

**AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE
REV. THEODORE PARKER, BEFORE
THE NEW YORK CITY ANTI-
SLAVERY SOCIETY, MAY 12, 1854**

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An Address Delivered by the Rev. Theodore Parker, Before the New York City Anti-Slavery Society, May 12,1854 by Various

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REV. THEODORE PARKER,

BEFORE THE

New York City Anti-Slavery Society,

AT ITS

FIRST ANNIVERSARY,

HELD AT THE

BROADWAY TABERNACLE,

May 12, 1864.

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The Gift of
The Author.
Rev. Carey.
1854.

ADDRESS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN : I shall ask your attention, this evening, to some few thoughts on the present condition of the United States in respect to Slavery. After all that has been said by wise, powerful and eloquent men, in this city, this week, perhaps I shall have scarce anything to present that is new.

As you look on the general aspect of America to-day, its main features are not less than sublime, while they are likewise beautiful exceedingly. The full breadth of the continent is ours, from sea to sea, from the great lakes to the great gulf. There are three million square miles, with every variety of climate, and soil, and mineral ; great rivers, a static force, inclined planes for travel reaching from New Orleans to the Falls of St. Anthony, from the mouth of the St. Lawrence to Chicago ; smaller rivers, a dynamic force, turning the many thousand mills of the industrious North. There is a coast most richly indented, to aid the spread of civilization. The United States has more than twelve thousand miles of shore line on the continent ; more than nine thousand on its islands ; more than twenty-four thousand miles of river navigation. Here is the Material Groundwork for a great State—not an empire, but a Commonwealth. The world has not such another.

There are twenty-four millions of men ; fifteen and a half millions with Anglo-Saxon blood in their veins—

strong, real Anglo-Saxon blood; eight millions and a half more of other families and races, just enough to temper the Anglo-Saxon blood, to furnish a new composite tribe, far better, I trust, than the old. What a Human Basis for a State to be erected on this material groundwork!

On the Eastern Slopes of the continent, where the high lands which reach from the Katabdin mountains in Maine to the end of the Apalachians in Georgia—on the Atlantic slopes, where the land pitches down to the sea from the 48th to the 28th parallel, there are fifteen States, a million square miles, communicating with the ocean. In the South, rivers bear to the sea rice, cotton, tobacco, and the products of half-tropic agriculture; in the North, smaller streams toil all day, and sometimes all night, working wood, iron, cotton and wool into forms of use and beauty, while iron roads carry to the sea the productions of temperate agriculture, mining and manufactures.

On the Western Slope, where the rivers flow down to the Pacific Ocean from the 49th to the 32d parallel, is a great country, almost eight hundred thousand square miles in extent. There, too, the Anglo-Saxon has gone; in the south, the gold-hunter gathers the precious metals, while the farmer, the miner and the woodman gather far more precious products in the north.

In the Great Basin between the Cordilleras of the West and the Alleghanies; where the Mississippi drains half the continent to the Mediterranean of the New World, there also the Anglo-Saxon has occupied the ground—twelve hundred thousand square miles; in the south to rear cotton, rice and sugar; in the north to raise cattle and cereal grasses, for beast and for man.

What a spectacle it is! A nation not eighty years old, and still in its cradle, and yet grown so great. Two hundred and fifty years ago, there was not an Anglo-Saxon on all this continent. Now there is an Anglo-Saxon commonwealth twenty-four millions strong. Rich as it is in numbers, there are not yet eight men to the square mile.

All this is a Republic; it is a democracy. There is no horn priest to stand betwixt the nation and its God; no Pope to entail his nephews on the Church; no bishop claiming divine right to rule over the people and stand betwixt them and the Infinite. There is no king, no horn king, to ride on the nation's neck. There are noble-men, but none Noble-born to usurp the land, to monopolize the government and keep the community from the bosom of the earth. The people is Priest and makes its own religion out of God's revelation in man's nature and history. The people is its own King to rule itself; its own Noble to occupy the earth. The people make the laws and choose their own magistrates. Industry is free; travel is free; religion is free; speech is free; there are no shackles on the press. The nation rests on industry, not on war. It is formed of agriculturists, traders, sailors, miners—not a nation of soldiers. The army numbers ten thousand—one soldier for every twenty-four thousand men. The people are at peace; no nation invades us. The government is firmly fixed and popular. A nation loving liberty, loves likewise law; and when it gets a point of liberty, it fences it all round with law as high up as the hands reach. We annually welcome four hundred thousand

immigrants who flee from the despotism of the Old World.

The country is rich—after England, the richest on earth in cultivated lands, roads, houses, mills. Four million tons of shipping sail under the American flag. This year we shall build half a million tons more, which, at forty dollars a ton, is worth twenty millions of dollars. That is the ship crop. Then, the corn crop is seven hundred millions of bushels—Indian corn. What a harvest of coal, copper, iron, lead, of wheat, cotton, sugar, rice, is produced!

Over all and above all these there rises the great American Political Idea, a "self-evident truth"—which cannot be proved—it needs no proof; it is anterior to demonstration; namely, that every man is endowed by his Creator with certain inalienable rights, and in these rights all men are equal; and on these the government is to rest, deriving its sole sanction from the governed's consent.

Higher yet above this material groundwork, this human foundation, this accumulation of numbers, of riches, of industry—as the cross on the top of a tall, wide dome, whose lantern is the great American political idea—as the cross that surmounts it rises the American Religious Idea—one God; Christianity the true religion; and the worship of God by Love; inwardly it is Piety, love to God; outwardly love to man—morality, benevolence, philanthropy.

What a spectacle to the eyes of the Scandinavian, the German, the Dutchman, the Irishman, as they view America from afar! What a contrast it seems to Europe. There liberty is ideal; it is a dream; here it is organic, an institution; one of the Establishments of the land.

That, ladies and gentlemen, in the aspect which America presents to the oppressed victims of European despotism in Church and in State. Far off on the other side of the Atlantic, among the Appennines, on the plains of Germany, and in the Slavonian lands, I have met men to whom America seemed as this fair-proportioned edifice that I have thus sketched out before your eyes. But when they come nearer, behold half the land is black with Slavery. In 1860, out of more than two hundred and forty hundred thousand Americans (24,000,000), thirty-two hundred thousand (3,200,000) were slaves—more than an eighth of the population counted as cattle; not as citizens at all. They are only human material, not yet wrought into citizens—nay, not counted *human*. They are cattle, property; not counted men, but animals and no more. Manhood must not be extended to them. Listen while I read to you from a Southern print. It was recommended by the Governor of Alabama that the Legislature should pass a law prohibiting the separation of families; whereupon the *Richmond Enquirer* discourses thus:

“This recommendation strikes us as being most unwise and impolitic. If slaves are property, *then should they be at the absolute disposal of the master, or be subject only to such legal provisions as are designed for the protection of life and limb. If the relation of master and slave be infringed for one purpose, it would be difficult to fix any limit to the encroachment.*”

They are property, no more, and must be treated as such, and not as men.

Slavery is on the Atlantic slopes of the continent. There are one million six hundred thousand (1,600,000) slaves between the Alleghany range and the Atlantic coast. Slavery is in the central basin. There are a