

## To the Legislative-Council and General Assembly of the State of New-Jersey.

THE New-Jersey Society for promoting the gradual Abolition of Slavery, request leave, through us the underwritten members thereof, to present before the Legislature their earnest entreaty and testimony in favor of the law now depending for the gradual extinction of Slavery in this state.

The principle of hereditary bondage can no longer be defended in a land of freedom, and by a people distinguished for reason and humanity; and few, very few, at this day, we should hope, will plead for it on the ground of private property. Even those who hold by purchase, and reason only on the basis of traffic, cannot in candor but acknowledge, that to enslave children to the latest posterity for the cost of the parent, and that too after the Father and Mother have worn out their lives in servitude for the price paid, is a satisfaction vastly disproportionate!

It is alleged, that to emancipate those now living, generally, would be to violate private rights in possession, and productive of many public evils. But as respects those who may *in future be born*, this objection does not apply: And we trust that the time has arrived when the united voice of reason and policy require that they should be admitted to the common blessings of Liberty; and not come into existence only to labor for others....to be bought and sold...and to transmit the same wretched inheritance to their posterity. The obvious way to effect this great and necessary end will be to declare, that all born after the passage of the law shall at some given age be free-men and free-women, and their children wholly free.

Surely years and years of servitude will compensate sufficiently the master for the cares and expences of childhood. How little indeed is really expended upon the first period of their infancy? Nurtured by the mother in the recesses of labor; uneducated, and almost unheeded, they arrive at the age of usefulness at an imperceptible cost. Few of them but at seven and ten years old begin to earn their subsistence....and will not servitude until twenty one fully repay the expences of infancy? It may be alleged that cases of particular hardship will happen: Some parents may have proved a burthen, and some children from accident or disease continue so for many years; but these instances will be rare, and the inequality be greatly overbalanced in the general operation of the liberal term of twenty one years service. What extensive regulation ever takes place without producing some individual losses? Legislators must often act without respect to these on the wide scale of public utility;...they indeed will cease to act at all, if a few possible or probable disadvantages of a private nature, must deter them from the execution of measures calculated for the good of the whole.

If then the principle is admitted that perpetual slavery is politically wrong, and morally a departure from the great laws of nature and humanity, certainly this question of profit and loss may be adjusted. Shall that forever stand in the way of emancipation? Will nothing short of the *servitude of children to the end of time satisfy the owner for the price paid for, or the value of the Parent?*...The value given for slaves is commonly settled with reference to personal capacity for labor, and not regulated by any views to the service of their after born issue; and all the owners of slaves in possession, whether held by immediate purchase or by descent, will in general be thereby paid for the consideration advanced. We ask you, fellow-citizens and Legislators, for no law to touch property *in possession* however acquired; neither for the disannulling of that by which Twelve Thousand human beings are doomed to die as they were born....*Vassals in a land of Freedom!* We supplicate you for the *unborn*; these have *not been bought*, and when they come into possession let a *fair equivalent in personal service satisfy the possessor for the care and cost of their infancy*. A period will then be fixed after which it may be said that **IN NEW-JERSEY NO MAN IS BORN A SLAVE!**

It is not credible that prejudice or personal interest can much longer hold out against a claim like this....a claim advocated by the natural feelings of the human heart, and acknowledged by Americans in their act of Independence, as among the most undeniable rights of man. Why then should this just and necessary measure be any longer delayed? We cannot but indulge the hope that the propitious moment has come, when the voice of humanity, intreating for the oppressed, will be heard....when an assembly of enlightened Legislators, acting on the principles of Eternal Justice, and in conformity with their Christian Character; will resolve "*to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*" Thus will it be your praise to have blotted from your country perhaps its greatest crime, and to have restored to an unhappy race of men, that long lost charter from which we ourselves derive so many blessings,—**THE CHARTER OF MAN'S LIBERTY!**

William Griffith, Richard Hartsborne, Thomas Redman, William Newbold, Gershom Crafts, David Wright, Samuel Clement, Committee.