

The Rev. JAMES WILLIAM CHARLES PENNINGTON then came forward and was received with loud applause. He said he had been sometimes told that by treating black people with kindness they made them proud and vain, but he could assure them that all the kindness and courtesy which he had received since he had been in their country, which had been but a short time, had only had the effect of making him feel his own nothingness. He sometimes, in passing about, had been almost at a loss to satisfy himself why so much kindness was shown to him, and the only way he could reconcile himself to it, was to consider that he was not acting for himself but for millions of his fellow countrymen who were suffering and in slavery. (Applause.) He therefore rejoiced after all greatly that opportunities had been afforded him, from time to time, to tell the story of woe—though it was but an unpleasant employment—to tell the story of woe, which unfortunately was no fiction but a reality. (Hear, hear.) It was painful for him to announce to them that he was from a land that, after the allowances that patriotism, and forbearance, and modesty, and courtesy would dictate, must be designated a land of slavery. (Hear, hear.) Notwithstanding the star bespangled banner that they saw in their waters,—notwithstanding all they heard of the declaration of independence, the celebrated document of '76,—notwithstanding the 4th of July orations,—notwithstanding what they heard of the Plenipotentiaries of the country taking fire sometimes in convention with the representatives of other nations, at some little infringement on their supposed rights,—notwithstanding all the pride of liberty that reigned in the American bosom, America was still a land of slavery. (Cheers.) He had often met, in his travels in this country, with persons who were exceedingly perplexed to understand how it was and why it was, that this accursed thing was permitted to exist in America. In order to understand the whole matter they must understand the geography of America, and the construction of its government. Sometimes America was spoken of as a country, but at other times it was denominated the United States, and in this latter point of view it presented itself a little different. They had twenty-six different states; thirteen of those States were denominated Free States, because

The Rev. JAMES WILLIAM CHARLES PENNINGTON then came forward and was received with loud applause. He said he had been sometimes told that by treating black people with kindness they made them proud and vain, but he could assure them that all the kindness and courtesy which he had received since he had been in their country, which had been but a short time, had only had the effect of making him feel his own nothingness. He sometimes, in passing about, had been almost at a loss to satisfy himself why so much kindness was shown to him, and the only way he could reconcile himself to it, was to consider that he was not acting for himself but for millions of his fellow countrymen who were suffering and in slavery. (Applause.) He therefore rejoiced after all greatly that opportunities had been afforded him, from time to time, to tell the story of woe—though it was but an unpleasant employment—to tell the story of woe, which unfortunately was no fiction but a reality. (Hear, hear.) It was painful for him to announce to them that he was from a land that, after the allowances that patriotism, and forbearance, and modesty, and courtesy would dictate, must be designated a land of slavery. (Hear, hear.) Notwithstanding the star bespangled banner that they saw in their waters,—notwithstanding all they heard of the declaration of independence, the celebrated document of '76,—notwithstanding the 4th of July orations,—notwithstanding what they heard of the Plenipotentiaries of the country taking fire sometimes in convention with the representatives of other nations, at some little infringement on their supposed rights,—notwithstanding all the pride of liberty that reigned in the American bosom, America was still a land of slavery. (Cheers.) He had often met, in his travels in this country, with persons who were exceedingly perplexed to understand how it was and why it was, that this accursed thing was permitted to exist in America. In order to understand the whole matter they must understand the geography of America, and the construction of its government. Sometimes America was spoken of as a country, but at other times it was denominated the United States, and in this latter point of view it presented itself a little different. They had twenty-six different states; thirteen of those States were denominated Free States, because

actual Slavery, that was, chains and cart whips, selling and buying men and women were not permitted there; but the other thirteen were denominated Slave States, because there the black man was under the reign of the cart whip, and was placed in the auctioneer's lot, and struck off to the highest bidder like an ox or a sheep. (Hear, hear.) In this way the country was divided; into Free States and Slave States. He had sometimes pictured to himself Slavery in America a great tree, having four enormous roots, and those roots piercing down through the entire moral soil of the country; one root piercing through all its politics; another through all its religion; another through all its education; and another through all its social intercourse; and the tree spread out his branches and bore then thousand kinds of bitter, nauseous, and accursed, fruit. (Applause.) In the first place, all the politics of the country, even in the Free States, were poisoned by its slavery. In the Free States of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire, he was glad to say, the coloured man was now permitted to vote in the elections, but in his own state of Connecticut, which was held to be one of the most highly favoured and enlightened in the Union, there was a provision in the constitution, by which coloured men were excluded from that privilege. By coloured men they meant not simply black men, but even men who could scarcely be distinguished from the whites by their complexion. If a man had, he almost might say, one thousandth part of black blood in his veins, if but one hair of his head were wrinkly, he was on the black side of the line, and was prohibited by the constitution of Connecticut from saying who should make laws he was to obey, and which were to protect or take away his life. In the States of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, the same was true, and yet all these were what were called free states. When the state of things existed in the free states, what must they expect in the slaves states? (Hear, hear.) In all the free states they found that legislation was

actual Slavery, that was, chains and cart whips, selling and buying men and women were not permitted there; but the other thirteen were denominated Slave States, because there the black man was under the reign of the cart whip, and was placed in the auctioneer's lot, and struck off to the highest bidder like an ox or a sheep. (Hear, hear.) In this way the country was divided; into Free States and Slave States. He had sometimes pictured to himself Slavery in America a great tree, having four enormous roots, and those roots piercing down through the entire moral soil of the country; one root piercing through all its politics; another through all its religion; another through all its education; and another through all its social intercourse; and the tree spread out his branches and bore ten thousand kinds of bitter, nauseous, and accursed, fruit. (Applause.) In the first place, all the politics of the country, even in the Free States, were poisoned by its slavery. In the Free States of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire, he was glad to say, the coloured man was now permitted to vote in the elections, but in his own state of Connecticut, which was held to be one of the most highly favoured and enlightened in the Union, there was a provision in the constitution, by which coloured men were excluded from that privilege. By coloured men they meant not simply black men, but even men who could scarcely be distinguished from the whites by their complexion. If a man had, he might almost say, one thousandth part of black blood in his veins, if but one hair of his head were wrinkly, he was on the black side of the line, and was prohibited by the constitution of Connecticut from saying who should make the laws he was to obey, and which were to protect or take away his life. In the States of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, the same was true, and yet all these were what were called free states. When this state of things existed in the free states, what must they expect in the slave states? (Hear, hear.) In all the free states they found that legislation was

poisoned, that the men who went to make laws were prejudiced by the influence of slavery, and that whenever a law was to be made, bearing on the black population, it was rarely indeed that they could expect anything like even handed justice. (Hear, hear.) In order to show the influence of slavery in the free states, he stated, that a slave who had escaped from his master was seized by the latter in Pennsylvania, and in despite of a law which existed in that state, providing that before any fugitive slave should be given up he should be tried by a jury there, he carried him back to the adjoining state of Maryland, and the supreme court of the United States, before which the matter was afterwards brought for trial by the authorities of Pennsylvania, gave a decision to the effect that the slaveholder had the absolute right to take his slave wherever he might find him; and that no judge or jury, no court or authority, in any of the free states, had any right whatever to interpose. That was the supreme law of this land of liberty, so that any fugitive slave who had taken refuge in the free states might, at any moment, whether he was in church or chapel, or court of justice, or in whatever other place he might have sought for sanctuary, be dragged back by his master to chains and slavery. (Shame.) Then with respect to the religion of the country, the effects of slavery upon the Christian church were most horrid to contemplate. All the great denominations in the country had their hands, he might say, stained with human blood. (Hear, hear.) They had all more or less interests at the south, and whenever, in their preaching, or their public or private actions of any kind, they came in contact with slavery, it was found that their judgment was prejudiced in favour of slavery, and against humanity. It was no uncommon thing to have ministers ascend the pulpit and drop a word in favour of slavery; and in the south, it was a common thing to see in the newspapers announcements of sermons to be preached by some eminent divine in support of slavery, from the Bible. (Shame.) Even in the Free States the spirit of slavery was carried out in their Christian communities, by the setting apart of what

poisoned, that the men who went to make laws were prejudiced by the influence of slavery, and that whenever a law was to be made, bearing on the black population, it was rarely indeed that they could expect anything like even-handed justice. (Hear, hear.) In order to show the influence of slavery in the free states, he stated, that a slave who had escaped from his master was seized by the latter in Pennsylvania, and, in despite of a law which existed in that state, providing that before any fugitive slave should be given up he should be tried by a jury there, he carried him back to the adjoining state of Maryland, and the supreme court of the United States, before which the matter was afterwards brought for trial by the authorities of Pennsylvania, gave a decision to the effect that the slaveholder had the absolute right to take his slave wherever he might find him; and that no judge or jury, no court or authority, in any of the free states, had any right whatever to interpose. That was the supreme law of this land of liberty, so that any fugitive slave who had taken refuge in the free states might, at any moment, whether he was in church or chapel, or court of justice, or in whatever other place he might have sought for sanctuary, be dragged back by his master to chains and slavery. (Shame.) Then with respect to the religion of the country, the effects of slavery upon the Christian church were most horrid to contemplate. (Hear, hear.) All the great denominations in the country had their hands, he might say, stained with human blood. (Hear, hear.) They had all more or less interests at the south, and whenever, in their preaching, or in their public or private actions of any kind, they came in contact with slavery, it was found that their judgment was prejudiced in favour of slavery, and against humanity. It was no uncommon thing to have ministers ascend the pulpit and drop a word in favour of slavery; and in the south, it was a common thing to see in the newspapers announcements of sermons to be preached by some eminent divine in support of slavery, from the Bible. (Shame.) Even in the Free States the spirit of slavery was carried out in their Christian communities, by the setting apart of what

was called a "Negro pew", in which every coloured worshipper, however wealthy, or however educated he might be, must sit; and for him to offer to buy, or take, or negotiate for any seat anywhere else, would be to offer insult. (Hear, hear.)

When the Lord's Supper was administered, every black communicant must take care to wait till the last, for if by any chance, and even though he were like himself, a minister of the Gospel, he should come before any white communicant, trouble and confusion would follow; some person would probably on the instant leave the church, or perhaps would fall out with the minister, who had nothing to do with it. (Cries of "Hear, hear.") Such was the influence of Slavery, even upon the churches in that part of the country where he lived. It was generally thought that the most highly educated men would be the most liberal, but in America it seemed just the reverse; and it was a common thing for the men who presided in their institutions of learning, to turn away the coloured youth who sought to obtain there the advantages and blessings of instruction. The story was that the coloured people were ignorant, worthless, degraded, unfit to associate with, incapable of being taught, and yet this was the way in which the experiment of improvement was made, by driving them away from their institutions of education. (Hear, hear.) He asked whether this was fair? (Hear, hear.) The moral bearings of the subject were equally appalling. Every where the family circle was polluted. He knew there were many kind hearted people in America; he himself knew many, who would be glad to open their doors to him, and receive him kindly, but they wanted courage, and were afraid of the remark that they kept "a nigger house," and of having the finger of scorn pointed at them. (Hear, hear.) He pitied them—he pitied them. (Applause.) Many ministers of religion were in this condition. He knew their feelings, and he pitied them. He noticed this, in order to make the remarks that they would feel greatly encouraged by the actions of ministers and churches on this side the water. (Applause.)

was called a "Negro pew," in which every enlightened worshipper, however wealthy, or however educated he might be, must sit; and for him to offer to buy, or take, or negotiate for any seat anywhere else, would be to offer insult. (Hear, hear.) When the Lord's Supper was administered, every black communicant must take care to wait till the last; for if by any chance, and even though he were like himself, a minister of the Gospel, he should come before any white communicant, trouble and confusion would follow; some person would probably on the instant leave the church, or perhaps would fall out with the minister, who had nothing to do with it. (Cries of "Hear, hear.") Such was the influence of Slavery, even upon the churches in that part of the country where he lived. It was generally thought that the most highly educated men would be the most liberal, but in America it seemed just the reverse; and it was a common thing for the men who presided in their institutions of learning, to turn away the coloured youth who sought to obtain there the advantages and blessings of instruction. The story was that the coloured people were ignorant, worthless, degraded, unfit to associate with, incapable of being taught, and yet this was the way in which the experiment of improvement was made, by driving them away from their institutions of education. (Hear, hear.) He asked whether this was fair? (Hear, hear.) The moral bearings of the subject were equally appalling. Every where the family circle was polluted. He knew there were many kind hearted people in America; he himself knew many, who would be glad to open their doors to him, and receive him kindly, but they wanted courage, and were afraid of the remark that they kept "a nigger house," and of having the finger of scorn pointed at them. (Hear, hear.) He pitied them—he pitied them. (Applause.) Many ministers of religion were in this condition. He knew their feelings, and he pitied them. He noticed this, in order to make the remarks that they would feel greatly encouraged by the actions of ministers and churches on this side the water. (Applause.)

Let no one suppose that what was said or done in England, would not have a good effect in America. It would: and knowing and pitying the condition of those kind hearted persons, to whom he had alluded, he wished as much to see them emancipated, as he wished to see his brethren emancipated. (Applause.) They were all slaves. (Loud applause.) The slave feeling was carried out even in the pulpit. (Applause.) He then referred to the insults which the coloured man in the Free States had to endure, if he had occasion to travel. When he (Mr. Pennington) set out from Hartford, on the 5th of May, on his way to this land, the very first step he took he met with insult. When he went to the depot, to take his ticket for Newhaven, though he paid the same money for it as other passengers did for theirs, yet the conductor followed him, to take particular care that he should not sit where any white person sat. (Expressions of disgust.) He opened the door of a little, dirty, dark carriage, and there, however respectable might be his appearance or his business, there he must sit. (Hear, hear.) At New York he met with the same treatment. Even now, if they sent a vessel from London, which contained one black man or one black passenger, and the vessel should go into some port of North Carolina, or Alabama, the captain would, under the laws of the state, be obliged to report to the mayor of the city, that he had such a black person on board, and the mayor would issue a warrant, and send an officer to take that black person, and lodge him in prison till the vessel was ready to sail again, and then, the captain would have to pay the expenses, (Hear, hear, and shame.) But [let] them mark, if the captain did not choose to pay the expenses, the coloured man would remain in prison, and be sold to defray the [gaol] fees, even if they should only amount to three dollars. (Shame.) He then became to all intents and purposes the slave of the person who bought him; and hundreds, in sailing from the Free States to the Slave States, had lost their freedom on this way. (Hear, hear.) Was it not likely th[e] that in this way England might

Let no one suppose that what was said or done in England, would not have a good effect in America. It would; and knowing and pitying the condition of those kind hearted persons, to whom he had alluded, he wished as much to see them emancipated, as he wished to see his brethren emancipated. (Applause.) They were all slaves. (Loud applause.) The slave feeling was carried out even in the pulpit. (Applause.) He then referred to the insults which the coloured man in the Free States had to endure, if he had occasion to travel. When he (Mr. Pennington) set out from Hartford, on the 5th of May, on his way to this land, the very first step he took he met with insult. When he went to the depot, to take his ticket for Newhaven, though he paid the same money for it as other passengers did for theirs, yet the conductor followed him, to take particular care that he should not sit where any white person sat. (Expressions of disgust.) He opened the door of a little, dirty, dark carriage, and there, however respectable might be his appearance or his business, there he must sit. (Hear, hear.) At New York he met with the same treatment. Even now, if they sent a vessel from London, which contained one black man or one black passenger, and the vessel should go into some port of North Carolina, or Alabama, the captain would, under the laws of the state, be obliged to report to the mayor of the city, that he had such a black person on board, and the mayor would issue a warrant, and send an officer to take that black person, and lodge him in prison till the vessel was ready to sail again, and then the captain would have to pay the expenses, (Hear, hear, and shame.) But let them mark, if the captain did not choose to pay the expenses, the coloured man would remain in prison, and be sold to defray the gaol fees, even if they should only amount to three dollars. (Shame.) He then became to all intents and purposes the slave of the person who bought him; and hundreds, in sailing from the Free States to the Slave States, had lost their freedom in this way. (Hear, hear.) Was it not likely that in this way England might

get into trouble with the Southern States of America? He next alluded to the letter which had been read by Mr. Richardson, which he said would serve to show the state of feeling in the Christian Church of America, with respect to Slavery. He had often seen documents [like ore,] and though he did not like to make violent charges against any body of men, yet he could scarcely suppress his indignation when heard them read.

What kind of heart could a man have who could write such a letter. (Loud applause.) To tell him that the slaves were satisfied; that they were happy; and to use the vulgar word “fat”—which was specimen of the grammar the philosophy, and the modesty of the slave catalogue—was preposterous. They might as well tell him (Mr. P.) that he would be better satisfied at the moment to be in chains than to be there. (Loud applause.) The letter [was an] universal libel; it was as false as anything could be. (Hear, hear, and applause.) Only think for a moment of the number of slaves that were annually and daily escaping from slavery, and they would find a sufficient answer to the assertion that the slaves were happy. (Cheers.) In his own state he was called upon every day to administer to those who had become free from this “happy” condition, and only a few days before he left home, he was called upon by one, who, after three attempts, and after being severely punished for his two unsuccessful ones, had at length succeeded in effecting his escape. This showed then how well the slaves satisfied. The only reason why they sometimes appeared so, was because they possessed a little practical wisdom, which taught them to make themselves satisfied under their circumstances until the convenient time when they could change them. By appearing satisfied, too they sometimes saved themselves from punishment; and it was also a fact, that the slaveholders so intimidated them at times, as to make them say, when questioned by travellers, that they did not want to be free. (Hear, hear.) But it was all humbug. (Loud applause.) Yet the letter served to show the state of moral feeling in the Christian Church, and

get into trouble with the Southern States of America? He next alluded to the letter which had been read by Mr. Richardson, which he said would serve to show the state of feeling in the Christian Church of America, with respect to Slavery. He had often seen such documents like ore, and though he did not like to make violent charges against any body of men, yet he could scarcely suppress his indignation when he heard them read. What kind of heart could a man have who could write such a letter. (Loud applause.) To tell him that the slaves were satisfied; that they were happy; and to use the vulgar word

“fat”—which was a specimen of the grammar—the philosophy, and the modesty of the slave catalogue—was preposterous. They might as well tell him (Mr. P.) that he would be better satisfied at that moment to be in chains than to be there. (Loud applause.) The letter was a universal libel; it was as false as anything could be. (Hear, hear, and applause.) Only think for a moment of the number of slaves that were annually and daily escaping from slavery, and they would find a sufficient answer to the assertion that the slaves were happy. (Cheers.) In his own state he was called upon every day to administer to those who had become free from this “happy” condition, and only a few days before he left home, he was called upon by one, who, after three attempts, and after being severely punished for his two unsuccessful ones, had at length succeeded in effecting his escape. This showed them how well the slaves were satisfied. The only reason why they sometimes appeared so, was because they possessed a little practical wisdom, which taught them to make themselves satisfied under their circumstances until the convenient time when they could change them. By appearing satisfied, too, they sometimes saved themselves from punishment; and it was also a fact, that the slaveholders so intimidated them at times, as to make them say, when questioned by travellers, that they did not want to be free. (Hear, hear.) But it was all humbug. (Loud applause.) Yet the letter served to show the state of moral feeling in the Christian Church, and

those who, in this country, had refused to hold Christian fellowship with them, till they [dis]countenance slavery had taken the right and the only effectual ground. (Applause.) There was a noble band of abolitionists in America, and he trusted that their efforts would never cease till every chain was broken, and every slave went free. (Loud applause.) Every week they heard of churches in America taking the right ground on this subject, and passing resolutions that they would not hold communion with slave holders. (Applause.) Their progress had hitherto been rather slow, but it was becoming more and more rapid. (Loud applause.) He concluded by expressing the gratification which he had derived from his brief visit to this country. This was his last week here. He should return home on the Saturday of this week. But his short stay amongst them had not been unprofitably spent, and he had more especially derived delight and instruction from his intercourse with Christian ministers, and Christian churches, and Christian circles in this country, whose conduct to him had exhibited such a strong contrast to the treatment he received in his own country, that he had been sometimes almost overwhelmed by it—and it had made such a deep impression on his mind, that he could never forget it, but should endeavour to profit by it to his last day. (Loud applause.) Though he might never be permitted to set foot on the soil of Great Britain again, he could never forget the kindness with which he had been received. (Applause.) He should return home the more cheerfully, because he should hasten to tell his brethren that there was hope—he should hasten to tell them that all the world were not like America—he should hasten to tell them that all the communities in the world were not afraid to act, and were not wedded to slavery. (Loud applause.) The report he should be able to make to them when he got home and especially the facts he should have to relate to them with respect to Christian ministers and Christian people of all denominations, would be highly cheering, and would tell with immense power on the cause in America.

those who, in this country, had refused to hold Christian fellowship with them, till they [dis]countenance slavery, had taken the right and the only effectual ground. (Applause.) There was a noble band of abolitionists in America, and he trusted that their efforts would never cease till every chain was broken, and every slave went free. (Loud applause.) Every week they heard of churches in America taking the right ground on this subject, and passing resolutions that they would not hold communion with slave holders. (Applause.) Their progress had hitherto been rather slow, but it was becoming more and more rapid. (Loud applause.) He concluded by expressing the gratification which he had derived from his brief visit to this country. This was his last week here. He should return home on the Saturday of this week. But his short stay amongst them had not been unprofitably spent, and he had more especially derived delight and instruction from his intercourse with Christian ministers, and Christian churches, and Christian circles in this country, whose conduct to him had exhibited such a strong contrast to the treatment he received in his own country, that he had been sometimes almost overwhelmed by it—and it had made such a deep impression on his mind, that he could never forget it, but should endeavour to profit by it to his last day. (Loud applause.) Though he might never be permitted to set foot on the soil of Great Britain again, he could never forget the kindness with which he had been received. (Applause.) He should return home the more cheerfully, because he should hasten to tell his brethren that there was hope—he should hasten to tell them that all the world were not like America—he should hasten to tell them that all the communities in the world were not afraid to act, and were not wedded to slavery. (Loud applause.) The report he should be able to make to them when he got home, and especially the facts he should have to relate to them with respect to Christian ministers and Christian people of all denominations, would be highly cheering, and would tell with immense power on the cause in America.

August 5, 1843
Pennington, J. W. C.
Leeds Mercury

(Loud applause.) He would conclude with the expression of a sentiment to which he was sure the audience would respond.
“*Homo sum: uilhumanua alienua puto.*”—I am man; and I regard as foreign to me nothing related to the family of man.]
(Reiterated applause.)

(Loud applause.) He would conclude with the expression of a sentiment to which he was sure the audience would respond.
“*Homo sum: uilhumanua alienua puto.*”—I am a man; and I regard as foreign to me nothing related to the family of man.]
(Reiterated applause.)