

LECTURES ON SLAVERY

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649290734

Lectures on slavery by Benjamin Godwin

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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BENJAMIN GODWIN

**LECTURES
ON SLAVERY**

LECTURES
ON
SLAVERY,

BY

REV. BENJAMIN GODWIN, D. D.
AUTHOR OF LECTURES ON *SUBJECT* AFRICAN.

"Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto."—TERENCE.

"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them."—HEB. xiii. 3.

FROM THE LONDON EDITION,
WITH ADDITIONS TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

BOSTON:
JAMES B. DOW,
1836.

E 45,
G 59

1836

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1836, by
WILLIAM S. ANDREWS,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM A. HALL & CO.

Ms. 18/8/1510,

PREFACE

TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

THE Lectures upon Slavery, which compose this work, were written by Dr. Godwin, in England, during the period when the question of emancipation, in the British West-India Islands, was before Parliament and the English nation. They were delivered, in that country, to highly intelligent, respectable, and crowded audiences; and were listened to by them with breathless attention and deep interest. The strong impression produced by them upon the public mind and feeling, both in their delivery and perusal, without doubt contributed very much to the production of that powerful national sentiment, which continued to gather strength in its progress, until, with the power of a cataract, it swept over the whole land,—bore down, with irresistible impulse, every obstacle before it, and finally produced the abolition of slavery in the whole British Empire.

That such may be the effect which it shall produce in the United States, also, we ardently hope; and it is only necessary that it should be introduced to the public at-

tion, to gain for it the same degree of popularity and success, which attended it in England. It is written by the same gentleman, whose work upon the '*Atheistic Controversy*' has recently issued from the press here; a work which has been very extensively and justly admired, for its cogent arguments, copious information, pure style, and amiable temper. The present work has all the same characteristics to distinguish it, besides being upon a subject more exciting in its character, and admitting of stronger appeals to the feelings, and a more glowing and impassioned strain of eloquence.

It has been said, by some who have read it, that it has all the enthusiasm and romance of a novel, and produces the same intense interest with a highly-wrought work of fiction,—besides having the advantage of being a narrative of real life, instead of being a mere fancy's sketch.

As the subject of the work is one which agitates, at the present time, the country, from one end to another, and is fraught with consequences of most momentous interest, it cannot but have a strong claim upon the public attention, which, together with the very high reputation of its author, will, without doubt, procure for it an extensive perusal and circulation.

The work begins by giving a history of Slavery and the Slave-Trade, from the earliest periods of its existence up to the present time, and traces all the successive attempts which have been made, particularly in England, to put an end to this brutal and nefarious traffic.

It gives a very interesting account of the progress of this controversy in parliament, and of the efforts made by distinguished philanthropists and statesmen, in that body, to produce an amelioration of the existing system, and, finally, its utter extinction. Although a part of the Lectures necessarily relate particularly to slavery as it existed in the British West-Indies, and under the influence of British laws; yet, the main body of it discusses such topics as relate to slavery in general, and applies as well to slavery in this country as in any other part of the world. All the important and difficult questions, which are involved in its consideration, are discussed at length, and with a power of reasoning, and a glow of feeling, calculated alike to convince the understanding, and strongly arouse the sensibility.

To the American edition there are added copious notes, which are intended to give additional information in relation to slavery as it exists in this country; and, also, some further views upon the various topics discussed in this work.

There is no author, who has appeared upon the stage for a long time, who has produced two works calculated to exert such an important influence upon the morals, welfare, and destiny of mankind, as are the works of Dr. Godwin upon ARMS, and upon SLAVERY. Like the sun in the heavens, they first arose above the horizon in his own native land, shedding their benign lustre upon that favored country, and dispelling there the mists of

ignorance, delusion, infidelity, and barbarism. In their march up the firmament, they have reached our beloved country; and God grant that their cheering rays may enlighten our intellectual atmosphere, and warm and invigorate our moral soil, as they have done that of our father land.

AMERICAN EDITOR.

PREFACE.

WHEN the following Lectures were delivered, the Author had not the remotest idea of publication; but as he has ventured to come before the public, he begs to say a few words in explanation of his reasons and his object. From his earliest years he felt a hatred to oppression: his love of liberty, civil and religious, "grew with his growth, and strengthened with his strength." He no sooner heard of slavery in the British dominions, and the miseries necessarily attendant on such a state, than he deeply deplored the case of the injured Negro. He was too young to take any part in the great struggle for the abolition of the slave trade, though he sincerely rejoiced in that great triumph of humanity. Since 1823, however, he has taken a more lively interest in the subject; and towards the close of the last year, by means of the information which was laid before the public, from time to time, his mind became so strongly impressed with the subject, that it followed him night and day: he felt that, for the peace of his own mind, he must make some attempt on behalf of his suffering fellow-creatures; it be-