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HALF SLAVE — AND —

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The Roots of Civil War

Revised Edition

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special use—to shore up a form of economy and society that most Northerners found increasingly repugnant and threatening. As we have seen, however, a common antipathy to slavery did not imply universal satisfaction with the direction in which northern society was developing. Deepening differences about the legitimacy and justice of the free-labor system undermined northern unity in the face of the planter challenge.

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To "Fight Against the Serpent": Antislavery and Its Early Progress

It is in the nature of slavery that its victims may not openly reject the demands made upon them or the ideological claims of their masters. Survival in bondage often depended upon hiding real feelings behind indirection and deception. "Persons live and die in the midst of Negroes," complained evangelical leader Charles Colcock Jones in 1842, "and know comparatively little of their real character. They are one thing before the whites, and another before their own color. Deception towards the former is characteristic of them." "The white folks made us lie," a former slave later explained. "We had to lie to live."

Day-to-day resistance to the slave regime thus took covert form. Slaves feigned stupidity, forcing masters or overseers repeatedly to explain the simplest task, thereby creating a precious pause for the laborer. With deliberate clumsiness, slaves destroyed tools and injured livestock, once again slowing the pace of work and reducing the expectations of their owners. A feigned pregnancy might for a time spare a slave woman some of the heavier field chores. Theft supplemented a meager diet and personal possessions. "So deceitful is the Negro," agreed one Georgia planter, "that as far as my own experience extends I could never in a single instant decipher his character. . . . We planters could never get at the truth."

The religious life of the slave population (as discussed in Chapter 4) revealed, at least to those able and willing to see, more about the slaves' real attitudes toward bondage. And slave revolts, though ultimately doomed, necessarily thrust aside the veil of secrecy and pretense, exposing explosive sentiments and beliefs. Particularly striking is the way in which African-Americans appropriated both the democratic-republican and evangelical Christian doctrines of the nation that held them captive and reshaped those materials into weapons of liberation. Denying the legitimacy of the slave regime, they claimed the right to share in civic freedom and equality, and they asserted divine support for that claim. Slave rebellions also asserted the right to achieve liberation through violence. For this claim too, rebels found ample justification in both modern and biblical history. The record of slave revolts also reveals some of the conditions that encouraged overt action. Slave rebels displayed acute sensitivity to developments that distracted, demoralized, or divided the captor nation. Such sought-for developments ranged from expressions of antislavery sentiments (by free blacks or whites, North or South, domestic or foreign) through involvement in international war.

As already noted, Gabriel Prosser's conspiracy of 1800 evidently drew confidence from the American Revolution and its rhetoric. It also bristled with evidence of religion's influence. Recruitment and planning had taken place during praise meetings. Martin Prosser, Gabriel's brother, was a preacher and invoked biblical precedent to reassure others that God would smile upon their plans. "Their cause was similar to the Israelites," Martin reportedly declared, and accordingly promised that "five of you shall conquer an hundred & a hundred thousand of our enemies."

The next major attempt came in 1822 in Charleston, South Carolina, at the initiative of a free black carpenter named Denmark Vesey. Like most of his supporters, Vesey attended the city's African Methodist Church, which was affiliated to the Philadelphia-based African Methodist Society, and there preached the legitimacy of insurrection and vengeance. "His general conversa-

tion was about religion," according to one deposition, "which Vesey would apply to slavery, as for instance, he would speak of the creation of the world, in which he would say all men had equal rights, blacks as well as whites." Leaders of this revolt evidently sent letters (via free black seamen encountered in Charleston) to Haitian president Jean Pierre Boyer seeking aid in their insurrectionary plans. Had the insurrection itself proved successful, Vesey and his lieutenants evidently planned to sail for Haiti.

Nine years later, in late August 1831, the slave Nat Turner led a rising that killed approximately sixty white residents of Southampton, Virginia, before being suppressed. Turner was a religious leader, a self-made Baptist preacher who learned of his revolutionary mission through revelations. In the first, "white spirits and black spirits engaged in battle, and the sun was darkened, and thunder rolled in the Heavens, and blood flowed in streams." In the second, the Holy Ghost bade Turner to "fight against the Serpent, for the time was approaching when the first should be the last and the last should be the first."

Perhaps the fullest, clearest, and most direct exposition of southern black antislavery principles came from David Walker. Born free in 1785 in North Carolina, Walker lived there for forty years before resettling in Boston in 1825. In 1829, Walker published and distributed his *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*. Within a year it had gone through three editions.

The pamphlet's inflammatory nature was clear in its very form; Walker's "appeal" was directed not only—and not primarily—to masters but "to my much afflicted and suffering brethren." The appeal itself endorsed and justified open revolt and provided specific advice about when and how to undertake it. "Never make an attempt to gain our freedom or natural right, from under cruel oppressors and murderers, until you see your way clear," Walker counseled. But "if you commence, make sure work—do not trifle, for they will not trifle with you—they want us for their slaves and think nothing of murdering us in order to subject us to that wretched condition—therefore, if there is an attempt made by us, kill or be killed." That it could be done had been proved in

Haiti, that "glory of the blacks and the terror of tyrants." (Despite all the Haitians' subsequent ordeals, "they are men who would be cut off to a man before they would yield to the combined forces of the whole world." Walker therefore encouraged those who escaped from American masters to seek sanctuary in Haiti, which "is bound to protect and comfort us.")

A violent end for American slavery, however, was ordained only if whites refused to "repent," to liberate their chattels, and to acknowledge the African's right to enjoy the liberties espoused in the Declaration of Independence. "Tell us no more about colonization," Walker wrote, but simply "treat us like men, and there is no danger[,] but we will all live in peace and happiness together. For we are not like you, hard hearted, unmerciful, and unforgetting. What a happy country this will be, if the whites will listen."

Eventually, some did listen, but the militant spirit that infused Walker's pamphlet was alien to the Enlightenment-inspired northern merchants and professionals who headed the white anti-slavery movement of the first post-revolutionary years. John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, and Benjamin Franklin led the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery (founded in 1784) and the New York Manumission Society (founded the following year). Those bodies, in turn, sponsored the creation in 1794 of the American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery and Improving the Condition of the African Race, which launched an educational campaign in support of gradual emancipation throughout the United States.

The perspectives of these organizations were grounded in a rather mechanistic optimism—a general assumption that slavery was an anachronism destined for extinction by the inexorable advance of economic development, spiritual cultivation, intellectual illumination, and moral suasion. As New York financier and philanthropist Thomas J. Eddy phrased it, "The light with which Providence has been pleased to enlighten the minds of men, as it regards moral or religious truths, is gradual—as was the commencement of the abolition of slavery" in the North.

Much seemed to justify this optimistic, gradualist outlook. The experience of the northeastern states and the Northwest Territory (in which the Continental Congress outlawed slavery in 1787) encouraged confidence that slavery was well on its way to extinction. So did Congress's ban on the Atlantic slave trade in 1808 and the apparently declining fortunes of Britain's slave-based West Indian sugar plantations. Exceptions to this trend—such as Congress's refusal (in 1798) to ban slavery in the Mississippi Territory or (in 1804) in the Louisiana Purchase—could still appear mere anomalies. Gradualism also commended itself to members and friends of the northern elite because of the presumed "unreadiness" of the slaves for immediate freedom. Paternalist traditions and assumptions left them skeptical of the ability of slaves to assume the rights and responsibilities of freedom without an extended period of benevolent guidance and preparation. (The New York Manumission Society thus refused to exclude slaveholders from membership and even conferred its presidency upon the slave owner John Jay.)

This gradualist bias informed all the efforts of the American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery. In 1812, Rev. Samuel Stanhope Smith, president of New Jersey's Presbyterian College, had proposed an arrangement whereby slaves would be permitted to purchase their liberty by hard work over a stipulated period of time. The American Convention promulgated a similar proposal in 1821. It provided that, during a period of "tutelage" prior to complete emancipation, former slaves would continue to work for their old masters, though now formally in exchange for wages, while being educated in the meaning and requirements of liberty. The same spirit dictated the Convention's advice to southern chattels. Until gradual emancipation became law, it wished to "impress upon [slaves] . . . the necessity of contentment with their situations," the better to win the sympathy of their masters. As for blacks already out of bondage, they should "cultivate feelings of piety and gratitude to your Heavenly Father for the many blessings you enjoy."

Before long, the Convention took a further step in a conserva-

tive direction. The American Colonization Society had been launched in 1817 to promote the transportation of emancipated slaves to its African colony, Liberia. Prominent upper South slave owners—including John Marshall, James Madison, James Monroe, and Henry Clay—applauded colonization. In 1820, Thomas Jefferson expressed himself eager to see a “general emancipation and *expatriation* . . . effected” and believed that “gradually, and with due sacrifices, I think it might be.” In part to win the favor of such men, the American Convention reversed its previous stand and endorsed colonization too.

The assumptions and expectations animating the American Convention were slow to die. For decades, Northerners like Philadelphia’s Thomas Cope continued to believe that “if slavery is ever to be extinguished in these United States, it must be by the cooperation of men who hold others in bondage,” that “a commencement has been made . . . & if our fierce, rash, anti-slavery men will keep hands off, this germ will grow & ripen into wholesome fruit.” After all, Cope opined, “more is gained by moderation, charity & persuasion than by acrimony, intemperate zeal and splenetic personal abuse.”

But such arguments began to lose their potency during the 1820s. A patient, patrician gradualism had proved sufficient for extinguishing bondage in the North, where slavery had never been central to the general economy or to the prosperity of any influential, distinct section of the elite. It was otherwise in the South, as the Missouri dispute had suggested. And in that confrontation, the forces demanding not slavery’s extirpation but its expansion had prevailed.

Hopes that the planter elite could be talked out of its human property were put to a practical test early in the 1830s; the Nat Turner revolt of 1831 precipitated an extended debate in the Virginia state assembly over bondage and its future. A number of the legislators—including those from districts where planters were fewest and small farmers, fishermen, and urban dwellers most numerous—expressed unhappiness with the slave-labor system. (One important source of that displeasure was the fact that slave

property was counted in apportioning representation in the state legislature. Large eastern planters thereby retained control and exercised it to frustrate the developmental projects of farmers in the western counties.) Much of the debate revolved around a proposal from Thomas Jefferson Randolph (Thomas Jefferson’s grandson) to make all slaves born after Independence Day 1840 property of the state once they reached maturity. Virginia would then hire them out in order to fund their “removal beyond the limits of the United States.” Until such slaves came of age, their masters would retain all ownership rights, including the freedom to sell their chattels into the Deep South—beyond, that is, the reach of the state’s emancipation law. And those slaves born prior to 1840 would remain slaves until they died.

When the proposal finally came to a vote, the representatives decided by a margin of 73–58 against the “expediency” of taking any legal action against slavery in Virginia. The affair had thus demonstrated two salient facts. First, that opposition to slavery and hopes for its demise still existed among a section of the Upper South’s white population. But second, that most planters even of that region (unlike the old slave owners of the northern states) remained adamantly opposed to any practical steps toward emancipation. The second revelation further deflated hopes for voluntary, gradual abolition in the South.

This development combined with the maturing secular and religious values nourished by the North’s free-labor system to inspire a more radical form of antislavery doctrine and movement, one that demanded the immediate end of slavery, rejected colonization, and sought full civil equality for free blacks.

In January 1831, the first edition of *The Liberator* appeared in Boston. Its editor, William Lloyd Garrison, a former Baptist temperance advocate, had been converted to emancipation two years earlier by the antislavery Quaker editor Benjamin Lundy. In 1832, Garrison and eleven other white men founded the New England Anti-Slavery Society in Boston. In New York City, meanwhile, the wealthy evangelical-minded merchant Arthur Tappan was working toward the establishment of a national abo-

lition organization. At the end of 1833, sixty-two people (most of them white male Quakers and evangelical Protestants but also including Congregationalists, Unitarians, four white women, and three black men) from eleven free states gathered in Philadelphia to found the American Anti-Slavery Society (AAS). Garrison drafted its declaration of principles, which labeled slavery a sin "unequaled by any other on the face of the earth," which rejected colonization, and which demanded that everyone, regardless of race, be made "secure in his own right to his own body—to the products of his own labor—to the protections of the law—to the common advantages of society." These words perfectly summarized the essence of free-labor ideology.

The size of the free black representation at this conference severely understated the importance of that group to the rise of immediatist abolition. In fact, initiatives taken by various free blacks living in the North had preceded these events by a number of years. We have already noted the example of Benjamin Banneker and his correspondence with Thomas Jefferson. A year prior to Gabriel Prosser's rebellion, a group of free blacks living in Philadelphia petitioned Congress for "justice and equity to all classes," urging a national program of emancipation. "As we are men," they held, "we should be admitted to partake of the liberties and unalienable rights . . . held forth" in the Constitution.

Another portent was an 1813 speech that George Lawrence delivered in a New York City African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church. Celebration of the fifth anniversary of the ban on the Atlantic slave trade provided the occasion. As in most such messages, Lawrence devoted much of his time to thanksgiving, to optimistic hopes of "melting" the cold hearts of slave owners with "good works" and "examples," and to enjoining "Fathers, Brethren, and Friends" to "let malice and hatred be far from your doors." Evidently, however, there were limits to so much pacific patience and goodwill. "The iron hand of oppression must cease to tyrannize over injured innocence," Lawrence told his listeners, and "the time is fast approaching." By the end of his address, the speaker was calling upon the "father of the universe and disposer

of events" to "crush that power that still holds thousands of our brethren in bondage."

Three years later, Rev. Richard Allen of Philadelphia became the first bishop of the new national AME denomination. It was in his Bethel Church that 3,000 black residents of Philadelphia gathered in 1817 to protest colonization plans on the grounds that they "will stay the cause of the entire abolition of slavery in the United States" and "must insure to the multitudes . . . misery, sufferings, and perpetual slavery." To colonize free blacks, Allen declared on another occasion, was the dream of masters who feared to let their human property "see free men of colour enjoying liberty." But "this land which we have watered with our tears and our blood is now our *mother country*," Allen declared, "and we are well satisfied to stay."

Ideas current in northern black society also expressed themselves through Walker's *Appeal*. It was in Boston, after all, that David Walker learned to read and write, joined the Methodist Church, made a living by selling used clothes, and gained prominence as an intellectual leader in the growing black community. He belonged to and spoke before the Massachusetts General Colored Association, which had been founded in 1826 to pursue abolition and community elevation. In 1827, John Russwurm and Rev. Samuel E. Cornish launched the first newspaper ever published by African-Americans, the *New York Freedom's Journal*, partly to combat colonization. "We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us," the paper declared. "Too long has the publick been deceived by misrepresentations, in things which concern us dearly." David Walker wrote for and distributed the *Journal* in Boston.

Walker's *Appeal* created a sensation in both the North and the South. It signaled a new stage in the development of antislavery generally and in the bearing and conduct of its free black partisans. Savannah's mayor called on his Boston counterpart to arrest Walker. Southern state governments moved immediately to prevent the *Appeal's* circulation—though not, it seems, before free blacks in Virginia, Georgia, Louisiana, and perhaps elsewhere

had obtained copies. William Lloyd Garrison, as a committed pacifist, disliked the *Appeal's* "general spirit" and regretted the appearance of this "most injudicious publication." He conceded, however, that it spoke "many valuable truths and seasonal warnings." Garrison had picked up his own hostility to colonization from free blacks like David Walker. Three years after its founding, Garrison noted, "of the whole number of subscribers to *The Liberator*, only about one-fourth are white. The paper, then, belongs emphatically to the people of color. It is their organ."

The founding of the American Anti-Slavery Society made possible the expansion of immediatist abolitionism. During its first three years of life, the new organization distributed more than a million pieces of antislavery literature, mostly by mail, some of it in the South. In mid-1835, the AAS reported the existence of about two hundred local antislavery organizations. Within a year that number surpassed five hundred; by 1837 it stood at a thousand. The total membership of these organizations had probably reached 200,000 by 1840.

For specific purposes, the abolitionists found they could enlist the support of significantly larger numbers of Americans. Antislavery petitions of various kinds had been submitted in modest numbers to Congress since the 1790s. In the 1830s, the AAS decided to transform this trickle into a flood. An unprecedented number of petitions—directed especially against the continuation of slavery in the District of Columbia—were now circulated through the free states. The campaign would have multiple benefits. It would provide a useful way to engage citizens in discussing the merits of slavery. It would force Congress to address the same subject "and turn it into a vast Anti Slavery Debating Society, with the whole country as an audience." It might even achieve its immediate goal. During the first year and a half of the campaign, according to the AAS, the number of petition signatures reaching Congress soared from a mere 23 to some 300,000—and to some 600,000 in 1837–38. AAS Officer Henry B. Stanton calculated that in 1838 and 1839, the society obtained 2 million signatures on such petitions. Many of those who signed were fe-

male, and women were prominent in many abolition societies. Some were Quakers, others belonged to one or another evangelical Protestant denomination. Future leaders of the movement for women's rights (including Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Lydia Maria Child) obtained some of their first political experience in the abolitionist cause. Black women such as Susan Paul, Grace and Sarah M. Douglass, Harriet Purvis, Sarah and Margaretta Forten, and Maria W. Stewart played key roles in mobilizing abolitionist opinion.

Women, of course, could not vote. In 1840, nevertheless, abolitionists committed to political action decided that a large enough number of antislavery voters now existed to sustain an independent political party dedicated to abolition. The new Liberty party's national platform accepted the federalist premises of the Constitution, according to which Washington had no power to ban slavery within the states. It did hold, however, "that slavery should never be extended beyond its then existing limits; but should be gradually, and yet, at no distant day, wholly abolished by state authority."

In the meantime, Liberty candidates would fight discrimination against free blacks in the free states and seek "the denationalization of slavery"—the removal of all federal approval of or support for bondage. "The political dominion which slavery has gained" over the nation, abolitionists held, is "a main pillar of support and tower of defence to the system of slavery itself. Shorn of political power, slavery would fall by its own weight, and die of its own imbecility." Accordingly, the Liberty party demanded the end of slavery in the District of Columbia, in all territories, on the high seas, and in interstate commerce and opposed the admission of any additional slave states. Thus isolated and deprived of all external props, slavery would be undermined in practice, compelling masters to accede to voluntary emancipation.

Support for organized abolition proved strongest in New England (where slavery had never been important) and in the lands to the west into which emigrants from New England were pouring during the first half of the nineteenth century—in New York's

upstate "Burned-Over District," Ohio's Western Reserve, and northern Illinois and Indiana. Liberty party leaders included disproportionate numbers of middling entrepreneurs, especially those resident in prospering small towns and cities, who were convinced of the virtues of the free-labor system. Although a handful of wealthy Northerners were active abolitionists (the Tappan brothers and Gerrit Smith are outstanding examples), most of the economic elite took a far more conservative position. Personally repelled by slavery, they felt at least as threatened by attempts to push that issue to the center of national politics. Doing so would antagonize the planters (with whom many maintained old and cherished business ties) and threaten the survival of both the Democratic and Whig organizations nationally and ultimately the federal Union. The abolitionist *Philanthropist* denounced "capitalists at the North who own slave property at the South" or "who from business, social connections, or otherwise, are interested in perpetuating the supremacy of the slave-interest."

The North's free white workers generally detested the institution of chattel slavery on principle. It embodied all the evils that they strove to avoid—the loss of personal independence, mutual respect, political equality, the right to the fruits of one's labor. When they sought the most powerful ways to denounce their employers, Lynn shoemakers, Lowell mill operatives, and other working people compared them to slave owners. Protesting their own condition, they referred to themselves as "wage slaves." Labor reformers, freethinkers, and communarians (such as Thomas Skidmore, Frances Wright, and Robert Dale Owen) expressed their hostility to slavery in particularly blistering terms. Substantial numbers of those who signed antislavery petitions during the 1830s were craft workers who owned little or no real property. In 1846, a convention of New England wage earners protested the fact that "there are at the present time three millions of our brethren and sisters groaning in chains on the Southern plantations." Wishing "not only to be consistent but to secure to all others those rights and privileges for which we are contending ourselves," the convention declared its refusal to do anything "to

keep three millions of our brethren and sisters in bondage" and called upon other labor groups "to speak out in thunder tones" along the same lines.

But the detestation of bondage common among northern working people induced very few of them to commit time and energy to abolishing that institution. Most were preoccupied with their own immediate economic and political goals. Few believed those goals related in any practical way to the abolition of chattel slavery. The racism that pervaded the nation reinforced such parochialism and undermined sympathy for the slaves as fellow human beings. So too did fears that emancipated bondsmen would flee the South, surge into the North, and there compete with free white workers (especially the economically more vulnerable unskilled) for jobs. Some northern workers who were averse to slavery nonetheless regarded abolitionists as fanatics bent on destroying their own favored political party (whether Democratic or Whig) as well as the federal Union (and thereby the liberties for free white men that the Union represented). Others noted that many abolitionist leaders came from the ranks or spoke in defense of large-scale employers of wage labor. The growing hostility toward such employers discussed earlier—a hostility that often embraced the whole range of economic, political, cultural, and religious values that employers seemed to treasure—helped steer many wage earners away from organized antislavery.

In the early 1830s, few abolitionists did much to challenge these perceptions or soften these antagonisms. True, a handful judged not only chattel slavery but also free-labor capitalism to be in conflict with human rights and justice. "Heartless, soul-destroying competition," wrote William I. Bowditch in 1852, undermined the "sublime doctrine of Christianity—the brotherhood of the human family." More commonly, however, abolitionists proudly subscribed to Adam Smith's free-market doctrines and placed their hopes for justice in the automatic functioning of the free-labor system. Efforts by northern wage earners to improve their conditions by collective action failed to win their sympathy. The first issue of Garrison's *Liberator*, in fact, attacked the New

England Association of Farmers, Mechanics, and Other Workmen, specifically decrying attempts "to inflame the minds of our working class against the more opulent, and to persuade men that they are contemned and oppressed by a wealthy aristocracy." "Where is the evidence," Garrison asked a few weeks later, "that our wealthy citizens, as a body, are hostile to the interests of the laboring classes? It is not found in their commercial enterprises, which whiten the ocean with canvas, and give employment to the useful and numerous class of men; it is not found in their manufacturing establishments, which multiply labor and cheapen the necessities of the poor."

Nor did economic inequality necessarily arouse abolitionist ire. Garrison believed that "a republican government . . . where the avenues to wealth, distinction, and supremacy are open to all . . . must, in the nature of things, be full of inequalities." "Poverty, wholesome poverty," wrote Wendell Phillips, "is no unmixed evil; it is the spur that often wins the race; it is the trial that calls out, like fire, all the deep great qualities of a man's nature." Theodore Parker concluded that "want is the only schoolmaster to teach" the lessons of "industry and thrift" to the shiftless. Lewis Tappan's abolitionist *Emancipator* conceded, with little evident concern, "that of the laborers for wages, a part will receive enough to accumulate, and a part only enough to subsist, on the simple principle that each receives what he earns."

Slave owners and their political allies, particularly in the Democratic party, appealed to northern workers alienated by this stance. Northern workers, declared John C. Calhoun and those who took their cues from him, lived harder lives than did southern slaves. If the latter had fewer formal rights, the former had less economic security. For that matter, Calhoun contended, "the manual laborers and operatives" of the free states were "essentially slaves," the only difference being that while "our slaves are hired for life and are well compensated,—yours are hired by the day and not cared for."

Some leaders of the northern labor movement found such rhetoric useful and regarded the Calhounites as allies in the fight

against northern employers. Most who felt this way found a home in the northern Democratic party, accepting that party's equation of—and common enmity toward—abolitionism, disunionism, evangelical and Sabbatarian zeal, and contempt for the interests and wishes of white working people.

A prime example was George Henry Evans, the Welsh-born printer who became antebellum America's leading land reformer. Earlier in his career, Evans had championed the cause of anti-slavery. "We are now convinced," he wrote in 1831, that "EQUAL RIGHTS can never be enjoyed, even by those who are free, in a nation which contains slaveites enough to hold in bondage two millions of human beings." In that year, Evans's *Daily Sentinel* was the only newspaper in New York to defend Nat Turner's insurrection in Virginia. "They were deluded," Evans declared of the rebels, "but their cause was just." Three years later, Evans vehemently denounced those—including wage earners—who had joined in antiabolition violence in New York City.

During the following decade, however, Evans executed a complete about-face. By the 1840s he was directly *countering* support for the interests of northern free workers to participation in abolitionist campaigns. "Wage slavery," he had decided, was "even more destructive of life, health and happiness than chattel slavery." Indeed, he added, "the efforts of those who are endeavoring to substitute wages for chattel slavery are greatly misdirected, and if they cannot be convinced of their error, they should, if possible, be prevented from making more converts to their erroneous doctrine."

There is, however, a particular irony in Evans's personal evolution. Even as he repudiated his early antislavery impulses, Deep South planters were embarking on a course of action that would eventually convince great numbers of other northern wage earners that their interests were directly menaced by the "Slave Power." And the defense of the "peculiar institution" would shortly pit slavery's most aggressive champions precisely against those northern farmers and wage earners most interested in the status of western lands.