays, published in the Western Reserve Chronicle, (Ohio),
after the election of 1842.*

BY A WHIG OF OHIO.

INTRODUCTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRONICLE: The election is past, and our opponents have triumphed. They are now charged with the responsibility of administering our State Government. This being the case, we may expect the election of a Senator to Congress who will vote to repeal the tariff, and to abandon the protection of the free labor of the North. We must expect the election of such a man as will exert his influence against our harbor improvements, and a completion of the Cumberland road; and who will oppose the distribution of the proceeds of the public lands. We must look for the election of a man who will vote for the annexation of Texas to this Union, and who will lend his influence generally to the slaveholding interests. The State will be so districted as to elect the greatest possible number of Representatives in Congress, who will sustain the same policy, and who will vote for John C. Calhoun to the office of President in 1844, should the election devolve upon the House of Representatives.

Had the friends of northern rights united their political efforts at the recent election, these consequences would have been avoided; but we were divided, and of course were *conquered*. Crimination and recrimination will not extricate us from the difficulties into which our unhappy divisions have precipitated us. Future triumph can only be secured by future union; we should, therefore, profit by experience. Let us search out the rock on which we have split, that we may avoid it hereafter. If there be any political or moral principle involved in the controversy, let us understand what it is. Let it be developed and placed before the people, that we may all distinctly understand it. In order to do this, it is the intention of the writer to enter into an examination of this subject. He will endeavor to do so with such plainness and sincerity as the subject demands; no false delicacy shall deter him from a full, fair, and candid expression of truth; nor shall feelings of excitement induce him to use terms or epithets that may offend the sincere inquirer after truth, whether he lives in a free or slave State, or belongs to the Whig, the Democrat, or the Liberty party.

In order to be distinctly understood, your readers may expect an examination of the subject in the following order:

1st. He will inquire into the rights and privileges of the several States in regard to slavery.

2d. The encroachments upon these rights, of which the anti-slavery men complain.

3d. The remedy which, I think, all will agree should be adopted.

The whole will occupy several columns of your paper, and will be furnished as the writer finds leisure to communicate with your readers.

November 1, 1842.

PACIFICUS.

NUMBER I.

RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF THE SEVERAL STATES CONCERNING SLAVERY.

MR. EDITOR: For the purpose of fixing in the mind a definite idea of our rights and privileges respecting slavery, it becomes necessary to look back to the time of forming the Constitution. At that period, the spirit of universal liberty pervaded the minds of our people generally, particularly those of New England and the northern States. The sages and patriots of 1776 had put forth the undying truth, "that man is born free," as a self-evident fact. In obedience to this declaration, Massachusetts, ever forward in the cause of liberty, by a similar assertion of the rights of man, had stricken the shackles from every slave within her territories. The soil of Vermont had never been contaminated with the footsteps of a slave. Pennsylvania, and indeed nearly all of the northern States, had commenced a system of gradual emancipation. The delegates from the north carried with them a strong predisposition in favor of universal liberty. While in convention they spoke of slavery with deep abhorrence, and the most irreconcilable hatred. Not so with the southern States. They regarded slavery as necessary to their prosperity. They refused to enter into the constitutional compact upon any terms that would subject that institution to the control of the General Government. Up to this period each State had acted, in regard to slavery, according to the dictates of its own will. Each, for itself, held supreme, indisputable, and uncontrolled jurisdiction over that institution within its own limits. This entire power was reserved to

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itself by each State, and no portion of it was delegated to the General Government; and to place the subject in such plain and palpable light that it should never be questioned or disputed; article 10, of the amendments, was subsequently adopted; by which it was declared, that the powers not delegated by the Constitution were reserved to the several States. It is, therefore, plain, that the General Government have now no more power over the institution of slavery than it had prior to the adoption of the Constitution. The people of the southern States hold that institution as independently of the Federal Government as they did under the old Confederation.

Precisely to the same extent do the people of the free States hold and enjoy the blessings of personal liberty. They delegated to the Federal Government no more power to involve them in slavery, than the south did to involve *them* in its abolition. The rights of the States on this subject were mutual, and perfectly reciprocal. Those States who desired to do so, could continue the institution of slavery; and those who desired to be free, and entirely exempt from the expense, the disgrace, and the guilt of it, reserved to themselves the full and indisputable right to remain altogether separate from, and unconnected with, its evils. The sons of the pilgrims regarded slavery as a violation of the will of Heaven, and a flagrant transgression of the law of God. They would no sooner have been prevailed upon to involve themselves in its moral turpitude, than they would in that of piracy or murder. The people of the free States, therefore, secured to themselves the absolute right of remaining free from the guilt, the disgrace, and the expense of slavery, by withholding from the Federal Government all constitutional power in regard to that institution; while the slave States secured to themselves an equal privilege to enjoy the benefits (as they supposed) resulting from a continuance of slavery.

These doctrines are not *new*—they are as old as the Constitution. They are not *local*, for they have been substantially asserted in Congress, and both in the north and the south. They are not *anti-slavery*, for they have been, for half a century, the declared doctrines of the *slave States*. If any anti-slavery man claims for the free States any further rights in regard to slavery than those expressed above, he is requested to make them known. If any Whig or Democrat of Ohio is willing to deny to the people of the free States the rights above set forth, he is invited to express his views, in order that the public mind may be informed upon this important subject.

If these be the constitutional rights of the free States, all will agree that they should be maintained and supported. On this point it would appear impossible that Whigs and anti-slavery men should disagree. I, therefore, submit the question to our editors, and the conductors of the public press generally, whether they ought not to speak out boldly and temperately upon this subject. Ought they not to urge forward our State and National legislators to maintain and defend the rights of the free States, as assiduously as they do those of the slave States? The question is also submitted to the members of our State Legislature, and to our members of Congress, whether they are not as much bound by their oath of office to preserve the free States from all participation in the guilt, the disgrace, and the expense of slavery, as they are to preserve the slave States from the abolition of that institution by Congress? Ought they not to put forth their influence to separate and wholly divorce the Federal Government from all support of slavery, and to bring it back to the position in which the Constitution placed it in relation to that institution?

Having thus stated, generally, the rights of the States, I shall, in my next communication, examine the subject of fugitive slaves; which has sometimes been urged as an exception to the general principle that we, of the free States, are constitutionally unconnected with slavery.

PACIFICUS.

NUMBER II. FUGITIVE SLAVES.

MR. EDITOR: The convention that framed our Federal Constitution, met with no trifling difficulty in fixing the rights of the people of the different States in regard to *fugitive slaves*. By the *common law*, and the law of nations, "*a slave became absolutely free by entering the territory of a free State or Government*;" whether he did so by consent of his master, or by escaping from his master's custody. It was foreseen that, if this principle of the common law remained in force, *self emancipation* would deprive the slave States of an institution which they regarded as important to their prosperity. A member from South Carolina moved an amendment to the Constitution, requiring "*fugitive slaves and servants to be delivered up like criminals*." This was objected to by members from Pennsylvania and Connecticut, for the reason that it would involve the people of the free States in the expense of slavery—vide 3d volume Madison Papers, 1447. An amendment was subsequently adopted, in the form in which it is now found in the last clause of the 1st section of the 4th article, which provides, that "no person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor." &c. By this provision the common law, as it then stood, was changed so far as the United States were concerned, so that a slave *ESCAPING* to a free State did not thereby become *free*.

Under this provision Congress passed the law of 1793, requiring certain officers of the State and Federal Governments to act when fugitive slaves were brought before them; and it was supposed by our people generally, that we were bound to aid the master in recapturing his fugitive slave. This has led many of our people to believe the subject of fugitive slaves to form an exception to the doctrine laid down in my first number. But the subject came before the Supreme Court of the United States at their last session, in the case of *Prigg vs. the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*; and it was decided, on solemn argument, that no State officer was obliged to act in such case, and that so much of said law as required them to act was *unconstitutional*. In this manner the doctrine laid down in my last communication was confirmed by the Supreme Court of the United States, in regard to *fugitive slaves*. There were many other important points decided in that case, from which the following principles are deduced:

A slave, by escaping to a free State, acquires certain important rights and privileges. When he reaches our territory we regard him as *a man*, and not as property. If he work for me, or sell me pro-

erty, he may sue me in his own name, and collect his pay. Neither I, nor any other man, except his master, can take advantage of his having been a slave. If any person attempt to arrest him, as a slave, without process, he may defend himself, with just so much force as becomes necessary to protect his person and his personal liberty. In this respect he enjoys the same rights and privileges which our citizens possess. He is liable to be arrested, and taken back to slavery by his former master—in all other respects he is regarded in law as a *freeman*. While in a slave State he may not resist the violence of his master, by any act of self-defence; if he do so, he may be instantly slain by his master, or otherwise severely punished under the laws of such State. It is this law, declaring it criminal in him to defend his person against the violence of his master, which constitutes *slavery*. That law can have no operation in our State. The slave, therefore, by escaping from a slave State, escapes from the operation of that law. Its penalties cannot be visited upon him for an act done in Ohio. There is no such law here, nor is it in the power of our Legislature to enact such a law. Our Constitution forbids its existence.

The court, in the case referred to, expressly decided that the jurisdiction is vested *solely* in Congress; that the passing of a law upon the subject by Congress, is conclusive that the master shall have the benefit conferred by the act; and that no State law can be interposed to qualify or change the powers given by Congress. They further decided, that it was equally plain that Congress intended that the master should have no *other or further facilities* for capturing his slave than those expressed in the law of Congress; and, therefore, no State law can add to the powers conferred in the act of 1793. It, therefore, follows, that he may defend himself against his master while in this State, for the obvious reason that self-defence is a natural right, and there is no law having force within the State of Ohio which forbids its exercise. If his master attempt to arrest him, the slave may defend himself with so much force as may be necessary to protect his person and liberty. If the master press upon him, and it becomes necessary for his protection, he may kill his master, or the agents of his master, be they many or few, without inquiring whether they come from a slave State, or be citizens of Ohio. It is important that our people should distinctly understand, that, if they volunteer to arrest a fugitive slave, they do so at their peril. I speak with confidence on this point. There is nothing in the act of Congress forbidding the slave to exercise his natural right of self-defence; nor does it mention any penalty for doing so. The act treats him as *property* merely, and visits upon him no more punishment for killing his master than it would upon a mule for the same act. The law of Congress settles the rights existing between the master and the people of the State to which the slave may flee; but it does not attempt to define the rights existing between the master and slave.

It follows, therefore, that the slave, when he reaches our territory, becomes at once reinstated in the enjoyment of all his natural rights which belonged to him while in Africa. It is true that we lend him no protection against his master, but we leave him to defend himself with all the means in his power. He may, for this purpose, provide himself with weapons. If there be two or more of them together, they may unite their efforts to defend themselves; and in all respects put forth their physical powers to the same extent that they could do were they on the soil of their native land. I am aware that many of our people think it wrong to do any thing by which the slave shall learn his rights. With such I disagree. If it were in my power, every person should know his rights the moment he touches our soil. To withhold from him this knowledge, would aid his master in regaining him. We are under no constitutional, legal, or moral obligation thus to aid the master; therefore, every means we may use for that purpose makes us partakers of his guilt. On the contrary, we are under every moral obligation to use all our efforts and influence to the advancement of justice and liberty, so far as we can, without offending against the laws of our country. It is on this principle that every citizen of our State, whether he be a judge, justice of the peace, or any other State officer, incurs as much moral guilt, when he assists a master in retaking a slave, as he would were he to go with the master to Africa, and aid him in capturing and bringing into slavery the inhabitants of that unhappy land. It must be a vitiated state of public opinion that regards them in any other light. The offence against mankind is the same in either case; and I intend that no false delicacy shall deter me from an unreserved expression of our rights. One of these rights is to inform every person within our borders of all his legal privileges. I would as soon take from a slave his physical powers of defence, as I would rob him of his moral power; I would as soon bind his body with chains, as I would bind his intellect in ignorance. But while the slave enjoys these natural rights, the master has his constitutional and legal privileges; and these we are bound also to respect and observe. The master may enter our State, and pass through it in pursuit of his fugitive slave, and we have not the constitutional power to prohibit him. As individuals, we may refuse him admission to our dwellings, or we may deny him the rights of hospitality; we may regard him with horror, and teach our children to detest him; but he may, nevertheless, travel our roads, and may arrest his slave in our presence; and may bind him, if necessary, and transport him back to the State from whence he escaped. We have no right to interfere for the slave's protection, although our sympathies may be excited in his favor. On this subject our faith is pledged, and must not be violated. But while we *permit* the master to do this, we do not *protect* him in doing it. Far from it. When he enters our State to arrest his fugitive slave, so far as they two are concerned, he does it at his own peril, as much as he would if he were to go to Africa to kidnap a native of that country. He has no law to protect him, and must depend upon physical force; yet he must respect the rights of our people. He must not violate the sanctity of our private dwellings, nor must he violate the public peace. He may lay "*gentle hands*" upon the slave—he may arrest and secure him; but we are under no obligation to furnish him the use of our prisons, or to guard his captive for him. If the slave defends himself, the master is not thereby authorized to shoot or kill him as he would if in a slave State. Should he do that, it would constitute murder under our law, for which he would be hanged, the same as though he had killed a freeman. After he has arrested the slave, he cannot compel him to perform any menial service whatever, nor can he legally beat or chastise him. Should he do this, he may be arrested and punished for the assault and battery. The master's power extends so far as is necessary to *arrest and take back his slave*; beyond

this he cannot go. But he may do every thing to effect this object *peaceably*. Here his rights terminate. But this he does at his own peril; and if the slave, in defending himself, kill his master, it is a matter in which we have no concern. Yet he must not do it wantonly or unnecessarily. Should he beat off his master, and, while the master is retreating, shoot him, that, too, would be murder, and we should then hang the slave.

These are some of the rights of the master, and of the slave, while within our State; and it will be observed by every reader, that it is a matter *entirely between themselves*. It is a subject in which our people are under no obligation to interfere. If the slave drive back the master when attempting to arrest him, there is no moral or legal duty resting upon us to step in to the master's aid. There is no such stipulation contained in our Constitution. The patriots who framed that charter of American liberty, made no such degrading compromise for the people of the free States. Yet, by the Constitution, our State is made the *race ground* over which the master may pursue his slave; and may use every means to arrest him that an officer may use to arrest a citizen on legal process. There is this distinction, however, between the master and officer; we *protect* the officer but not the master. For a person to resist an officer, in the execution of process, is criminal under our law. Not so with the slave, he may defend himself precisely as he would in Africa; or as a citizen of our State may defend himself against a person who, without process, attempts to arrest him for crime. Nor are our people under any more obligation to assist a slaveholder to catch a slave here, than they are to go to Africa to aid him in kidnapping. Indeed, if you will show me a man who, *knowing his rights*, will aid a master in catching a slave in this State, I will show you a man who would go to Africa and aid in kidnapping the people there, and bringing them into slavery, provided he could do so without incurring danger of the halter. Or, if you will show me a judge, or justice of the peace, or other State officer, who, *knowing his rights*, will aid in sending a fugitive back into slavery, or in detaining one for further proof of his being a slave, I think I hazard little in saying, that for the same fees he would send you or me into bondage, if he had the power to do so.

Yet it is a humiliating fact, that, in 1839, our Democratic Legislature attempted, by legal enactment, to make our State officers and citizens the catchpoles of southern slaveholders. I say they *attempted* to do this: for, by the decision of the supreme court, above referred to, all such State laws are declared "UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND VOID." Notwithstanding they were then told that such acts would be void, they gravely occupied their time, and expended the money of our citizens, in devising the best mode of *catching slaves*. They used all their power and influence to involve you and me, and our people generally, in the guilt, the disgrace, and expense of slavery. In this they violated the Constitution of the United States, as well as that of our own State.

And now, Mr. Editor, anti-slavery men ask that the *party*, the *men*, who enacted this law, should receive the full benefit of their servility. They desire that public sentiment should be expressed through our public papers. That this law be repealed.* That our State be relieved from the disgraceful attitude in which it now stands. That the subject of fugitive slaves be left where the Constitution and laws of the United States have placed it. And can there be any difference of opinion, on this subject, between Whigs and anti-slavery men? Is there a Whig editor in our State, who will hesitate to raise his voice against this disgraceful law? And to maintain the clear, absolute, and indisputable right of our people, to be entirely free and exempt from the guilt, the disgrace, and expense of catching fugitive slaves?

PACIFICUS.

NUMBER III.

SUPPRESSION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

The framers of our Federal Constitution set forth, in the preamble of that instrument, the objects for which it was entered into. One of those objects is "TO SECURE TO OURSELVES AND POSTERITY THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY." Mr. Webster, in his late letter to Lord Ashburton, says, "Slavery exists in the southern States of this Union *under the guaranty of our Federal Constitution*."—The patriots who framed the Constitution, declared their object was "to secure the blessings of Liberty." Mr. Webster affirms that they "*guaranteed slavery*." Did Madison and Washington, and Franklin say one thing, and do another, or is Mr. Webster mistaken in the assertion contained in his letter? If this doctrine of Mr. Webster be correct, it follows, of course, that the free States are involved in all the *guilt, disgrace, and responsibility* of slavery; and the position assumed in my first communication, "that the free States are no more liable to support slavery, than the slave States are to abolish it," is erroneous and unfounded.—This doctrine of Mr. Webster is often asserted by southern slaveholders, as well as by northern men, who appear anxious to impress our people with the idea that the free States are thus subsidiary to the slave States, and involved in all the hateful consequences of slavery. I will not call such men *dough faces*; with them I have nothing to do; my business is with their *arguments*. Our country and posterity will hold them responsible for their attempts to induce our people to yield up their own constitutional rights, and to become the voluntary supporters of slavery, and the slave trade. To arouse our people to the investigation of our constitutional rights in regard to this subject, and to inspire them to a patriotic and firm maintenance of our interests and honor, is the duty of the public press, and of public men.

To the people of Ohio, and of the free States, I declare this doctrine unsupported by any clause in our Constitution. No such guaranty is found in that instrument. The patriots who framed that "bond of Union," made no such degrading stipulation on the part of northern freemen. If that instrument had contained any clause susceptible of a doubtful construction, in this respect, all will agree, that it would, and ought to be so construed, as "*to secure the blessings of liberty*," rather than to *perpetuate slavery*. But there is no clause that can, in the opinion of the writer, be deemed *doubtful*, or that by any strained construction, can be said to guaranty slavery. The 4th section of the 4th article is, however,

* The law has been repealed since the above was first published.

quoted in support of the doctrine referred to. It reads as follows: "The United States shall *guaranty* to every State in this Union, a republican form of Government, and shall protect them against invasion, and on application of the executive, when the Legislature cannot be convened, against domestic violence." The word *guaranty* is used in connexion with a "*republican form of government*," and not with slavery. It can hardly be expected that any one will suppose these terms to be synonymous. It is believed, however, that those who adhere to the doctrine now contended against, rely upon the last clause, which pledges the protection of the United States against "*domestic violence*."

The history concerning the insertion of this provision is this: In 1786, the "Shay's rebellion" broke out in the State of Massachusetts. This insurrection threatened the overthrow, not only of the government of that State, but portended the downfall of all the other State governments.—While they were thus endangered, it was discovered that no authority existed in the old articles of confederation, by which the troops of one State could be employed to suppress an insurrection in another. This difficulty gave rise to the adoption of this clause for suppressing domestic violence. Massachusetts was then the only State that had *abolished slavery*. In this history it is difficult to trace out any intention to *guaranty slavery*. It is impossible to see how any legal mind can torture this clause into such a guaranty. It is simply a provision for *suppressing insurrections*. It applies as much to the *free* States as to *slave* States, and would have been adopted, had no slavery existed in either of the States. It has no relation to the character of the insurgents, whether they be *black or white, bondmen or freemen, masters or slaves*. If an insurrection actually take place, the power of the Federal Government must be employed to put it down, if milder measures will not effect that object. But the President, when called on for aid to suppress an insurrection, cannot stop to inquire into the cause from which it arose. He is entirely unauthorized to withhold such aid, in case it arise from the *abolition* of slavery. The truth is, the Federal Constitution considers slaves as *persons*; and draws no distinction in regard to the character of the insurgents. When the United States troops arrive upon the theatre of action, they must direct their efforts to suppressing the *violence*. It is their duty to slay all persons found in arms against the public tranquility. The master and slave fighting side by side against the public authority, must both be slain without distinction, and without inquiring into their relations to each other.

When the violence is suppressed, the duty of the troops will be performed. If, then, every slave in the nation *peaceably leaves his master, and starts for CANADA*, there is no power in the Federal Government to send our troops after them, or to set them as a guard to prevent their escape. The duty of the President, and of the troops, is to *suppress the violence*, and not to *support slavery*. Such escape of slaves would prove a total *abolition* of slavery. Where then would be the *guaranty*? But suppose the slaves engage in, and continue the violence; it will then be the duty of our troops to *slay* them. Would such *killing of slaves be a support of slavery*? It would be so far an *abolition* of slavery, and if all the slaves be thus slain, slavery would be *abolished* (for no new importations can be made under our laws). Where then will be our guaranty? Again: if the slaves should stubbornly refuse to labor or to obey their masters, they would thereby work the abolition of slavery. But would such act obligate the Federal Government to furnish obedient servants? or should they commit suicide, and thereby abolish the institution, would the United States become liable as guarantors? Or, were they to pursue a course of secret destruction of their master's property, and thus compel their owners to emancipate them, could the slaveholders demand indemnity of the Federal Government? Or, should the slaves pursue any other course which would inevitably destroy that institution, would the Federal Government be held responsible? I apprehend but one answer can be given to these interrogatories. But some politicians give a more loose and indefinite construction to this section. They hold that, as Congress is bound to lend its protection when called on to suppress domestic violence, it is their duty, in time of peace, to provide arms, troops, and fortifications for that purpose, and to have them so distributed as to intimidate the slaves to obedience. If this construction be correct, it is certainly one that was not foreseen or intended by the framers of the Constitution. If it be correct, the freemen of the north may be taxed to erect a fortification on every plantation south of "Mason and Dixon's line," and to furnish a body guard to every slaveholder and overseer in the United States. Indeed, such construction would render it the duty of our freemen of the north to go to the slave States, and act as life-guards to the slaveholders. But there is, in this section, no authority for the Federal Government to act on the subject until *actual violence takes place*. The President cannot order out the troops of the United States to suppress an insurrection, even when actual violence has occurred, unless his aid be invoked by the State authority.—Every reader will see that two things are necessary to authorize the President to interfere—

1st. There must be actual violence.

2d. There must be a demand of aid from the Federal Government by the State authorities.

Without these the President has no power to act. If violence arise, it is the privilege of the State government to suppress it, and to enforce their own laws, if they please.—In such case the President has no power to order the troops of the United States into the field. If the slaveholders anticipate violence from their slaves, they are at full liberty to remove all danger by emancipating them. But the President has no power to send our troops to the slave States to guard the masters and overseers, while they whip, and scourge, and torture their slaves, to compel them to labor for the support, and to promote the luxury, of their owners. Yet such is, substantially, the doctrine avowed and inculcated by some northern politicians, as well as southern slaveholders; and the question comes home to our editors and public men, whether such views shall be pressed upon the public mind, without examination and contradiction?

I have now examined the only clause in our Constitution relied upon by those who urge that "slavery exists in the southern States under the *guaranty* of our Federal compact. The doctrine has no foundation except in the servile disposition of those who appear anxious to involve the people of the free States in the guilt and dishonor of an institution, with which we are constitutionally unconnected.

Mr. Webster, probably, without deliberation or close examination of the subject, wrote his letter of directions to Mr. Everett, under the dictation of a slaveholding President, giving to that minister orders to exert our national influence, to obtain indemnity for the slave dealers who claimed the cargo of the

Creole. In this manner he involved the people of the free States in the disgrace of that accursed traffic in human flesh. Having done this, it became necessary that he should sustain the doctrine in his correspondence with Lord Ashburton. In his letter addressed to that functionary, upon the subject of the Creole, he substantially declares the people of the free States to be the *guarantors* of slavery, and the supporters of the slave trade, which they execrate and detest. This saying of Mr. Webster will be quoted by thousands of northern doughfaces, to establish this unfounded doctrine.—It is believed that every such effort, to commit us to the support of slavery, should be promptly met, and exposed by our public press. They are attempts to surrender up our constitutional rights, and should be discarded by every friend of liberty, and by every lover of his country. On this point, it would seem that no difference of sentiment could exist among our people, whether they belong to the Whig, the Democratic, or Liberty party. All are desirous that our press and public men should speak forth, in plain and respectful language, our constitutional rights. They neither wish nor desire that language, offensive to southern men, should be employed. On the contrary, they would have them treated with respect and kindness. It is proper that the public mind should be fully informed in regard to our rights. And that these rights should be respectfully and firmly maintained. Is there a Whig who would not do this? Is there an editor or elector in the Whig ranks, who feels too *delicate* to assert our rights, or too *patriotic* to maintain them? I make these remarks in consequence of the feeling so often expressed, that the agitation of our rights is *impolitic*. The idea is one which should meet with universal disapprobation.—We ought never to remain silent when our rights and interests are invaded.

Having examined the two paragraphs in our Constitution, which are quoted to prove that we are involved in the support of slavery, I trust the reader will be prepared to say with me, that the Federal Government, and the free States, have the constitutional right to be separate and totally exempt from the support of slavery and the slave trade; and that this right is as supreme, absolute, and unconditional, as is the right of the slave States to maintain them.

In my next I shall ask the attention of my readers to some of the instances in which their rights have been invaded.

PACIFICUS.

NUMBER IV.

VIOLATION OF THE CONSTITUTION FOR THE SUPPORT OF SLAVERY.

MR. EDITOR: In my first communication, I stated that, by our Federal Constitution, the free States possessed “the absolute and unqualified right of being exempt and entirely free from the *expense*, the *guilt*, and the *disgrace* of slavery and of the slave trade.” To establish this principle beyond all doubt or cavil, has been the object of my second and third numbers. Having thus disposed of that part of my subject, I shall now proceed to call the attention of my readers to some few of the instances in which the people of the free States have been unconstitutionally involved in the *expense* of that institution; reserving, for a future number, all reference to the *guilt* and *disgrace* which has been forced upon us, in order to sustain and encourage slavery. This practice of sustaining slavery at the expense and inconvenience of the people of the free States, had its origin in the days of our revolution. In 1780, the authorities of South Carolina sent a confidential agent to inform Congress that their State could furnish no troops to defend her territory against the British forces, as it was necessary that her men should all *remain at home to defend their families and friends against their slaves in case of insurrection*. (Vide secret Journal of Congress.) Under these circumstances, troops were taken from the northern States, to defend them against the British, while they defended themselves against their slaves, and compelled them to labor for the benefit of their masters. In this way southern plantations were rendered productive, while those of the north were left destitute of laborers, and the burden of supporting slavery was thrown almost entirely upon the northern States. By the subsequent adoption of the Constitution, slavery was made *strictly a State institution*. Its burdens to be borne by such States as continued them, while those States, who preferred to do so, had an equal right to be exempt from all its evils, by emancipating their slaves. Yet the practice of throwing the burden of supporting slavery upon the nation at large, thereby involving the free States in its expense, has continued down to the present day. These burdens have been cast upon the people of the free States: Firstly, by appropriations made by Congress for the direct and avowed purpose of sustaining slavery and the slave trade. And, secondly, by such action of the executive and legislative branches of government, as was calculated, eventually, to produce that effect, and, in some instances, the *refusal* of Congress and the Executive to act, lest such action would relieve the people of the free States from this burden.

To the first branch of this proposition, I shall devote the present number.

Our first treaty, formed with the Creek Indians, was signed 7th August, 1790. It contained a stipulation on the part of the Indians to *surrender up all negroes then in their territory*.

The same stipulation was contained in nearly all our subsequent treaties with that savage nation. I regret that the limits, prescribed to myself, will not admit of detail, and I will here state, that if any reader shall call for details on any point embraced in these essays, I will most cheerfully give them hereafter. This covenant of the Indians to surrender up negroes, was connected with stipulations to perform other acts, and the exact amount paid for surrendering negroes is therefore unknown. For the violation of this clause of the treaty, we compelled them to pay to the slaveholders of Georgia, at one time, two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. I think it a fair estimate, to set down the sum paid to that nation, for the purpose of inducing them to return fugitive slaves, at three hundred thousand dollars.—In our treaty with the Florida Indians, concluded at Camp Moultrie, in 1823, we agreed to pay them six thousand dollars, and an annuity of five thousand dollars for twenty years. The Indians, on their part, stipulated “*to be active and vigilant in preventing fugitive slaves from passing through their country, and in apprehending and returning to their masters such as should seek an asylum among them*.”—Official reports and documents, now on file in the War Department, show, beyond contradiction, that the Florida war was commenced and prosecuted for the purpose of regaining fugitive slaves, and to prevent further escapes of that class of people.

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The expense of this war is estimated at *forty millions of dollars*.

After the close of the late war with Great Britain, our Government demanded of that nation compensation, for the owners, of such slaves as escaped to their army during hostilities. The demand was resisted, and years of diplomatic effort were employed in extorting from them the price of liberty thus gained by our fellow men. After much effort and expense, we obtained *fourteen hundred thousand dollars* for the slaveholders; but the people of the free States were taxed to defray the expense of obtaining and distributing the money. In 1823, and for many years subsequent to that time, the efforts of our Government were put forth "*to prevent the abolition of slavery in the Island of Cuba*, lest the example might affect the institution in our southern States." And an agent was sent there to prevent the emancipation of slaves. Our people of the free States were thus involved in the expense of opposing the liberty of mankind. In 1818, General Jackson marched his army into Florida; while there, his soldiers, and the followers of his camp, took many slaves from the people of that territory, and the people of the free States have been taxed to pay for the negroes thus taken.* (Vide documents on file in the office of the Secretary of the Treasury.)

In 1816, certain fugitive slaves took refuge in the Territory of Florida, and erected a fort upon the bank of the Apalachicola river. Here they made their gardens, and cleared their fields, and cultivated their farms. General Jackson sent orders to General Gaines, to enter this territory of the King of Spain, to destroy the fort, and "*to arrest and return the fugitive slaves to their masters*." A gunboat was despatched for the purpose of effecting these objects. The fort was cannonaded with hot shot until the magazine was blown up, and two hundred and seventy men, women, and children were instantaneously murdered in cold blood, for no other crime than that of preferring *liberty to slavery*. A law was passed in February, 1838, to pay more than five thousand dollars to the officers and crew, as a bounty for this destruction of our fellow beings. Our people of Ohio, and the other free States, were thus involved in the expense of *murdering fugitive slaves*, for the benefit of that institution.

The bill granting this sum, as a merited bounty for *killing slaves*, was reported by the chairman of the Naval Committee, and, it is said, was passed upon their authority without further examination in the House. Many of the slave States have laws authorizing their officers to arrest and imprison free colored persons who enter their States, and to sell them as slaves, unless the expense of imprisoning them be paid. Many free colored men in the employ of the United States, have been thus imprisoned, and the expense paid by Government in order to release them. (Vide reports of committees made at the last session of Congress.) Much expense has also been incurred by Government in sending detachments of troops and of the marine corps to intimidate the slaves of the south to obedience. These instances have been frequent; so much so, that officers, commanding detachments, do not even wait for orders from the War Department, to march their forces into any region where appearances of insurrection are manifested.† Every reader is aware that ships, engaged in the slave trade, have been wrecked on and near the British West India islands; and the slaves, finding themselves at liberty, have refused to return. Our Government has espoused the cause of the slave dealers, and have, for many years, involved the people of the free States in the expense of obtaining, from the British Government, the loss which the slave merchants sustained by the liberation of their slaves. Thus have we been taxed for the support of the slave trade. I need not mention the particulars concerning the Creole. They will be recollected by every reader. More than a hundred thousand dollars have been appropriated for the erection of prisons in the District of Columbia.—These prisons have been, and still are, used by slave merchants, to confine their slaves until their cargoes or coffles for southern markets are completed. In a former number, I referred to the fact, that a *Democratic* Legislature of our own State appropriated the money of our fellow citizens, to pay themselves their per diem, while they discussed the proper mode of *catching southern slaves*. These are *some* of the instances in which the people of the free States have been involved in the *direct* expense of sustaining and supporting slavery. The *amount* cannot be ascertained with precision. Many have estimated it at one hundred millions dollars, or more than one-eighth part of the whole sum, expended by the United States, since the adoption of our Federal Constitution, including the expense of the late war with Great Britain. They include, in such estimate, the expense of removing southern Indians, and the amount paid for the purchase of Florida and Louisiana.—The protection of slavery, doubtless, entered into and formed a part of the objects attained by these purchases and the removal of the Indians. But the writer is unwilling to bring forward, upon his own responsibility, any estimate that admits of dispute or argument. The amount is immense when viewed in the most favorable light. Yet the *abuse* consists in the clear and palpable violation of our constitutional rights, rather than in the number of dollars and cents taken from our pockets, and appropriated to the support of slavery.

The Constitution has been violated; and these violations have become so frequent, as to create alarm among our patriots and sages. (Vide Mr. Adams' late speech at Braintree.) The writer, however, considers the most alarming circumstance to be the perfect *silence* of our northern press, and our northern statesmen and politicians, under the infliction of those abuses and violation of the Constitution, and of our rights and interests. We have submitted to them so long, and so patiently, that many of our people begin to entertain the opinion that we are constitutionally bound to contribute a portion of our substance, accumulated by our toil and labor, to enable the slaveholders of the south to keep their slaves in subjection. Sir, this supineness of the northern press and northern men, is unworthy of the de-

* In the last clause of the 9th article of our treaty with Spain, entered into in 1820, the United States agreed "to pay the Spanish officers, and the private Spanish citizens, for all *property lost by the movements of the late American army in Florida*." On a reference of the question to the late Attorney General, Felix Grundy, that officer gravely decided, that slaves were *property*, and he substantially decided also, that *stealing negroes* constituted a portion of the movements of our late army in Florida. Upon the authority of this opinion, Secretary Woodbury paid for the negroes, although no other Secretary had ever entertained such an application.

† Hon. Isaac Toucy, a *democratic* representative from Connecticut, was the author of the bill.

‡ Most appointments in the army and navy, made by slaveholding Presidents, are from the south.

scendants of our revolutionary fathers. Further abuses should be resisted. While we pay all possible deference to the rights of the slave States, we surely ought to maintain our own. We should stand upon the strict line of the Constitution. We ought not to permit our southern brethren to invade our rights, while we should be equally careful not to encroach upon theirs.

PACIFICUS.

NUMBER V.

VIOLATIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION CONTINUED.

MR. EDITOR: In my last communication, I referred to some of the instances in which the money, collected from our people of the free States, had been appropriated *directly* to the support of slavery. It is now my purpose to refer to some instances in which the people of the free States have been compelled to suffer pecuniary inconvenience and loss, for the benefit of the slaveholding interests of the south.

It is more than forty years since the people of Hayti, following the example which we had set them, achieved their independence, and establish a government of their own.—By their acts of valor and patriotism, they became as much entitled to a rank among the governments of the earth, as we did by our revolution. This claim has been acknowledged by France and England, and, indeed, so far as I am informed, by all the civilized nations of the earth, *except the United States*. So far from recognising the government of Hayti, at an early day we passed a law to suppress all commercial intercourse between our people and the people of that Island. (Vide act of Congress, approved 28th February, 1806.) This was done because the people had, most of them, been slaves; and it was designed to withhold from them our provisions in order to bring upon them famine and distress, lest their example might induce the slaves in our southern States to assert their liberty. It is true that a hazardous and uncertain trade has existed between our people of New England and those of Hayti, but we have been virtually cut off from the *profits and advantages* of a commerce with that island, for the reason that intercourse with that people might affect the slaves of the southern States, and render them discontented in their chains of bondage. Most of this time we have been virtually excluded from the commerce of the British West India Islands. In the meantime Hayti has offered to our merchants golden temptations for their American produce. These temptations they were compelled to forego in order that the southern slaves might be held in ignorance of their rights. Our farmers of Ohio have been denied a market for their wheat, flour, beef, pork, and other produce, in order to maintain such a state of ignorance in the slave States as would enable the masters to hold their slaves in subjection.

I have already alluded to the fact that, by a law existing in most of the slave States, colored seamen, when they arrive in port, are liable to be seized and imprisoned, lest their presence might create a desire for liberty among the slaves. If the persons thus imprisoned are found unable to pay the extravagant charges for their arrest and imprisonment, they are to be sold into slavery. These proceedings have operated as a tax upon the commerce of our northern States. Thus have our interests been made to subservise the interests of slavery. In this way the Federal Government has extended its fostering care over that institution, at the expense of the people of the free States. For forty years we have thus been rendered tributary to the slave States. Our Government still refuses to enter into commercial relations with that of Hayti, and the interests of our shipowners, our sailors, our merchants, our mechanics and farmers, are depressed and discouraged, in order that ignorance and slavery may be prolonged in the south. And where are our statesmen or our editors, of either party, who boldly denounce this flagrant abuse of northern interests and northern rights? Nay, I appeal to every thinking, candid man, to say whether a frank and temperate maintenance of our rights on this subject has not been regarded as unconstitutional and *dishonorable* by a portion of our people of the north? So long, so tamely and silently, have we been accustomed to yield up our interests for the benefits of slavery, that an open assertion of our rights, and support of our interests, is regarded with distrust and jealousy.

In 1816, our people of the free States were deeply engaged in commerce; our ships navigated every sea; our sailors were numerous; our merchants were enjoying a profitable commerce; our farmers were encouraged by a ready market for their products. The war, then but just closed, had left our nation in debt; a hundred millions of dollars was to be raised, beside the current expenses of Government. Southern statesmen considered that the interests of the slaveholding States would be promoted by levying this vast sum upon the commerce of the free States. The command was given, and the blow was struck. Twelve thousand seamen were turned out of employ, commerce was crippled, and thousands of our ship owners and merchants were ruined, and the industry of the north was, for a season, paralyzed for the purpose of relieving the slave States of their due proportion of our public debt and the expenses of Government.

At length our people of the north gradually conformed to the tariff of 1816, and subsequent amendments. They vested their fortunes, accumulated by industry and economy, in the factories designed to supply our nation with such fabrics as were deemed necessary to the comfort of our people. Our laborers again found employ. Industry was encouraged. Our farmers of Ohio found a ready market for their produce; prosperity again cheered every department of society in the free States. Our public revenues were ample. Our national debt was paid off; our harbor improvements, the improvement of our river navigation and our Cumberland road, were going forward with rapidity, when the slaveholding influence became dissatisfied, and threatened a dissolution of the Union. One of the slave States arrayed its military forces to oppose this northern prosperity, and to reduce the Federal Government to the necessity of changing its policy for the fancied purpose of forcing prosperity upon the slave States, in defiance of that law of Providence which has ordained that it shall never result from oppression and vice. The compromise act of 1853 was nothing more nor less than the mandate of southern statesmen, by which they directed that our harbor and river improvements should cease; that the sale of Ohio wheat, flour, pork, and beef, in New England, should stop: and that our farmers should be deprived of a home mar-

ket for their produce; that the manufacturers of New England should be ruined; that hundreds of thousands of laborers should be turned out of employ; that the revenues of Government should be struck down; that a national debt should be incurred, public credit impaired, and private credit ruined, for the purpose of sustaining and encouraging the interests of the slave States. The mandate was obeyed, and the people of the free States have quietly, and almost silently, submitted to the loss of untold millions, for the benefit of the slave States. The writer would not be understood as saying these were violations of the *Constitution*; but that they were as clearly *violations of the rights of the free States* as were the appropriations of money for the express purpose of capturing fugitive slaves. It is thus that our commerce with Hayti has been cut off, and our domestic labor has been left to compete with the pauper labor of Europe, in order that the interests of the slave States might be protected, sustained, and upheld at the expense of northern freemen.

Under the law distributing the proceeds of the public lands among the several States, a fund was provided, by which all our northern States would have extricated themselves from their present embarrassments, and would have been enabled to complete their internal improvements already commenced. Our canals and railroads would have given increased facilities to our internal commerce; stimulated our agricultural and mechanical laborers to greater effort by offering greater encouragement. They would have aided and increased our manufacturers. They would, in a great degree, have annihilated the space which now divides the people of New England from those of our western States; our associations would have increased; refinement and taste would have been encouraged; intelligence more rapidly disseminated; and learning and science promoted. These advantages, though highly desirable to a free people, are dangerous to the interests of slavery, which must ever depend upon the ignorance and stupidity of the slave population in regard to their rights, and the means of regaining them. All these results were clearly seen by that influence which is ever jealous of the progress of knowledge, which teaches man to know the rights that God has given him. Their sacrifice was deemed necessary to the interest of slavery. A slaveholding President became the willing instrument by which the object was effected. Consistency, self-respect, reason, and the rights of the northern States, presented but slight obstacles to the attainment of his purpose. These advantages to the free States, increasing and expanding as we look forward to coming time, were sacrificed by the Federal Government for the purpose of preserving the slaveholding influence from all hazard. I am aware that a portion of our people consider these subjects of but little importance. They urge that all encroachments upon our rights in favor of the slaveholding interests are to be resisted, but deny that a protective tariff, the distribution of the proceeds of the public lands, the improvement of our harbors, our river navigation, or of the Cumberland road, are of such importance as to require their aid and support.

If these important interests be abandoned by those who make the "support of northern rights" their motto, how can they expect the friends of internal improvements, and of the tariff, to unite with them in matters which they deem of far less pecuniary importance. If one class of our northern men will tamely surrender our *pecuniary* interests, may we not expect that another portion will be as willing to yield up our *honor* to the demands of the southern States? Is there an individual who is not perfectly conscious that such divisions must prove destructive to all our sectional rights? If those whose minds dwell mostly on the moral influences of slavery, and who feel most deeply interested in removing the moral desolation it occasions, abandon all support of our pecuniary interests, separate from their political friends, and refuse to co-operate with them; can they expect, by such separation, to facilitate the accomplishment of their own purposes? Can any man of reflection suppose that we can extricate ourselves from the *moral* influence of slavery, while it continues to control our pecuniary interests.

The safety of the free States depends upon preserving the Constitution in its purity, and in the firm and temperate support of *all our rights*. If one of our important rights suffer, all must be affected. They will either stand or fall together. Division of our friends is itself a sacrifice of our rights.—Union of our friends will secure our rights and our interests. I am aware that I shall be charged of speaking mostly in regard to the rights of the *north*, while I say but little of those of the *south*. But I beg my readers to understand that the south have not only *maintained their own rights*, but they have made our rights subservient to their interests; and it has therefore become necessary that public attention should be thus particularly called to the support of *the interests and the honor of the free States*.

PACIFICUS.

NUMBER VI.

VIOLATIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION CONTINUED.

MR. EDITOR: Having in my two last numbers made some allusion to the manner in which the people of the free States have been involved in the pecuniary expense of slavery, I will now proceed to examine some of the instances in which we have been involved in the moral guilt of that institution.

By act of Congress, approved February 27, 1801, slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia were re-established and continued. As some diversity of opinion exists in regard to the power of Congress over the subject of slavery in that District, it may be well to remark, that the States of Maryland and Virginia, by deeds of cession bearing date in 1800, conveyed the territory embraced within the District of Columbia to the United States. These deeds of cession each contained a clause providing that the State laws should continue in force within the territory ceded, until Congress *should accept the grant*. Congress accepted the grant, and, from that instant, the State laws ceased to have any force or effect within the territory. It then came under the control of another sovereignty, and, of course, all former laws must cease. When I speak of former State laws, I refer to *all statute or municipal* laws, including the laws of descent and distribution, and the laws for the collection of debts and punishing crimes, as well as the laws of slavery and the slave trade. All these ceased to exist the moment Congress accepted the grants. From that time to this, there has been no municipal law in existence within

said District *except acts of Congress*. In order that the people within the District should suffer no inconvenience for the want of laws, Congress passed the act above referred to. By this law, the statutes formerly in force were re-enacted, and became the *laws of Congress*, and have been in force since that time. In this way slavery was re-established, and, by virtue of this act of Congress, the slave trade is now continued in the city that bears the name of WASHINGTON. Repeat that *act of Congress*, and the slave trade will instantly be abolished, and slavery will be done away forever. Congress refuses to repeal this law of their own enacting, and by such refusal *upholds* the slave trade, with all its horrors, and its attendant guilt. By virtue of this law, parents are separated from their children, husbands from their wives, brothers from their sisters, and chained to the coffee, or placed on board the slave ships, are destined for a southern market. By virtue of this law of Congress, all the ties of domestic life are severed by the mercenary trader in human flesh. Here the father, in the presence of his wife and children, has been known to lay violent hands upon himself, and rush into the presence of his God, rather than meet the horrors of a separation about to be inflicted upon him, under the sanction of this *Congressional slave trade*. Here within the walls of the prison, erected by funds drawn from the people of the free States, the mother has been known, in the unutterable anguish of her soul, to murder the children of her own body, to prevent their otherwise inevitable doom of being exposed to a southern slave market; and then with hands reeking with the blood of her offspring, to sever the thread of her own existence, rather than meet the tortures of that "execrable commerce," now carried on under the sanction of this law, passed and sustained by votes of *northern representatives*.* Petitions are forwarded every year to Congress, praying that body to repeal this law, and thereby release the people of the north from the soul-sickening guilt attendant upon this trade in suffering humanity. Yet these petitions are treated with contempt, and we are compelled to continue involved in its turpitude, fearing that *our release from it would affect the interest of the slave-dealers*. To prevent our release from this guilt, every Democratic member of Congress from Ohio has, for years, united his influence and efforts with the slaveholders of the south. Indeed, they have stood before the world as "*the Swiss Guards*" of the slave-dealers; ready, on all occasions, to fight the battles of those who follow a traffic condemned and execrated by the civilized world—cursed of God, and hated by man. I will not occupy time by any thing more than a mere reference to the fact that slavery and the slave trade exists in the Territory of Florida, under the sanction and approbation of the Congress of the United States.† In the guilt of thus sustaining and continuing the institution in that Territory, the people of the free States are deeply involved, while their petitions, to be relieved from such guilt, are indignantly scouted from the halls of legislation by their servants in the House of Representatives.

In a former number I referred to the fact that the Executive of the United States has put forth our national influence for many years "*to prevent the abolition of slavery in the Island of Cuba*," for the reason that "*the sudden emancipation of a numerous population could not but be very sensibly felt upon the adjacent shores of the United States*."‡ How far these efforts of our Government have involved us in the guilt of slavery and of the slave trade, as they have been carried on there for the last fifteen years, I am unable to determine. I refer to facts, and leave them for the consideration of the reader.

The troops of the United States have often been called on to support the institution of slavery by the direct interposition of our arms. More than five hundred slaves were captured by our army in Florida, and returned to a state of interminable slavery. (Vide ex. doc. 45, of last session of Congress.) Thus the people of the free States have been involved in all the guilt of enslaving our fellow men, in order that the slaveholders may have the benefit of their labor.

In my fourth number I referred to the manner in which a fort within the Territory of Florida was blown up, and two hundred and seventy men, women, and children were murdered by the crew of a gun-boat detached from our naval force, for the sole purpose of robbing them of their lives, for no other reason than that they were unwilling to be robbed of their *liberty*. This murder, unparalleled in the history of any free and enlightened government on earth, was committed by persons in our employ—by our agents, acting in our name and by our authority. We were thus involved in the guilt of violently sending two hundred and seventy of our fellow beings to their final doom, in order that slavery may continue and prosper.

"The deep damnation of their taking off" rests on us—on the people of the free States, as well as on those of the slave States.

In the general support which our Government has given to slavery, they have involved our people of the free States in the general guilt of that institution. The late census has given us some interesting data by which the number of lives annually *sacrificed* among the slaves may be estimated with an approximation to truth. It has been said by some intelligent slaveholders, that the most profitable time in which "*to use up a slave, was seven years*." By this it is understood that the holder may make more profit from his slave by driving him so hard as to make the average length of life among his slaves no more than seven years after they reach maturity. By comparing the number of deaths, between the ages of twenty and forty, among the slaves of the south and the laborers of the north, some opinion may be

* Every Democratic member from Ohio has, for years, opposed all attempts to repeal this law, or to stop the traffic in slaves.

† Since the publication of this article, an attempt has been made in Congress to disapprove of a territorial law of Florida, which authorizes the sale into slavery of such free colored persons as come into any port of that territory. The law was sustained by every Democratic member from Ohio, as well as most of those from the free States, whose constituents will thereby become liable to be sold into interminable bondage. (Vide Journal of the House of Representatives of the 3d of January, 1842.)

‡ See letter of Mr. Van Buren, Secretary of State, to Mr. Van Ness, our minister in Spain. October 22, 1829.

formed as to the number of murders by the abuse of slaves in the United States. The writer speaks from memory when he states, that such comparisons show that four hundred thousand human lives have been sacrificed to the Moloch of slavery within the United States between 1830 and 1840. In the guilt of these wholesale murders the people of the free States have been involved, in just such degree as they have lent their influence and aid in supporting that institution. Every man who uses his influence to withhold from our people a knowledge of these facts, and of their rights to be exempt from this inconceivable amount of guilt, becomes accessory to the murders thus committed. Our public men and editors, who endeavor to suppress the agitation of our rights on this subject, become voluntary participators in shedding this river of blood, the stains of which centuries will not wash from our national escutcheon.

I might refer to numerous instances in which the people of the free States have been involved in the guilt of slavery and the slave trade; but I have mentioned enough to serve as examples. My object has been to show my readers the manner in which their constitutional rights to remain free from the guilt and moral turpitude of slavery, have been invaded. If the Federal Government had abolished slavery in every State of this Union, the outrage upon the Constitution would have been no greater, than has been that of involving the people of the free States in the base wickedness of slavery and of the slave trade.— Yet, Mr. Editor, our public press, and public men, have not only remained supinely inactive under these positive violations of the Constitution and of our rights, but they have been absolutely *silent*.

One of our great political parties has constantly aided in the perpetration of those outrages upon the people, while it must be acknowledged that the other has exhibited entirely too much insensibility to our wrongs; although their votes and acts, for some years past, have demonstrated to the world an unwillingness entirely to yield up our blood-bought privileges. This servile yielding up of the Constitution, as well as the rights and interests of the free States, will gain no favor among the people for either party. No *southern patriot* will demand it; no *northern patriot* will silently submit to it. If our Union be maintained, it will be by *supporting the Constitution*, not by *violating it*. By maintaining the rights both of the *north* and of the *south*, not by trampling upon those of either section. The south must be permitted to maintain their slavery while they wish to do so; the north must be permitted to enjoy its freedom uncontaminated and unpolluted by the *guilt of slavery*. The political party that throws its influence into the support of *all* these rights, will be sustained by the people; while the party that either invades the rights of the south, or supinely surrenders up those of the north, will be found wanting, when weighed in the balance of public sentiment.

PACIFICUS.

NUMBER VII.

VIOLATIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION—CONTINUED.

MR. EDITOR: I proceed to notice, briefly, some of the instances in which the people of the free States have been involved in the *disgrace* of slavery. In my first number I alluded to the unanimous declaration by these States of the *self-evident truth*, "THAT MAN IS BORN FREE, AND IS ENDOWED BY HIS CREATOR WITH THE INALIENABLE RIGHT OF LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS." Every act of our Federal Government, which denies to our fellow men these rights, exhibits to the world an inconsistency, and renders us obnoxious to the charge of hypocrisy. The first act of gross inconsistency, on the part of the Federal Government, was the act of Congress, approved 27th February, 1801, by which slavery and the slave trade were re-established, continued, and are now supported in the District of Columbia. Under that law, the people of the free States have for forty years been involved in the disgrace of the slave trade, which, during that period, has been carried on in the city of Washington.

At an early day, it was found that the slaves of the south escaped to the British West India islands, to Mexico, and to Canada. Our Government espoused the cause of the slaveholders, and opened a correspondence with Great Britain and Mexico, in order to obtain an arrangement with those Governments for the return of such slaves; thus endeavoring to make the Federal Government and the free States the protectors of slavery, and holding out to the world that it was a *national* institution, in palpable violation of the constitution, and of every dictate of justice. In 1835 the people of Florida sent a representation to General Jackson, that the slaves of that Territory, and of the adjoining States, were in the habit of fleeing from their masters and taking refuge with the Seminole Indians. Our troops, paid by the Federal Government in money drawn from the people of the north, were ordered there, and were literally made the catchpoles of slaveholders; thus making the capture of fugitive slaves the business of the *nation*, and involving the people of the free States in its disgrace. I mentioned in a former number the fact that, by order of the War Department, a gunboat went up the Apalachicola river for the purpose of destroying a fort in which fugitive slaves had taken refuge, and that two hundred and seventy human beings were murdered in cold blood by the agents of our Government, paid by the freemen of the north.

In this extraordinary transaction, our people of the free States were involved in the disgrace of *murdering fugitive slaves*.

The efforts which our Government put forth to obtain indemnity for the owners of slaves who escaped to the British army during the late war, led that nation, and the civilized world, to believe that slavery was a *national* institution, sustained by the free States as well as the slave States, and we were consequently involved in all the odium of slavery. The exertions of our Government to prevent the abolition of slavery in Cuba, and thus to stop the progress of human liberty, involved the people of the free States in all the disgrace attached to that extraordinary transaction. The spirited manner in which our Government espoused the cause of the slave dealers, who owned the cargoes of the *Comet* and *Encomium*, brought upon the people of the free States all the ignominy attached to the supporters of the slave trade.

But the honor of the free States has suffered most deeply from the restraints placed upon our people by the force of public sentiment among ourselves. This state of public opinion originated in the patriot-

ism of the northern States. Prior to the formation of our Constitution, our people felt the absolute necessity of a confederated Government, with more ample powers than existed under the old confederation. To obtain this, they were ready and willing to make sacrifices. Georgia and South Carolina would not adopt the Constitution, unless they were permitted to follow the slave trade for twenty years; to this the northern States reluctantly consented, in order to bring them into the Union. The north also consented to permit the south to be represented in Congress in proportion to the number of their slaves, and to pursue their fugitive slaves into the free States, and arrest and carry them back. These concessions were sacrifices of northern sentiments and northern interests, made for the purpose of obtaining a more efficient government, in order to strengthen and perpetuate the institutions of our country. In this manner the Constitution was *purchased* by the free States. Since the adoption of the Constitution, we have been constantly called on to make further sacrifices to purchase its *continuance*. Thus, in 1820, the slave States demanded an extension of the slaveholding influence, by the admission of Missouri as a slave State, in order to check the increasing preponderance of the free States. The free States objected. The south threatened an immediate dissolution of the Union, unless their demands were complied with. The north submitted for the purpose of *preserving the Union*. The sacrifice was declared an act of patriotism, and an example worthy to be imitated by statesmen and politicians. In 1833 South Carolina demanded a surrender of the tariff, and distinctly informed us, that, unless her demands were complied with, she would dissolve the Union. The statesmen of the free States hesitated, trembled, and submitted. The tariff was repealed, and the interests of the free States yielded up, in order to purchase a continuance of the Union. The act is yet quoted by some as an example of patriotism on the part of the free States. Our press, our statesmen, and politicians treated it as such; and our people were thus led to believe, that the sacrifice of northern rights to the interests of the slave States, was, in fact, a duty and a virtue.

Whenever the interests of the north and the south came in conflict, southern members were, for more than a quarter of a century, in the habit of threatening "*a dissolution of the Union*," as the most effectual argument in favor of their measures; and it seldom failed to convince their opponents. This practice became so common, that dictation appears to have been regarded as the *right* of the south, and *submission* was looked upon as the *duty* of the north. This feeling prevailed so long, and to such an extent, that any deviation from the accustomed submission was regarded as suspicious.

In our circles at home, the agitation of any question which embraced the institution of slavery, or the slave trade, was usually denounced as *abolition*; and, without further examination, was regarded as dishonorable to him who proposed it. Our public men became unwilling to raise any question that should affect slavery, lest they should thereby jeopardize their political standing; and the public press discouraged every attempt to assert the rights of the free States in opposition to the interests of the south. To support slavery, it is absolutely necessary to suppress all knowledge of human rights among those held in bondage.

To the suppression of such knowledge our people of the free States became accessory. In doing this, our own rights were lost sight of; we saw our money taken from our pockets and appropriated to the recapture, and even to the murder of fugitive slaves, and were silent under the outrage. The spirit of independence and honor seemed to have fled from our people. We saw our Presidents; our Heads of Departments; our Speakers of the House of Representatives, and of the Senate; our foreign ministers; our officers in the army and navy, mostly taken from the slave States, and we meekly submitted to the abuse. We saw our respectful petitions to Congress treated with contempt; and our citizens, who dared thus to approach their servants, were insulted and abused by the supercilious advocates of slavery; while scarcely a solitary voice was heard in defence of northern honor. Even such as dared to stand forth in defence of our rights and interests, were generally condemned by the press, or "damn'd with faint praise." This was the point of our lowest degradation. History will mark the commencement of 1842 as the period of the deepest humiliation of the free States. It was the time when the slave power ruled triumphant; and, untrammelled by the Constitution, held the freemen of the north in almost willing subjection to its dictates: when the rights, the interests, and the honor of the free States were regarded as of little importance, except as a means of promoting the interests of the slave States. At this period, when all hope of supporting the rights of the north appeared about to expire, a most important incident transpired in the House of Representatives of the United States. John Quincy Adams presented a petition to *dissolve the Union*; I say nothing in favor of this petition; it was, however, a request that Congress would carry into effect the threats which, for twenty-five years, had been put forth by southern statesmen. It was a request that those States, which had assumed to themselves the control of the Federal Government, might be left to take care of and protect themselves. The proposition horrified those who had so often menaced us with the consequences now prayed for by northern men.

The effect produced by this petition was most important. Southern statesmen exhibited to the world a consciousness of their *entire dependence upon the free States*. It was distinctly avowed, by one of their ablest and most influential members, that "*the dissolution of the Union would be the dissolution of slavery*." It showed to the people of the free States, and to the world, that our institutions and national independence must ever depend upon northern freemen for support. From this moment northern men felt more conscious of their power, and of the importance of our free institutions of the north. The sceptre of power then departed from the south, and must hereafter be swayed by the north, if our people prove themselves worthy of the high trust reposed in them. It is true great efforts were subsequently made, and will continue to be made, by members from the slave States, assisted by *northern Democrats*, to stop the wheels of that revolution in the public mind, which originated in the attempt to censure the venerable Adams. But their efforts have only served to awaken our people more fully to the maintenance of our rights.

PACIFICUS.

MR. EDITOR: I have now stated, generally, the constitutional rights of the people of the free States concerning slavery, and have referred to some of the most prominent abuses to which those rights have been subjected. It remains for me to call the attention of my readers to the remedy. But this will at once suggest itself to the mind of every reader, and each will say that our remedy consists in a *united vindication of our rights*; that the real difficulty consists in our divisions, and our first efforts should be to unite the friends of northern rights. In order to do this, we must search out the cause of our division, and understand distinctly the point on which we separated. If I understand our Liberty men, they are anxious to maintain the rights of the free States, and they ask for nothing more. I speak upon the authority of many leading men of that party. I have never met with an intelligent man who asked or demanded any thing more than this; yet they say, "the Whigs have neglected a portion of our most important rights, and they feel it their duty to separate from them, and to form a distinct party, whose principal efforts are to be directed to the maintenance of such of our rights as have been neglected by the Whigs. It was not my intention, when I commenced these essays, to throw censure upon any class of men, nor is such my present object; I may, however, be permitted to say, that I think our Liberty friends did not well "define their position" before they separated from us. For the correctness of this remark, I will refer to the recollection of the great mass of our people of all parties. At the time of separating from us, they had not clearly set forth to the world our rights, which had been trampled upon; nor did they state, with perspicuity, the abuses which they sought to correct. Neither did they definitely mark the boundaries, and limit the extent of the political reform which they were endeavoring to effect. On the contrary, there was a degree of obscurity pervading their objects. They professed opposition to slavery, and left the public to infer a design to invade the privileges of the slave States, instead of maintaining our own. This idea has rested in the minds of a large portion of our people, both in the free and in the slave States. It is true the charge was often denied; and it is equally true that the denial was not carried home to the minds of the great mass of our people; many of whom, to this day, really believe the object of the Liberty party to be an unconstitutional interference with the privileges of the slave States. But, so far as I have been able to learn their motives, and to analyze their views, I understand them to be simply the *preservation of our own rights*; the repeal of all acts of Congress, passed for the support of slavery or the slave trade; to separate the Federal Government, and the free States, from all unconstitutional connexion with that institution, and to leave it with the individual States, where the Constitution placed it. This, I believe, to be the boundary and farthest extent of their *political* intentions. If they entertain any other or farther views, I hope Judge King (the candidate of the Liberty party for Governor of Ohio) will state to your readers, through the Chronicle, the point on which I have failed to express their objects. I hope, also, that the editors of the Philanthropist and Emancipator will, through their respective papers, set forth definitely any error into which I may have fallen, in regard to the designs and objects of their party. But, for the present, taking these to be the definite limits to which they aspire, I will respectfully ask the Whigs, as a party, and the Liberty men, as a party, to show me the line of demarcation between them? Is there an individual in the whole Whig party of Ohio, or in the free States, that is willing to surrender a single right of our people? If there be such a whig, I have not met him. If there be a Whig editor, north of Mason and Dixon's line, who is willing to yield up any of the constitutional rights of the free States, I hope he will favor the country with his views; and that he will inform us distinctly *which part* of the Constitution we ought first to surrender. I speak with great confidence when I say, that I believe no such man can be found. Let the rights of the people of the free States, in regard to slavery, be fairly and distinctly pointed out, and there will be no want of firmness nor of patriotism to maintain them. It is true, however, that many Whigs have, and still do oppose the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia; but they will assign to you, as the reason, that Congress *has not the constitutional power* to abolish it. If you then ask them if they are willing that Congress *should repeal its own laws*, for the support of slavery and the slave trade in that District, they will, at once, answer you in the affirmative. If you inquire whether they are willing to lend their influence, or their property, to support slavery, they will answer you that they detest the institution. If you interrogate them in regard to any other rights of the north, they will unhesitatingly assure you of their determination to sustain them.

If, then, our Whigs are willing to sustain *all* our rights, and our Liberty men have no further objects in view than the support of such rights, the question at once suggests itself, *why do they divide?* What principle separates them from each other? And it is a question of high and solemn import, which the writer would repeat in the ear of every Whig, every anti-slavery man, and of every lover of our free institutions, *why do you divide your political influence, and prostrate your political energies, while you agree in principle, and are laboring for the same objects?*

We have the same interests to watch over, the same rights to maintain, and the same honor to protect. All these must receive our attention, or be left to those who, as a party, have uniformly lent themselves to the slave-holding influence. If we forget those rights, and spend our efforts in unmeaning contentions and useless quarrels with each other, will not our country hold us responsible? Our interests have been sacrificed; our rights have been trampled upon; our State has been disgraced, as I have heretofore shown. Yet we have divided our efforts, and separated from our political associates, and delivered the honor of our State to the keeping of a party who, forgetful of the dignity of freemen, have shown themselves willing to become the *catchers of slaves*, and to degrade themselves and their State by legislating for the sole purpose of robbing their fellow men of that liberty with which the God of nature has endowed them. But I desire to examine a little further the cause of our separation at the late election. The Whigs supported our tariff; our harbor improvements; the distribution of the proceeds of the public lands, with zeal and constancy. But our commerce with Hayti, the right of petition, the slave trade in the District of Columbia, received from them, generally, much less attention, although they were not ne-

glected by a portion of that party. These latter subjects were deemed of paramount importance by a portion of our political friends; on these they bestowed their principal thoughts, and treated the others with comparatively little attention. In this manner each party felt that they were exerting their efforts upon subjects of vital interest to our country, and each considered the other as laboring in behalf of interests that were not worthy of the attention paid to them.

In this way each party became dissatisfied with the other. Here, then, is the precise point of division among our friends: not because either did *wrong*, but because each felt that the other was not sufficiently zealous in supporting *all* their interests. The division did not arise from any political sin of *commission*, but for *omitting some part of our duties*. The Democratic party has violently *opposed* those rights which Liberty men deem sacred. The Whigs were lukewarm in supporting them; and, on this account, our Liberty friends withdrew from us, and thereby delivered over our interests to the disposal of those whose bitterness against the rights of man can scarcely find utterance in our language.* Having thus ascertained the cause, and the precise point of our separation, the remedy is plain. It consists simply in *doing our duty*—in maintaining our rights and interests, and firmly resisting all abuses; in placing ourselves upon the exact line of the Constitution, and temperately, but resolutely, opposing all encroachments upon our interests, our honor, or our constitutional privileges. I am aware that many of our editors and public men fear that the assertion and maintenance of our rights in regard to slavery, would drive from us our Whig friends in the slave States. If these fears were well grounded, they would form no good reason why we should surrender our constitutional rights, in order to *purchase* their adherence. This is the policy of the opposite party. They appear anxious to surrender up our rights, our interests, and our honor, for the purchase of southern votes. If the Whigs attempt to rival that party in *servility*, they must fail. The independent spirit, the high sense of honor, the patriotic sentiment of our Whigs, will not permit them to become subservient to the slaveholding interest. But the argument is not well-founded. Our southern Whigs are generally men of liberal and patriotic sentiments. They will not ask of us the sacrifice of our constitutional rights. On the contrary, they will be as willing to grant us the enjoyment of *all* our rights, as to demand the enjoyment of all their own. If they are not such men, they are unfit to be the associates of northern Whigs. It is, however, true, that they, as well as northern men, have not, heretofore, fully understood our rights, for the reason that we, ourselves, *dare not assert them*; and they, as well as northern men, have unconsciously voted and acted in opposition to the rights of the free States, under the impression that they were sustaining the Constitution. But when the attention of our southern and northern Whigs shall be directed to this subject; when they shall have fully investigated it, and shall understand the constitutional limits of slavery, I apprehend there will be no difference between them. It is, therefore, all important that public attention should be directed to this matter. Indeed, intelligence in regard to northern rights cannot be longer suppressed. A spirit of inquiry is abroad among the people, and it is increasing daily, and becoming stronger and stronger. A marked and palpable change has taken place in the public mind within the past year. In February last, almost the entire press united in the opinion that we were bound to support the coastwise slave trade of the south. At this time, who is willing to hazard his reputation by advocating such doctrine? Yet, with such examples before us, a portion of our press and of our public men, exhibit much timidity as to asserting and maintaining our constitutional rights. So long have the people of the north been accustomed to silent submission, when our rights have been invaded, that many of our editors, our statesmen and politicians, still appear to doubt the *safety* of an open, frank, and manly defence of our interests and our honor. It, however, needs no spirit of prophecy to foretell the downfall of any party, who has not the moral and political courage to maintain the rights and interests of the north. If the Whigs come forth to the defence of these interests, and maintenance of these rights, their success is not less certain than the continuance of time; and if the opposite party continue to *oppose* these rights and interests, their defeat is inevitable.

PACIFICUS.

NUMBER IX.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

MR. EDITOR: In this, my closing number, it is my intention to answer some objections that have been urged against a union of the friends of northern rights. The first, and most important, objection urged by the "Liberty men" is, that "Henry Clay is the Whig candidate for President, and they cannot vote for him, because he is a slaveholder." My first answer to this objection is, that Mr. Clay is *not* the candidate of the Whig party, at present; and whether he will be, is quite uncertain. Nor can I admit it to be good or sound policy for me to withdraw from the support of good men *at this time*, for the reason that I think a bad man may be a candidate two years hence for another office. Again: should Mr. Clay die before the next Presidential election, or should he not be a candidate, how can they justify their withdrawal at the late election from the support of men who openly avow and support every principle which they do themselves. My next answer is, that Mr. Clay, under the laws of Kentucky, is permitted to hold slaves. By the Constitution of the United States that is made no disqualification from office. It is an objection unknown to the Constitution, and we ought to be careful how we attempt innovations upon that instrument, unless they be made in the mode pointed out for its amendment.

The first President, under the Constitution, was a slaveholder; and the slaveholders of those States have an equal right to hold office that gentlemen who reside in the free States have. For us, at this day, to establish such a rule as a test for office, would be a violation of the rights of the people of the slave States. This is, in my opinion, highly objectionable. It would show us willing to *invade* their rights, while we profess to maintain our own. This would be inconsistent. Our inquiry should be, *will he maintain the Constitution, and will he support the constitutional rights of all parts of the Union?* If

* Vide the late numbers of the "Ohio Statesman."

we are satisfied that he will do this, we ought not to throw away our political influence, and suffer our interests, our honor, and our constitutional rights to be trampled under foot by a party who appear anxious to bring us under the subjection of the south. I would, in all candor, ask our Liberty men, whether they would not prefer the support of our rights by a slaveholding President, rather than their destruction by a "northern man with southern principles?" I certainly prefer that our candidates should not be slaveholders; for I believe slaveholding, even in a slave State, to be immoral and wrong, and must detract from the moral character of those who practise it. Like all other vices, it should have its due weight in our estimate of character; but it is entitled to nothing more. Should Mr. Clay, or his friends, satisfy me that, if elected President, he will, in good faith, support all these rights to which I have alluded, and which have been so often and so long trampled upon, and he be the only candidate, who, in my opinion, will sustain those rights, and who, at the same time, has a reasonable chance for election, I could not justify myself to my conscience were I to withhold my support from him. Were I to do so, and thereby elect a man who I believed would violate our Constitution, and disregard our rights, I should thereby become accessory to his acts.

In order to satisfy myself in regard to Mr. Clay's views on this subject, I, as one of the sovereign people, may propound to him any and all questions that I may deem important on this subject; and if he be worthy of that high office, he will not hesitate to answer them fully and frankly. If I, then, become satisfied that he will, if elected, disregard those constitutional rights of the north, I cannot support him—it would be wrong for me to do so; for I should become accessory to the violation of our Constitution, and the subversion of the rights of the free States. Questions of *policy* constantly require of us mutual concessions of opinion; but no circumstances can justify the yielding up of any portion of the Constitution. When that shall be done, society will be resolved into its original elements.

Another objection is, that slaveholders, when in office, do injustice to the free States. This assertion has proven too true in many cases, but is not correct in all instances. I quote the example of the present Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Hon. John White. No northern man has condemned his official acts. He has discharged his duties honorably, and is as much entitled to confidence as though he lived in a free State. Here I would caution our anti-slavery men not to permit their lofty principles of human rights to dwindle down to mere local jealousies. We should no more invade the *spirit* of the Constitution by making the holding of slaves a test for office, than we should permit our southern friends to invade its *letter*.

Again: it is said, that the Whigs have done nothing in favor of those rights which anti-slavery men consider so important. Is the assertion correct? Have not J. Q. Adams, William Slade, Seth M. Gates, and other Whigs, done what they could for the defence and support of northern rights? But it is said these are *individuals*. Yet they belong to the Whig party, and constitute a part of it; and surely their acts cannot be placed to the credit of the *other party*. But do not our friends, who make this objection, charge over to the Whig party the acts of individuals belonging to that political sect when they oppose the cause of human rights? The great body of the Whig party in Congress voted to repeal the obnoxious 21st rule. A few individuals joining with the opposite party prevented its repeal. Our liberty papers and their party charged this as the act of the *Whig party*; while they deny to that party any credit for the efforts of Mr. Adams and others. This practice is unjust, and ought to cease. But have not the Whig party (and when I speak of the party, I mean the *majority* of the party,) voted in support of these rights for the last two years? Have they not voted against the odious *gag*, and in favor of the right of petition, when these questions came before them? Did they not sustain Mr. Adams, when an attempt was made to censure him? Did they not sustain Mr. Giddings when censured? Did not the Whig party in his district sustain him? I ask, in what instance, for the last two years, have the Whigs in the House of Representatives failed to sustain these rights, when agitated upon the floor of Congress? I will not say, that they have at all times maintained our rights; but I do not hesitate in saying, that I know of no instances when the question of northern rights has been brought distinctly before them for the last two years, in which a majority of the members of the Whig party present have not sustained those rights.

Yet it is asserted by some, that "the two great political parties have been equally opposed to the rights of mankind and to the interests of the people of the free States." I can hardly believe that any intelligent man would make such statement while under the exercise of a suitable regard to candor. It is well known that, for the last two years, in every instance in which those rights so dear to our friends have come before Congress, every Democratic member from this State has opposed them, and that every Whig member from this State has sustained them; and such, too, has been substantially true of the two parties generally, though not to the same extent. A Whig member from this State introduced resolutions declaring the rights of the free States as set forth in my second number, and was sustained by every Whig colleague; while one of his Democratic colleagues moved a resolution to *censure* him for thus presuming to assert our rights, and every Democratic member voted for the resolution of censure. And is it possible that any man can now be sincere in saying that the two parties are *alike* subservient to the interests of the south?*

But it is said that the Whigs *have been* subservient to southern dictation; and their acts, in former years, are quoted to prove the fact. This charge is too true. Up to a certain time, both parties appear to have been submissive to the demands of the slave States. Such, too, was the case generally with the

* The votes in Congress for suppressing the slave trade in the District of Columbia, and for repealing the territorial law of Florida which authorizes selling freemen into slavery, were given since the above was published. On these questions the representatives from the free States were divided almost entirely by party lines.

men who now make this charge. Their attention had not then been aroused to the subject. They, with the Whigs and the Democrats, were equally unconscious of the encroachments upon our rights; and the Whigs, or the Democrats, may now make this charge against the "Liberty party" with the same propriety that the latter can urge it against the others. The truth is, the abuse of northern rights has but just begun to attract attention. But whatever has been done in Congress, has been done by Whigs. Up to this time there has been no Liberty men in that body, or in our State Legislature. But such has been the revolution in public opinion that, if it continues to progress as it has for the last year, it will be completed; our rights secured; and the Constitution will be vindicated before that party will get many members elected to either body. Would it not be far better for the cause of northern rights if our Liberty men were to deal justly and candidly with both of the great political parties, and to approve as frankly that which is praiseworthy, as they condemn that which is wrong.

But it is said that the present political parties have become *corrupt*, and it is therefore necessary to form a new party, that shall be free from such political corruptions. But I ask, from whence are we to find the men for this new party? Must they not come from the present parties? And will they be more pure, more honest, and more patriotic when transferred to a new party, than they now are? Is there any regenerating influences to act upon such as join the new party? Are their political transgressions to be washed out? Will the Whig who has always acted honestly, and been guided by a sincere desire for his country's good, be more likely to leave his party, than the demagogue and the office seeker? I would not by any means be understood as impugning the motives of those who now constitute the Liberty party; on the contrary, I believe them as honest and patriotic as any other class of men. But I ask them, if the formation of a new party will not be likely to draw to them the profligate and the unprincipled from both of the other parties?

Again: it is said to have become necessary to form a party whose *principal* object shall be the maintenance of those rights which our Anti-slavery men deem important. If by this form of expression it be understood that those who unite with that party are, in any degree, to neglect the protection of free labor by a proper tariff of duties; or if they intend to abandon the improvement of our lake harbors, and our river navigation, and other northern interests which the Whigs deem important, then I, for one, cannot unite with them, nor can I believe their prospect of success very flattering. Our people may easily be persuaded to *maintain* our rights when their attention is called to them; but it will be difficult to convince them that it has become their duty to *neglect* either their *rights* or their *interests*.

But if a portion of our friends form a distinct party for the support of the right of petition, and to maintain the freedom of debate, and for that purpose they should oppose those who are engaged for the protection of the free labor of the north, while another portion turn their attention to this latter object, and oppose their influence to the former, is it not perfectly clear that *both must fail*? While a union in support of both would inevitably secure the triumph of each.

But I have not time to pursue the subject further; I have already occupied more of your paper, and more of the attention of your readers, than I designed to have done when I commenced the secessays. It has been my object to call public attention to what I believe the true points in issue. I have intended to speak with such plainness, that no man, nor party, nor editor, should say that I feared to state the *whole* truth. Or that Whig papers dare not publish arguments touching *all* our rights. And if I have fallen short of this, I again call upon the editors of the Philanthropist and the Emancipator to show wherein? And, on the other hand, if there be a Whig editor who is unwilling to support *all* our rights, or who thinks the assertion and support of all our rights and interests impolitic or imprudent, I desire him to place his objections before the public. It is surely time that our papers and our people had ceased to contend about *names* and *terms*, and that they should search out some *principle*, or some constitutional or political right, as the foundation of their quarrels.

Again, the writer would say to his readers, that he has put forth no opinion upon the constitutional rights of the several States, without mature investigation, or on which he entertains any doubt. Yet he claims for himself no infallibility. And if any man desire explanations, or authorities on any point, he will most cheerfully furnish them.

In taking leave of my readers, I wish to say that I was induced to appear before the public, on this subject, from the most thorough conviction, that no fixed and established policy will be framed by the General Government while the rights of the free States remain unsettled concerning slavery. Looking at Ohio, New York, and all of New England, and considering the result of our late elections, and the divisions which distract and divide the friends of the north, and of liberty in those States, we must all acknowledge that we have little hopes of seeing our interests, our honor, or our rights protected, until *union* shall characterise our political efforts. Since the commencement of these essays, many things have transpired to rivet this conviction more thoroughly upon the mind. I refer, among other things, to the Latimer case at Boston, and the absorbing interest now felt on the subject in Massachusetts and in Virginia.* Feeling desirous to call the attention of our people, as well as that of our politicians and Statesmen, to the importance of a speedy settlement of those questions which involve the most vital interests of the free States, I have seized upon such moments as I could spare from other employments, to place some of my views before the public. I have done this under the strong conviction that every true patriot should put forth his influence to sustain our rights, and to unite our people in the protection of our interests, our honor, and the Constitution of our common country.

PACIFICUS.

* Since this article was published, the Norfolk meeting in Virginia have passed resolutions recommending to their Legislature the "arming and disciplining of their militia," preparatory to the coming conflict between the slave and free States. Yet while Virginia is thus urged to arm her militia in support of slavery, some northern Editors feel it their duty to remain silent in regard to northern rights.



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Ohio, Evangelical Religion, and the Merging of the Antislavery Movement: Joshua R. Giddings, Salmon P. Chase, and Their Remarkable Crusades Against Slavery

Douglas Montagna¹

Joshua R. Giddings and Salmon P. Chase deserve their own section on the spectrum of opponents to slavery in American history. Without the combined and prodigious efforts of these two Ohio lawyer/politicians working as antislavery activists, slavery in the United States would likely not have ended when and how it did. Their careers as antislavery activists began in the late 1830s and continued into the Civil War, spanning nearly the entire existence of the political antislavery movement. Joshua R. Giddings served as a congressman in the United States House of Representatives from 1838 to 1859 representing districts in the area around Cleveland, also known as the Western Reserve. From his earliest days in Congress to the day he left, he denounced slavery and the slave owners at almost every opportunity, often in the face of threats of violence against him from Southern congressmen, working and strategizing with abolitionists and other antislavery congressmen to keep the cause alive and in the public consciousness. He also was an effective polemicist, writing not only a torrent of editorials but also well-researched works to make his arguments against slavery.²

Salmon P. Chase also began his antislavery activism during the late 1830s, first as a lawyer in Cincinnati defending fugitive slaves and whites prosecuted for aiding them and then as a political organizer, polemicist, and later as a United States Senator (1849-1855), Governor of Ohio (1856-

¹ Douglas Montagna is Associate Professor of History at Grand Valley State University.

² James B. Stewart, *Joshua R. Giddings and the Tactics of Radical Politics* (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve, 1970); James B. Stewart, *Abolitionist Politics and the Coming of the Civil War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), chapter 5.

1860), Secretary of the Treasury (1861-1864) and finally as Supreme Court Justice from 1864 until he died in 1873. His greatest work in opposing slavery was as a political organizer. As the well-known historian Eric Foner said of him: “No anti-slavery leader was more responsible for the success of this transformation [switching tactics of the fight against slavery from moral suasion to politics], and none did more to formulate an antislavery program in political terms than Salmon P. Chase.”³ It is notable that these two successful antislavery politicians, perhaps the two most successful of the Antebellum era, settled in and built their careers in the state of Ohio. Even though their homes were in opposite corners of the state—Giddings in the northeastern Ohio’s Western Reserve and Chase in the southwestern Ohio city of Cincinnati—both these Ohio settings were critical in making and sustaining the antislavery careers of these two men.⁴

Before getting into the specific local and regional circumstances of their antislavery careers, a remarkable feature about Giddings and Chase is that they both combined elements and even embodied two distinct groups in the overall antislavery movement. The first group Giddings and Chase resembled were the evangelically inspired immediatist abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison, Theodore Weld, Joshua Leavitt, and Lewis and Arthur Tappan.⁵ They resembled the abolitionists because Giddings and Chase were also inspired by evangelical religion and a relentless search for holiness and deeper meaning and purpose in their lives, and they all found it by fighting slavery, an institution they all considered the greatest injustice and evil in antebellum America. Giddings and Chase differed from the abolitionists in tactics, not their mutual hatred of slavery and goal of eradicating it. Both of them worked extensively with abolitionists. They were

³ Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 73; John Niven, *Salmon Chase: A Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Frederick Blue, *Salmon Chase: A Life in Politics* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1987);

⁴ There is a growing body of scholarship emphasizing the Midwest as a distinct region in American history. Some notable examples include Christopher Phillips, *The Rivers Ran Backwards: The Civil War and the Remaking of the American Middle Border* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 65. Although Phillips focuses on anti-abolitionism in the Middle region of the country, he does say the Western Reserve was one of the few places in the region with significant abolitionist sentiment. Andrew R. L. Cayton, *Ohio: The History of a People* (Columbus: The Ohio University Press, 2002); J. Brent Morris, *Oberlin, Hotbed of Abolitionism: College, Community, and the Fight for Freedom and Equality in America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

⁵ For a few examples of the scholarship on the abolitionists. Henry Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998); Lawrence Friedman, *Gregarious Saints: Self and Community in American Abolitionism, 1830-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1982); Hugh Houck Davis, *Joshua Leavitt: Evangelical Abolitionist* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery* (Cleveland: Case Western University Press, 1971); Robert H. Abzug, *Passionate Liberator: Theodore Dwight Weld and the Dilemma of Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

also members of a second group, two-party system politicians who opposed slavery but thought it could be best opposed by conventional political tactics and arguments couched in non-radical language based on their views of the Constitution and the ideals of the Founding Fathers.⁶ Both Giddings and Chase spent parts of their political careers participating in the Whig/Democratic and then Republican/Democratic two-party systems, and other parts as members of third parties, but with the hope of using the third parties to influence the two major parties. And Ohio provided the setting where such an integration and merging of two distinctly different parts of the antislavery movement was possible. In Ohio, according to a historian of the Ohio-based Oberlin College, the ideological divisions that divided the antislavery movement among easterners between the New England-based Garrisonians and the New York-based political abolitionists, were far less pronounced, and in the case of Oberlin College, “the Ohio abolitionists united these two and became their counterpart in the West.”⁷ The antislavery careers of Giddings and Chase reflect a similar blending of two approaches to fighting slavery.

This article will treat the antislavery careers of Giddings and Chase in three parts. The first part will show that they were exposed to evangelical religion early in their lives and that their religious lives continued to develop throughout their childhoods and young adulthoods. The second part will show what experiences inspired each to become antislavery activists. And the third part will show how religion remained the cornerstones of both of their fights against slavery while working within the American political system. Both themes of this essay—the importance of the Ohio society and environment in fostering and enabling their antislavery careers, and how both of them merged and embodied two distinct parts of the antislavery movement, the religiously inspired abolitionism and the belief that the American political system could be used to effectively fight slavery—will be developed through all three parts.

While the scholarship on abolitionism and antebellum politics and religion is voluminous, references to a few scholarly trends and works will help to situate this article. Some of the major studies on antebellum politics minimize the importance of abolitionism and antislavery politics on the two-party system, in some cases by barely mentioning them or by arguing that the Whigs and Democrats successfully stifled the slavery issue, at least until the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the

⁶ Giddings would use radical, prophetic language, but he did base his antislavery tactics and some of his arguments on an interpretation of the Constitution.

⁷ Morris, 6-7.

growth of the Republican Party.⁸ Other studies, however, argue that abolitionism and antislavery politics were vitally important to American politics and others argue about the place of abolitionism in the larger antebellum society, such as its connection to antislavery politics and reform movements in general.⁹ This article fits into the scholarship arguing for the importance of antislavery politics and de-emphasizing the differences between the so-called immediatist abolitionists, who rejected the American political system and hoped to end slavery through moral suasion, and the political abolitionists.¹⁰ Another argument advanced in this article is that Ohio had a distinct political and cultural environment conducive to the success of Giddings and Chase.

RELIGION AND UPWARD MOBILITY IN OHIO:

THE EARLY LIVES OF JOSHUA R. GIDDINGS AND SALMON P. CHASE

Both Giddings and Chase came from New England backgrounds, as did many of the abolitionists. Joshua R. Giddings was born in 1795, the descendant of a long line of New England Puritans, and he remained a member of the Congregationalist church his entire life. Giddings's father moved from Connecticut to Pennsylvania seeking a better living, where Joshua was born in 1795.¹¹ The large Giddings family struggled to survive as farmers, continuing to move in search of prosperity, moving on from Pennsylvania to New York and finally in 1805 to the Western Reserve in Ohio, the area where emigrants from Connecticut did their best to recreate the Puritanism of their place of origin and where Joshua would make his name and live most of his life. The

⁸ See Michael Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1983); William Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852-1856* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Gienapp argues that Temperance and Nativism broke up the Whig party before the heating up of the sectional crisis in the aftermath of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861* (New York: Harper, 1976); Aileen S. Kraditor, *Means and Ends in American Abolitionism: Garrison and His Critics on Strategy and Tactics, 1834-1850* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1967); Kraditor makes a similar point about the insignificance of political abolitionism from the perspective of the abolitionism movement.

⁹ Richard H. Sewell, *Ballots for Freedom: Antislavery Politics in the United States, 1837-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); Ronald Walters, *Anti-Slavery Appeal: American Abolitionism after 1830* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); Alan M. Kraut, ed., *Crusaders and Compromisers: Essays on the Relationship of the Antislavery Struggle to the Antebellum Party System* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983). Kraut's introduction provides an excellent historiographic essay on the interactions of abolitionism with the two-party system in the scholarship prior to 1983. Reinhard O. Johnson, *The Liberty Party: Antislavery Politics Third-Party Politics in the United States* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009); Bruce Laurie, *Beyond Garrison: Antislavery and Social Reform* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); James Oakes, *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861-1865* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013).

¹⁰ This article makes some of the arguments found in Frederick Blue, *No Taint of Compromise: Crusaders in Antislavery Politics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004).

¹¹ George Julian, *The Life of Joshua R. Giddings* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1892), 15-16; Stewart, 4.

popularity of antislavery sentiments in the Western Reserve would make Giddings's political career possible.¹² Giddings spent most of his childhood working hard on his father's various farms as a boy and young man, leaving little time for formal primary education. He grew into a physically imposing, athletic man, a quality that would serve him well when confronted and physically threatened by pro-slavery congressmen later in his life.¹³ Desperately wanting to avoid his father's constant struggles to survive, Giddings strove to educate himself and then focused on the study of the law, a career that brought him wealth and respectability. He partnered with Benjamin Wade, who would also become a prominent Republican and antislavery politician. As a young adult, he was active in his church and community, serving as an elder in his local congregation and as president of the local chapter of the Bible Society.¹⁴ Giddings, like many of the abolitionists, had a strong religious foundation upon which he would build in response to the ups and downs of his adult life.

Born in Corning, New Hampshire in 1808, Chase too came out of the New England Puritan tradition but with a twist; one of his uncles converted to the Episcopalian faith and convinced the rest of the Chases to do the same, so Salmon grew up and lived his whole life in the Episcopalian faith. He did, however, live an intensely pious life more typically associated with overtly evangelical denominations.¹⁵ The Chase family had a prestigious New England pedigree, with a United States Senator and an Episcopalian Bishop among their relatives. Salmon's father Ithamar never achieved the renown of his more successful relatives, but he did well enough to provide a comfortable life for his family, farming with the help of their ten children and investing in a nearby glass factory, with the added prestige of serving as Justice of the Peace and as a Senator in the New Hampshire Senate. His family managed to provide Salmon with a tutor and send him to primary school. Chase also acquired the trappings of piety and "rectitude" during his early

¹² Julian, 14; Harlan Hatcher, *The Western Reserve: The Story of New Connecticut in Ohio* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1949), see especially chapter 16; Andrew R.L. Cayton, *Ohio: A History of its People* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2002), 29, 119-120.

¹³ Julian, 15-16.

¹⁴ Stewart, 10, 11.

¹⁵ Niven, *Salmon Chase*, 6.

childhood, qualities that remained with him and grew throughout his life.¹⁶ While his early childhood was stable and comfortable, he would experience more than his share of personal tragedies, pushing him to seek a deeper and more meaningful religious life.

He experienced the first of many personal tragedies at age nine when his father died of a stroke after his glass factory went out of business due to increasing British competition after the War of 1812. After struggling to make ends meet his mother sent the twelve-year-old Salmon west to the central Ohio town of Worthington to live with his Uncle Philander Chase, one of the leading Episcopalian clergymen west of the Appalachians and a fearsomely strict disciplinarian. Salmon recalled how his Uncle's childrearing differed from his father's style of discipline, being strict and harsh instead of mild and gently persuasive. Philander gave young Salmon room, board, and a classical education in return for labor on his dairy farm. Noting Salmon's talent as a student, Philander encouraged him to pursue a career in the Episcopalian clergy while subjecting him to a rigorous education in the classics and theology. Although Salmon had unpleasant memories from this part of his life as he recalled the fear and constant threat of harsh beatings he got from his uncle whenever he supposedly did anything wrong in his many tasks, his religious development continued as he was confirmed in the Episcopalian church during his two year stay in Worthington. While occasionally restless in church, he nevertheless became "a zealous champion of the Episcopacy" during his two years in Ohio.¹⁷ Philander then moved to Cincinnati to take over the presidency at Cincinnati College, taking Salmon along with him where he enrolled as a thirteen-year old freshman. The ever-ambitious Philander realized that more money was needed to establish a better Episcopalian college in the west, and once again he moved, this time to England to raise money for what would become Kenyon College. Salmon went with him as far as Kingston, New York, but returned home to New Hampshire, arriving in 1823, while Philander went on to England.¹⁸

Chase's next step in life was to attend Dartmouth College and teach school to help his family out financially.¹⁹ Admitted to Dartmouth at age sixteen, he cruised through, finishing

¹⁶ Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005), 35-37; John Niven, "Introduction," *The Salmon P. Chase Papers*, volume 1, *Journals, 1829-1872* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1993), ed. by John Niven, James P. McClure, William M. Ferrar, and Steven Leikin, Five Volumes, xvi, xvii.

¹⁷ Blue, *Salmon Chase*, 4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5, 6; Niven, *viv.*

¹⁹ Niven, *Intro*, *viv.*

eighth in his class without fully applying himself. The most important event for Chase at Dartmouth was a religious revival that profoundly affected him. Typical of Episcopalians, he was initially skeptical of revivalism but the evidence of its effectiveness caused him to change his mind and allow his own faith to considerably deepen. He wrote the following to his friend Thomas Sparhawk: “A revival has commenced here. I was not taught to believe much in the efficacy of such things, but I do not know enough to oppose them.” He then went on to point out that several individuals were positively affected by the revival, and overall the student body showed much more solemnity and respect for religion, as evidenced by “so silent and attentive” a response to evening chapel services.²⁰ In a letter to the same friend two months later, he explained the revival as “the work which I verily believe to be the spirit of God...” In that same letter he urged his friend to “seek the kingdom of heaven,” otherwise his efforts in life would be in vain. At least to his friend, Chase had become an evangelist.²¹ His faith, first nurtured within his nuclear family and then through his time living with his uncle became even stronger after the Dartmouth revivals. Although he held out against his uncle’s wishes by not becoming a clergyman and instead a lawyer, that choice allowed him to work in a system supposedly designed to bring justice to people. An older brother convinced him that Episcopalian ministers often became “hypocritical reverends” whose pride and desire for power made them “the disgrace of the Christian church,” an insight similar to ones that occurred to some of the abolitionists contemplating lives in the clergy at a time when the prestige and even effectiveness of the clergy was in decline.²² His deep exposure and commitment to his faith prepared him to join the growing number of Americans trying to reform their republic.

The Episcopal denomination, officially called the Protestant Episcopal Church, was itself divided between an evangelical party and a high church party. Chase and his Uncle Philander were evangelical Episcopalians. After the Revolutionary war, the Anglican church in America broke off from the English church and changed its name to the Protestant Episcopal Church, hoping to distance itself from its association with the British. The denomination faced enormous challenges. They lost their established status, meaning a loss of state sponsorship and the opening up of a competitive religious environment where they were just one denomination among

²⁰ Salmon Chase to Thomas Sparhawk, March, 16, 1826, quoted in Arthur Schlesinger, “Salmon P. Chase, Undergraduate and Pedagogue,” *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications* 28 (December 1919): 130.

²¹ Chase to Sparhawk, May 15, 1826, *Ibid.*, 131.

²² Blue, *Salmon P. Chase*, 6; Freidman, *Gregarious Saints*, 18.

many competing for membership. American religion followed the pattern of American politics in the half century or so after the Revolution by becoming more democratic and opening up opportunities for people, denominations and sects not part of the establishment or elite. Preachers from denominations such as the Methodist and Baptists, feeling validated by their exploding membership, often mocked the elitism and formalism of the Episcopalians.²³ Enough members of the Episcopalian clergy realized that if they were going to remain relevant in American society, their denomination would have to adopt at least some of the trappings and methods of the rapidly growing evangelical denominations.²⁴ Careful to avoid the emotional excesses and lack of dignity they believed marred and sometimes delegitimized much of the revivalism in early American history, evangelical Episcopalians nonetheless promoted revivals through “prayer, preaching, the Episcopal liturgy and Lenten observation” and even occasionally encouraged extemporaneous prayer. They also organized Bible studies, Sunday schools and “inquiry meetings” as ways to gain conversions.²⁵ Chase was able to live out his evangelically inspired life within the Episcopal church.

After graduating from Dartmouth in 1826, Chase moved to Washington, D.C. hoping one of his successful relatives would get him a job in the government, which did not happen. He taught school while studying for the bar exam. Once he passed the bar exam, he decided to return to Cincinnati, a dynamic, growing city fast becoming the commercial hub of the Ohio Valley and an ideal place for a young lawyer to get his start and as it turned out, an ideal place to get immersed in the slavery controversy. He arrived in Cincinnati in 1830, and within a few years established a successful legal practice.²⁶ Chase’s piety grew stronger after he moved to Cincinnati. Despite the hard work he did to succeed as a lawyer, he found time to live a remarkably active Christian life, joining and attending regularly the St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, praying with his

²³ Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

²⁴ There was nothing new about Anglicans/Episcopalians becoming evangelists and revivalists—after all, George Whitfield and John Wesley were Anglican churchmen and remained so throughout their careers despite the considerable controversy they caused. Methodism was a movement within the Anglican church until 1784 when it declared itself a separate denomination.

²⁵ Diane Butler, *Standing Against the Whirlwind: Evangelical Episcopalians in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 35, 50; See also Sidney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 624-625.

²⁶ Schlesinger, “Salmon Chase,” 131-133, 121.

family once he had one, reading the Bible, performing service in the church, and frequently recording and commenting on these activities in his journal. Like many of the other antislavery activists, Chase first participated in some of the other religiously inspired reform movements, joining the Young Men's Temperance Society, organizing the local Young Men's Bible Association, and serving as Superintendent of his church's Sunday School.²⁷ In his journal he constantly reproached himself for not being fully committed to his faith. A bout with rheumatic fever in January 1833 was a jarring reminder of his shortcomings: "Some things, I thought, almost venial now appeared exceedingly sinful. Yet I trust I was willing to depart in the hope I should be with Christ. I felt a confidence that though my transgressions were multiplied and aggravated yet the blood of Christ was sufficient to wash away all sin." Then he went on to resolve his determination to live up to Christian ideals even more fully: "And I resolved if I should recover to try to do more for God than I had done before—to live a more Godly life & to be near instant in prayer & more abundant in good works."²⁸ Chase's religious faith mandated that he do good works, and within a few years that mandate would draw him into the antislavery movement. And it would be the specific setting of Cincinnati as a border city that provided the catalyst for him to join.

FINANCIAL RUIN AND SPIRITUAL AWAKENING: THE RADICALIZATION OF JOSHUA R. GIDDINGS

Giddings's transformation from conventionally pious young man to antislavery activist was more abrupt than Chase's. Like Chase, he succeeded as a lawyer and became a wealthy man, and like other driven, wealthy men in antebellum America, hoped to get even wealthier through land speculation. After investing in land near Toledo, Giddings became, at least on paper, independently wealthy. He had grown tired of the law, and with his additional wealth from his land investments, felt secure to retire, dissolving his partnership with Benjamin Wade in 1836.²⁹ In 1837, however, the economy crashed and Giddings's land holdings declined dramatically in value, leaving him on the verge of bankruptcy at 42 years of age. Combined with some health problems and an unsuccessful attempt to return to the legal profession, Giddings experienced

²⁷ Blue, *Salmon Chase*, 16-17.

²⁸ Salmon Chase, January 18, 1833, *The Salmon Chase Papers*, vol. 1, *Journals*, 1829-1872, ed. by John Niven, (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1993), 68.

²⁹ Stewart, *Joshua R. Giddings*, 16.

what today we call a nervous breakdown or a spiritual crisis. Giddings called it “hypochondria.”³⁰ Following the advice of his doctor, Giddings sought recovery through travel. First, he traveled to the east, visiting relatives on his mother’s side in New York and Hartford. Still unable to return home for fear that it would only exacerbate his depression and melancholy, he followed a path toward a more meaningful spirituality not uncommon in America at that time (and since), seeking inspiration and solace in nature, and in his case the prairie around Chicago.³¹

Meanwhile, Giddings’s Congregationalist denomination, also the denomination of the Tappans, Weld, and Leavitt, had been undergoing dramatic changes. Along with the Presbyterians, with whom they allied themselves for the purposes of keeping up with westward expansion, they considerably modified Calvinism into a belief system that encouraged believers to pursue their salvation with greater intensity, putting much more agency for salvation in the hands of seekers and believers.³² Both denominations increasingly promoted Baptist and Methodist-style revivalism, reaching its apex in the ministry of Charles Grandison Finney, setting upstate New York ablaze with revivalism in the 1820s and 1830s, and converting the future abolitionist leader Theodore Weld. All of this was controversial among the clergy of both denominations, leading to the Presbyterian split of 1837, with so-called Old School Presbyterians opposing Finney’s theatrical tactics to promote revivalism and the so-called New School promoting them. These controversies and schisms, however, did not stop or significantly dampen the new religious energy. Still striving to build Godly communities, but facing a turbulent, growing society threatening to order and morality on all fronts, the Congregationalists and Presbyterians, both as denominations and individual members, spearheaded the prodigious building of a network of benevolent organizations such as the American Bible Society, American Sunday School Union, and eventually antislavery organizations. The historian Robert H. Abzug described this overall movement as a “radical and angry explosion of revival religion...in turn helped radical reform.”³³ Giddings himself had been affected by revivalism as early as 1831, grumbling in several letters about the opposition to revivalism among conservative Congregationalists.³⁴

³⁰ Julian, 35.

³¹ Catherine Albanese, *Nature Religion in America from the Algonkian Indians to the New Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 120-121.

³² Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 456-457. The alliance was known as the Plan of Union, and it began in 1801.

³³ Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling*, 57, see also chapters 2 and 3 for the larger process.

³⁴ Stewart, *Joshua R. Giddings*, 26.

The revivalism prepared Giddings for his prairie sojourn and his life afterwards. In a letter home dated July 20, 1837, Giddings expressed a measure of what he was seeking. Impressed by the flat, stark Midwestern landscape, he felt “a feeling of solemnity.” Only the birds “appeared to be at home amid this lovely, lonely, this majestic scene.” And he recalled “never sleeping sounder” even though he had none of the luxuries of domesticated life such as “mattress, pillow, nor blanket.”³⁵ Giddings’s biographer James B. Stewart describes his response to his immersion in nature: “He responded in a poetic, nearly animistic fashion to his surroundings, and began submerging his anxieties by seeing similarities between his difficult situation and God’s larger world of nature...”³⁶ He not only regained his composure during his foray into the prairie but came back a changed man who had undergone a “religious transformation,” determined to live a more pious, meaningful life and no longer pursuing material success, as he had done for most of his life.³⁷

Upon his return from the prairie, he threw himself into reforming his community by visiting prison inmates, forming a temperance society and taking the pledge to not drink. He wrote to his daughter urging her to follow his path of helping others.³⁸ Like other religiously inspired reformers in the North at that time, he soon reconsidered his position on slavery. He had been a supporter of colonizing free African-Americans in Africa, a moderate antislavery position widely supported not only by Northerners but even by some Southerners. Colonization avoided the problem of having African-Americans living side by side with whites without threatening the property of slave owners because emancipation would require removing the freedmen and would be voluntary and compensated. Even some of the abolitionists, including Garrison, the Tappans, and Weld, originally supported colonization before rejecting it because of its inherent racism, impracticality, and the fact that African-Americans themselves did not want to move to Africa, a foreign land to most of them. They began supporting stronger antislavery positions, especially the immediate, unconditional emancipation of slaves.³⁹ The American Anti-Slavery Society, the main abolitionist organization supporting immediate and unconditional emancipation of slaves, had made their way to Ohio by the 1830s spearheaded by the talented orator Weld, and found

³⁵ As quoted from Julian, 35--36

³⁶ Stewart, *Joshua R. Giddings*, 24.

³⁷ Stewart, *Abolitionism and the Coming*, 117.

³⁸ Stewart, *Joshua R. Giddings*, 25-26.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 10; Friedman, *Gregarious Saints*, 15.

many willing listeners and supporters in the Western Reserve. Giddings had heard Weld speak as early as 1835 and Weld had even stayed in the Giddings's home. While Weld impressed Giddings, there is little evidence that he converted Giddings to his antislavery position in 1835 since Giddings continued to support colonization, which abolitionists strongly opposed by 1835. It was not until 1838, after his spiritual crisis and his resolution to seek greater piety through actions, did he commit himself to a stronger antislavery position. He soon found opportunities to act on his newly acquired principles when he helped found the abolitionist Ashtabula County Anti-Slavery Society and then ran for the vacancy created when his former friend and partner Elisha Whittlesey retired in 1838 from his seat in the United States Congress. The Whigs dominated in the Western Reserve, enabling Giddings to win the special election in 1838 and then the regular election for a full term in the following year.⁴⁰ He had arrived at the position and place where he would carry on his fight against slavery for the next two decades.

CINCINNATI, GRIEF, AND SALMON CHASE'S IMMERSION INTO ANTISLAVERY ACTIVISM

Chase's transformation into an antislavery activist was more gradual than Giddings's. His active faith continued to grow, and when Episcopal services were not available, he often attended services of other denominations, including the more overtly evangelical ones. While still living in Washington, D.C., Chase attended a Methodist service and left an account showing both fascination and condescension. He first described it "as a scene unlike anything I ever saw, imagined, or heard of." Chase was struck by the preacher's speaking style of gradually increasing the tone and excitement of his sermon, and by his ability to "transition from darkness to light and from deep horror to lofty rapture..." The preacher got the reaction he wanted, as the congregation's "sobs and groans resounded thro' the house..." and "some started wildly from their seats as if to rush to joy or escape from woe..." Chase does not say how he was personally affected by the preaching, although he condescends towards the whole scene, referring to the congregation as "ignorant" and the preacher's style as "plainer than plain."⁴¹ Nothing this emotional and raucous had ever happened in any of the previous services he ever attended, but he is never critical of the service beyond condescension, never assessing it any way as invalid or fraudulent. He had seen

⁴⁰ Stewart, *Abolitionist Politics*, 116; Stewart, *Joshua R. Giddings*, 27-32.

⁴¹ Chase, February 21, 1830, *Journals*, vol. 1, 39-41.

and experienced American revivalism at its rawest and most intense. And while living in Cincinnati, he heard the influential Congregationalist Lyman Beecher preach, describing one of his sermons as “plain and powerful.” The topic of the sermon was the necessity of immediate conversion, a straightforward evangelical topic that Chase listened to “with great attention & hope it will be blessed to my soul.”⁴² The way Chase lived his Episcopalian faith was similar to how Giddings and the evangelically inspired Congregationalist abolitionists lived their Congregationalist faiths. As deep as his religious life was, by the mid-1830s, nevertheless, he still had expressed little interest in the slavery issue.

Had his life gone on without traumatic disruptions, perhaps his intense piety and reform work would have been enough for him. But his life became full of traumatic disruptions, and he would respond to them by seeking deeper, more meaningful religious experiences, finding them in the same place Giddings did, in the antislavery movement. No other event in his life had as dramatic an impact on his spirituality as the death of his beloved first wife, Catherine Garniss. Chase’s family had worried that his burning and relentless ambition to succeed professionally would put his faith and even his health at risk, so they were pleased when he fell in love with and married Catherine on March 4, 1834, with Lyman Beecher officiating. His family hoped that a warm family life would moderate his ambition, but that was not how his life worked out. Chase left on a business trip to Philadelphia in November of 1835, even though Catherine was still sick from complications following the birth of their child. For a while he thought she was getting better, receiving frequent reports on her health during his trip. Then the reports on her health turned bad, and he received news of her death before he returned home, devastating Chase and forcing him to reexamine his faith.⁴³ He blamed himself that she had not professed her religious faith before she died:

What grieves me most is that I was not, while my dear wife lived so faithfully...I have no certain assurance that she died in faith...I have not that clear evidence of her salvation which might reasonably have been expected to result from more faithful and diligent efforts on my part for her conversion.⁴⁴

⁴² Ibid., 75. Lyman Beecher was also one of the early influences on William Lloyd Garrison.

⁴³ Goodwin, 41-42.

⁴⁴ Chase, December 27, 1835, *Journals*, vol. 1, 97.

In a journal entry dated January 17, Chase desired to “humbly submit myself to the Divine will & to magnify the name of the Lord.” On May 30 of 1836, he lamented how little he had served God, and pledged to “bring forth fruit to the glory of thy name...and to serve Thee.” In June of that year he meditated upon Psalm 119, a Psalm noted for urging followers to fulfill God’s law.⁴⁵ These pledges by Chase to glorify God and follow religious laws take on special significance because he was on the verge of joining the antislavery movement, whereas prior to Catherine’s death he had expressed no interest in the abolitionist movement, despite several local controversies raging in Cincinnati in 1835 that Chase had to have been aware of.

One controversy was about the debate over abolitionism then raging at Lyman Beecher’s Lane Seminary, where Theodore Weld led an exodus of students out of the college in response to the faculty’s conservatism on the slavery issue, and the other was about the former slaveowner turned abolitionist James Birney’s intention of publishing an abolitionist newspaper in Cincinnati.⁴⁶ The Birney controversy raged on throughout 1836, and was what pulled Chase into the antislavery movement. Birney began publishing his abolitionist paper, the *Philanthropist*, in Cincinnati in January of 1836, leading to mob violence trying to shut down the paper. The *Philanthropist* attracted a great deal of attention in the virulently anti-abolitionist environment of Cincinnati, including “advice” to stop publishing the journal. The environment of Cincinnati was such that there would be both a person willing to set up an abolitionist newspaper and then a population willing to resort to mob violence to stop it, a combination of circumstances fostered by the diverse population of Ohio.⁴⁷

In July a mob destroyed his printer, but he managed to continue printing and publishing the *Philanthropist*. On July 30, another mob destroyed the printer again, and searched for Birney intending to do him harm, as anti-abolitionist mobs had been doing to abolitionists throughout the country. The next night another mob sought out Birney and tried to enter the house they believed he was in, but were instead met by Chase who refused to let them in. When the mob threatened Chase, he recalled telling them he was easy to find. Chase was at that time a physically imposing young man in his late twenties. Showing personal courage and risking his health and possibly his life was an important step for Chase on his journey to becoming an antislavery activist. From this

⁴⁵ Ibid, 107, 125, 126.

⁴⁶ Niven, *Salmon Chase*, 44-46; Aron, *Queen City*, 300-312. These circumstances were not unique to Cincinnati.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

point forward, Chase considered himself part of the antislavery cause. To him at that time, the mob violence and threats to Americans' First Amendment rights were more alarming than slavery itself, but he understood that the institution of slavery led to the break downs of "law and order" he witnessed on the streets of Cincinnati, and most importantly, violated his religious views.⁴⁸ Several days later Chase expressed his opinions of the series of events in an article to the *Cincinnati Gazette*. Chase wrote that while he opposed many of the actions of the abolitionists, he thought that their "evils" were light compared to the mob's actions of threatening people and destroying property, later claiming that from this point forward he was a decided opponent of slavery and would even accept the label of abolitionist if anyone chose to call him that.⁴⁹ In a journal entry of December 27, 1836, he wrote about his own "sinfulness and destitution," hoping that God would enable him to have "greater love for others that I might pray for them more heartily."⁵⁰ Considering his newly found interest in the antislavery movement, Chase must have been considering slaves when he wrote "greater love for others."

Living in Cincinnati also brought Chase in contact with slavery in the form of the fugitive slave issue. Just across the Ohio River from Cincinnati was Kentucky, a slave state. Fugitive slaves often made their way through Cincinnati, pursued by their owners or their agents trying to recapture them. Chase represented some of the fugitive slaves and the whites assisting them, and soon established a reputation as one of the top lawyers defending fugitive slaves. One of Chase's most well-known and important fugitive slave cases involved Birney himself. Birney sought out Chase to represent a fugitive slave named Matilda who had been working for Birney as a maid when slave catchers caught up with her. Even though he often lost these cases—Matilda, for example, was returned to slavery—his arguments were sometimes published and became widely known and circulated, contributing to the larger legal fight to de-nationalize slavery.⁵¹ Chase also had political ambitions, and those ambitions would soon involve him more deeply in the fight against slavery.

⁴⁸ Ibid; Blue, *Salmon Chase*, 30-31.

⁴⁹ Blue, 30; Chase, Letter to the *Cincinnati Gazette*, August 4, 1836, *Correspondence, 1823-1857* vol. 2, 62-63.

⁵⁰ Chase, December 27, 1835, *Journals*, vol. 1, 97.

⁵¹ Oakes, *Freedom National*, 16-17.

JOSHUA R. GIDDINGS'S CRUSADE AGAINST THE SLAVE POWER

Giddings came to Congress prepared to work against slavery as well as to try to advance the Whig agenda. By the end of his first few years in Congress, Giddings had at times acted like a radical opponent of slavery, quickly throwing himself into the middle of the storm of controversy, but other times he acted like a loyal Whig willing to work with slave owning members of his party. Ohio provided an ideal setting for his unique political career, not only because of the antislavery views prevalent in the Western Reserve but also because of a relatively strong abolitionist presence compared to other western states, that on some occasions inspired and worked with Giddings but at other times strongly criticized him, but also gave him cover to hold and espouse radical positions. He confused and often enraged both antislavery activists and Whigs as he went back forth between acting like a radical antislavery activist and a loyal Whig, but he never saw the contradictions, believing the Whig economic agenda to be an effective weapon against slavery. Early in his time in Washington, D.C., he witnessed slavery firsthand and the haughty, aggressive behavior and demeanor of proslavery congressmen, strengthening his resolve to work against slavery.

On January 30, 1839, in Washington, D.C., he watched a group of slaves chained together, likely being transported as part of the slave trade. In his journal, Giddings noted how the chained slaves were accompanied by a “being in the shape of a man on horseback, with a large whip with which he chastised those who...were tardy in their movements.” Especially galling was this happened “in public view of all who happened to be so situated as to see the barbarous spectacle.”⁵² In a journal entry soon after arriving in Washington, he described the Southern congressmen as “self-important...haughty...and overbearing.” He lamented that “no Northern man dares fearlessly and boldly declare his abhorrence of slavery and the slave trade.” He then resolved not to back down: “This kind of fear I had never experienced, nor shall I commit to it now.”⁵³ Giddings prepared to do his “political duty and leave the consequences to God...,” who would “manifestly” show his “wisdom... in any subject brought before the congress.”⁵⁴ Immediately after witnessing the slave coffle, he conferred with Rep. William Slade from Vermont, one of the few explicitly antislavery congressmen and a close associate of John Quincy Adams. They discussed

⁵² As quoted in Julian, 64.

⁵³ Ibid., 52.

⁵⁴ As quoted in Stewart, *Abolitionist Politics*, 116.

how to best advance the antislavery agenda. Giddings also sent out a letter to Gamaliel Bailey, an Ohio abolitionist and the current editor of the *Philanthropist*, the abolitionist journal that Chase had defended in Cincinnati. Bailey wrote back, promising that abolitionists would help him, but also pleading for action, and for Giddings to “do something...make a beginning.”⁵⁵ This was one of many instances of Giddings working with abolitionists. And sure enough, Giddings did “do something.”

Faced with the notorious “Gag Rule” that tabled all antislavery petitions and often shut down any consideration of slavery in Congress, Giddings immediately tried to find ways around it, soon joining forces with John Quincy Adams and antislavery Whigs in a sustained campaign to overturn the Gag Rule. On February 13, 1839, Giddings dove headlong into the antislavery fight when he used a bill trying to appropriate money for building a bridge from Washington, D.C. across the Potomac as an excuse to excoriate the slave trade, arguing that such a bridge would help the domestic slave trade by providing an easy route into and out of Washington, D.C. even though a large part of the nation bitterly opposed the slave trade, and could not even petition against it due to the Gag Rule. Claiming to be only against the slave trade, Giddings was met by insults and threats, a pattern that would repeat itself many times. Even his own Whig party criticized him for raising the issue. It took an hour to restore calm, and Giddings was declared out of order.⁵⁶ This newly arrived congressman from Ohio helped create the storm of controversy over slavery and put himself in the eye of that storm, where he remained throughout his career. His son-in-law and future fellow antislavery Congressman George Julian from Indiana summed up the essence of Giddings’s challenge when he first arrived in Congress:

The church had joined hands with the state in the new trinity of the nation’s faith...to oppose it was to risk mobs...give up reputation...and all the prizes of life...which worldly ambition could covet. It was to take up the heaviest cross yet fashioned this century as the test of Christian character and heroism.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Stewart, *Giddings*, 41.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁷ Julian, *Life*, 44.

And yet, after this initial foray into agitating on the slavery issue, he acted like a good Whig willing to compromise even on slavery throughout the campaign of 1840, fully supporting William Henry Harrison for the presidency and voting for the slaveholder Robert M.T. Hunter for Speaker.⁵⁸ In his correspondences with abolitionist leaders, Giddings received contradictory advice about Harrison's antislavery potential, with Bailey writing "a tolerably good case could be made for the general..." While hardly a ringing endorsement, it does show abolitionists had at least some hope Harrison would be responsive to some of their policy proposals, such as abolishing slavery in D.C. Lewis Tappan, on the other hand, wrote Giddings that Harrison was as bad as possible on the slavery issue.⁵⁹ The point is that for antislavery politicians such as Giddings, there was no clear, obvious path to achieving his objectives because political antislavery activism was new and did not have any precedents to work from.

So why would someone so adamantly opposed to slavery remain with a political party that generally supported it, or at least accepted it? Giddings believed that the Whigs were far more righteous than the Democrats and in essence an antislavery party, claiming that the Whig program of economic development consisting of policies such as a national bank, protective tariffs, and federally funded and planned internal improvements would debilitate slavery because it would reduce the ignorance of the population on which slavery was based. As he wrote in an editorial, slave owning interests were "jealous of the progress of knowledge which teaches men to know the rights God has given them."⁶⁰ The Democrats were clearly the stronger supporters of slavery, pursuing the expansion of slavery into Texas and beyond and sponsored and supported the hated Gag Rule. Like most parties in American political history, however, the Whigs were an unwieldy coalition that had limited ideological consistency, trying to appeal to both enemies of slavery and some slave owners at the same time. And since many antislavery people were in the Whig party, a strong antislavery advocate like Giddings could only help that wing of the Whig party. Giddings posed a challenge to the Whig leadership. On the one hand, his ferocious denunciations of slavery and his support of violence by slaves trying to free themselves frightened and alienated slave owners. On the other hand, those same actions and sentiments earned him and

⁵⁸ Stewart, *Giddings*, 51-52.

⁵⁹ As quoted and cited in Julian, 88-92.

⁶⁰ Stewart, *Abolitionist Politics*, 122. Another example of just how close Giddings was to the abolitionist position is that he urged his children to become abolitionists, succeeding with several of them.

their party support among some Northern opponents of slavery. He was trying to stake a claim in the Whig party for his position on slavery and hold on to it.

In 1840, however, he faced a new political threat, not from conservative Whigs or Democrats but from an abolitionist third party, the Liberty Party, formed by a group of mainly upstate New York abolitionists who realized the Garrisonian approach of moral suasion and staying out of politics was not working. The creation of the Liberty Party led to a major schism in the abolitionist movement over whether or not abolitionists should engage in politics.⁶¹ The Liberty Party was relatively strong in Ohio due to the widespread political participation and the presence of abolitionists and other opponents of slavery.⁶² Giddings could have joined the Liberty Party but he did not think there were enough of them to make an impact in Ohio or American politics, and thought the cause of antislavery could be better served by remaining with the Whig party and supporting its economic agenda. Giddings's district, however, was one of the most antislavery in the nation, so he now faced a threat from the more extreme antislavery side. Giddings became the target of scathing denunciations from the Liberty press, especially throughout 1840 when he campaigned vigorously for Harrison and the Whigs. The Liberty Party presidential nominee, James Birney (the same man Chase had defended in Cincinnati), had considerable support in Giddings's district, and for several election cycles Giddings had to fight off political and ideological challenges from the Liberty Party abolitionists. By opposing the Liberty Party, Giddings gained support from the Garrisonians, both nationally and the Garrisonian organization in Ohio, the Ohio American Antislavery Society, and he hosted and even appeared at rallies with Garrisonians.⁶³ The irony is that Giddings's approach to fighting slavery aligned more with the Liberty Party's, which also believed in denationalizing slavery through the political process.

After the 1840 elections, Giddings got back to fighting slavery. Early in the 1841 session Giddings and his small group of antislavery congressmen met to strategize on how to overthrow the Gag Rule, realizing they could introduce petitions and make antislavery speeches as a collateral matter whenever the issue at hand intersected with slavery in any way, like he had done in 1839. In 1841 he found another opportunity to do so, this time by denouncing the Second Seminole War, a war Giddings accused the national government of fighting only to help slaveowners

⁶¹ Sewell, *Ballots for Freedom*, 90.

⁶² Johnson, *Liberty Party*, 177.

⁶³ Douglas A. Gamble, "Joshua Giddings and the Ohio Abolitionists: A Study in Radical Politics" *Ohio History* Winter 1979 (88), 42.

recapture runaway slaves. On February 9, 1841, he clearly stated his position in a speech denouncing the Seminole War:

I hold...if the slaves of Georgia...leave their masters and go among the Indians, the federal government has no constitutional power to employ the army for their recapture...slavery is a state institution, with which this government cannot rightfully interfere, either to sustain it or abolish it.⁶⁴

Using even more scathing language, he accused the United States government of turning the American army into “slave catcher[s], the most degraded class of human beings who disgrace that slave cursed region.”⁶⁵ Southern congressmen repeatedly interrupted his speech with threatening language and at least in one case physically threatening him, while earning the admiration of the abolitionist William Jay.⁶⁶

In addition to a finding a way around the Gag Rule, the Seminole War helped Giddings formulate his precise position on slavery. As much as he hated slavery, he nevertheless publicly denied being an abolitionist, and instead took a position that slavery was entirely a state affair and that the Tenth Amendment denied Congress “any legislative power” over slavery where it existed, claiming that this position was in line with the strong states’ rights position of Southern slave owners. An example of his policy to denationalize slavery was to advocate for the abolishment of slavery and the slave trade in Washington, D.C., an area under federal jurisdiction.⁶⁷ His speech further cemented his reputation as one of the congressional leaders in the fight against slavery and helped inflame American politics.⁶⁸

Giddings continued to make national news from his unofficial position as the leader of antislavery congressmen, continuing to support Adams’s efforts to overturn the Gag rule by finding more ways to introduce the topic slavery collaterally, such as the *Creole* case. The *Creole*

⁶⁴ Joshua Giddings, *Speeches* (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1853), 6.

⁶⁵ As quoted in Julian, 94.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 93-98, 106.

⁶⁷ Stewart, *Abolitionist Politics*, 122, 125. Giddings lays out his arguments regarding slavery in the *Pacificus* essays, originally published in *The Western Reserve Chronicle* after the election of 1842, and they were later reprinted in Julian, 415-462.

⁶⁸ Gamble, “Joshua Giddings,” 38; Robert Ludlum, “Joshua Giddings, Radical” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 23 (June 1936): 55.

was a ship transporting slaves from Virginia to New Orleans in 1841, during which the slaves rebelled and took over the ship and landed it in the British West Indies, where they were immediately free according to British law. The American government, on behalf of the slave owners who had lost their “property” in the rebellion, lobbied the British government to compensate the slave owners, clearly violating Giddings’s position that the federal government should not help in any way to uphold slavery. In another example of Giddings working with the abolitionists, his group enlisted the support of Theodore Weld to research the *Creole* case and write a powerful denunciation of how the American government was handling it, basing it on the argument slavery could only be upheld by local jurisdictions since it was against the natural law at the heart of the American government. Giddings presented Weld’s argument to Congress on March 21, 1842, making even more radical antislavery statements than he had before, saying the slaves had and have the right to rebel violently against their white captors: “I suppose that at no moment of time from their first seizure in Africa until their restoration of freedom, were they under any moral obligation to obey their oppressors...” Giddings went on to say that if the slaves had any opportunity to free themselves “it would have been just and right for them to do so at any expense of life and treasure to those who opposed their freedom.”⁶⁹ Congress censured Giddings for his remarks on the *Creole* case. He then resigned but was then re-elected in a landslide, running on a platform that highlighted his remarks about the *Creole* case. The Western Reserve in Ohio, which was sympathetic to abolitionism due to the work several years earlier by Theodore Weld, was one of the few places in the nation a politician so critical of slavery could get re-elected after being censored for inflammatory antislavery statements.⁷⁰ Giddings’s actions during the *Creole* case made him a hero to antislavery activists, including earning praise from Garrison’s own *Liberator*.⁷¹ He was not, however, done being a Whig.

Giddings’s support for Henry Clay for the presidency in 1844 even drew criticism from his strongest supporter, his son-in-law and admiring biographer George Julian. Clay initially opposed the annexation of Texas. Opponents of slavery bitterly opposed the annexation of Texas because it would add at least one more slave state to the union and give the lie to any hope that slavery was being contained. However, Clay soon qualified his position, saying he would support

⁶⁹ Giddings, *Speeches*, 24.

⁷⁰ Stewart, *Joshua R. Giddings*, 76; James M. McPherson, “The Fight against the Gag Rule: Joshua Leavitt and the Antislavery Insurgency in the Whig Party, 1839-1843,” *Journal of Negro History* 48 (July 1963), 193.

⁷¹ Gamble, “Joshua Giddings,” 41.

annexation if it could be accomplished “honorably,” presumably meaning without war or hostilities with Mexico. Annexation, regardless of how it was accomplished, meant expansion of slavery, an outcome someone with Giddings’s views should not have tolerated. Clay’s ability to appear supportive of clashing political positions deceived Giddings. In an April 28 letter to his wife, Joshua felt “flattered” by Clay’s attention and his supposed support for Giddings’s position on slavery. Giddings wrote that Clay “complimented me on the course I had taken in public life, and declared my views to be correct.”⁷² Even George Julian thought Giddings was taken in by Clay, perhaps because of his personal magnetism or near legendary status among Whigs. Giddings’s belief that the Whig party could serve as an effective check against the extreme, proslavery forces died hard, but it would die.⁷³

Giddings continued to work against slavery after the 1844 election, helping to overthrow the Gag Rule in December of 1844 and diving headlong into trying to stop the annexation of Texas.⁷⁴ In January 1845, he argued that the Texans deserved no help from the rest of the United States against the threat posed by Mexico because the Texans treated their slaves far worse than anything the Mexicans had done or could do to the Texans. He accused the cotton planters of purposefully working their slaves to death in seven years because the “driver’s lash impels them to excessive effort, and really causes their death as much as the knife or pistol of the murderer causes the death of his victim.” He went on to compare the slave owner to the pirate, with the former finding it in his interest to keep his captives alive seven years whereas the pirate only for a few hours. And as was often the case with his speeches, he wrapped it up with God’s impending judgment: “With this impression, I feel as confident that chastisement and retribution for the offenses we have committed against the down trodden sons of Africa, await this people, as I do that justice controls the destinies of nations or guides the power of omnipotence.”⁷⁵

He was one of fourteen Whigs to vote against the declaration of war against Mexico, criticizing the process of the declaration of war for not allowing discussion of the matter. He even

⁷² As quoted in Julian, *Life*, 158.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 168. James Stewart argues that Giddings remained a Whig for as long as he did because of a combination of political ambition, love or need for the political combat he was constantly involved in, and for the idealistic reasons summarized above.

⁷⁴ Stewart, *Joshua R. Giddings*, 103.

⁷⁵ As quoted in Julian, 181-182.

wrote an accompanying editorial saying the Union should be dissolved because of the unconstitutional nature of the war.⁷⁶ The Mexican-American War further inflamed sectional antagonism, not only because the war consummated the annexation of a slave state, Texas, but also created the possibility of even more slave territory added to the nation from land that could be taken from Mexico. During the sectional antagonism that erupted during the Mexican-American War, Giddings finally would have enough of the Whigs and take principled stands leading to the fragmentation of his Whig Party, constituting “the most significant role of his political career.”⁷⁷ During 1848, Giddings’s wing of the Whig Party suffered two significant losses as a slaveholder, Zachary Taylor, was nominated for President and a pro-war and pro-Southern Massachusetts Whig, Robert Winthrop, was elected Speaker of the House. Giddings tried to force Winthrop to support several antislavery positions, including trying to end the war, bringing bills to the floor of the House calling for the abolition of slavery in D.C. and repealing the 1793 fugitive slave law. After Winthrop refused these demands, Giddings did not vote for Winthrop, who won the speakership anyway by one vote. Once again, Giddings found himself the target of scathing criticism by the Whig press, to which he responded using his own press outlets. In a September 7, 1847 letter to Horace Greeley, he wrote he would rather see the Whigs disband than support the war. Electing a Whig speaker was of no importance if they did not maintain “their integrity” and advocate for “great and holy principles.”⁷⁸ Giddings spent the first part of 1848 doing all he could to prevent Taylor from getting the presidential nomination, supporting Ohio Whig, future Republican and Dred Scott dissenter John McLean for the nomination. Still hoping the Whigs would come to their senses, however naïve that seemed to his contemporaries and to modern historians, he agitated as hard as ever against slavery, speaking not only in his native Ohio but also in Massachusetts, where he had become a hero to antislavery people.⁷⁹ While he failed to sway the Whigs from their conservative course, he did get many Liberty Party abolitionists, including Henry Stanton and Joshua Leavitt, to reconsider him as a legitimate antislavery advocate.

⁷⁶ Stewart, *Life*, 114, 115-116; Julian, 192, 196.

⁷⁷ Stewart, 123.

⁷⁸ Julian, 216. Winthrop and Giddings would then get involved in a bitter battle in the press over Giddings’ accusation that Winthrop had caucused the Whigs to support the war. Winthrop vehemently denied the charge. See Stewart, 143-44 for more details about this battle.

⁷⁹ Stewart, 154-155.

Opponents of slavery began to think about uniting the various antislavery political groups, from the antislavery Whigs like Giddings, the Liberty Party supporters, and a faction of northern Democrats increasingly opposed to the extension of slavery. While trying to unite the Whig Party, Giddings “unwittingly” helped “galvanize the third-party movement.”⁸⁰ When the Whigs nominated Zachary Taylor in its June convention in Philadelphia, Giddings and other antislavery Whigs bolted and joined the quest to create a new antislavery party, the Free-Soil Party, which its supporters hoped would have greater appeal than the Liberty Party.

Giddings’s religious beliefs continued to change throughout his life. In addition to his immersion into nature religion prior to his awakening in 1837, he dabbled in Spiritualism beginning in 1852, trying to get over the deaths of family members and close friends, including his mother and John Quincy Adams. He no longer feared death and increasingly believed God was all-loving and not at all vengeful, a far cry from the Calvinist deity of his earlier life.⁸¹ Following in the path of some of the abolitionists, he lost respect for Christian denominations in antebellum America because of their tolerance, as he saw it, for slavery. He stated some of his new religious beliefs in a letter to the *Anti-Slavery Standard*. For example, he accused the Presbyterians of “open and undisguised infidelity” for their indifference to slavery considered it “an absurdity... to be a Presbyterian who barter his fellow man for gold.”⁸² He even criticized the early Protestant reformers such as Luther and Calvin for their inability or unwillingness to create ideals and teachings that would actually liberate mankind. Crediting the Protestant reformers with at least getting rid of “some of the prominent errors of the church,” he then pointed out how they still “held to the divine right of kings to...rule over their fellow man” and to “establish privileges for one class and hold heavy burdens on the other.”⁸³ He hoped a new version of Christianity would develop that “should erect the standard of a higher, purer justice, of God; a theology in harmony with the teachings of the gospel...”⁸⁴ Sectarian differences over theology became at best impotent and useless and at worst fetters preventing people from becoming true Christians devoted to the brotherhood of humanity. His son-in-law George Julian summed up not only this phase of Giddings’s spiritual development but also the essence of it since his reawakening in

⁸⁰ Ibid., 153-55.

⁸¹ Ibid., 208-209,

⁸² Julian, 401.

⁸³ As quoted in Julian, 400.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 401

1838: “In laboring for the emancipation of the slave, Giddings emancipated himself from the bondage of sectarian theology.”⁸⁵ Giddings long believed politics and religion were intertwined, and he provided a full articulation of this view towards the end of his congressional career. In February of 1858, an elderly Giddings gave a speech in Congress that was later published, entitled *American Infidelity*, laying out how much his sense of religion had merged with his antislavery politics.

The American infidels, of course, were the slave owners and their supporters in both the North and the South. Giddings argued that the national debate boiled down to a simple dichotomy. Americans opposing slavery were upholding “religious truths” while those supporting slavery were violating “religious truths,” truths stated clearly in one of the core phrases of the Declaration of Independence, “that all men are endowed by their creator with inherent, equal, and inalienable rights.”⁸⁶ The United States was founded “on religious truths, and it was thus far emphatically a religious government.” Slavery clearly violated the God-given rights granted to all people in the Declaration, and all supporters of slavery, which he implied was the Democratic party, “deny that the right to live, to protect life, and to attain moral elevation and happiness, is derived from Heaven...” The defenders of slavery “claim unlimited sovereignty over human Governments over human rights,” the essence of tyranny. He then went on to show the brutality of slavery, including how it literally worked people to death and paralyzed “the soul” by denying slaves the most basic right to pursue a proper religious life. Giddings spelled out, once again, that Christianity and the fight against slavery had become one and the same: “The great heart of Christendom now beats in sympathy with the enslaved of this land.”⁸⁷ Nor was this basic struggle unique to the United States, as he placed the efforts to end serfdom in Russia and the eventual abolishment of slavery in the British and French West Indies as part of the same struggle to live up to the principles of Christianity. For much of its history, the United States was moving away from the principles of Christianity as Northerners “became unwilling to offend those who had embraced this infidelity.” Finally, during the 1856 Republican national convention in Philadelphia, did a group of Americans stand up and resolve to set itself on the path of restoring true

⁸⁵ Ibid., 403.

⁸⁶ Joshua Giddings, *The Conflict Between Religious Truths and American Infidelity: Speech of Mr. Giddings of Ohio, upon the Issues Pending Before the American People in Regard to Freedom and Slavery* (Washington D.C.: Buell & Blanchard, Printers, 1858), 1.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 2-6.

Christianity to the Republic. He did not understate the significance of the Republican party: “That day witnessed the dawning of a reformation more deep, more radical, more important in its religious, moral, its social and political effects upon mankind, than has occurred since the sixteenth century.... the first to proclaim the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man.”⁸⁸ With this published speech, Giddings merged two of his guiding principles: the sacredness of the fight against slavery and the sacredness American politics established by the Founders that the Republican Party had restored. And yet, Giddings still did not call himself an abolitionist and the Republican Party was not an abolitionist party. Merely denationalizing slavery was enough to make the nation once again Godly because denationalizing slavery would lead to its extinction.⁸⁹ Giddings lived until 1864, long enough to see the Civil War transformed into a war to abolish slavery. He was finally denied a seat in Congress in 1859 when passed over by the Republican nominating convention after over twenty years of nearly continuous service in Congress. He was too closely associated with radical antislavery views for the Republicans at that time who were trying to appear as moderate as possible.⁹⁰ The Republican Party, however, had not forgotten all that Giddings had done to pave the way for their success, and he was appointed as Consul General to Canada by Abraham Lincoln. Giddings’s fellow antislavery activist Salmon Chase never abandoned his orthodox Christian views but those views would continue to inspire his struggle against slavery. While he would go on to achieve even greater political success than Giddings, his political success originated in his activities organizing and promoting the Liberty Party in Ohio.

SALMON P. CHASE’S RELIGION AND THE MAINSTREAMING OF ANTISLAVERY POLITICS

Salmon P. Chase did not make as many explicit connections between his opposition to slavery and his religion as did Giddings, nor did he use as often the millennialist-tinged, perfectionist language about abolishing slavery that Giddings and many of the abolitionists used. There are, however, three ways to show Chase’s religion motivated his antislavery activities. First,

⁸⁸ Ibid., 7.

⁸⁹ Not even all Republicans were in favor of de-nationalizing slavery in the sense Giddings wanted to. For example, Lincoln would have been willing to enforce the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act.

⁹⁰ Stewart, *Joshua Giddings*, 259-260.

Chase's faith became stronger as he went through life, beginning with strong childhood influences, deepened by revivalism, immersion into reform activities, and finally his antislavery activism, as shown in his journal and in his letters. He was so intensely religious that religion influenced everything he did that had a clear moral dimension. Second, his plunge into antislavery activism occurred simultaneously as he experienced spiritual crises brought on by the traumatizing impact of the deaths of all three of his wives and several daughters, beginning in the 1830s and continuing through the 1840s. The timing itself shows a connection. And finally, he made the connection explicit enough to leave no doubt in his writings and speeches.

In addition to his first wife's death in 1835, more personal tragedies haunted Chase as he struggled with religion and continued to get more involved in the antislavery movement. He remarried in 1839 to Eliza Ann Smith. Within three months, however, his daughter with his first wife died. In a letter to James Birney he expressed his grief: "You lost a most interesting child but had another left; I have lost my only one—her upon whom all my affections and hopes centered."⁹¹ He had three daughters with his second wife, but two of them died within a year of their birth.⁹² And then Eliza died in 1845. He married a third woman, Belle Ludlow, but she too died prematurely, in 1852. He did not remarry again. Even during an era when disease took far greater percentage of young lives than today, Chase's experiences were horrific and undoubtedly took a toll on him. It is no wonder that he struggled with religion, as he expressed repeatedly in his journal. In 1840 he even expressed dissatisfaction with his denomination for its acquiescence to slavery. On a Sunday when he did not attend church because there was no place "for my horses," he further explained his absence "because I feel doubtful as to my duty arising from the relation of the Church to Slavery...I cannot doubt that it is wrong for the church to maintain an indifferent if not hostile attitude to the cause of the enslaved..."⁹³ Several months later he thought himself "insensible in private prayer and not much moved at family devotions...loaded with benefits by a gracious father and rendering such poor returns." On May 23, 1840, he found himself bored by the preacher: "The sermon was dull, or I was sleepy."⁹⁴ In an August entry, he once again found

⁹¹ Chase, letter to James Birney, February 7, 1840, *Correspondence*, vol. 2, 67.

⁹² James P. McClure, Peg A. Lamphier, and Erika M. Kreger, eds., "*Spur up your Pegasus*": *Family Letters of Salmon, Kate, and Nettie Chase* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2009), 1-2.

⁹³ Chase, February 22, 1846, *Journals*, 178.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 121, 123.

family prayers “cold and informal,” and later admitted “Nothing saves me from absolute despair...but that the certainty of atonement is infinite, and that the Holy Spirit is pledged to those who ask.”⁹⁵ During the 1840s, he sought to save himself from “absolute despair” and acquire “a better and holier spirit” by getting increasingly involved in the antislavery movement, no longer as a lawyer but also as a political organizer and eventually by holding major political offices.

Chase had been sympathetic to the Whig Party during the 1830s, helping to organize it in Cincinnati.⁹⁶ Like Giddings, he thought that the Whig Party had a greater chance to be an anti-slavery party than the Democrats. In 1840, however, a new political possibility emerged when a group of abolitionists dissatisfied with the progress of moral suasion, James Birney among them, decided to form the Liberty Party, the same Liberty Party Giddings refused to join and had to contend with in his antislavery district.⁹⁷ When the Liberty Party appeared in 1840, Chase at first thought it too small to do anything substantial to weaken slavery, an opinion shared by Giddings.⁹⁸ His allegiance to the Whigs, however, eroded over the next year and a half, with the ascension to the presidency of the Virginian slave owner John Tyler after William Henry Harrison’s unexpected death in 1841. He also changed his thinking on economic policies, believing the Democrats’ Independent Treasury proposal a wise policy, and he increasingly favored other Democratic economic policies over Whig policies. Further racial violence in Cincinnati during the summer of 1841 and the Whigs’ rejection of Chase as a candidate to the State Senate due to his antislavery reputation after he had been defeated for reelection to the City Council convinced him to make the leap and support the Liberty Party, which he first announced at a statewide convention in December of 1841. Chase would go on to become a leader if not *the* leader of the Ohio Liberty Party. Due to the propensity of Ohioans to become politically involved and the relatively high presence of antislavery sentiment in Ohio, the Liberty Party did reasonably well in his state, fueling Chase’s rise in both regional and national prestige.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ As quoted in Robert Warden, *An Account of the Private Life and Public Service of Salmon Chase* (Cincinnati: Wiltach, Baldwin, & Co., 1873), 291.

⁹⁶ Blue, 40-41.

⁹⁷ James Stewart, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), 95-96. Some abolitionists also noted that debates over slavery had entered American politics, due in large parts to the efforts of Joshua Giddings in the United States House of Representatives.

⁹⁸ Vernon L. Volpe, *Forlorn Hope of Freedom: The Liberty Party in the Old Northwest, 1838-1848* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1990), 48.

⁹⁹ Blue, 43-46; Volpe, 54.

From the beginning of Chase's involvement in the Liberty Party, he sought to widen its appeal by supporting the denationalization of slavery rather than explicitly calling for the abolition of slavery and by trying to replace his former client, James Birney, at the top of the ticket with a candidate with greater name recognition and more appeal. He even wrote to Birney, urging him to step aside by writing "no one ... would not cheerfully vote for you...but all regard your election... as impractical."¹⁰⁰ Chase also wanted to emphasize the constitutional arguments against slavery whereas the eastern Liberty men had emphasized religious and Biblical criticisms of slavery. That did not mean, however, that religious reasons were not Chase's inspiration for opposing slavery. He thought that emphasizing the constitutional arguments, which he also believed, would be more effective in gaining supporters for the party.¹⁰¹ Religion, after all, inspired the Liberty Party, as it did much of the antislavery movement.¹⁰² For the same reason of hoping to widen their appeal, he wanted the Liberty Party to avoid labelling itself "abolitionist" because that term alienated much of the population, not only Southerners but Northerners as well. He wrote his friend Charles Cleveland: "It [abolitionism] dare not show itself principally because it is believed to be unpopular, but partly because Ministers and Party leaders denounce abolitionism." Another criticism and stumbling block to the success of the Liberty Party was that their critics accused them of blending Church and State, and once again he tried to avoid the pitfall, as he wrote to Gerrit Smith: "...most of us believe, in fact, that political bodies have nothing to do with ecclesiastical organization...to avoid giving any occasion of this cry... our political conventions carefully refrained from any expression ...in relation to church govt. and discipline." He purposefully kept as much religious rhetoric as he could possibly influence out of the Liberty Party, but that does not mean he cared any less about religion.¹⁰³ His insight was that he saw the potential for a larger antislavery movement because he correctly observed that despite the widespread and strong anti-abolitionism present in Ohio, "strange as it may seem there is a large amount of genuine antislavery feeling in this city....," referring to Cincinnati.¹⁰⁴ To what extent that was true in 1841 is hard to assess, but it would become truer and truer throughout the North

¹⁰⁰ Chase to James Birney, January 25, 1842, *Correspondence*, vol. 2, 84-85.

¹⁰¹ Foner, *Free Labor*, 78

¹⁰² Johnson, *Liberty Party*, 226.

¹⁰³ Chase to Gerrit Smith, May 14, 1842, *Correspondence*, vol. 2, 96-97.

¹⁰⁴ Chase to Charles Cleveland, *Ibid.*, October 22, 1841, 79-81.

over the next two decades. From the beginning of his political antislavery activities, Chase envisioned the arguments and strategy that would eventually bring down slavery in the United States. He understood the importance of free labor to Northerners and he conceptualized slave labor as being antagonistic to it. Constitutional and legal arguments against slavery, some of which he advanced while serving as a lawyer for fugitive slaves and those accused of aiding them, would resonate throughout Northern society. He thought a considerable number of Northerners would soon agree with him that slavery was “threatening to nullify and overshadow” all that was worthwhile and positive in the American government. Like Giddings, he thought denationalizing slavery would leave it “stripped of her protective veil, to be exposed in all her monstrous deformity, and to perish amid destruction of them whom she has so long deluded and betrayed.”¹⁰⁵ Chase forecasted the appeal of the Republican Party over a decade before its formation. His original religious motivations, however, remained at the heart of his antislavery thought and actions.

Two of Chase’s nineteenth century biographers, Jacob Schuckers and Albert Hart Bushnell, believed Chase’s religion accounted for his antislavery activism. Schuckers, who personally knew Chase, wrote “upon faith in Almighty God and a belief in accountability in another world for acts done in this, and those other beliefs which Protestant Christians hold to be fundamental, Chase founded the maxims and conduct of his life.”¹⁰⁶ Albert Bushnell Hart wrote the following: “The testimony of those who came closest to him is that he took up the antislavery cause because he felt it to be a religious duty because he believed slavery to be a dreadful wrong.”¹⁰⁷ Even though neither book emphasizes Chase’s religion, both authors explicitly state they thought religion was the heart of Chase’s motivations for his antislavery activism.

Chase’s own words, both private and public, further demonstrate his belief in the sacredness of the cause. After pining over his dead daughter Katherine, he criticized himself for being “deficient in charity and brotherly kindness” and for not doing enough to help “the poor and distressed...” and to have “a better and holier spirit.” He wrote this in December of 1841, just as his

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.; Peter Walker, *Moral Choices: Memory, Desire, and Imagination in Nineteenth Century America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 309-310. Perhaps Giddings remained with the Whig party six years longer than Chase because Giddings still had his Congressional seat, which provided him with a good platform to advance his views.

¹⁰⁶ Jacob Schuckers, *The Life of Salmon P. Chase: United States Senator and Governor of Ohio* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1874), 593, <https://bit.ly/2YxeJFe>.

¹⁰⁷ Albert Bushnell Hart, *Salmon Portland Chase* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1899), 53, <https://bit.ly/2WJjbQY>.

activities with the Liberty Party were getting started, so he had to have been referring primarily to slaves as the “poor and distressed.”¹⁰⁸ Writing to Smith, he affirmed his commitment to anti-slavery principles by saying that the Democrats and Whigs needed to become sufficiently anti-slavery before they could align: “We shall be glad when Whigs and Democrats become Liberty men. But Mahomet must come to the mountain—the mountain cannot possibly come to Mahomet...for the mountain is planted by the Almighty.”¹⁰⁹ Chase was saying that the antislavery cause was planted by “the Almighty.” During an address at a Liberty Party convention in Philadelphia during February of 1844, Chase made these positions clear: “Profoundly do we revere the maxims of true Democracy; they are identical with those of true Christianity, in relation to the rights and duties of citizens.” Later in the address he said what he hoped would happen to slavery: “Regarding, as we do, the question of slavery as the paramount question of our day and nation, to give it our cordial and vigorous support, until slavery shall be no more.”¹¹⁰ In an 1849 speech, he claimed that the newly formed Free Soil Party was the only national party, accusing the Democrats and the Whigs of being split along sectional lines. He said that Free Soil men “must stand up erect in the dignity which God has given him and say my creed is the Declaration of Independence” and that regardless of where he stood in the United States, “no slave must stand upon that Holy ground.”¹¹¹ Years later, in 1864, when slavery was on the verge of being abolished, he gave a speech comparing Abraham Lincoln to a ship captain where he “studied the political charts and felt the pulse of the people...Captain Lincoln told them to set the main sail Emancipation...the old ship dashed into the water as if she would go under but then there was faith in God that kept her afloat.”¹¹² Chase hated slavery because it violated Christian ideals and he used his considerable talents to end it, just like the abolitionists.

Chase’s political career took off once he began working for the Liberty Party. When the sectional crisis exploded during and after the Mexican-American War, Chase was certainly in the right place at the right time. By 1848, he was instrumental in merging much of the Liberty Party with free soil Democrats and so-called Conscience Whigs (antislavery Whigs) to widen the appeal of the antislavery movement and to create the Free Soil Party, one of the forerunners to the

¹⁰⁸ Chase, January 31st, 1841, *Journals*, 148.

¹⁰⁹ Chase to Gerrit Smith, May 14, 1842, *Correspondences*, volume 2, 96-97.

¹¹⁰ Chase, “Address,” as quoted in Warden, 305-306.

¹¹¹ Chase, “Speech of Hon. S. P. Chase,” August 28, 1849, *Daily Evening Traveler*, <https://bit.ly/2vZ5npJ>.

¹¹² Chase, *Speeches and Writings*, Thursday, Nov. 12, 1864, <https://bit.ly/2HtIzDK>.

Republican Party. Chase parlayed his influence with the Free Soilers and some Democrat state legislators in Ohio to be elected to the United States Senate in 1849, a remarkable achievement considering both his strong antislavery views and his relative inexperience holding political office. In Ohio, the Whigs and the Democrats were so close in their level of support that the Free Soil Party held the balance of power, giving them immense leverage distinct to Ohio.¹¹³

He opposed the Compromise of 1850, but his influence in the Senate was limited by the other Democrats, especially Southerners, who found his antislavery positions unacceptable. He took a bigger role opposing the Kansas-Nebraska Act, first facing off against Stephen Douglas in a debate in the Senate, and then collaborating with Joshua Giddings and other antislavery Senators and Congressmen to write the influential “Appeal of the Independent Democrats in Congress to the People of the United States,” originally published in *The National Era*, an abolitionist newspaper, and then circulated throughout the North as a pamphlet. Giddings wrote the first draft and then Chase and Charles Sumner edited and refined it. The “Appeal” contained especially harsh language against the authors and supporters of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, calling it “a gross violation of a sacred pledge” and a “criminal betrayal of precious rights” for abrogating the Missouri Compromise by opening up the possibility of slavery in the Louisiana Purchase north of the 36-30 line. While most of the arguments were political and legal, they did “implore Christians and Christian Ministers” to oppose the bill because “their divine religion” demanded that all men be treated as brothers, a standard violated by potentially advancing the territorial reach of slavery.¹¹⁴ The “Appeal” helped galvanize opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act and support for the Republicans, which emerged from the chaos of the break-up of the Whigs and the sudden emergence of the nativist American Party to become the second party alongside the Democrats. Both Giddings and Chase joined the Republicans.¹¹⁵ Chase became the Republican governor of Ohio and then hoped to get the Republican presidential nomination in 1856, failing to do so in part because he was considered too strong an opponent of slavery and had alienated enough Ohio politicians by his machinations to secure the Senate seat in 1848.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Stephen Maizlish, *The Triumph of Sectionalism: The Transformation of Ohio Politics, 1844-1856* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1983), chapter 6.

¹¹⁴ Niven, *Salmon Chase*, 150; Giddings, Chase, et. al, “Appeal to the Independent Democrats of the United States,” <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/appeal-of-the-independent-democrats/>

¹¹⁵ Giddings sacralized the Republican party in his *Conflict Between Religious Truths and American Infidelity...*

¹¹⁶ Goodwin, 186-187.

Chase continued to seek the presidency in one way or another until his death in 1873. Lincoln, after defeating Chase in the contest for the 1860 Republican nomination and becoming the President, offered Chase the prestigious and vital cabinet post of Secretary of the Treasury, a compliment to Chase's all-around abilities since he had little experience as a public financier or administrator. As part of Lincoln's cabinet, Chase found himself in a position to advocate for his lifelong goal of ending slavery, and he did so, constantly urging Lincoln to take stronger anti-slavery steps. When Lincoln first proposed the Emancipation Proclamation, Chase surprisingly wanted a revised version that would leave it to the military commanders to enact emancipation, although he ultimately gave it his approval. When the time came in December of 1862 to implement the Proclamation, Chase suggested a rhetorical flourish to conclude the document: "Upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God." Lincoln and the other cabinet members agreed, enshrining Chase's sacred view of emancipation.¹¹⁷

Chase's piety did not wane in his later years, and his antislavery activities did not alter his belief in conventional evangelical religion like it did for Giddings and some of the abolitionists. His frequent and earnest references to his faith in his letters to his two remaining daughters, Kate and Nettie, reveal a person living out his religious faith, and urging his daughters to do likewise. The following that he wrote to his daughter Kate in February of 1852 is typical. Here is the language in his second paragraph:

You and I have lost one who was to me a devoted comforter & supporter and to you a kind and affectionate guide [his third wife Belle]. Now, my dear child, you must think of her as in heaven whither a purer and gentler spirit has seldom gone. You, I hope, will manifest your sincere devotion to her memory, by constant endeavors to do what you know she would wish in every respect—by cultivating your manners and your intellect; by doing all the good you can; above all, by devoting your heart to God, and seeking reconciliation with Him through Jesus Christ.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Allen Guelzo, *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 179-180.

¹¹⁸ Salmon Chase to Nettie Chase, February 12, 1852, from "Spur up Your Pegasus," 111.

Just one month later in another letter to Kate, Chase's puritanism came out when he warned her "that you naturally have an evil heart and that it is through God's grace alone that you can overcome sinful inclinations...and look constantly through Christ for his blessings."¹¹⁹ A decade later, in the midst of the Civil War and Chase's exhausting task of financing the Union war effort, he made similar points to Kate. Worrying whether or not she would be able to hold up to the tragedies life inevitably brings, he wrote "... trust in God, proved by conformity to His will, is a sure defence against the ills of life." After pointing out the near impossibility of abiding by God's laws, he reminded his daughter "the Christian faith comes in to save us from our despair."¹²⁰ Countless examples of Chase's heartfelt religion in his letters and other writings such as these show a person continuing to be guided by the evangelical religion he acquired early in life and nurtured throughout the rest of it.

Chase would go on to have an eventful final decade or so in life and in politics. Never abandoning his deep piety or his ambitions, he repeatedly sought the presidency and clashed with Lincoln to the point where Lincoln finally accepted his resignation.¹²¹ As Secretary of the Treasury, he helped facilitate the Union's successful financing of the war, including marketing the Union war bonds, helping to set up the banking system that would prevail until the early twentieth century, and even went against his hard money beliefs by issuing greenbacks as a way to maintain liquidity in the North. Despite Lincoln's problems with Chase, he nominated Chase to be the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court after Chase resigned from the Cabinet, once again showing his great respect for Chase's intellect and all-around competence while at the same time eliminating his ability to hurt Lincoln politically. Chase had been a lawyer, but never a judge. While even a cursory summary of his career as Chief Justice cannot fit into this paper, the years he presided were critical ones, covering the first part of the Reconstruction Era.

¹¹⁹ Salmon to Kate, March 4, 1852, in *Ibid.*, 114.

¹²⁰ Salmon to Kate, November 18, 1863, *Ibid.*, 243.

¹²¹ Goodwin, 603-609. Chase tried to take the 1864 Republican nomination from Lincoln, and was left in an awkward position when that failed, giving Lincoln the upper hand in their relationship.

**CONCLUSION: THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF
JOSHUA R. GIDDINGS AND SALMON P. CHASE**

Joshua R. Giddings and Salmon P. Chase succeeded as antislavery politicians, beginning early in the movement in the 1830s, and remaining to see the end of slavery in Chase's case and nearly the end in Giddings's case. They succeeded because they had settled in Ohio, a state that provided settings that brought the slavery issue to their respective attentions, and then had the right mix of voters and politics enabling them to win office and exert considerable influence both within the state and nationally. Both had the distinctive set of personal qualities, including deep religiosity, belief that slavery could be effectively opposed through the American political system, and burning ambition for influence and political office, to make it possible for them to persevere. And both could be hard-headed, practical politicians as well as religiously inspired idealists, hoping to project their religious visions onto American society. There were not many people in America with these distinct qualities to fight against the slave system for as long as they did, making the fight against slavery so difficult at least until the sectional upheavals of the 1850s and 1860s. But Giddings and Chase had kept the cause alive, agitating and organizing and helping to put the antislavery cause in position to make a dramatic difference when the time came.¹²²

Although there were other antislavery politicians in the North about whom some of the same could be said, including Charles Sumner, Thaddeus Stevens, George Julian, William Slade, Henry Wilson, John Hale, and some others, few of them were as consequential or had as long careers at the center of this fight as Giddings and Chase. Without the dynamic religious and political landscape of the antebellum North in general and Ohio in particular, however, Giddings and Chase never would have had the inspirations or opportunities to lead this political movement and help put it in place to fight the Civil War and abolish slavery.

¹²² Stewart, *Holy Warriors*, 115.