

A N  
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O N  
S L A V E R Y,

Proving from SCRIPTURE its Inconsistency  
with HUMANITY and RELIGION;

In Answer to a late Publication, entitled,

“ The AFRICAN TRADE for Negro Slaves shewn to  
“ be consistent with Principles of HUMANITY, and with  
“ the L A W S of REVEALED RELIGION.”

By GRANVILLE SHARP, Esq.

With an introductory PREFACE, containing the Sentiments of the Monthly Reviewers on that Publication; and the Opinion of several eminent Writers on the Subject.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

An ELEGY on the miserable State of an African Slave, by the celebrated and ingenious WILLIAM SHENSTONE, Esq.

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*The Lord also will be a Refuge for the Oppressed—a  
Refuge in Time of Trouble. Psal. ix. 9.*

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B U R L I N G T O N:  
Printed and Sold by ISAAC COLLINS,  
M. DCC. LXXIII.



# P R E F A C E.

**T**H E following Essay, though wrote, as the Author signifies, in haste, is thought to have such merit as to deserve a publication.—The copy was sent to one of the Writer's particular friends, whether for his own peculiar satisfaction, or the press, is uncertain; but as the subject is *Liberty*, so it is expected the *Freedom* which is here taken cannot justly give him offence, or be unacceptable to the publick.

It was designed to confute a piece wrote by Thomas Thompson, M. A. some time fellow of C. C. C. entitled, “The African trade for  
“ Negro Slaves shewn to be consistent with  
“ principles of humanity, and with the laws  
“ of revealed religion.” Printed at Canterbury.

IN order to shew that the Essay Writer has not misrepresented the text, nor is single in his observations upon it, the sentiments of the Monthly Reviewers on that pamphlet in May 1772 are here inserted.

“ We must acknowledge,” say they, “ that  
“ the branch of trade here under con-  
“ sideration is a species of traffick which we  
“ have

“ have never been able to reconcile with  
 “ ~~the dictates~~ of humanity, and much less  
 “ with those of religion. The principal ar-  
 “ gument in its behalf seems to be, the *ne-*  
 “ *cessity* of such a resource, in order to carry  
 “ on the works in our plantations, which,  
 “ we are told, it is otherwise impossible to  
 “ perform. But this, though the urgency  
 “ of the case may be very great, is not by  
 “ any means sufficient to justify the practice.  
 “ There is a farther consideration which has  
 “ a plausible appearance, and may be thought  
 “ to carry some weight; it is, that the mer-  
 “ chant only purchases those who were slaves  
 “ before, and possibly may, rather than  
 “ otherwise, render their situation more tole-  
 “ rable. But it is well known, that the lot of  
 “ our Slaves, when most favourably confi-  
 “ dered, is very hard and miserable; be-  
 “ sides which, such a trade is taking the  
 “ advantage of the ignorance and bruta-  
 “ lity of unenlightened nations, who are  
 “ encouraged to war with each other for this  
 “ very purpose, and, it is to be feared, are  
 “ sometimes tempted to seize those of their  
 “ own tribes or families that they may ob-  
 “ tain the hoped for advantage: and it is  
 “ owned, with regard to our merchants,  
 “ that, upon occasion, they observe the like  
 “ practices, which are thought to be allow-  
 “ able, because they are done by way of  
 “ reprisal for theft or damage committed by  
 “ the natives. We were pleased, however,

“ to

“ to meet with a pamphlet on the other side  
“ of the question; and we entered upon its  
“ perusal with the hopes of finding some-  
“ what advanced which might afford us satis-  
“ faction on this difficult point. The writer  
“ appears to be a sensible man, and capa-  
“ ble of discussing the argument; but the  
“ limits to which he is confined render his  
“ performance rather superficial. The plea  
“ he produces from the Jewish law is not, in  
“ our view of the matter, at all conclusive.  
“ The people of Israel were under a *theo-*  
“ *cracy*, in which the Supreme Being was  
“ in a peculiar sense their King, and might  
“ therefore issue forth some orders for them,  
“ which it would not be warrantable for ano-  
“ ther people, who were in different circum-  
“ stances, to observe. Such, for instance,  
“ was the command given concerning the  
“ extirpation of the Canaanites, whom, the  
“ sovereign Arbiter of life and death might,  
“ if he had pleased, have destroyed by  
“ plague or famine, or other of those means  
“ which we term natural causes, and by  
“ which a wise Providence fulfils its own  
“ purposes. But it would be unreasonable  
“ to infer from the manner in which the  
“ Israelites dealt with the people of Canaan,  
“ that any other nations have a right to pur-  
“ sue the same method. Neither can we  
“ imagine that St. Paul’s exhortation to ser-  
“ vants or slaves, upon their conversion, to  
“ continue in the state in which christianity  
“ found

“ found them, affords any argument favour-  
 “ able to the practice here pleaded for. It  
 “ is no more than saying, that Christianity  
 “ did not particularly enter into the regula-  
 “ tions of civil society at that time; that it  
 “ taught persons to be contented and diligent  
 “ in their stations: but certainly it did not  
 “ forbid them, in a proper and lawful way,  
 “ if it was in their power, to render their  
 “ circumstances more comfortable. Upon  
 “ the whole, we must own, that this little  
 “ treatise is not convincing to us, though, as  
 “ different persons are differently affected by  
 “ the same considerations, it may prove more  
 “ satisfactory to others.”

In another place they observe, “ since we  
 “ are *all brethren*, and God has given to *all*  
 “ men a natural right to *Liberty*, we allow of  
 “ no *Slavery* among us, unless a person for-  
 “ feits his freedom by his crimes.”

THAT Slavery is not consistent with the  
 English constitution, nor admissible in Great-  
 Britain, appears evidently by the late solemn  
 determination in the court of King's Bench  
 at Westminster, in the case of ——— So-  
 merfet, the Negro;—and why it should be  
 revived and continued in the colonies, peo-  
 pled by the descendents of Britain, and blef-  
 sed with sentiments as truly noble and free as  
 any of their fellow subjects in the mother  
 country, is not easily conceived, nor can the  
 distinction be well founded.

IF “natural rights, such as *life* and *Liberty*,  
 “ receive no additional strength from muni-  
 “ cipal laws, nor any *human legislature* has  
 “ power to abridge or *destroy them*, unless  
 “ the owner commits some act that amounts  
 “ to a forfeiture :” (a) If “the natural *Li-*  
 “ *berthy of mankind* consists properly in a  
 “ power of acting as one thinks fit, without  
 “ any restraint or controul unless by the *law*  
 “ *of nature* ; being a *right inherent in us by*  
 “ *birth*, and one of the *Gifts of God to man*  
 “ at his creation, when he endued him with  
 “ the faculty of *free will* :” (b) If an *act*  
*of Parliament* is *controulable by the laws of God*  
*and nature* ; (c) and *in its consequences* may  
 be rendered void for absurdity, or a *manifest*  
*contradiction to common reason* : (d) If “Chri-  
 “ stianity is a part of the law of Eng-  
 “ land ;” (e) and Christ expressly com-  
 mands, “Whatsoever ye would that men  
 “ should do to you, do ye even so to  
 “ them,” at the same time declaring, “for  
 “ this is the law and the prophets :” (f) And  
 if our forefathers, who emigrated from Eng-  
 land hither, brought with them all the  
 rights, liberties, and privileges of the Bri-  
 tish constitution—(which hath of late years  
 been often asserted and repeatedly contended  
 for by Americans) why is it that the poor  
 footy African meets with so different a mea-  
 sure

(a) 1 Blackstone's Commentaries 54. (b) do. 125.  
 (c) 4 Bacon's Abridg. 639. (d) 1 Black. Com. 91.  
 (e) Stra. Reports, 1113. (f) Matt. vii. 12.

sure of justice in England and America, as to be *adjudged free* in the one, and in the other held in the most *abject Slavery*?

WE are expressly restrained from making laws “repugnant to,” and directed to fashion them, “as nearly as may be, agreeable to, the laws of England.” Hence, and because of its total inconsistency with the principles of the constitution, neither in England or any of the Colonies, is there one law directly in favour of, or enacting *Slavery*, but by a kind of side-wind, admitting its existence, (though only founded on a barbarous custom, originated by foreigners) attempt its regulation. How far the point litigated in ———— *Somerset’s case* would bear a sober candid discussion before an impartial judicature in the colonies, I cannot determine; but, for the credit of my country, should hope it would meet with a like decision, that it might appear, and be known, that *Liberty* in America is not a partial privilege, but extends to every individual in it.

I MIGHT here, in the language of the famous JAMES OTIS, Esq. ask, “Is it possible for a man to have a natural right to make a Slave of himself or of his posterity? What man is or ever was born free if every man is not? Can a father supersede the laws of nature? Is not every man born as free by nature as his father? (a) There can be no prescription old enough  
“ to

(a): American Tracts by Otis, 41

“ to supersede the law of nature, and the  
 “ grant of God Almighty, who has given  
 “ to every man a natural right to be  
 “ free. (a) The Colonists are by the law  
 “ of nature free born, as indeed all men  
 “ are, white or black. No better reason  
 “ can be given for the enslaving those of any  
 “ colour; than such as Baron Montesquieu  
 “ has humourously assigned, as the founda-  
 “ tion of that cruel Slavery exercised over  
 “ the poor Ethiopians; which threatens  
 “ one day to reduce both Europe and Ame-  
 “ rica to the ignorance and barbarity of the  
 “ darkest ages. Does it follow that it is  
 “ right to enslave a man because he is black?  
 “ Will short curled hair like wool, instead  
 “ of christians hair, as it is called by those  
 “ whose hearts are as hard as the nether  
 “ mill-stone, help the argument? Can any  
 “ logical inference in favour of Slavery,  
 “ be drawn from a flat nose, a long or a  
 “ short face? Nothing better can be said in  
 “ favour of *a trade* that is the most shocking  
 “ violation of the laws of nature; has a di-  
 “ rect tendency to diminish every idea of the  
 “ inestimable value of Liberty, and makes  
 “ every dealer in it a tyrant, from the director  
 “ of an African company, to the petty chap-  
 “ man in needles and pins, on the unhap-  
 “ py coast.” (b)

B

To

(a) American Tracts by Otis, 17. (b) do.



## P R E F A C E.

To those who think Slavery founded in Scripture, a careful and attentive perusal of the Sacred Writings would contribute more than any thing to eradicate the error; they will not find even the name *Slave* once mentioned therein, and applied to a servitude to be continued from parent to child in perpetuity, with approbation.—The term used on the occasion in the sacred text is *Servant*; and, upon a fair construction of those writings, there is no necessity, nor can the service, consistent with the whole tenor of the Scripture, be extended further than the generation spoken of; it was never intended to include the posterity.

The mistaken proverb which prevailed in that early age, that “The fathers had eaten  
“ four grapes, and the childrens teeth were  
“ set on edge,” was rectified by the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who declared to the people, that “they should not have oc-  
“ casion to use that proverb any more;—  
“ Behold all souls are mine, as the soul of  
“ the father, so the soul of the son; the soul  
“ that sinneth it shall die;—the son shall not  
“ bear the iniquity of the father, neither  
“ shall the father bear the iniquity of the  
“ son;—the righteousness of the righteous  
“ shall be upon him, and the wickedness of  
“ the wicked shall be upon him. (a) And the apostle Peter assures us, after the ascension of our Saviour, that “God is no re-  
“ specter of persons, but in every nation he  
“ that

(a) Jer. xxxi. 29. Ezek. xviii. 3, 4, and 20.

“ that feareth him is accepted of him.” (a)  
 It is also remarkable, that at that time an  
*Ethiopian*, “ a man of great authority,” (b)  
 was admitted to the freedom of a Christian,  
 whatever we may think of the colour now,  
 as being unworthy of it.

BUT admitting Slavery to be established  
 by Scripture, the command of the Sove-  
 reign Ruler of the universe, whose eye takes  
 in all things, and who, for good reasons,  
 beyond our comprehension, might justly  
 create a perpetual Slavery to effect his own  
 purposes, against the enemies of his chosen  
 people in that day, cannot be pleaded now  
 against any people on earth; it is not even  
 pretended to in justification of Negro Sla-  
 very, nor can the sons of Ethiopia, with  
 any degree of clearness, be proved to have  
 descended from any of those nations who so  
 came under the Divine displeasure as to be  
 brought into servitude; if they are, and  
 those denunciations given in the Old Testament  
 were perpetual, and continue in force, must we  
 not look upon it meritorious to execute them  
 fully upon all the offspring of that unhappy  
 people upon whom they fell, without giving  
 quarter to any?

MANY who admit the indefensibility of  
 Slavery, considering the subject rather too  
 superficially, declare it would be impolitick  
 to emancipate those we are possessed of; and  
 say, they generally behave ill when set at  
 liberty.

(a) Acts x. 34. (b) Acts viii. 27.

liberty. I believe very few of the advocates for freedom think that all ought to be manumitted, nay, think it would be unjust to turn out those who have spent their prime of life, and now require a support ; but many are in a fit capacity to do for themselves and the publick ; as to these let every master or mistress do their duty, and leave consequences to the Disposer of events, who, I believe, will always bless our actions in proportion to the purity of their spring. But many instances might be given of Negroes and Mulattoes, once in Slavery, who, after they have obtained their liberty, (and sometimes even in a state of bondage) have given striking proofs of their integrity, ingenuity, industry, tenderness and nobility of mind ; of which, if the limits of this little Piece permitted, I could mention many examples ; and why instances of this kind are not more frequent, we may very naturally impute to the smallness of the number tried with freedom, and the fervility and meanness of their education whilst in Slavery. Let us never forget, that an equal if not a greater proportion of our own colour behave worse with all the advantages of birth, education and circumstances ; and we shall blush to oppose an equitable emancipation, by this or the like arguments.

“ LIBERTY, the most manly and exalting of  
 “ the gifts of Heaven, consists in a free and  
 “ generous exercise of all the human facul-  
 “ ties as far as they are compatible with the  
 “ good

“ good of society to which we belong; and  
 “ the most delicious part of the enjoyment  
 “ of the inestimable blessing lies in a con-  
 “ sciousness that we are *free*. This happy  
 “ persuasion, when it meets with a noble na-  
 “ ture, raises the soul, and rectifies the  
 “ heart; it gives dignity to the countenance,  
 “ and animates every word and gesture; it  
 “ elevates the mind above the little arts of  
 “ deceit, makes it benevolent, open, inge-  
 “ nuous and just, and adds a new relish to  
 “ every better sentiment of humanity.” (a)  
 On the contrary, “ Man is bereaved of half  
 “ his virtues that day when he is cast into  
 “ bondage.” (b)

THE end of the christian dispensation,  
 with which we are at present favoured, ap-  
 pears in our Saviour's own words, “ The  
 “ spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he  
 “ hath anointed me to preach the gospel  
 “ to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the  
 “ *broken hearted*; to preach deliverance to  
 “ the captives; and recovery of *sight to the*  
 “ *blind*; to set at *liberty them that are bruised*;  
 “ to preach the *acceptable year of the Lord*.” (c)

THE Editor is united in opinion with the  
 author of the Essay, that Slavery is contrary  
 to the laws of reason, and the principles of  
 revealed religion; and believes it alike ini-  
 mical and impolitick in every state and coun-  
 try; for as “ righteousness exalteth a nation,  
 “ so

(a) Blackwell's Court of Augustus. (b) Homer.

(c) Luke iv. 18.

“so sin is a reproach to any people.” (a) Hence whatever violates the purity of equal justice, and the harmony of true liberty, in time debases the mind; and ultimately draws down the displeasure of that Almighty Being, who “is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity.” (b) Yet he is far from censuring those who are not under the same convictions, and hopes to be understood with charity and tenderness to all. Every one does not see alike the same propositions, who may be equally friends to truth, as our education and opportunities of knowledge, are various as our faces. He will candidly confess to any one who shall kindly point it out, any error which in this inquiry hath fell from his pen. There can be but one beatific point of rectitude, but many paths leading to it, in which persons differing in modes and non-essentials, may walk with freedom to their own opinions; we may much more innocently be under a mistake, than continue in it after a hint given, which occasions our adverting thereto; for it seems a duty to investigate the way of truth and justice with our utmost ability.

A much more extensive and perfect view of the subject under consideration, has of late prevailed than formerly; and he believes nothing is wanting but an impartial disinterested attention to make still greater advances. Thus, by a gradual progression, he hopes the name of *Slavery* will be eradicated  
by

(a) Prov. xiv. 34. (b) Habakkuk i, 13.

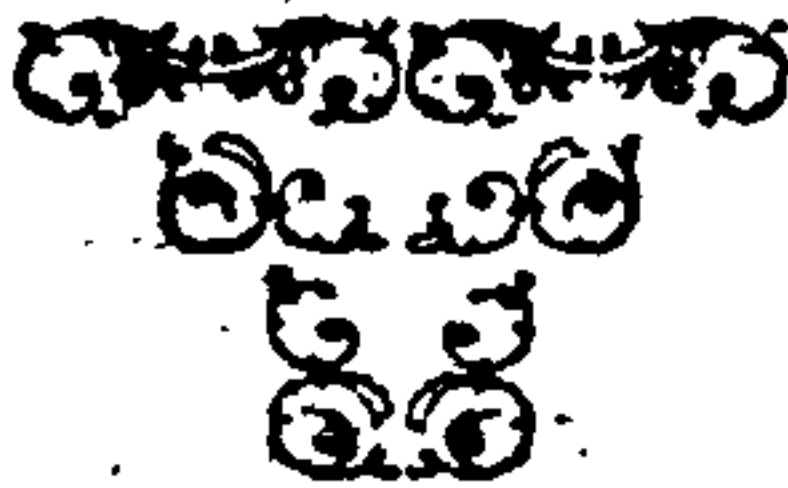
by the general voice of mankind in this land of *Liberty*.

THE mode of manumitting negroes in New-Jersey is such as appears terrific, and amounts almost to a prohibition, because of its incumbering consequences, which few prudent people choose to leave their families liable to. It is much easier in several other colonies. In Pennsylvania a recognizance entered into in THIRTY POUNDS to indemnify the township, is a complete discharge. In Maryland, where Negroes are so numerous, I am informed, the master or mistress may at pleasure give Liberty to their Slaves without the least obligation, and be clear of any future burden. Both these are exceptionable, and may be improved. Proper distinctions are necessary; for as the freedom of all gratis might be unjust, not only to the publick but the Slave, so any clog upon the owner who gives up his right at an age when he cannot have received much or any advantage from the labour of the individual, would be unreasonable. The wisdom of a legislature earnestly disposed to do good, will, I hope, be directed to surmount every little difficulty in pointing out a scheme more equal and perfect, by steering a middle course; and proper care being kindly taken to assist and provide for the usefulness of those deserving objects of benevolence, the approbation of Divine Providence will I doubt not attend such laudable endeavours, and crown them with success.—

That

That the legislative body of each province in America, may give due attention to this important engaging subject, and be blessed to frame and establish a plan, worthy of the united jurisprudence, wisdom, and benevolence of the *Guardians of Liberty*, is the sincere wish of

THE EDITOR.





A N

E S S A Y

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S L A V E R Y, &amp;c.

**A** REVEREND author, Mr. Thomas Thompson, M. A. has lately attempted to prove “ that the African trade “ for Negro Slaves is consistent with the prin- “ ciples of *humanity* and *revealed religion*.

FROM Leviticus xxv. 39 to 46, he draws his principal conclusion, viz. “ that the buy- “ ing and selling of Slaves *is not contrary to the “ law of nature*, for (says he) the *Jewish “ constitutions* were strictly therewith consist- “ ent *in all points*: and these are in certain “ cases the rule by which is determined by “ *learned lawyers* and casuists, what is, or is “ not, *contrary to nature*.” I have not leisure to follow this author methodically, but will, nevertheless, examine his ground *in a general way*, in order to prevent any ill use that may  
C be





be made of it against the important question now depending before the judges. (a)

THE reverend Mr. Thompson's *premises are not true*, for the Jewish constitutions were not "*strictly consistent*" with the *law of nature* in all points, as he supposes, and consequently his principal *conclusion* thereupon is erroneous. Many things were formerly tolerated among the Israelites, merely through the *mercy and forbearance* of God, in consideration of their extreme frailty and inability, at that time, to bear a more perfect system of law. Other laws there are in the five books (besides the ceremonial laws now abrogated) which are merely *municipal*, being adapted to the peculiar polity of the Israelitish commonwealth, on account of its situation in the midst of the most barbarous nations, whom the Hebrews were at all times but too much inclined to imitate.

THE universal *moral laws*, and those of *natural equity* are, indeed, every where plentifully interspersed among the *peculiar laws* above-mentioned; but they may very easily be distinguished by every sincere christian, who examines them with a *liberal mind*, because the *benevolent purpose* of the Divine Author is *always apparent* in those laws which are to be *eternally binding*; for "*it is the reason of the law which constitutes the life of the law,*" according to an allowed maxim of our own country,

(a) Meaning, I suppose, the case of Somerset, which then depended.

country, “*Ratio Legis est anima Legis,*” (Jenk. Cent. 45.) And with respect to these *moral and equitable* laws, I will readily agree with the reverend Mr. Thompson, that they are the best rule by which “*learned judges*” and casuists can determine what is, or is “*not, contrary to nature.*”

BUT I will now give a few examples of laws, which are in *themselves contrary to nature or natural equity*, in order to shew that Mr. Thompson’s *premises* are totally false :

THE Israelites were expressly *permitted by the law of Moses* to give a bill of divorce to their wives whenever they pleased, and to marry *other women* ; and the women, who were put away, were also expressly permitted, by the Mosaic Law, *to marry again*, during the lives of their former husbands.

ALL which practices were manifestly contrary to *the law of nature* in its purity, though not perhaps to *the nature of our corrupt affections and desires* ; for Christ himself declared, that “*from the beginning it was not so,*” Matt. xix. 8, 9. and at the same time our Lord informed the Jews, that “*Moses, because of the hardness of their hearts, suffered them to put away their wives.*”

NEITHER was it *according to the law of nature*, that the Jews were *permitted* in their behaviour and dealings, to make a partial distinction between their *brethren* of the house of Israel, and strangers. This national partiality was not, indeed, either commanded or recommended,

commended in their law—but it was clearly *permitted* or *tolerated*, and probably, for the same reason as the last mentioned instance—  
 “thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother,” &c.—“unto a stranger thou mayst lend upon usury,” &c. Deut. xxiii. 19.—Again—“of a foreigner thou mayst exact;” (that is, whatsoever *has been lent*, as appears by the preceding verses) but that which is “thine, with thy brother, thine hand shall release,” Deut. xv. 3.

Now all these laws were “contrary to the law of nature,” or “natural equity,” (whatever Mr. Thompson may think) and were certainly annulled, or rather *superfeded*, as it were, by the more perfect doctrines of *universal benevolence* taught by Christ himself, who “came not to destroy, but to fulfil the law.”

In the law of Moses we also read, “Thou shalt not avenge or bear grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Leviticus xix. 18.

THE Jews, accordingly, thought themselves sufficiently justified, if they confined this glorious perfection of charity, viz. *the loving others as themselves*, to the persons mentioned in the same verse, viz. “the children of their own people;” for they had no idea that so much love could possibly be due to any other sort of neighbours or brethren. But Christ taught them by the parable of *the good Samaritan*, that all strangers whatever, even those  
 who

who are declared enemies, (as were the Samaritans to the Jews) are to be esteemed our *neighbours* or *brethren*, whenever they stand in need of our charitable assistance.

“THE Jewish institution,” indeed, as Mr. Thompson remarks, “permitted the use of *Bondservants*, but did not permit the *bondage of brethren*: STRANGERS ONLY could be *lawfully* retained as *Bondmen*——“ of “the heathen,” (or, more agreeably to the Hebrew word, “*of the nations*) “that are round about you, *of them shall ye* “buy *Bond men and Bond maids*. Moreover of the children of *strangers* that do sojourn among you, *of them shall ye buy,*” &c. ——“*They shall be your Bondmen for-ever.*” Levit. xxv. 39 to 46.

THIS was the law, I must acknowledge, with respect to a *stranger* that was *purchased*; but with respect to a *brother* or Hebrew of the seed of Abraham, it was far otherwise, as the same chapter testifies; (39th verse) for, “If thy *brother* that dwelleth by thee be waxen “poor, and be *sold* unto thee, thou *shalt not* “*compel him to serve as a Bondservant*, but as a “hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be “with thee, and shall serve thee unto the “year of jubilee, and *then shall he depart from* “*thee, both he and his children with him,*” &c. This was the *utmost servitude* that a Hebrew could *lawfully* exact from any of his *brethren* of the house of Israel, unless the servant entered *voluntarily* into a perpetual servitude:  
and

and, let me add, that it is also, the very *utmost servitude* that can *lawfully* be admitted *among christians* ; because we are bound as christians to esteem *every man our brother, and our neighbour*, which I have already proved ; so that this consequence, which I have drawn, is absolutely *unavoidable*. The Jews, indeed, who do not yet acknowledge the commands of Christ, may perhaps still think themselves *justified* by the law of Moses, in making partial distinctions between *their brethren of Israel, and other men* ; but it would be *inexcusable* in christians to do so, and therefore I conclude, that we certainly have no right to exceed the *limits of servitude*, which the Jews were bound to observe, whenever their poor *brethren* were sold to them : and I apprehend that we must not venture *even to go so far*, because the laws of *brotherly love* are infinitely enlarged, and extended by the gospel of peace, which proclaims “ *good will towards men,*” without distinction ; and because we cannot be said to “ *love our neighbours as ourselves ;*” or to “ *do to others as we would they should do unto us*” — whilst we retain them against their *will*, in a despicable servitude as *Slaves*, and *private property*, or *mere chattels*.

THE glorious system of the gospel destroys all *narrow, national partiality* ; and makes us *citizens of the world*, by obliging us to profess *universal benevolence* : but more especially are we bound, as christians, to commiserate and  
assist

assist to the utmost of our power all persons in distress, or captivity; whatever the “worshipful committee of the company of merchants trading to Africa,” may think of it, or their advocate, the reverend Mr. Thompson.

CHARITY, indeed, begins at home; and we ought most certainly to give the preference to our own countrymen, whenever we can do so without injustice; but we may “not do evil that good may come;” (though our statesmen, and their political deceivers may think otherwise) we must not, for the sake of *Old-England*, and its *African trade*, or for the supposed advantage, or imaginary necessities of our American colonies, lay aside our *christian charity*, which we owe to *all the rest of mankind*: because, *whenever we do so*, we certainly deserve to be considered in no better light than as an overgrown *society of robbers*, a mere *banditti*, who, perhaps, may love one another, but at the same time are at enmity with *all the rest of the world*. Is this *according to the law of nature*? —  
For shame Mr. Thompson!

I HAVE much more to communicate, but no more time to write: ——— if I had, I could draw from the scriptures the most alarming examples of God’s severe judgments upon the Jews, for tyrannizing over *their brethren*, and, *expressly*, for exceeding the *limits of servitude* just now mentioned. I must find time however to adopt one observation

tion even from the reverend Mr. Thompson, (p. 11) viz. “ This subject will grow more serious upon our hands, when we consider the *buying and selling Negroes*, not as a clandestine or piratical business; but as an open publick trade, encouraged and promoted by acts of parliament; for so, if being contrary to religion, it must be deemed a national sin; and as such may have a consequence that *would be always to be dreaded.*” May God give us grace to repent of this abominable national oppression, before it is too late!

If I have vindicated the law of Moses, much easier can I vindicate the benevolent apostle Paul, from Mr. Thompson’s insinuations, with respect to Slavery; for he *did not* entreat *Philemon* to take back his servant Onesimus “ in his former capacity,” as Mr. Thompson has asserted, in order to render Bondage “ consistent with the principles of revealed religion,”—but St. Paul said expressly, “ not now as a servant, but, above a servant, a brother beloved,” &c. So that Mr. Thompson has notoriously wrested St. Paul’s words.

In the other texts where St. Paul recommends submission to *Servants*, for conscience-sake, he at the same time enjoins the master to entertain such a measure of *brotherly love* towards his Servants, as must be entirely subversive of the African trade, and West-Indian Slavery. And though St. Paul

Paul recommends christian patience under servitude, yet, at the same time, he plainly insinuates, that it is inconsistent with christianity, and the dignity of Christ's kingdom, that a *christian brother* should be a *Slave*. "Can'st thou be made free?" (says he to the christian servants) "*choose it rather*, for he that is called of the Lord, *being a servant*, is the *Freeman* of the Lord; and, in like manner, he that is called, *being free*, is the *servant of Christ*"——"*Ye are bought with a price*; BE NOT THEREFORE, THE SERVANTS OF MEN." The apostle, indeed, had just before recommended, to his disciples to *abide in the same calling* wherein they were called, and, "*being servants, not to care for it*:" That is, not to grieve on account of *their temporal* state; for he was unwilling to advance any doctrine that might seem to interfere with the *temporal establishments* of government, and the supposed rights of men; yet it plainly appears, by the insinuations, which immediately follow, that he thought it derogatory to the honour of christianity, that men, *who "are bought,"* with the inestimable *price of Christ's blood*, should be esteemed *servants*; that is, *the Slaves*, and private property of other men; and had christianity been established by *temporal* authority, in those countries where Paul preached, as it is at present in these kingdoms, we need not doubt but that he would have *urged*, nay, compelled the masters, *as he did Philemon*,

D by



by the most pressing arguments, to treat  
 their quondam Slaves, “ NOT NOW AS  
 “ SERVANTS, BUT ABOVE SERVANTS—  
 “ AS BRETHREN BELOVED.



A N

E L E G Y

On the miserable STATE of an AFRICAN  
 SLAVE, by the celebrated and ingenious  
 WILLIAM SHENSTONE, Esq.

—SEE the poor native quit the Lybian shores,  
 Ah ! not in love's delightful fetters bound !  
 No radiant smile his dying peace restores,  
 Nor love, nor fame, nor friendship heals his wound.

Let vacant bards display their boasted woes,  
 Shall I the mockery of grief display ?  
 No, let the muse his piercing pangs disclose,  
 Who bleeds and weeps his sum of life away !

On the wild beach in mournful guise he stood,  
 Ere the shrill boatswain gave the hated sign ;  
 He dropt a tear unseen into the flood ;  
 He stole one secret moment, to repine.

Yet the muse listen'd to the plaints he made ;  
 Such moving plaints as nature could inspire ;  
 To me the muse his tender plea convey'd,  
 Smooth'd, and suited to the sounding lyre.

“ Why

“ Why am I ravish'd from my native strand?  
 What savage race protects this impious gain?  
 Shall foreign plagues infest this teeming land,  
 And more than sea-born monsters plough the main?

Here the dire locusts horrid swarms prevail;  
 Here the blue asps with livid poison swell;  
 Here the dry dipsa wriths his sinuous mail;  
 Can we not here, secure from envy, dwell?

When the grim lion urg'd his cruel chace,  
 When the stern panther sought his midnight prey,  
 What fate reserv'd me for this \* christian race?  
 O race more polish'd, more severe than they!

Ye prouling wolves pursue my latest cries!  
 Thou hungry tyger, leave thy reeking den!  
 Ye sandy wastes in rapid eddies rise!  
 O tear me from the whips and scorns of men!

Yet in their face superior beauty glows;  
 Are smiles the mien of rapine and of wrong?  
 Yet from their lip the voice of mercy flows,  
 And ev'n religion dwells upon their tongue.

Of blissful haunts they tell, and brighter climes,  
 Where gentle minds convey'd by death repair,  
 But stain'd with blood, and crimson'd o'er with crimes  
 Say, shall they merit what they paint so fair?

No, careless, hopeless of those fertile plains,  
 Rich by our toils, and by our sorrows gay,  
 They ply our labours, and enhance our pains,  
 And feign these distant regions to repay.

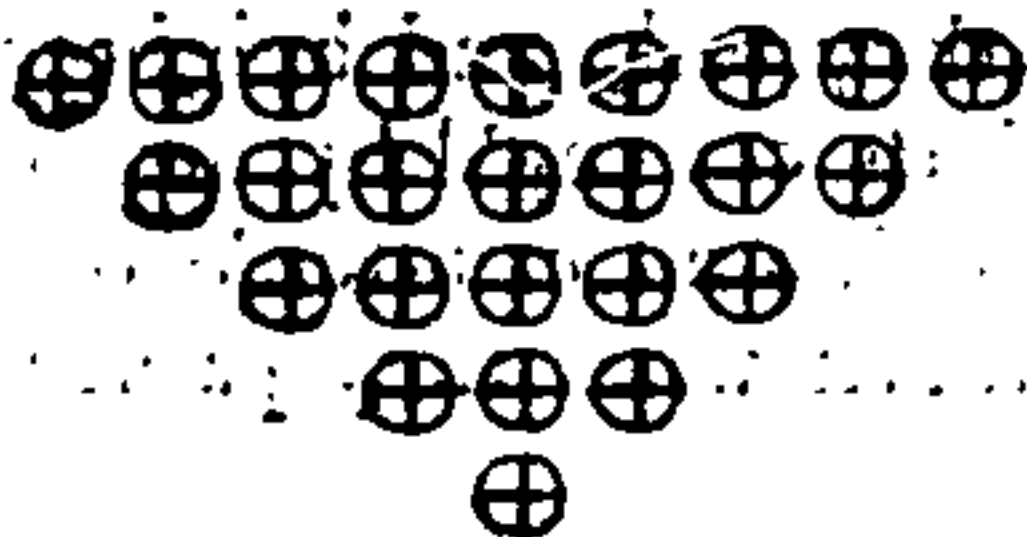
For

\* Spoke by a savage.

For them our tusky elephant expires ;  
 For them we drain the mine's embowel'd gold ;  
 Where rove the brutal nations wild desires?—  
 Our limbs are purchas'd, and our life is sold !

Yet shores there are, blest shores for us remain,  
 And favour'd isles with golden fruitage crown'd,  
 Where tufted flow'rets paint the verdant plain;  
 Where ev'ry breeze shall med'cine ev'ry wound.

There the stern tyrant that embitters life  
 Shall, vainly suppliant, spread his asking hand ;  
 There shall we view the billow's raging strife,  
 Aid the kind breast, and waft his boat to land."



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