CHAPTER 12

THE PURSUIT OF PERFECTION

SUMMARY
Social and economic upheaval in the early nineteenth century resulted in religious fervor, moral reform, and sometimes confusion that divided communities and undermined established institutions. Abolitionism, one of the most prominent reform movements of the era, challenged the central facet of southern society and contributed to political conflict and eventually civil war.

The Rise of Evangelicalism
During the early nineteenth century, turmoil was common for American Protestantism. Among evangelical Protestants, revivals were effective tools to increase membership and extend religious values, something deemed absolutely necessary as “infidel” groups like the Catholics and Mormons grew.

The Second Great Awakening: The Frontier Phase
Beginning on the southern frontier, a revival movement known as the Second Great Awakening provided an emotional outlet, a right of passage, and social cohesion for rural communities through camp meetings. Eventually turning instead to “protracted meetings,” the Baptists and Methodists grew in membership and influence in the South during the first half of the 1800s. Though they sometimes created societies to encourage temperance or discourage dueling, southern churches generally shied away from social reform.

The Second Great Awakening in the North
In both New England and upstate New York, evangelical revivals—conducted mostly by Congregationalists or Presbyterians—arose emphasizing free choice and free will in sinners’ conversion to God. The tendency to reform was much more evident and active in the North.

From Revivalism to Reform
The evangelical revivals of the North often spawned middle-class reform movements which emphasized self-improvement for the benefit of the nation. Should the object of reform not wish to improve himself, these reformers were not adverse to stamping out sin and social evil themselves. Some of the social reform efforts spawned by the Second Great Awakening included missionary societies, the American Tract Society, and moral reform groups that targeted drinking, dueling, prostitution, gambling, and irreligious activity on Sunday. The “benevolent empire” was a major cultural force by the 1830s.

Domesticity and Changes in the American Family
Increasingly, reformers celebrated the family, and especially the mother, as important to society. Though women were confined more and more to the domestic circle, their roles within it grew in importance.
Marriage for Love
In the nineteenth century, love became more and more important in choosing a marital partner. Marriages became more egalitarian as wives became companions for their husbands rather than mere servants or possessions. Despite these changes, in law and in cases of conflict between husbands and wives, the husband was still the unchallenged head of the household.

The Cult of Domesticity
The glorification of the role of the wife/mother has been described as the “Cult of Domesticity” or the “Cult of True Womanhood.” The reason behind this new conception of femininity was the increasing division of the working lives of men and women. As industrialism began to grow, men’s place of work began to be separate from the household at the same time that women were being more closely confined within it. The “doctrine of separate spheres” emerged to justify and glorify this new pattern: while men toiled in the harsh world of work, women provided the welcoming, domestic sphere for them to come home to. Middle- and upper-class women in particular gained from these two concepts. For some such women, the domestic ideal sanctioned efforts to expand their activities into the masculine world of work for the purpose of reform. If women were moral and pure enough to be entrusted with the rearing of their children and keeping of the home, then surely they could make the world a better place through their reform.

The Discovery of Childhood
Lower birthrates and smaller families—the result of new forms of birth control and conscious family planning—led parents to place more emphasis on affectionate child rearing rather than just treating children as “small adults.” New customs, fashions, and products went hand in hand with the discovery of childhood.

Institutional Reform
Responsibility for the reform of the individual eventually spread from the family to the larger community and society’s important institutions.

The Extension of Education
Public education developed, especially in the North, under the leadership of reformers such as Horace Mann. Tax money was used to finance new schools, supplementing the informal education that was common in most towns and cities. Reformers believed that schools were especially necessary among poor and immigrant children whose families could not provide them with the proper upbringing. In addition to the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic, schools also taught students the Protestant ethic, which, along with compulsory attendance laws, often served to alienate immigrant children from their parents.

Discovering the Asylum
Rejecting the traditional belief that insanity, poverty, and criminality were the result of divine judgment or original sin, reformers worked to rehabilitate those who exhibited deviant behavior. The 1820s and 1830s saw the emergence of state-funded prisons, insane asylums, and poorhouses. In theory, such institutions were meant as a substitute for absent
families. In practice, they were far from such an ideal. Dorothea Dix, among others, worked to raise the level of care for these inmates.

Reform Turns Radical
Some of the reformers insisted on reforms so extreme that many of their fellow reformers considered them radical.

Divisions in the Benevolent Empire
Arguments between the adherents of moderate reform and those supporting quicker change split many organizations, including the temperance movement, the American Peace Society, and the antislavery movement. The most prominent anti-slavery group before the 1830s had been the American Colonization Society, but the promise of colonization of Blacks outside of the United States proved inadequate as a step toward abolition. In 1831 William Lloyd Garrison revolutionized the abolitionist movement when he began publishing the Liberator.

The Abolitionist Enterprise
Growing out of the evangelical movement, the abolitionist movement succeeded, especially in small and medium-sized towns in the upper North. It faced considerable opposition, sometimes violent, especially near the Mason-Dixon Line. Additionally, there was disagreement within the abolitionist movement itself over the role of the church, the federal government, and women. The Liberty Party was the first attempt by the abolitionist movement to enter the fray of politics as a separate political party.

Black Abolitionists
Free, northern Blacks were active in the abolitionist movement from the beginning. The stories of former slaves were printed as narratives, and escaped slaves were some of the most convincing orators for the antislavery cause. Eventually, conflict arose between Black and White abolitionists, leading to the establishment of a separate Black antislavery movement in the 1830s. In addition to speaking out against slavery, a vital part of the Black antislavery movement was the underground railroad. Though the abolitionist movement did not end slavery, it did bring it to the forefront of public consciousness.

From Abolitionism to Women’s Rights
From the beginning, women served in the abolitionist movement. Seeing similarities between slavery and their own oppression, some women like Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton began to work for their own liberation, organizing the first gathering for women’s rights in the United States at Seneca Falls in 1848. The Declaration of Sentiments issued by the convention called for woman suffrage and equality.

Radical Ideas and Experiments
Some Americans in the early to mid-nineteenth century sought a perfect social order and formed utopian socialist communities such as those promoted by Robert Owen and Charles Fourier. The Shakers’ Oneida community was one of the most successful and longest-lasting pre-Civil War utopian experiments. A literary and philosophical
movement known as transcendentalism also inspired experimental living arrangements like Brook Farm. Luminaries like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller all participated in the transcendentalist movement. Other Americans promoted fads such as phrenology, vegetarianism, and spiritualist seances.

**Conclusion: Counterpoint on Reform**

Hawthorne, in his writing in this period, underlined the observation that the dreams of the reformers promised more than they could deliver and led to a distorted view of human nature and possibilities. Nonetheless, accepting Hawthorne’s interpretation of reform means that no one should do ever anything to try to improve society.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After mastering this chapter, you should be able to:

1. List the factors that caused the Second Great Awakening and discuss the differences between the revivalism that swept the South and the North.
2. Show how the religious revivals became reform movements and why.
3. Describe the “Cult of True Womanhood” and the doctrine of separate spheres.
4. Analyze the impact the reform of family life had on lower-, middle-, and upper-class women.
5. Explain the purpose of public education according to Horace Mann.
6. Explain the “discovery of the asylum.”
7. Why did Black leaders establish a separate Black antislavery movement?
8. Describe the factors and events that led to the rise of the women's rights movement.
9. Evaluate the results of the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848.
10. Discuss the other more radical reform ventures in the mid-nineteenth century. What impact did they have on society?
GLOSSARY

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms:

1. **rite of passage** a ceremony, ritual, or formal act conferring adult status on an individual. "Conversion at a camp meeting could be a rite of passage . . ."

2. **expose** the revelation of a scandal, secret, or cover-up. "As a result of this expose, an asylum was established . . ."

3. **piety** reverence, devotion, and obedience to the will of a supreme being. "The ideal wife and mother was . . . a model of piety and virtue . . ."

4. **corporal punishment** physical or bodily punishment, such as spanking. "Corporal punishment declined, partially displaced by shaming or withholding of affection."

5. **indoctrination** the act of instructing or teaching a doctrine or certain principles. "Purely intellectual training at school was regarded as less important than moral indoctrination . . ."

6. **lyceum** an organization that provides concerts, lectures, or cultural events. "Every city and almost every town or village had a lyceum . . ."

7. **schism** a division or a split. " . . . but the schism did weaken Garrison's influence . . ."

8. **secular humanist** one who advocates a philosophical system that exalts human values without appeal to religion or the divinity of Christ. "Some were secular humanists carrying on the free-thinking tradition of the Enlightenment . . ."

9. **transcendentalism** a philosophical system that maintains that realities exist beyond the physical world. " . . . philosophical movement known as transcendentalism."

10. **phrenology** a doctrine that alleges that the shape of the skull determines character traits and talents. " . . . the craze for phrenology—a popular pseudoscience . . ."
IDENTIFICATION

Briefly identify the meaning and significance of the following terms or names:

1. Charles G. Finney

2. Second Great Awakening

3. “benevolent empire”

4. “Cult of True Womanhood”

5. Horace Mann

6. Dorothea Dix

7. the *Liberator*

8. Frederick Douglass
9. Seneca Falls

10. utopianism

MATCHING

A. Match the following abolitionist leaders with the appropriate description:

_____1. William Lloyd Garrison  a. midwestern abolitionist preacher who founded Oberlin College

_____2. Theodore Dwight-Weld  b. daughter of a South Carolina slaveholder who worked for the abolition of slavery and the struggle for equal rights for women

_____3. Lewis Tappan  c. leading abolitionist and founder of the American Anti-Slavery Society

_____4. Elijah Lovejoy  d. absolute pacifist who repudiated all types of governmental coercion

_____5. Sarah Grimké  e. antislavery editor who was shot and killed for his beliefs

f. split with the American Anti-Slavery Society and organized the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society with no women on the executive board
B. Match the following religious leaders with the appropriate description:

_____1. Charles Finney   a. first itinerant evangelist for the Congregationalists
_____2. Timothy Dwight   b. first practitioner of evangelical Calvinism
_____3. Nathanial Taylor   c. president of Yale College in 1795, who opposed rationalism and Unitarianism
_____4. Lyman Beecher   d. spellbinding preacher of revivals in upstate New York
_____5. Samuel John Mills   e. most important theologian of neo-Calvinism
   f. leader of the American Bible Society

COMPLETION

Answer the question or complete the statement by filling in the blanks with the correct word or words.

1. The religious revival that began around 1801 on the southern frontier was called the ________________.

2. The _____________ and ________________ dominated the Second Great Awakening on the southern frontier.

3. The organization that tried to convince people to abstain from drinking hard liquor was the ________________.

4. The ________________, the antislavery society that dominated until the 1830s, advocated emancipation followed by the colonization of freed African Americans.

5. The primary school reading book that was introduced in 1836 and also taught the “Protestant ethic” was called the ________________.

6. William Lloyd Garrison published a leading abolitionist journal called the ________________.

7. The political party that was based on anti-slavery sentiment was the ________________.
8. The Shakers established the ________________________, one of the most successful and long-lived manifestations of utopianism before the Civil War.

9. The doctrine of ________________________ was used to justify and glorify the women’s role in the domestic sphere.

10. The _______________________________ was an enterprise to spirit slaves out of the South to freedom in the North or in Canada.

TRUE/FALSE

Mark the following statements either T (True) or F (False):

_____ 1. American Protestantism was extremely stable in the early nineteenth century.

_____ 2. Camp meetings served only religious purposes.

_____ 3. Northeastern revivalism was less emotional than the camp meetings of the Southwest.

_____ 4. Neo-Calvinism held to a rigid concept of absolute predestination.


_____ 6. The temperance movement can be considered somewhat successful because alcohol consumption declined during the 1830s.

_____ 7. New work patterns had little or no effect on sex roles in the nineteenth century.

_____ 8. The availability of various methods of birth control and easy access to abortion resulted in smaller families in the nineteenth century.

_____ 9. Horace Mann viewed education as more moral indoctrination than intellectual training.

_____ 10. Leaders of the abolition movement also favored complete equality for women.
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Circle the one alternative that best completes the statement or answers the question.

1. Pious Protestants of the early nineteenth century were concerned about
   a. the spread of secular humanism.
   b. the lack of respect for the Christian orthodoxy set by the founding fathers.
   c. the increase in established state churches.
   d. declining membership in frontier churches, such as the Baptist and the Methodist.

2. Camp meetings on the frontier provided all of the following except
   a. an emotional outlet.
   b. a sense of community.
   c. a rational appeal to moral behavior.
   d. a rite of passage for a young man or woman.

3. The Second Great Awakening in the North especially appealed to
   a. Unitarians, searching for a revival theology consistent with their view of the Trinity.
   b. small- to medium-sized town dwellers with New England Puritan backgrounds.
   c. urban workers and mechanics, looking to revivals for relief from daily work problems and perhaps their dreary home life.
   d. rural planters, seeking a method to help them with their drinking problems.

4. Temperance reformers opposed public drunkenness because it
   a. spawned crime and vice.
   b. was a threat to the family.
   c. was a threat to private property and public order.
   d. all of the above.

5. The “cult of true womanhood” or the “ideology of domesticity” achieved
   a. true equality for men and women.
   b. some equality for women, especially in the ownership of property.
   c. some equality for women, especially in religion and morals for the family and as companion for their husbands.
   d. nothing that was not already accomplished in the colonial era.

6. The rise of the “cult of true womanhood” was caused by
   a. a division in the working lives of men and women.
   b. successful Supreme Court decisions.
   c. the high number of women in the teaching profession.
   d. agitation by organized groups.
7. The new literature that glorified the “cult of true womanhood” appealed especially to
   a. relatively affluent women.
   b. single women.
   c. working-class wives.
   d. rural and mountain wives.

8. The nineteenth century has been called the “century of the child” for which of the
   following reasons?
   a. The average family had more children.
   b. Birth control and abortion were not available.
   c. Children were an economic asset to the urban family.
   d. The family became more child-centered.

9. The purpose of public education as seen by Horace Mann was to teach
   a. cultural plurality.
   b. morality and discipline.
   c. freedom, liberty, and other ideals of the American Revolution.
   d. that the rights of private property are absolute.

10. The “discovery of the asylum”
    a. occurred because economic development led to the rise of urban areas and the
       decline of cohesive villages.
    b. resulted in placing lunatics and paupers with families in small towns.
    c. led to the abolition of solitary confinement.
    d. happened after a Calvinist revival meeting.

    a. gradual emancipation with compensation to owners.
    b. gradual emancipation without compensation to owners.
    c. immediate abolition of slavery and colonization of African Americans in Africa.
    d. immediate abolition of slavery without emigration.

12. Which of the following caused a formal split in the American Anti-Slavery
    Association?
    a. Garrison’s attack on the clergy
    b. Garrison’s support for women’s rights
    c. racism in the North
    d. African American leadership in the organization

13. The primary catalyst for the women's rights movement of the 1830s was the
    a. “cult of true womanhood.”
    b. rise of free public education.
    c. abolitionist movement.
    d. Second Great Awakening.
14. The “Declaration of Sentiments” of the Seneca Falls meeting of 1848 stated that
   a. men had established a tyranny over women.
   b. men should willingly accept the cult of domesticity.
   c. women should have equal rights but only in their own spheres.
   d. women should have the right to vote, but not necessarily equality within the family.

15. The utopian socialist communities of the 1830s and 1840s were
   a. all secular with no religious basis.
   b. variable in organization and leadership.
   c. based on the idea of “free love.”
   d. based on a purely American idea.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

To check your understanding of the key issues of this period, solve the following problems:

1. What are some of the social, political, and economic similarities of the eras of American history that have experienced revivalism?

2. What was the relationship between the rise of capitalism and the temperance movement?

3. What do modern feminists have in common with the leaders of the women's movement of the 1830s and 1840s?

4. To what extent does public education in America still resemble that described by Horace Mann?

5. Speculate on the factors that caused the utopian communities to be short-lived.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

After reading William Lloyd Garrison, from *The Liberator* (1831), Frederick Douglass, Independence Day Speech, and George Fitzhugh, “The Blessings of Slavery” (1857), answer the questions following the reading selections.

William Lloyd Garrison, from *The Liberator* (1831)

During my recent tour for the purpose of exciting the minds of the people by a series of discourses on the subject of slavery, every place that I visited gave fresh evidence of the fact that a great revolution in public sentiment was to be effected in the free states-and particularly in New England-than at the South. I find contempt more bitter, opposition more active, detraction more relentless, prejudice more stubborn, and apathy more frozen, than among slaveowners themselves. Of course, there were individual exceptions to the contrary.

This state of things afflicted but did not dishearten me. I determined, at every hazard, to lift up the standard of emancipation in the eyes of the nation, within sight of Bunker Hill and in the birthplace of liberty. That standard is now unfurled; and long may it float, unhurt by the spoliations of time or the missiles of a desperate foe, till every chain be broken, and every bondman set free! Let Southern oppressors tremble—let all the enemies of the persecuted blacks tremble.

Assenting to the "self-evident truth" maintained in the American Declaration of Independence "that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights-among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," I shall strenuously contend for the immediate enfranchisement of our slave population.

I am aware that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. No! No! Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen—but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest—will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat in a single inch—and I will be heard. The apathy of the people is enough to make every statue leap from its pedestal, and to hasten the resurrection of the dead.

It is pretended that I am retarding the cause of emancipation by the coarseness of my invective and the precipitancy of my measures. The charge is not true. On this question my influence—humble as it is—is felt at this moment to a considerable extent, and shall be felt in coming years—not perniciously, but beneficially—not as a curse, but as a blessing. And posterity will bear testimony that I was right.

Frederick Douglass, Independence Day Speech (1852)

Fellow citizens above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions! whose chains, heave and grievous yesterday, are, today, rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them. If I do forget, it I do not faithfully remember those bleeding children of sorrow this day, "may my right hand forger her cunning, and may ny tonguecleave to the roof of my mouth"! To forget them, to pass lightly over their wrongs, and to chime in with the popular theme would be treason most scandalous and shocking, and would make me a reproach before God and the world. My subject, them, fellow citizens, is American Slavery. I shall see this day and its popular characteristics from the slav;s point of view. Standing there identified with the American bondman, making his wrongs mine. I do not hesitate to declare with all my soul that the character and conduct of this nation never looked blacker to me than on this Fourth of July! Whether we turn to the declarations of the past or to the professions of the present, the conduct of the nation seems equally hideous and revolting. America is false to the past, false to the present, and solemnly binds herself to be false to the future. Standing with God and the crushed and bleeding slave on this occasion, I will, in the name of humanity which is outraged, in the name of liberty which is fettered, in the name of the Constitution and the Bible which are disregarded and trampled upon, All the emphasis I can command, everything that serves to perpetuate slavery the great sin and shame of America! "I will not equivocate, I will not excuse"; I will use the severest of language I can command; and yet not one word shall escape that any man, whose judgment is not blinded by prejudice, or who is not at heart a slaveholder, shall not confess to be right and just.

But I fancy I hear someone of my audience say, "It is just in this circumstance that your and your brother abolitionists fail to make a favorable impression on the public mind. Would you argue more and denounce less, would
you persuade more and rebuke less, your cause would be much more likely to succeed." But, I submit, where all is plain, there is nothing to be argued. What point in the antislavery creed would you have me argue? On what branch of the subject do the people of this country need light? Must I undertake to prove that the slave is a man? That point is conceded already. Nobody doubts it. The slaveholders themselves acknowledge it the enactment of laws for their government. They acknowledge it when they punish disobedience on the part of the slave. There are seventy-two crimes in the state of Virginia which, if committed by a black man (no matter how ignorant he be), subject him to the punishment of death, while only two of the same crimes will subject a white man to the like punishment. What is this but the acknowledgment that the slave is a moral, intellectual, and responsible being? The manhood of the slave is conceded. It is admitted in the fact that the Southern statute books are covered with enactments forbidding, under severe fines and penalties, the teaching of the slave to read or to write. When you can point to any such laws in reference to the beasts of the field, then I may consent to argue the manhood of the slave. When the dogs in your streets, when the fowls of the air, when the cattle on your hills, when the fish of the sea and the reptiles that crawl shall be unable to distinguish the slave from a brute, then will I argue with you that the slave is a man!

For the present, it is enough to affirm the equal manhood of the Negro race. It is not astonishing that, while we are plowing, planting, and reaping, using all kinds of mechanical tools erecting houses, constructing bridges, building ships, working in metals of brass, iron, copper and silver, and gold; that, while we are reading, writing, and ciphering, acting as clerks, merchants and secretaries, having among us lawyers, doctors, ministers, poets, authors, editors, orators, and teachers; that, while we are engaged in all manner of enterprises common to other men, digging gold in California, capturing the whale in the Pacific, feeding sheep and cattle on the hillside, living, moving, acting, thinking, planning, living in families as husbands, wives, and children, and, above all, confessing and worshiping the Christian's God, and looking hopefully for life and immortality beyond the grave, we are called upon to prove that we are men!

Would you have me argue that man is entitled to liberty? That he is the rightful owner of his own body? You have already declared it. Must I argue the wrongfulness of slavery? Is that a question for republicans? Is it to be settled by the rules of logic and argumentation, as a matter beset with great difficulty, involving a doubtful application of the principle of justice, hard to be understood? How should I look today, in the presence of Americans, dividing and subdividing a discourse, to show that men have a natural right to freedom? speaking of it relatively and positively, negatively and affirmatively? To do so would be to make myself ridiculous and to offer an insult to your understanding. There is not a man beneath the canopy of heaven that does not know that slavery is wrong for him.

Would you have me argue that is wrong to make men brutes, to rob them of their liberty, to work them without wages, to keep them ignorant of their relations to their fellow men, to beat them with sticks, to flay their flesh with the last, to load their limbs with irons, to hunt them with dogs, to sell them at auction, to sunder their families, to knock out their teeth, to burn their flesh, to starve them into obedience and submission to their masters? Must I argue that a system thus marked with blood, and stained with pollution, is wrong? No! I will not. I have better employment for my time and strength than such arguments would imply.

What, then remains to be argued? Is it that slavery is not divine; that God did not establish it; that our doctors of divinity are mistaken? There is blasphemy in the thought. That which is inhuman cannot be divine? Who can reason on such a proposition? They that can may; I cannot. The time for such argument is past.

At a time like this, scorching iron, not convincing argument, is needed. O! had I the ability, and could I reach the nation's ear, I would today pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be quickened, the conscience of the nation must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exploded; and its crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced.

What, to the American slave is your Fourth of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he s the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sound of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants, brass-fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings with all your religious parade and solemnity, are, to Him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation of savages. There is not a nation on earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States at this very hour.

Go where you may, search where you will, roam through all the monarchies and despotsisms of the Old World, travel through South America, search out every abuse, and when you have found the last, lay your facts by the side of the everyday practices of this nation, and you will say with that, for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival.
George Fitzhugh, "The Blessings of Slavery" (1857)

The negro slaves of the South are the happiest, and in some sense, the freest people in the world. The children and the aged and infirm work not at all, and yet have all the comforts and necessaries of life provided for them. They enjoy liberty, because they are oppressed neither by care or labor. The women do little hard work, and are protected from the despotism of their husbands by their masters. The negro men and stout boys work, on the average, in good weather, no more than nine hours a day. The balance of their time is spent in perfect abandon. Besides, they have their Sabbaths and holidays. White men, with some of license and abandon, would die of ennui; but negroes luxuriate in corporeal and mental repose. With their faces upturned to the sun, they can sleep at any hour; and quiet sleep is the greatest of human enjoyments. "Blessed be the man who invented sleep." "Tis happiness in itself-and results from contentment in the present, and confident assurance of the future. We do not know whether free laborers ever sleep. They are fools to do so; for, whilst they sleep, the wily and watchful capitalist is devising means to ensnare and exploit them. The free laborer must work or starve. He is more of a slave than the negro, because he works longer and harder for less allowance than the slave, and has no holiday, because the cares of life with him begin when its labors end. He has no liberty and not a single right.

Until the lands of America are appropriated by a few, population becomes dense, competition among laborers active, employment uncertain, and wages low, the personal liberty of all the whites will continue to be a blessing. We have vast unsettled territories; population may cease to increase slowly, as in most countries, and many centuries may elapse before the question will be practically suggested, whether slavery to capital be preferable to slavery to human masters. But the negro has neither energy nor enterprise, and, even in our sparser populations, finds with his improvident habits, that his liberty is a curse to himself, and a greater curse to the society around him. These considerations, and others equally obvious, have induced the South to attempt to defend negro slavery as an exceptional institution, admitting, nay asserting, that slavery, in the general or in the abstract, is morally wrong, and against common right. With singular inconsistency, after making this admission, which admits away the authority of the Bible, of profane history, and of the almost universal practice of mankind-they turn around and attempt to bolster up the cause of negro slavery by these very exploded authorities. If we mean not to repudiate all divine, and almost all human authority in favor of slavery, we must vindicate that institution in the abstract.

To insist that a status of society, which has been almost universal, and which is expressly and continually justified by Holy Writ, is its natural, normal, and necessary status, under the ordinary circumstances, is on its face a plausible and probable proposition. To insist on less, is to yield our cause, and to give up our religion; for if white slavery be morally wrong, be a violation of natural rights, the Bible cannot be true. Human and divine authority do seem in the general to concur, in establishing the expediency of having masters and slaves of different races. In very many nations of antiquity, and in some of modern times, the law has permitted the native citizens to become slaves to each other. But few take advantage of such laws; and the infrequency of the practice establishes the general truth that master and slave should be of different national descent. In some respects the wider the difference the better, as the slave will feel less mortified by his position. In other respects, it may be that too wide a difference hardens the hearts and brutalizes the feeling of both master and slave. The civilized man hates the savage, and the savage returns the hatred with interest. Hence West India slavery of newly caught negroes is not a very humane, affectionate, or civilizing institution. Virginia negroes have become moral and intelligent. They love their master and his family, and the attachment is reciprocated. Still, we like the idle, but intelligent house-servants, better than the hard-used, but stupid outcasts; and we like the mulatto better than the negro; yet the negro is generally more affectionate, contented, and faithful.

The world at large looks on negro slavery as much the worst form of slavery; because it is only acquainted with West India slavery. But our Southern slavery has become a benign and protective institution, and our negroes are confessedly better off than any free laboring population in the world. How can we contend that white slavery is wrong, whilst all the great body of free laborers are starving; and slaves, white or black, throughout the world, are enjoying enjoyments. “Blessed be the man who invented sleep.” “Tis happiness in itself—and results from contentment in the present, and confident assurance of the future. We do not know whether free laborers ever sleep. They are fools to do so; for, whilst they sleep, the wily and watchful capitalist is devising means to ensnare and exploit them. The free laborer must work or starve. He is more of a slave than the negro, because he works longer and harder for less allowance than the slave, and has no holiday, because the cares of life with him begin when its labors end. He has no liberty and not a single right.

The aversion to negroes, the antipathy of race, is much greater at the North than at the South; and it is very probable that this antipathy to the person of the negro, is confounded with or generates hatred of the institution with which he is usually connected. Hatred to slavery is very generally little more than hatred of negroes.

There is one strong argument in favor of negro slavery over all other slavery; that he, being unfitted for the mechanic arts, for trade, and all skilful pursuits, leaves those pursuits to be carried on by the whites; and does not bring all industry into disrepute, as in Greece and Rome, where the slaves were not only the artists and mechanics, but also the merchants.

Whilst, as a general and abstract question, negro slavery has no other claims over other forms of slavery, except that from inferiority, or rather peculiarity, of race, almost all negroes require masters, whilst only the children, the women, and the very weak, poor, and ignorant, &c., among the whites, need some protective and governing relation of this kind; yet as a subject of temporary, but worldwide importance, negro slavery has become the most necessary of all human institutions.
The African slave trade to America commenced three centuries and a half since. By the time of the American Revolution, the supply of slaves had exceeded the demand for slave labor, and the slaveholders, to get rid of a burden, and to prevent the increase of a nuisance, became violent opponents of the slave trade, and many of them abolitionists. New England, Bristol, and Liverpool, who reaped the profits of the trade, without suffering from the nuisance, stood out for a long time against its abolition. Finally, laws and treaties were made, and fleets fitted out to abolish it; and after a while, the slaves of most of South America, of the West Indies, and of Mexico were liberated. In the meantime, cotton, rice, sugar, coffee, tobacco, and other products of slave labor, came into universal use as necessaries of life. The population of Western Europe, sustained and stimulated by those products, was trebled, and that of the North increased tenfold. The products of slave labor became scarce and dear, and famines frequent. Now, it is obvious, that to emancipate all the negroes would be to starve Western Europe and our North. Not to extend and increase negro slavery, pari passu, with the extension and multiplication of free society, will produce much suffering. If all South America, Mexico, the West Indies, and our Union south of Mason and Dixon's line, of the Ohio and Missouri, were slaveholding, slave products would be abundant and cheap in free society; and their market for their merchandise, manufactures, commerce, &c., illimitable. Free white laborers might live in comfort and luxury on light work, but for the exacting and greedy landlords, bosses, and other capitalists.

We must confess, that overstock the world as you will with comforts and with luxuries, we do not see how to make capital relax its monopoly-how to do aught but tantalize the hireling. Capital, irresponsible capital, begets, and ever will beget, the immedicabile vulnus of so-called Free Society. It invades every recess of domestic life, infects its food, its clothing, its drink, its very atmosphere, and pursues the hireling, from the hovel to the poor-house, the prison and the grave. Do what he will, go where he will, capital pursues and persecutes him. "Haeret lateri lethalis arundo!" Capital supports and protects the domestic slave; taxes, oppresses, and persecutes the free laborer.

1. Compare the anti-slavery arguments and emotional styles of Garrison and Douglass.

2. In Douglass’s speech, what obvious points does he refuse to “argue”? Why does he approach these subjects in this way?

3. From your reading on slavery, react to Garrison’s question “... is there not cause for severity?”

4. What points mentioned by Fitzhugh show slavery was a “blessing”?

5. Does there appear to be any middle ground or points of agreement between Garrison and Douglass on the one hand, and Fitzhugh on the other?