
A LETTER TO A CLERGYMAN,

Urging him to set FREE a BLACK GIRL he held in SLAVERY.

REVEREND SIR,

PERMIT me to speak to you freely of one matter in which, I am persuaded, you offend your God. I dare appeal to him who searches the heart, that, so far as I know my own heart, I have no worse design in speaking of it than regard for the glory of God, and love to your person; and, therefore, I hope you will take what I have to say in good part. The matter I mean is, the concern you have in the most infamous and accursed of all commerce, the buying and selling of man, who "*is the image and glory of God.*"^a

Is it so then that one man is born a Slave, and another a Lord? Or (to use an old metaphor), are one part of mankind born saddled and bridled, and the other part born d and spurred, ready to mount their harnessed brethren? No, Reverend Sir, all men at their birth are equally naked, helpless, and destitute of marks of authority. You could not distinguish between his royal highness and the child of the poorest beggar that walks the streets. This a maxim equally agreeable to scripture and reason, and peculiarly dear to every British subject, that all mankind are born upon a level, and that no man can rule over another but by mutual consent. As, therefore, you have not the consent of that Girl over whom you rule, I would desire you to give a solid answer to this question: "By what authority dost thou these things; and who gave thee this authority?" For my own part, I see no authority you can have, but that you are able to do it. I confess, it would be esteemed very good authority in a world of tyrants; the same by which the great fishes devour the small; but it will never satisfy the conscience of a tender Christian. If you have more power or wealth than your slave, it is owing to this cause only,—that God hath been more liberal to you than to her. His superior liberality to you or me, should be a powerful incitement to us to be more compassionate and helpful to our poor, oppressed brethren; and particularly to exert ourselves, to the utmost, for the redemption, protection, and education of slaves: But that it should be employed for the purposes of oppression and slavery, is, without doubt, a most horrid abuse of the kindness of God, and a lasting reproach to ourselves. Tell me, Reverend Sir, why you do not sell me? I am your brother, and your slave is your sister: You are not able. I bless God for his kindness to me, which hath put it out of your power to deal with me as you have done with my sister. Tell me, why may not your slave sell you? What right does she want, that you have, but power? I hope she wants inclination too.

The Apostle Paul preffeth us to hospitality, from this consideration, that "some have thereby entertained Angels unawares." Preposterous as it may seem to you, I must confess that I would be afraid to engage in the slave trade, lest I should be found to injure some superior beings, angelic or divine, in disguise. Had you lived when Angels visited the earth, in human form, you would not have forbore to buy and sell them if you had an opportunity. Had

^a 1 Cor. xi. 7.