Transcription of Germantown Friends’ Protest Against Slavery, 1688

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Transcription of
Germantown Friends' Protest Against Slavery, 1688

This is to ye Monthly Meeting held at Richard Warrell's.

These are the reasons why we are against the traffick of men Body, as followeth: Js there any that would be done or handled at this manner? viz., to be sold or made a slave for all the time of his life? How fearfull & fainthearted are many on sea when they see a strange vassel, being afraid it should be a Turck, and they should be tacken and sold for slaves into Turksey. Now what is this better done as Turcks doe? yea rather is it worse for them, wch say they are Christians; for we hear that ye most part of such Negers are brought heither against their will & consent; and that many of them are stolen. Now tho' they are black, we can not conceive there is more liberty to have them slaves, as it is to have other white ones. There is a saying, that we shall doe to all men, licke as we will be done our selves; macking no difference of what generation, descent or Colour they are. And those who steal or robb men, and those who buy or purchase them, are they not all alicke? Here is liberty of Conscience, wch is right & reasonable; here ought to be lickewise liberty of ye body, except of evildoers, wch is an other case. But to bring men hither, or to robb and sell them against their will, we stand against. In Europe there are many oppressed for Conscience sake; and here there are those oppressed wch are of a black Colour. And we, who know that men must not comitt adultery, some doe comitt adultery in others, separating wifes from their husbands and giving them to others; and some sell the children of those poor Creatures to other men. Oh! doe consider well this things, you who doe it; if you would be done at this manner? and if it is done according Christianity? You surpass Holland & Germany in this thing. This mackes an ill report in all those Countries of Europe, where they hear off, that ye Quackers doe here handel men licke they handel there ye Cattel. And for that reason some have no mind or inclination to come hither. And who shall maintaine this your cause or plaid for it? Truely we can not do so, except you shall inform us better hereoff, viz: that christians have liberty to practise this things. Pray! What thing in the world can be done worse towards us, then if men should robb or steal us away, & sell us for slaves to strange
Countries, separating husband from their wife & children! Being now this is not done at that manner, we will be done it, therefore we contradict & are against this traffic of menbody. And we who profess that it is not lawfull to steal, must likewise avoid to purchase such things as are stollen, but rather help to stop this robbing and stealing if possible; and such ought to be delivered out of ye hands of ye Robbers & and sett free as well as in Europe. Then is Pennsilvania to have a good report, in stead it hath now a bad one for this sacke in other Countries. Especially whereas ye Europeans are desirous to know in what manner ye Quackers doe rule in their Province; & most of them do loock upon us with an envious eye. But if this is done well, what shall we say, is done evill?

If once these slaves, (:wch they say are so wicked and stubbern men:) should joint themselves, fight for their freedom and handel their masters & mastrisses as they did handel them before; will these Masters and mastrisses tucke the sword at hand & warr against these poor slaves, lice we are able to belive, some will not refuse to doe? Or have these Negers not as much right to fight for their freedom; as you have to keep them slaves?

Now consider well this thing, if it is good or bad? and in case you find it to be good to handel these blacks at that manner, we desire & require you hereby lovingly, that you may informe us here in, which at this time never was done, viz., that Christians such a Liberty to do so. to the end we shall be satisfied in this point, & satisfie lickewise our good friends & acquaintances in our natif Country, to whose it is a terrour or fairfull thing that men should be handeld so in Pensilvania.

This is from our Meeting at Germantown held ye 18. of the 2. month 1688. to be delivred to the Monthly Meeting at Richard Warrel’s.

- garret henderichs
- derick op de graeff
- Francis Daniell Pastorius
- Abraham op Den graef.

at our monthly meeting at Dublin, ye 30—2 mo: 1688 we having inspected ye matter above mentioned & considered of it, we finde it so weighty that we think it not Expedient for vs to meddle with it here, but do Rather comitt it to ye consideration of ye Quarterly meeting; ye tenor of it being nearly Related to ye truth.

On behalfe of ye monthly meeting.

Signed, Jo: Hart.

This, above mentioned was Read in our quarterly meeting at Philadelphia, The 4th of ye 4th mo 88 and was from thence recommended to the Yearly Meeting and the above said Derick and the other two mentioned therein to present the same to ye Above said meeting it being a thing of too great A weight for this meeting to determine.

Signed by order of ye meeting

Anthony Morris.

(Based on text in Marion Dexter Learned, The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius: The Founder of Germantown [Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1908], 261–62.)
The Germantown Protest against Slavery, 1688.
The Germantown Protest against Slavery, 1688, from Marion Dexter Learned, The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius: The Founder, 1908, after p. 262.