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## SPEECH OF HON. OWEN LOVEJOY, of Illinois.

Delivered in the House of Representatives, February 21, 1859.

Within the last five lustrians, a strange fanaticism has made its appearance in this country—a fanaticism at once monstrous and malign. Twenty-five years ago, by the universal sentiment of the country, Slavery was deemed a moral, social, and political evil; a wrong to the slave, an injury to the owner, a blight on the soil, a detriment to all the best interests of the communities or States where it was found, and, in its reflex influence, a reproach and damage to the whole country. By many, it may be, this evil was considered incurable, but still an evil. But within the period indicated, a different sentiment has sprung up. This fanaticism deems Slavery not an evil, but a blessing.

Formerly by all, and still by all right-thinking men, Slavery was regarded as a hag, ugly, deformed, wrinkled, and covered with the dust and paint of hardship; but now we are told it is an angel of beauty, a virgin decked in bridal attire to be gazed on with complacency and love! Candidates who aspire to gubernatorial honors are made to renounce opinions held a quarter of a century ago, and give in their adhesion to this new dogma, to wit: that Slavery is a blessing. It is not any longer the question how a cancer can be cured—whether by knife or caustic, or other remedial agencies—but to have a cancer is now proclaimed to be a sound and normal condition of the human system, the highest type of health, and, if on the face, an ornament and beauty spot. Every one, to enjoy perfect health, must have this form of disease gnawing at his vitals. The spirit of this fanaticism has taken possession of the Democratic party, and worked therein a wonderful and almost incredible transformation; for, since the Ares drew up the reins and started on their journey, I do not suppose they have witnessed such a stupendous Lie as the Democratic party now is. I speak of the organization, without any reference to the individuals who compose the party. "From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment"—unmediated and unbaudaged, it drips with its fetid precursors.

Look at the President's message, now under discussion. It is instinct with simulation and deceit. Professedly he deprecates the discussion and agitation of the Slavery question, and yet the whole of the message is engrossed with it. Not a leading topic of that state paper that has not a direct or remote bearing on it. What do we want of another slice from Mexico? Is our population pressing against our boundaries? Let the vast regions within our present limits yet unoccupied, and which will not be occupied for the next half century, answer that question. Why, then, does the Executive urge the acquisition of more of the Mexican domain? It is that Slavery and Disunion, twin-born of Darkness, may have a rail car in which to ride.—This is openly avowed, in the other end of the Capitol. What is that part of the message relating to Kansas, but the querulous last word of an old man, who whose Pro Slavery policy had been condemned by the country? What occasion is there for the doleful tone of the message in regard to the future decadence of the Republic, which has given rise in Europe to so many prophecies of ill omen in regard to our future? How eagerly the advocates of despotic government catch up this Democratic slander, and foretell the downfall of our free institutions?

But what is the trouble? Is there any disloyalty to the Union among the Republicans, or indeed among any class in the free States? No. Any disaffection toward our principles of Government?—None. What then has excited the fears of this urbane and hospitable old gentleman? Did the Chief indite the message under the influence of too deep potations from the distillations of Rye? No one believes this. The Slavery-extending policy of the Administration had received a terrible rebuke from the people.—They had repudiated the President's Senocho Panza, the autocrat of the dinner table; and the poor man shocked and te-diwildered, and tearing his locks, like King Lear, thought the Government was falling to pieces, because Slavery Propaganda had been repudiated by the popular vote. *Hinc lachrymæ!* Be comforted, venerable Chief! It is not the free institutions of our country, but the Pro Slavery Democracy, that is falling asunder, like a piece of limestone when water is poured upon it. So also in regard to Cuba. The real object of its purchase is not the *avowed* one. It is governed by a race who do not speak our language—who are unused to self-government—who

have, and if annexed as States will continue to have, an established form of religion, or Church and State united; but, in spite of all, we are asked to purchase this island, and to place thirty millions in the hands of the Executive, to begin the negotiations—that is, to buy up the officials!—Does any one believe that it is for the benefit of commerce, or the safety of navigation, that we are asked to do all this? If so, why not seek to purchase the British West Indies? Have we not as much to fear from England as from Spain?—And where is Canada and the other British possessions, that stretch all along our Northern frontier, from the Atlantic to the Pacific? No; it is not for the benefit of commerce, nor to guard against invasion, that we are asked to purchase Cuba; but it is for the benefit of slave-breeders and human flesh mongers. And yet these Democrats profess that they want to get Slavery out of national politics.—Would to God they were sincere! Would to Heaven this beast of prey would take the carcass of the slain into its lair! It might gnaw the flesh and crunch the bones without molesting me! But instead of that, it asks me to hold its victim while it sucks the blood. But this, God helping me, I never will do. Take your pound of flesh, if it is so nominated in the bond, but do not ask for the blood as well.

Read over the whole message, and you will find its entire texture to be Slavery. Every topic is discussed with reference to its bearings on the subject of Slavery. And yet the Democrats, with an impudence that challenges our admiration for its sublimity, turn to us, and say, "Do not agitate this subject." Do not keep up this sectional strife! To agitate, to legislate, to make treaties, to annex territory, to purchase empires for Slavery, is all right, but do anything against Slavery is wrong and sectional.

And here is another phase of this fanatical spirit, which has taken up its dwelling place in the Democratic party. It identifies Slavery with the nation, and especially with the South. Now, I am reckoned as ultra and extreme as most on this subject, and yet, no one has ever heard me say anything against the South. It is only against Slavery that I have spoken, and I propose to assail that only in those modes justified by the Constitution; yet I am sectional, and Republicans are sectional. When they only seek to prevent the extension of a system which is under the ban of the civilized world, they are charged with being sectional. In Illinois, we have supplied full of this horror. And what is the proof? We have no delegates from slave States to attend our National Nominating Conventions. Why have we none? Mark; because if delegates attend these Conventions they are mobbed and driven into exile. What if we, in the free States, should say to the Democrats, "If you attend the Charleston Convention, we will hang you," and thus keep them at home, and then reproach them with being a sectional party, because only the slave States were represented? "Well, you have no votes in the slave States; your principles do not circulate with us at all; you dare not even proclaim your doctrines among us." And why do not our principles circulate in the slave States? They used, for they are the principles of Washington, and Franklin, and other founders of the Republic. The reason why our principles do not circulate in the slave States is, that this despotism has, like another Napoleon, crushed out the freedom of speech and of the press. Allow us free access to the minds of the non-slaveholders of the South, and in one year we would have more Republican votes in proportion, in slave States, than there are Democratic votes in the free States. "Your principles do not circulate down here," boasts the Slavery propagandist. Sacred history tells us of a certain rich man who died, and was very unfortunate in the selection of a future home; but, though an impassable gulf spread itself between him and a better world, it seems he could converse with those more happily situated. Supposing, now, this man should lift up his voice, and sending it booming across the chasm that yawns between heaven and hell, and say, "Ho, Abraham, Isaac, Gabriel, and your celestials generally, you are a sectional party up there; your principles do not circulate down here." And why does not Heaven's truth circulate down there? Because the inmates are so wicked that they will not tolerate the presence of any angel preacher. This man must have been a good, sound, national Democrat. And so, I suppose, was that illustrious personage whom Milton has described as bridging the chasm that spread between earth and the place of his exile, and who claimed the right of carrying the local institutions of his realm into Paradise.

And this reminds me to say that the Democratic party, led on by this insane fanaticism, which holds Slavery to be morally right, under the guidance of a political harlequin and trickster, has proclaimed the constitutional right of Slavery to go into the Territories without let or hindrance. Plighted national faith is broken and dishonored! Principles once declared sacred by this very leader, and said to be canonized in the hearts of the American people, and ruthlessly and recklessly trampled under foot. We had an angel of Liberty stationed at the portals of our Territories. For thirty years, this sentinel had kept watch and

ward, and guarded that magnificent domain as the heritage of Freedom, and with the flaming sword of the ordinance of the patriots of the olden time, kept out Slavery from this Eden. Who chased away this angel, and broke down the walls that enclosed that empire, consecrated to the sons and daughters of Freedom as a dwelling place and home, as long as the sun and moon should endure? Who did this ruthless, reckless, damnable work? The Democratic party, under the leadership of the individual I have indicated. Under what plea was Slavery thus allowed to enter in and ravage the heritage of Freedom? On the same ground that the madman opens the pest house to let leprosy, plague, and cholera, rush forth, as did the winds from the fabulous cave, to walk at midnight and waste at noonday. A man with a contagious disease must not stay in his own house, nor be confined in the hospital, but must be allowed to roam abroad, to spread disease and death among his fellow men! What is this but the veriest madness that ever raved in Bedlam! I know it is said that there are two wings to the Democratic party.—I am aware of that, and I know, also, that both wings belong to the same vulture, and, although one has been slightly out of joint, it has now got back to its place, and both will flap in unison, to bear the carrier bird back to gorge and fatten on the carcass where it has gorged and fattened so long.

But the strangest and most impious phase of this fanaticism is, that it claims the sanction of the Bible for American Slavery. I have neither time nor disposition to enter into a philological argument on this question. I shall not ransack Greek lexicons and musty manuscripts to ascertain the precise etymological force of the Greek words translated *servant* in the Bible. And as for the grand old Hebrew, in which the ancient Scriptures were written, it has no word which describes a human being as a piece of property. Before quoting chapter or verse, I desire to say a few words having a general bearing on this subject. The Theocratic charter granted to the Jews was exclusive, and constituted them a kind of close corporation, with peculiar privileges as a commonwealth. But all those unusual franchises were bestowed upon them on the express condition that they should comply with a prescribed ritual. God explicitly declared that he would slay every native-born Jew that did not comply with the provisions of their charter. Now, I desire to inquire of those who claim the right to hold slaves under this old charter given to the Jews. Have you complied with the requisitions of that charter? Do you abstain from Virginia ham and other swine's flesh? Do you observe the new moons, the sabbaths, circumcision, and the appointed feasts? If not, you are no Jew, and are not entitled to the franchise of a Jew; but on the other hand you belong to the Gentile race, who, according to your theory, were of right made slaves. If the advocates of Slavery choose to go back and place themselves under a code of laws given to a race of men evidently yet in a state of barbarism, let them take the whole code, and abide by it, and obey it. Another statement. If the Bible sanctions Slavery at all, it is the enslavement of white men. No one pretends that the servants spoken of in the Bible were blacks. The Roman slave was not a black man.—The Hebrew servant was not a black man.—The question is, whether the laboring man, white or black, may rightfully be enslaved.

I may as well notice, here, that worn-out quotation erroneously placed on H. M. Noah planted a vineyard, raised some grapes, made some wine, and got drunk. When he waked up, still fuddled with the fumes of the wine, *sotto voce*, so confused he did not know his son from his grandson, he uttered the malediction, "cursed be Canaan," not Ham, who had been guilty of the wrong. And now in the blaze of the nineteenth century, with the radiance of Christianity shining around, Democrats go mousing back five thousand years to learn the basis of human rights from the lips of a man still half drunk. "Cursed be Canaan" is evermore the refrain of Democratic minstrelsy.

And now to the Bible. I will not detain the Committee long, for I have no patience with the impety that attempts to throw the sanction of this holy book around the diabolical system of American Slavery. What says this inspired volume? "Thou shalt not steal!" Brief, comprehensive, and to the point. This must be taken from the Bible, before it can be made to sanction Slavery. Does this forbid my taking of my neighbor's horse, but allow me to induce the man to a slave, and then claim them both? How much better is a man than a sheep? If I am told that Slavery is not theft, because the felonious intent is not there, I reply, as the gentleman from Georgia replied, who has in former years on this floor attempted to justify Slavery on the authority of the Scriptures. He declared that the act of Paulding in arresting the marauder, Walker, was an act of robbery. Some one replied, that it could not be robbery, for there was no felonious intent. The gentleman from Georgia rejoined, "I said robbery; I did not say legal robbery."—So I say theft; I do not say legal theft, or theft in the legal sense. We are talking about the moral, not the legal, character of Slavery. The title to every slave originated in violence and robbery, and

its continuance has no other moral character. There can be no mistake about the rightful ownership of a human being. He belongs to himself. Because my father or mother was reduced to the condition of a slave, does that justify my being reduced to the same condition of brutism? Does the continuance of wrong take away its guilt? I repeat, there can be no doubt as to the ownership of any human being. The title is in himself. To take it from him is robbery. But we have a specific statute on this subject. "He that stealth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hands," that is, in his possession, "he shall surely be put to death." This enactment, takes this transaction out of the catalogue of ordinary crime, and brands it with peculiar reprobation. Other forms of theft could be stoned for by returning four-fold; this claimed the forfeiture of life itself, thus making it a capital offence. No squirming of sophistry can get round this. There it stands, the estimate of the Jewish Scriptures of the crime of trafficking in human flesh. So once thought the Presbyterian church, when they declared slaveholding to be a violation of the eighth commandment.—So thought President Edwards, when he declared the slaveholder guilty of man-stealing every day. This was the constitutional law of the Jewish Commonwealth. No other statute could contravene it, any more than a State or Territorial law could annul a provision of the Constitution of the United States. All the instances of buying and selling relied upon by the advocates of Slavery are confined to the person bought and the person sold. A person "falling into decay," sold himself, not as a chattel or slave, but as a servant for a term of years; and when the jubilee came round, liberty was proclaimed throughout all the land, to all the inhabitants thereof. When there was a failure on the part of the people to proclaim this liberty, promised and secured by law, then God proclaimed a liberty to them to the sword, and to the pestilence, and those other judgments that fell swift and terrific from the hand of an incensed God. It was this providential retribution which made Jefferson tremble for his country, when he remembered that God was just, and that his justice would not sleep forever. In the uprising of these oppressed millions, he averred that no attribute of Jehovah could take sides with the oppressor.

Honor thy father and thy mother, is the requirement of the Bible. Slavery utterly annuls this command. The owner claims honor and obedience, to the utter disregard of parental authority and parental claims. Whoever thinks of a slave child obeying his parent in preference to his master? The very suggestion is preposterous. Does the Bible sanction a system that abrogates its own injunctions? There stands that slave mother, pressing with a mother's love her own child to her breast! To whom does it belong? Is it not hers against the universe? Is there any being, this side the throne of God, that has the right to take it from her? Has the master the right to come and tear it away from her embrace, and claim it as his property? And is this robbery sanctioned by the Bible, and that Bible the word of God? I know the people are taught this by a ministry that I dislike to characterize as I think they deserve.

"Wealth, lust, and fashion, bid them still to bleed, And holy men quote Scripture for the deed." But these men do not truly interpret the Bible. They teach for doctrines the commandments of men, and make the word of God of none effect through their traditions. How dare these men make the Bible lend its sanction to a system that abrogates parental authority and filial duty?

So, also, with the conjugal relation.—The Bible everywhere represents this as the most sacred, inviolable, and indissoluble of all human relations. Father and mother are to be forsaken, in obedience to the claims of this still higher and holier relation. Now, what does Slavery do with this domestic institution? Leave God and the parties perfectly free to regulate it in their own way? No; with impious and brazen front, it steps in and utterly annihilates the marriage relation, so far as its victims are concerned. There is no more any legal marriage among the three or four millions of slaves in the United States, than there is among so many cattle. Slaves in the eye of the law are cattle, and their union is that of brutes. They are declared to be goods, chattels personal, to all intents, constructions, and purposes, whatever. The civil law which prevails in some of the States takes them *pro nullis, pro mortuis, pro quadrupellis*.

Would it not be an interesting spectacle to see one of these clergymen, who teach that the Bible sanctions Slavery, called in to attend the wedding of a bureau and chest of drawers! The chairs, shovel, and tongs, are invited as guests. After a fervent prayer for the divine blessing, the clergyman says:— "By the old Levitical laws, I join the bureau to the drawers." *Quid Rides? mutata nomine, detur fabula narrantur.* Absolutely, there can be no more legal marriage between two slaves, than between two articles of furniture, or between two brutes. They "take up together;" they do not marry. No clergyman dare

pronounce two slaves husband and wife till death shall separate them. The will of the master is their fate. The Bible says: "What God hath joined together, let no man put assunder." The slave system says: Who cares for God? I will separate them when I please. A slave who is a church member is taught by his religious teachers, that it is his duty, on being sold from one plantation to another, leaving a so-called wife behind to take another mate; and the reason assigned by these pious instructors is, that in this way he can be most profitable to his master, which is his first and paramount duty. Thus he may, as a good Christian, take up with a new woman on every plantation to which he is sold.— This has been formally so decided by an ecclesiastical council. And yet these blasphemers seek to make God a partner in this revolting practice.

The Bible everywhere requires an equivalent to be given for services rendered. "Who unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work." "Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields which by you is kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them that have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." Slavery never allows any wages at all to those who garner in its harvests. To say that the clothing and the food that the slave receives are wages, is to say that the hay, grain, and stabling of the horse, are wages. These constitute the keeping of the horse and of the slave; wages they are not.

It is frequently said, that although individuals may do wrong, yet the system is right. Now, it is against the system that I speak. The truth is, the individuals are better than the system. The humanity—and in my charity, perhaps, I ought to say the Christianity—of the master often triumphs to a great extent over the system. If every master exemplified the extreme capability of the system, for outrage and diabolism, an indignant world would rise and wipe it out.

Suppose, now, this system, all reeking with lust, incest, crime, and cruelty, is brought out and placed under the blaze of Christianity. Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them; for this is the law and the prophets. This is the condensed summary of the whole Bible. Who has the hardihood to say that the practice of slaveholding is consistent with this injunction? What, in the New Testament, is the classification of slaveholders? It places them with murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers.

Everywhere the Bible inculcates a spirit of generous magnanimity. "Ye that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please yourselves." Slavery, I know, claims this attribute and talks about its chivalry and magnanimity. And is it not magnanimous to cheat a poor, ignorant, degraded man out of the entire earnings of his whole life—rob him of his wife and children, and then justify it by saying that they are an inferior race? Admit the fact of inferiority—does it therefore follow that it is right to oppress them? Every page of the Bible flashes its anathemas against the oppression of the poor and helpless. The obivary of the Bible is to help the weak, to protect the defenceless, and rescue those in peril. This, indeed, is the idea of the olden chivalry. Witness the incident in romance of Ivanhoe. The true knight, enfeebled by sickness, rides into the lists to meet a powerful antagonist—and in whose defence? For one belonging to a race as despised and degraded then as that of the African now is. This chivalry we recognize as having something manly and noble in it. But, from the chivalry that applies the scourge to helpless women, to secure their labor or make them surrender their chastity; which sells a boy for a harlot and a girl for a pair of shoes; which by superior knowledge, combination, and legal enactment, reduces millions of human beings to the condition of brutism, and then by false teaching seeks to delude their conscience, and cause them to believe that their enslavement is in accordance with the will of God—from all such chivalry I ask to be delivered.

The Bible sanctions Slavery, and, if the Bible, then God. What kind of an ideal of Deity has that religionist who holds this doctrine? The ancients divided their vices, and made one of their gods the divinity of each. The advocate of Bible Slavery takes a system that concentrates in itself all crime, and makes Jehovah its patron Deity. I do wish that Slavery would leave us an ideal of the Supreme Being that is not polluted with its slimy touch. It is said of Goldsmith, as a writer, that there was nothing that he did not touch, and nothing that he did not beautify. And it can truly be said of Slavery, that there is nothing that it does not touch, and nothing that it touches that it does not defile. It has perverted the Government, violated the national faith, muzzled the press, debauched the church, corrupted Christianity, and seeks to change the glory of the invisible God into a Moloch, and transform the eternal and loving Father into a patron of cruelty, lust, and injustice; and then, with the impudence of the strange woman, wipes its mouth, and says, I have committed no sin. I should be ashamed of such a God as that!

It is to me utterly incomprehensible that any one can sincerely believe that the Bible sanctions the system of American slavery, and I leave that point.

But this fanaticism goes still farther, and arrogates to itself prerogatives which will separate them when I please. A slave who is a church member is taught by his religious teachers, that it is his duty, on being sold from one plantation to another, leaving a so-called wife behind to take another mate; and the reason assigned by these pious instructors is, that in this way he can be most profitable to his master, which is his first and paramount duty. Thus he may, as a good Christian, take up with a new woman on every plantation to which he is sold.— This has been formally so decided by an ecclesiastical council. And yet these blasphemers seek to make God a partner in this revolting practice.

The gentleman from Georgia the other day called our attention to the sublime spectacle of State after State emerging from a Territorial condition, and wheeling into line as sovereign States in this Confederacy. In this process, according to the gentleman, were united the two principles of expansion and popular sovereignty, and the gentleman was reminding of that grand chorus which an ancient exile heard when there was poured upon his ear the voice of many waters, and the voice of the thunders, and the voice of the Almighty, and the utterance of ocean and thunder and of Jehovah was "Vox Populi vox Dei." Sir, I claim that the voice of truth, and justice, and liberty, is the voice of God. When I hear the voice of thousands and thousands, and ten times ten thousand, swelling upward, like the voice of many waters and the voice of mighty thunders and the voice of the Almighty, it is that other and better sentiment, "Let justice prevail, though the universe crumbles." Aye, sir; I too heard the voice of the people, and it went surging through the streets of Judea's proud metropolis. It swept through the portals of Pilate's judgment Hall, and echoed along its arches, crying, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Was "Vox Populi vox Dei" then? Did the gentleman from Georgia bear the voice of the Almighty, responsive to the popular will, demanding the crucifixion of his own Son? Did their cry of blood have the Divine sanction, simply because they had voted it, and because they had a law by which the Man of Nazareth must be put to death? What an impious dogma!

But let us follow this expansion and *vox populi* doctrine. We already embrace Utah; there the voice of the people sanctions and demands a multiplicity of wives. Is it the voice of God? We acquire Cuba; and there the voice of the people demands the union of Church and State, and forbids a prayer to be uttered by the open grave of a friend who breathed out his soul beyond the pale of the Papal church; and the voice of the people is the voice of God! Expansion! We sweep onward, and take in Mexico; and in some sequestered vale there is a remnant of the old Aztec race, with their Teocalli surrounded with human skulls.—The voice of the people here leads forth a pampered young man, the fairest and best of the nation, decorated with flowers, up to the consecrated hill, laying him on the sacrificial stone, and with breast raised, the priest seizes the knife, and drags it cranking through the ribs, and tears out the heart, all reeking and quivering; and this is the voice of God!

But we have taken in the continent, from Esquimaux to Patagonian, and still we must expand! We ride forth on the Pacific wave, and annex the Feejee Islands, and the voice of the people here is to feast on human flesh, and the voice of the people is the voice of God! Is this an insane asylum? Is the Democracy struck with lunacy as well as filled with fanaticism?

The Slavery Democracy prates and chatters about "negro equality." "Black Republicans," and "nigger stealing," to use its classic phrase and improved orthography. It has, or affects to have a great horror of "niggers." And any one who advocates the principles of human freedom, as they were enunciated and laid down in enduring forms by the fathers of the Republic, as a "wooly head," and these same Democrats have learned to speak of them with a peculiar *musci* twist. *Nisi contemnerentur a diabolo.* You would suppose that these gentlemen, whose offices are so sensitive and acute, never saw a nigger, unless in a menagerie. And yet, would you believe it! the very first service rendered him on earth is performed by a nigger; as an infant, he draws the milk which makes his flesh and blood and bones from the breast of a nigger; looks up in her face and smiles, and calls her by the endearing name of "mammy." (*Infans parvum puer. Cui noscere risu matrem.*)