A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery, Consistently with the Interests of All Parties Concerned (London, 1828)

By Moses Elias Levy
Edited and Annotated by Chris Monaco

INTRODUCTION

Published anonymously during the turbulent antislavery crusade in Britain, Moses Elias Levy's *A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery* stands without parallel. The appearance of this pamphlet in 1828 establishes Levy—a Jewish plantation owner and utopian colonizer from Florida—as the first among his coreligionists in the United States to call for the elimination of slavery. Additionally, the scope and magnitude of his ideas exceed the more modest achievements of other Jewish American abolitionists. The appearance of the treatise in London—the world center of the antislavery movement—and its influence on abolitionist thought place Levy in the front ranks of social activists on both sides of the Atlantic.¹

Historians have long held that Jewish antislavery activities during the antebellum period were fairly limited. In *United States Jewry: 1776–1985*, Jacob Rader Marcus emphasized antebellum Jewry's disengagement from Protestant-dominated social reform movements.² On the other hand, Bertram Wallace Korn's seminal work, *American Jewry and the Civil War*, demonstrated that Jews often took positions on both sides of the slavery debate shortly before the Civil War.³ Prominent among Jewish abolitionists were Michael Heilprin and Rabbi David Einhorn.⁴ Both these men expressed their deeply held beliefs in newspaper articles or sermons and fixed much of their attention on rebutting the well-publicized proslavery views of Rabbi Morris Raphall of New York City. Unlike Heilprin and Einhorn, Levy did not dwell on scriptural interpretation or moral debate. Instead, he devised a remarkably detailed and highly ambitious scheme for the total elimination of slavery.⁵ Unfortunately, the pamphlet's past anonymity resulted in its omission from the body of Jewish antislavery literature.
Moses Levy was both slave owner and abolitionist. Accordingly, Levy's plan reveals a unique combination of pragmatism and radical social experimentation. Convinced that the character of slaves had been corrupted by human bondage, Levy proposed that only the succeeding generation be granted freedom. The children of slaves would be provided with a Protestant religious education, as well as courses in the natural sciences and in agriculture, and allowed freedom at age twenty-one. Universal emancipation would arrive in "50 or 100" years. Levy theorized that intermarriage between whites and blacks would reduce racial conflict. Therefore, he devised a scheme in which British convicts would be transported to the West Indies rather than New South Wales, not only for punishment but for the ultimate goal of miscegenation. The establishment of private agricultural companies constituted another vital component in his plan. These commercial-philanthropic enterprises would implement Levy's ideas as they engaged in the development of nonslave-dependent agriculture. Furthermore, a "united association" of countries would stop the importation of African slaves through a network of specially designed sailing vessels.

Whenever Levy advanced abolitionism he preferred the inclusive terminology of Revelation and Providence rather than specific references to either Christianity or Judaism. This rhetorical technique encouraged a sense of common ground whenever he addressed Protestant evangelicals in England. Provocative speeches and newspaper articles dealing with anti-Semitism first earned Levy wide acclaim in London. Shortly thereafter, news of a draconian Russian ukase or edict against Jews in 1827 inspired him to organize an unprecedented and widely noted protest in England. Liberal Protestants, all staunch abolitionists, bestowed surprising approval upon Levy; they responded enthusiastically to his activist spirit, his passionate but reasoned oratory, and his thorough knowledge of both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. In Levy's writing, a Jewish perspective combined with an evangelical style that invariably stressed the sanctity of the Bible. Although this same formula is apparent throughout A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery, Levy was careful to avoid any overt Jewish reference.

While the charismatic Levy attained considerable distinction in London, his final return to Florida in August 1828 hastened the moment when his anonymous publication would eventually fall into
A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery

obscurity. The reasons for withholding his name were threefold. First, the gesture of anonymity was valued as an act of piety and humility within religious circles. Second, by Levy’s own admission, he was subject to criticism from some quarters merely by “being a stranger and a Jew.” Burgeoning nationalism as well as a legacy of anti-Semitism pervaded British culture, and withholding authorship assured that the scheme would be judged on its own merits and reach as wide an audience as possible. Third, unlike England, abolitionists in the American South were universally reviled, and dire consequences would certainly have ensued had the author’s identity been discovered. Also, Levy’s advocacy of racial intermarriage would have brought him into direct conflict with territorial statutes that imposed severe punishment for miscegenation. Unfortunately, the protective mantel of anonymity obscured the pamphlet’s origin for future generations as well.

Not surprisingly the uncommon biographical details of this inveterate social activist are as fascinating as his later accomplishments in England. Moses Levy was born in the seaport fortress of Mogador, Morocco, in 1782, and as was traditional in most Sephardic Jewish merchant families, he acquired an early proficiency in Spanish as well as Hebrew and Arabic. He was the son of Eliahu Ha-Levi Ibn Yuli, an influential Jewish courtier of Sultan Sidi Muhammad. While Eliahu was not the vizier, as is often stated, he was still a man of considerable wealth and privilege. In 1790 the death of the sultan precipitated a period of atrocities against the Jewish population; Eliahu then converted to Islam under the threat of death. This “conversion” notwithstanding, the family departed for the security of British Gibraltar, where Eliahu died some years later. His tragic death coincided with a serious epidemic that compelled the remainder of the family to seek a new life in the Danish West Indies. They arrived in Saint Thomas in 1800.

Moses Levy experienced early adulthood among a close-knit group of Jews, “nearly all from different parts of Europe.” He was employed as a clerk in a lumber export company where he acquired sufficient funds to marry in 1803 and begin a family. In a few years he became a partner in the export firm of Levy, Benjamin and Robles. Levy then moved to Puerto Rico and later to Cuba where a close business relationship with the intendente, Don Alejandro Ramírez, allowed a lucrative trade in arms and munitions. Levy amassed a
considerable fortune and traveled extensively in the Caribbean and in South America, but a merchant's life could not satisfy the deeply religious man. While on a visit to London in 1816 he presented his friend and colleague Frederick Warburg with a plan for the establishment of colonies where persecuted European Jews could find refuge. Two years later Levy visited America and established close rapport with Samuel Myers of Virginia. Pleased by what he saw of the United States, Levy returned to Cuba where he purchased 53,000 acres of land in East Florida. He intended to settle Jews there as soon as the Spanish colony was transferred to U.S. jurisdiction. America, a "New Country" where "prejudices [have] less scope," had constitutionally protected religious freedom and was the most logical destination.

Levy arrived in the new territory of Florida in July 1821. The following year he planted sugar cane and ordered the construction of buildings at his Hope Hill plantation on the west bank of the Saint Johns River. Further, he established another sugar estate—called Pilgrimage—near the remote inland settlement of Micanopy, an area still occupied by Native Americans. In 1823 a small group of Jewish settlers, which included Frederick Warburg, arrived there. Despite considerable effort and immense expenditures, Moses Levy failed to attract more than "three or four" Jewish families, and his funds steadily diminished. Consequently, he left Florida and in 1825 arrived in London where he hoped to elicit interest from affluent members of the Jewish community. While he ultimately failed in this effort, it was while in the English metropolis that he came into his own as a Jewish rights activist and as an abolitionist.

The proof of Levy's authorship of A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery rests on a number of convincing details. The publication date—July 1, 1828—is in the same year that Levy declared he would "publish a plan for the abolition of negro slavery throughout the world" while in London. Significantly, correspondence dated August 28, 1828, indicates that his "plan" was already in print. Therefore, both the time and place of publication correspond.

Additional proof lies in the distinctive background of the pamphleteer, whose "twenty-four year" residence in slaveholding countries coincides with Levy's tenure in Saint Thomas, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Florida. The author's "20 years in the West Indies" provides additional evidence, inasmuch as Levy left Cuba for Florida at the end
of twenty years. Furthermore, the pamphleteer places special emphasis on Puerto Rico and Cuba, countries Levy knew well. The mere presence of a non-Catholic in the Spanish colonies raises another significant issue: the Spanish prohibition against Protestants and Jews. Levy was able to circumvent these stricture through his unique relationship with Intendant Ramírez. It is significant that the author recalls an incident with elite Cuban planters during the year "1812 or 13" because new policies that allowed foreign businessmen into Cuba for the first time did not appear until several years later.36

Details of Levy's published writing reveal additional similarities. Over the course of his life Levy became a staunch advocate of universal education, a radical concept for the time. What further separated Levy from most of his contemporaries, however, was his insistence that the study of ancient Greek and Roman authors, whom he adamantly dismissed as "pagan," be prohibited. Instead, the Bible would be the centerpiece for all instruction, augmented by practical courses in agriculture and the basic sciences. These ideas are reiterated when the pamphleteer discusses how the children of slaves should be educated; he cautions that a classical education would promote certain character defects, specifically "self-love, ambition, vain-glory, and the like."37 Similarly, in May 1828 Moses Levy lectured about the pitfalls of a classical education; he emphasized the resultant personality faults of "emulation, ambition, and vain-glory."38

Equally important is the appearance of Levy's idiosyncratic concept: "operating and being operated upon." By this phrase Levy meant that an individual never acts or "operates" alone but is always under the influence of Divine Providence as well as other people. This peculiar expression concerning the unity of man and God was, in effect, a signature of Levy; throughout his lifetime he used this phraseology in one form or another. The "law of operating and of being operated upon," he wrote, "is as imperious in our constitution as the law of attraction which keeps harmony in the heavenly bodies."39 Strikingly, the pamphleteer positions his marks on the abolition of slavery within the grand context of his "knowledge of one great truth": "Providence works to effect a certain end for the benefit of all mankind, so man must be operated upon by the same spirit in all his actions; and that, consequently, it is impossible to attempt to injure or benefit any part of the family of man without operating, either directly or indirectly, on the whole."40
This statement also suggests Levy’s distinct communitarian philosophy. Profoundly influenced by the ideas of the European Haskala movement (Jewish Enlightenment), by the reform endeavors of Israel Jacobson in Prussia, and by the utopian concepts of Charles Fourier, Moses Levy adhered to an early form of socialism that stressed a communal, agrarian life-style. Only cooperative communities allowed men and women fulfillment in life—communities whose allegiance was to God and not to political regimes. Evidence of this thinking persists throughout *A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery*. The author’s call for the establishment of small cooperative societies made up of former slaves and his idea of forming extranational, “united associations” to stop the slave trade bear an unmistakable relationship to Levy’s philosophy.

Reaction to *A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery* was quite favorable. The London *Literary Chronicle*, swayed by the author’s convincing exposition and his pragmatic, “gradualist” approach to abolition, recommended the tract “to the serious attention of the legislature and the public.” The editor of the influential religious newspaper, the *World*, recognized the author’s “great benevolence of soul” and compared Levy’s “unbounded philanthropy” with that of the famed abolitionist William Wilberforce. A new antislavery organization was formed, incorporating the ideas of the pamphlet into its charter and promising to start “similar Societies all over Europe and America.”

Levy’s antislavery views were an extension of his deeply felt sense of humanism and social justice. While in London he even went so far as to compare the historical subjugation of Jews to the institution of slavery. His commitment to its ultimate eradication was emblematic of a sensitivity and kinship toward all oppressed peoples. *A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery* stands in stark contrast to the prevailing sentiments of the ante-bellum South where Levy continued to reside after his return from England. Unfortunately, his antislavery stand failed to engage his own family. Most lamentable is the case of his youngest son, the outspoken proslavery senator from Florida, David Levy Yulee. Out of necessity, Moses Levy kept his abolitionist views from public notice in the United States. Only in England, far from the rigid plantation system of the South, did he feel free to express fully his ideas on a wide range of social reform issues.
HAVING devoted my attention to the abolition of Slavery for the last twenty years, under peculiarly advantageous circumstances, I feel anxious to contribute my mite to the general stock of information on this interesting subject, that those who are manfully labouring to effect this great object may be in possession of all information likely to throw light on the subject. I have resided in slave-holding countries for more than twenty-four years, and, during that time, I have experienced the weaknesses and infirmities, the temptations and passions, which are incident to slave-owners. The lessons which this state of things necessarily conveys to reflective minds, led to the inquiry as to the best mode of counteracting its effects, at least, in my own family.

But, the more I examined the subject, the more complicated it appeared to me; and often did I, in a tone of despair, pronounce the case hopeless. This may easily be conceived, when it is said, that, in tracing effects to causes, we find that the present vices of the slave are but the effects of those of the owner; and that those of the owner are likewise the effects resulting from those of the slave; and that, consequently, the moral degradation of both renders any reform originating in themselves, impracticable. The severe measures adopted by the master seem called for by the vices of the slave; and these, again, are requisite, to pamper the weaknesses and passions of the avaricious master. Such insurmountable obstacles might have put a stop to my endeavours; did not their effect manifestly operate on my children, already labouring under many moral incapacities, originating from another, and a more inveterate, source: and thus, in reflecting on the one, the other, as it were, sympathetically presented itself; until, from motives of principle, the one became identified with the other. This train of reflection ultimately led me to the knowledge of one great truth,—that, as Providence works to effect a certain end for the benefit of all mankind, no man must be operated upon by the same spirit in all his actions; and that, consequently, it is impossible to attempt to
injure or benefit any part of the family of man without operating, either directly or indirectly, on the whole.\footnote{52} When, therefore, man loses sight of this great truth, however good his intention or action may be, if confined to any single community in its operation, he will inevitably encounter conflicting interests, and meet with obstacles to impede its progress. This view, in my opinion, answers the questions put by Mr. Denman, in his admirable speech at the last anniversary meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society.—"Why have we made so little progress in the great cause of emancipation? Why have the colonists evaded the resolutions submitted to them by the mother country for these five years?"\footnote{53} It is, I say, because the \textit{true} interests of both slave and owner, not only with respect to this, but to ALL other slave-holding states, are not unitedly consulted and manfully attacked. The question in the abstract, and the relation it bears to the civilized and religious world, is so momentous, that, without a thorough acquaintance with its extent and importance, it will be impossible to ascertain the degree of evil arising from a system of slavery, the ruinous consequences it threatens, or the nature of the remedy which might be successfully applied. The European reader must, however, be impressed with this fact, that the \textit{black and white inhabitants of the colonies cannot possibly be expected to sympathise or unite, at least for some time, in civil or domestic intercourse.}\footnote{54} The eastern and some of the middle states of America afford a good example of this fact; nay, I will even instance the Society of Friends\footnote{55} in that country; that class of individuals have ever displayed indefatigable zeal in the cause of emancipation; they will make any effort to promote this their darling object; yet have we no instance of their taking a genteel coloured family or person by the hand of unqualified friendship, intermarrying with them, or even mixing in social or convivial pleasure. This fact the philosopher and legislator should not lose sight of, in their speculations on this most delicate question. Whether the prejudice will be undermined by some stronger motive, I will not, at present, venture to assert; but, as far as mere reasoning goes, this great barrier will not be easily removed by mere human effort; and he who would legislate without considering the consequences to which this prejudice may give rise, in a mixed community governed by laws of equal rights, can possess but a limited degree of knowledge of the human heart. Is it not natural, I would ask, that minds operated upon by innate and insurmountable prejudices should produce correspondent resentment and ill-will in the heart of
A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery

frail man, whether white or black?

What will be the consequence of placing the injured and resentful untaught negro on a level, in civil rights, with the haughty and imperious civilized white? Will nine or ten hardy blacks submit to the contemptuous and haughty treatment of one of their white fellow citizens; when, in addition to the confidence which numbers and physical strength must necessarily inspire them with, the laws afford them but the power of revenging themselves on their oppressors by stratagem, cunning, or perjury? Let us suppose, that the slaves in the British colonies are emancipated by Act of Parliament:—will the feeling of gratitude be sufficient to make them overlook the personal as well as mental advantages of the whites, who are constantly reflecting on their inferiority? Let us allow, for a moment, that the limited number of enervated whites in the British colonies will, by some unknown effort of the mind, be led to act so as to make their black fellow-subjects feel their inferiority as little as possible:—will the untutored negro be blind to the degradation in which his race is held all over the other parts of the world? Will mere motives of gratitude teach him to distinguish between the white skin of an Englishman and that of other white oppressors? Let him who would for a moment entertain such a theory look at St. Domingo. Were the slaves not made free and equal citizens, in one single day, with their masters? Did gratitude prevent the massacre of all the white inhabitants of the island? The charity of Englishmen may give freedom to the slaves of their own colonies; but it will avail nothing, as against the general feeling entertained towards this unhappy race all over the world. Will their charity mould their own nature, to view with equal complaisance the symmetrical form and the fair skin of an European, and the disproportioned figure and black skin of an African? the long auburn tresses, and the woolly hair? the well-shaped and polished forehead, and a depressed one? the finely-shaped nose, and the short, flat, wide nose? the cherry lips of an European, and the thick black ones of an African? It is within the power of legislation or money to emancipate 800,000 slaves; but is there any legislative act, except that of God, that can counteract such insurmountable prejudices? I will even go further, and, laying aside the question of emancipation, suppose the present slaves qualified to appear as witnesses in courts of justice, not only the property, life, and honour of the master are exposed, but eventually the whites will become the slaves of the blacks. Be it so, it may be said.
But, if the government be once in the hands of the blacks, will the colonies remain for any time under the British dominion? Let the colonies go,—I may be answered. But, then, will such a state of things benefit the blacks? Will any vessel be able to navigate those seas strewn with innumerable small islands, inhabited by a small number of people of unequal power, and, consequently, of conflicting interests? But what alternative have we? Shall we, it may be asked, to avoid such evils, continue the unjust system of slavery? No: not only justice, but policy, forbids it: for, by continuing it, you necessarily produce a worse state of things,—a state in which the whole religious and civilized world is materially concerned,—a state which threatens the earth with a scourge, to retaliate on and punish the oppressors of the unhappy sons of Africa, enslaved for nearly three centuries.

It is to this awful side of the picture that I solicit the reader's most particular attention. Let us, for the present, view the question but in a political light. The prospect which opens upon Europe and America, if some timely steps be not resorted to, is neither more nor less than that of anarchy, and all its demoralising effects, for centuries to come, which will ultimately end in the establishment of the dominion of the blacks; and that rich portion of the American territory, extending from Chesapeake Bay, in the United States, to Rio de la Plata, in South America, will become another New Guinea. By the census of 1810, in the United States, the black population amounted to nearly two millions of souls. Their increase is very rapid: and, although the population there is as four whites to one black, yet this proportion is only found in classing the northern, middle, and southern States together; for, if we limit ourselves to the southern States, the proportion will be found in favour of the blacks.

Let us now throw a prospective glance on this state of things, fifty or one hundred years hence, when the present number of blacks will have increased to eight or even to sixteen millions. Can such a number exist, in a rich and extensive territory, reaching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, without becoming formidable? Yet, formidable as such a power is in itself, it will even become greater, by the moral strength they must necessarily receive from the Island of Cuba, whose black population must now amount to nearly the whole number of slaves in the British colonies. This large island, nearly 700 miles long, cannot but shortly follow the example of its neighbouring power, St. Domingo; as must, likewise, Jamaica. What mighty empires each of these islands is
A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery

capable of forming, to the annoyance of posterity, and united by the strongest of ties, the unconquerable hatred and prejudice of the whites! Pursuing, in our course, the line of islands and keys which are thickly scattered in that part of the ocean, and which must prove more dangerous to the peace and tranquillity of nations, from their insignificant size, we arrive at that unhealthy coast of the Guianas. As the climate of this extensive territory of low-lands has ever proved more destructive to the enervated whites, under their hitherto slave-driving system, than any other country, no increase in the already insignificant and disproportinate white population can be expected; while the coloured people, who, from their rural and laborious employments, accommodate their nature to the climate, must increase in a surprising degree.

We now come to the vast empire of the Brazils. Here we must pause, and attentively contemplate the situation and policy of this southern extreme of the future New Guinea. The population of this fertile and extensive territory consists, like the rest, of a greater number of blacks than whites. The slave trade is still carried on to an alarming extent, and, from its contiguity to Africa, it would be impossible, without extraordinary vigilance, to suppress it. From the great facilities afforded by the numerous unfrequented harbours, bays, and creeks, a Brazilian planter might, without much risk of detection, sail with a vessel and cargo of the value of from 500l. to 1000l. to the opposite coast, and return with a supply of 100 or 200 negroes for his plantation. Now what can be the result, but that, in process of time, that great extent of free America will be converted into a species of New Guinea. We here behold this skeleton of a future gigantic power, in as formidable a position as a well-adapted combination of circumstances can make it; North America on the one hand, and the Brazils on the other; while, in the centre, is the chain of islands on one side, and Guiana, Venezuela, and central America on the other; whose population, at present, according to the most moderate calculation, is at the ratio of seven coloured persons to one white. What renders this picture still more gloomy is, that the newly-formed States in that part of the world are feeble, from the unwieldly extent of territory occupied by their thinly scattered population. The many evils resulting from this circumstance, combined with the inveterate vices inherited from the parent nations, must render the protection of the lives and properties of the settlers extremely precarious: hence emigration from Europe
cannot be expected to keep pace with the increase of coloured population. Will, then, the present degraded and debased slaves, when they shall have arrived at that ascendancy with which their growing numbers must one day invest them, possess a due sense of justice, morality, or religion, to temper the savage ferocity natural to injured and frail man in a straggling, extensive territory? I will leave it to the contemplative mind to form a true picture of the state of such countries a century hence, if not counteracted by timely, wise, and active measures. Will not the religious mind be apt to perceive, in such a state of things, the retributive hand of Justice preparing a scourge to chastise the whites for the oppression they have, for so many centuries, been guilty of towards the unfortunate sons of Africa? It would, I fear, be useless to call on Spain or Portugal, as originators of the slave-trade, to redress the wrongs of the unhappy negroes: for they are already on the edge of the vortex which the sins of their forefathers have been preparing for them, and into which they seem even now to be hurrying. It is England, and her offspring on the other side of the Atlantic, France, and Holland—in fact, all the influential potentates of Europe, who should advance with united interest to warn the Brazilians of the impending danger which they, by speedy and wise measures, might be able to avert.

Before, however, we touch on the best means of averting this threatened evil, I will make a few observations on the obstacles which the internal interest of the different nations have to contend with, in addition to those which emancipation presents, morally and abstractedly speaking.

The raising of sugar, as hitherto pursued in the West Indies, is held to be impracticable by free labour. To this I am inclined to give full credence. To detail all that could be advanced in its support would swell this pamphlet to an inconvenient length. The principal reason appears to be this: that, as the cultivation of the cane, the manufacturing of the sugar, and the distilling of the rum, are all united in one concern; and, as each separately does not require the number of hands that are often necessary, on some urgent occasions, for a short time, the planter would be unable, without incurring great expense, to provide against the risk of losing unforeseen favourable moments, if the requisite number of labourers could not be promptly obtained. Slaves, therefore, whose time may be disposed of at command, seem to be necessary, both for the success of the
A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery

undertaking, and for raising the commodity at a reasonable price. To convince those who are unacquainted with this species of occupation, I will merely refer to St. Domingo. Their principal staple, while the soil was worked by slaves, was sugar; whereas, now, coffee has taken its place: nay, the Haytians, until lately, imported sugar for their own consumption. However feasible, therefore, the raising of sugar by free hands may appear to be, under a new system and a new colony, it could not possibly be enforced in establishments which have been carried on under a system of slavery for centuries past, without great loss of property and a complete change in the characteristic features of the different branches of industry, policy, morals, legislation, &c. This obstacle is justly felt by the proprietors and legislators of the West Indies, and very inconsiderately overlooked by European philanthropists and philosophers. Thus we see, that if the slaves are emancipated, we have to contend, first, against the legal claims of proprietors, not only with respect to the property which, by law, they have in the slave, but as proprietors of the soil and the extensive sugar manufactories, which must fall in value if the present system of agriculture be altered; secondly, it is a well-known fact, that the English proprietor is only concerned in the West India interest as far as pecuniary considerations go; for, his object is to acquire an independence, and retire to England; consequently, he could not be expected to make any willing sacrifice to secure the future prosperity of a community with whom he is not morally identified. Nothing but force could compel the colonists to legislate against their pecuniary interest; and, if even prevailed on to enact any laws in favour of the slave, they would be but a dead letter: for lawyers, witnesses, jurors, and magistrates, are all interested parties. Thirdly, the vices and ignorance of both masters and slaves. Fourthly, the prejudices of the white against the black, and the corresponding hatred it engenders in the breast of the black. Fifthly, the impossibility of counteracting this prejudice in any single community, while the degradation of the blacks is universal. And, sixthly, the want of consideration, on the part of the Europeans, in urging emancipation without contributing any other aid towards it than clamour, and in expecting that the slaves could be emancipated by the sole interference of government.

Thus we are surrounded by difficulties on all sides, and, in either case, civilized society is threatened with greater evils than those inflicted by the slave-dealers on the oppressed sons of Africa. If the
impending mischief be not averted by timely measures, the Americans will entail on their future posterity more suffering than the slaves ever experienced from the galling chains and merciless whip of their forefathers. Before, however, I proceed to offer any remarks on the remedy which sixteen or eighteen years' deliberation has suggested to my mind, it is necessary to observe, that only those persons who both acknowledge and feel the influence of Divine Revelation (and not the mere philanthropist) are capable of undertaking the work proposed, or of effecting any good in the cause: for it must be granted, that the past sufferings and oppression of the blacks, however just with respect to the dispensation of Providence, are unjust on the part of those who have acted as oppressors for their own private interest. To avert, therefore, the retribution which justice demands, it is not only necessary to abandon the system of persecution and oppression hitherto pursued against the blacks, but to turn that very system into an instrument of blessing to the uncivilized Africans.

This language neither the mere philosopher nor the mere philanthropist can comprehend: it can only be felt by those who are operated upon by the principles of the revealed word of God. It is such, and such alone, who are capable of perceiving the impracticability of prevailing against the contending interests and prejudices in which the question is involved, unless the work be undertaken in the spirit of atonement for past aggressions, and in order to promote the purposes of God.

From the nature of the obstacles which lie in the way of emancipation, the remedies necessary to counteract them appear to me to be these:—First, that the proprietors should not be the only sufferers in the cause of emancipation, but that every individual, both in Europe and America, should equally lend their aid in the cause: for, were we to examine the question fairly, we should find that every one in Europe, as well as in America, has profited, either directly or indirectly, by the system of slavery, and has, consequently, assisted in oppressing its subjects. Secondly, that legislation for the amelioration of the condition of the slaves, should not be entrusted to slave owners. Thirdly, that the slaves, being naturally unaccustomed to think for themselves, and being habitually indolent, deceitful, and vicious, from the effects of their abject state, should be suffered to die as slaves, and even continue, with some gradual alterations, under the accustomed oppressive government in which they were born and bred. Fourthly,
that a practical, substantial, and religious education should be given to
the rising generation, both of the whites and blacks.64 Fifthly, that the
system of agriculture, in general, should be altered, particularly with
respect to raising sugar. Sixthly, that the emigration of white people
should be encouraged. Seventhly, that some period should be fixed,
when slavery shall cease in the whole continent of America and all the
West Indian isles. And, lastly, that companies should be established in
every civilized nation to cooperate in carrying these things into effect
indiscriminately, by example in all slave-holding countries.

This last remedy is, in my opinion, so essential, that, without it, no
reform could be really effected: for unless, as I previously observed,
slavery could be attacked, in general, by a well-defined and plain
universal system, existing prejudices cannot be so effectually
overcome, as to render an equal participation in civil rights safe. By
having chartered companies to carry on a system of agriculture agreed
upon, or any other measure, in every place, the interests will be united,
and the policy of the several governments will receive a check when it
interferes with private interests; by which means, the system will be
carried on under the stability and guarantee of unanimity.

The plan or system to be proposed, is as follows:—That chartered
companies shall be established in Europe, and also in America, for the
purpose of abolishing slavery in the civilized world, by means of
education, and a new system of agriculture; and that they shall obtain,
from the different governments interested in it, a concordat, declaring
some specified period when slavery shall cease to exist,—say 50 or 100
years hence. My opinion is, that mankind generally fail in their
projects, by endeavouring to sow and to reap before the proper time
and season. The emancipation of the slaves should not be aimed at
until they are rendered capable of enjoying and of deserving their
freedom. If this be not first attended to, their liberty will prove as great
a curse to them as the free institutions of this country, or the United
States of America, would be to the Algerines or the Cannibals. Lord
Melville65 proposed, in 1792, that the slaves shall be declared free in
1800. Had this statesman said in 1850, the friends of emancipation
might have been nearer the attainment of their desires than they are
at present. Indeed, 50 or 60 years are even too limited a period, unless
great exertions are used, to prepare the slaves to receive the blessing
of freedom; it is scarcely sufficient time to allow their owners to
dispose of their property, or to direct their operations to an opposite
system than the one under which they were established, or to train their children to different pursuits and habits than the usual ones.

If all the civilized powers were, with one consent, to fix the emancipation of the slaves at some reasonable period, the owners, perceiving themselves considerately dealt with, and that, if the slaves were not prepared for their freedom at a fixed period, they would obtain it by severe means, would not only acquiesce in the measure, but even be induced to co-operate and forward a cause that would ultimately redound to their own safety. From the mere fact, that emancipation is decided on at a stated period, by the united voices of the civilized powers of Europe, all unreasonable tongues will be silenced. The slaves, on their part, will direct their expectations to the same distant object and certain hope; which will put an end to that dangerous state of mind which deferred hope creates, arising from the circumstances of being aware that their masters resist granting a freedom which the Europeans are labouring to gain for them. Nay, the blacks will, by losing all hopes of freedom for themselves, and centring them in their offspring, learn a lesson that will operate to advantage on their moral character: viz., that they are unfit to be freemen, from possessing the vices of slaves, but that their rising generation will be made deserving of receiving that blessing.

It will be further the duty of the United Association zealously to inquire into and suggest to government the best and most effectual means of annihilating the slave-trading system: for, however inclined the separate governments may be to promote this object, yet, if they do not all unite, both in counsel and means, to destroy that inhuman traffic, in vain will be all the labour which they may individually bestow. It is of very little use for any single power to send agents to Spanish colonies or Portuguese settlements, to prevent the introduction of any more slaves: for, were the agent to report any infraction of such orders in places where they are practised, his life would pay the forfeit; nay, he dares not even notice the prohibited Africans being landed before him. This I know from experience. It is, therefore, the slave-coast that must be guarded, not by England alone, but by all nations. Is there any nation more interested in guarding the coast than Brazil or Spain? I am aware that their subjects are, as yet, incapable of perceiving their own interest in its true light; but their governments might lead them to it. In fact, to employ an active vigilance on that coast is of the highest interest, not only to America,
but to all Europe: for it is impossible to separate the interests of civilized society. It is, therefore, incumbent on all the American governments in particular, and on the European ones in general, to unite their efforts, in order to establish, by some equitable system of contribution, a formidable force or fleet of small vessels, under one head, at the different points of that continent, to be in an uninterrupted cruise against the slave traders.

It appears to me that such a plan might be adopted, at a very moderate expense, and would be the means of arresting the progress of that inhuman traffic which is the present source of the evil, but which, in ten years, if the proposed measures were followed up with energy, would be entirely forgotten.

To do this effectually, the management should be entrusted to one single nation. The vessels employed in such an enterprise should be of a peculiar construction, and fitted, in every respect, for the service; for those used by the slave traders are fast sailing, and calculated to beat to windward, upon which alone they depend on escaping from cruisers in tropical and calm latitudes. It appears to me, that if schooner-rigged vessels of about 150 to 200 tons were to be built at Bermuda, of light cedar-wood, and so constructed as to be navigated occasionally by steam, they might be of essential use in chasing a vessel upon the wind, or in a calm.* [Note at bottom of page in original pamphlet: The palm oil, which abounds on the coast of Africa, may be used with great advantage for fuel] These steam-boats might be manned principally by natives, and commanded by able and expert men from the same place, or from the West India Islands. The expense of such a fleet would be less than the usual cost of those generally employed, and, at the same time, more real good would be effected. The Bermuda vessels are known to sail faster before or free from the wind than the sharp Baltimore schooners, and from the advantage of steam navigation they will possess a decided superiority over them upon the wind.67 Being manned by natives and persons inured to the climate, the lives of many Europeans who now fall a sacrifice will be spared; and from the practice which a stationary employment will give to these men, they will prove more formidable than British officers and commanders, who must serve their apprenticeship at every change.68 Whilst such energetic measures are taken to prevent the further introduction of slaves into America, the united societies established in the different civilized countries must, on the other hand, direct their
attention and labour to promote the emigration of white people to America—suggesting from time to time to the different governments the best means, which experience may teach them, to induce emigrants to settle in the infant states. This must evidently appear an object of the highest importance to the civilized world; for the emigration of white people to America will not only prove the most effectual method of destroying slavery, and of consolidating the newly-formed governments, but Europe itself will be greatly benefitted. By this means she will be enabled to disencumber herself of her redundant population, and check the present alarming growth of crime, aggravated by the oppressing system of monopoly which the arts and sciences tend but to increase. Why is not the wise and humane measure adopted by England of transporting the greater part of her criminals to New South Wales, practised by all the other nations of Europe? Why do they not enter into some treaty with the new Governments of America to receive all those of their subjects whom want and misery have driven to vicious habits? The West Indies, Central America, Venezuela, Guiana, and Brazil, are all thinly populated—let them, therefore, receive the criminals of Europe as subjects; and if no other more humane means are as yet discovered to reclaim them, let them even be received as slaves. The spirit of the black population will be thus neutralized, and, by attending to the education of their freeborn offspring, the now wild wastes of America will be populated by an enlightened generation, in which the black skin will be lost with slavery in the gradual shades of improvement.69

Indeed, England herself might derive benefit by changing the present place of transportation to the West Indies or America. For the increase of crime is alarming, and the place of banishment is not longer a dread;—hence, far from deterring criminals, it, on the contrary, operates as an incentive to crime, for it procures them a free passage to a good country, where they may have a new field of action, and be screened from misery and want.70 A case which will illustrate the above statement was published in the Times newspaper a short time since. A number of privates belonging to a regiment which had been removed from New South Wales to Madras, actually committed felonies in order to return to their favourite country—preferring even to be sent thither in the degrading character of slaves or criminals to remaining in the luxuriant cantonments of the East Indies!*

[Note at
Another case as late as last week was brought before a sitting magistrate, where the culprit candidly confessed that he stole a parcel of eleven pair of stockings in the hope of being transported, in order to save himself from misery and want. It could not be argued that policy requires the continuance of the present system of transportation to populate New South Wales, as the country possesses sufficient attractions to induce the choicest part of society to settle under its happy climate, without incurring the enormous expense which this country must be at, in transporting their criminals to so great a distance. If, instead of New South Wales, England were to substitute the West Indies, or South America, for her convicts, she would, while augmenting the population in those countries, increase her own interest and influence by spreading the enlightened habits and customs of her people, and necessarily increasing, in a proportionate degree, the demand for her own manufactures. In addition to these considerations, crime will receive some check from the dread of transportation to a climate considered unhealthy, which, with the horrors of West India slavery, will operate more powerfully on the mind than even the fear of death. If those criminals of Spain and Portugal who are condemned to the galleys were to be transported for life to Cuba, Porto Rico, or the Brazils, their condition might then be really ameliorated both in a temporal and a moral point of view. For what, in fact, is the miserable condition of a galley-slave?—It does not require any argument to convince those who are acquainted with the wretched state of these criminals, that death itself would be an improvement on a law said to be instituted from motives of humanity. As for France and Italy, they will find a sufficient field in their Palais Royales, their Galères, their Realtos, Bravos, Lazarones, &c. to furnish their quota of subjects; and they would thereby ease the coffers of the state, and remove a class of people from scenes which chain them to their vicious habits. In short, the benefit that would ensue from adopting such a course would be generally felt throughout Europe as well as America. It may be said that the criminals will contaminate the present inhabitants of the countries to which they may be transported. So they may, if left to themselves. I am aware that difficulties will attend the plan suggested for the first few years; but what are they when compared to the evils which a perseverance in the old system threatens to posterity? The planter will, perhaps, consult his private interest, and object to the
introduction of intelligent subjects to act in a menial capacity, and who may be likely to disturb that debased state of mind necessary to make the slaves content to live on dried plaintains, and work six days in the week, to procure luxuries for a single individual. But it is now time that the selfish slave owner should be roused from his lethargy. It is time that he should be made to feel, if he cannot understand, that if he be not willing to lend his head and heart to promote the general good, the right of property which he claims in the slave is held but by a feeble tenure—that it is in reality but of a secondary consideration in the scale of the improvement of society—that if he look up to the community for the protection of his property, he must, on his part, contribute to the safety of that community. Were the subject, however, to be viewed in its true light, we should find that the planter would merely be required to sacrifice a little feeling in the change proposed. Let him but call forth the energies of a man, and he will be armed against all imaginary, as well as real, dangers. The change will not be as sudden and as formidable as he at a first glance may be led to fancy.

The criminal subjects which Europe might furnish cannot exceed fifty or sixty thousand souls; and the evils which might be anticipated from their depraved minds might be averted by the influence of those good and industrious persons which the tide of emigration would direct to that quarter. But even were this not to be the case, such a number is very insignificant when we consider the vast extent of territory and diversity of climate on the one hand, and on the other, the numerous useful occupations and trades in which they might be advantageously employed. The change at first would be scarcely felt before the system is tolerated, and the mind accommodated to the new state of things. I will, however, grant that the major part of the West India Islands, from their limited resources and their present system of agriculture, will not allow any great scope for emigration. But the large islands, such as Cuba, Jamaica, and Porto Rico, will most assuredly be able to receive subjects from Europe, who, although they may not intermingle with the negroes of established plantations, may nevertheless be employed in separate establishments of cotton, coffee, rum, &c. as also in different trades. It is true that the climate is an enemy to intemperate strangers, but this is one of the risks to which the laws of his country expose the criminal. The scheme is well worth a trial in Jamaica, Honduras, and Demerara; with respect to Cuba and Porto Rico, I am confident it will succeed, for the distance between the whites and blacks in Spanish countries is not so great as with the
grave calculating Dutchman—the aristocratic Frenchman—or the high-minded, but haughty, Englishman. Often have I seen in Cuba, and Porto Rico, a white man working by the side of his slave and sitting at the same table. It appears to me that one reason why we find the Spanish creoles more identified with their native place, is because they are brought up to agricultural employments which serves their constitution and moulds their nature to the climate. Even the inundated country of the Choco contradicts the general assertion that the white people could not endure hard labour in tropical climates. The wagoners in Cuba are all white men, and the cultivators of tobacco, and graziers, are likewise generally of that class. It is owing to the circumstance that we do not perceive in Spanish colonies that disproportion in numbers between the whites and blacks as is invariably the case in other colonies. The population of these two islands, in 1815 and 1817, was at the rate of four white to five coloured persons in Cuba, and one white to two coloured in Porto Rico. Among the coloured population of these islands, there are many nearly white, who possess a competent and even affluent independence—nay, there are many families of the first respectability and influence in Cuba whose grandfathers or grandmothers were coloured persons. Their number, it is true, is comparatively limited, but this fact argues that the plan suggested in Spanish colonies is practicable. The reader will easily perceive that I have laboured to impress on his mind the necessity and practicability of European emigration to America and the West Indies; it is not, however, so much to the European that I address myself on this subject as to the creole. I know the difficulty attending a system which is likely to lower that idea of superiority which the planter deems so necessary for the negro to entertain towards a white person, however culpable or mean he may be. I know that the intelligence and vices of a white criminal may tend to counteract, not the purity of the negro’s morals, but that stupid simplicity and abject submission to the white which transform the vices of the slave to virtues of the highest importance, which, although as pernicious to his soul as the most heinous crimes, yet are they deemed virtues, because they contribute to the replenishment of the master’s purse.

I am aware that the plan suggested will be pronounced as monstrous by the white creole—but, at the same time, I know that it is his mistaken interest that blinds him and prevents him from
understanding. I know that the West Indian nabobs will at first exclaim, and raise a clamour against the system, and endeavour by the best means in their power to counteract it, until they are convinced from experience that in raising the slave to the level of the white, although a criminal, and in debasing the white criminal to the level of the slave, they will both be benefited and attain to a higher state of excellence than the master can possibly conceive,—and he will one day feel happy to find himself on a level with the penitent slave, either white or black. Being thus aware of the difficulties which the slave owners will throw in the way of the proposed system, I am conscious that its introduction cannot be expected to originate with them; it must be done by the European societies, who are influenced by far higher motives than mere pecuniary interest. In short, let religion and piety be the sole guides and primary objects of such establishments, and the white criminal and vicious slave will breathe an atmosphere uncontaminated by the vices of either. But methinks I hear the creole, with all those angry feelings which some of them betray on such subjects, demand—"Do you then advocate indiscriminate marriages?" To this I reply—that if religion be not capable of allowing a connexion which mere animal passion gives rise to in slave-holding countries, we must then abandon the subject as hopeless, and consider the world to be governed by chance, there being two classes of beings, created with a prejudice against each other without the means of overcoming it. We can only then say—let America and the West Indies become another new Guinea, which, with the old one, shall unite to persecute the white people because they are not black, in the same manner as the white persecute the black because they are not white; and let brutal and indiscriminate passion effect what religion cannot.

The next object to which the societies should turn their attention, is that of promoting religious information, both amongst the whites and the blacks. As a preliminary, however, marriages, particularly amongst the blacks, should be encouraged; nay, even enforced by law; for how can we expect that religion or civilization shall find its way among persons compelled to live as brutes? Did the planter ever consult his interest—his pecuniary interest, he would enforce marriage amongst his slaves; for, surely, conjugal affection, parental and filial love, are the best guarantees for the good conduct of the subject. The planters of the Island of Cuba soon discovered the benefit of introducing marriage amongst the slaves. This reform was effected
by so trivial an occurrence, and spread so rapidly, that I cannot but relate it. In the year 1812 or 13, a gentleman on a visit at a house of the most opulent planter in Havannah, Don P— de-la C— M—, met there, by chance, several planters of the highest rank—the subject of the moral condition of the blacks was discussed in the course of conversation. Some gave it as their opinion, that the mind of the black was incapable of cultivation, and that there was something naturally imperfect in its construction. The stranger remarked, that experience would contradict that position if the planter would apply the remedy which all savage nations did, to their great advantage, the blacks would yield to its influence as well as any other class of the sons of Adam. The remedy alluded to was the word of God—Religion! Oh! rejoined some of them; they are baptized, they confess once a year, &c. But how, replied the stranger, can confession be expected to avail if the sins are still persisted in? Are not the slaves by the most unjust discipline, obliged to live as brutes amongst themselves? Why not promote marriages amongst them? Try this, said he, and you will find it to be the best preparatory step to religious feelings; nay, added he, the very interest of the planter will benefit by such a system, for the affections of husbands, wives, parents, and children, will prove but so many ties to attach the slaves to their locations, and will make them more rational, more sober, and more useful inmates of the establishment. The conversation was put a stop to by a reply, that Christians were far from doing their duty; and a pause ensued, which seemed to indicate that the argument had made some impression.

The stranger, two or three years after, revisited the Island of Cuba, and, to his astonishment, found the system of marriages spreading sympathetically on all the plantations in the Island. It appears that the above referred-to opulent planters, adopted the system of marrying the slaves on their own plantations, the salutary effect was soon felt and communicated to their neighbours, until it became a favourite discipline in all well-regulated plantations. Thus was a population of blacks, which must now be nearly 600,000 souls, by a mere hint, founded on the duties which the revealed word of God teaches, snatched from the brutalizing effects of a mistaken policy, which has, for so many generations, raged in the West Indian Isles. The change wrought in the condition of nearly 600,000 souls will be easily conceived, when the reader is told that, previous to this, the plantations had but a very inconsiderable number of females to the
number of males.

I know of an instance, where an establishment of 1,000 negroes did not have fifty females amongst them.

I am aware, that it is impossible to enforce marriage in a plantation where the master would not be willing to facilitate it. But let a tax be imposed on all single persons in the colonies, and the planter will soon find it to his interest to promote legal marriages on his plantation.

This will be deemed a novel mode of legislating; be it so: if society require it, it is as fair a subject for legislation as any other.

I have attempted, hitherto, to point out the objects which the united societies should endeavour to promote. But, it is necessary to create a field of action, which, while it may prove the means of carrying their measures into effect, will tend to unite their interests and afford an opportunity to acquire experience; the only school which could promise success in so gigantic an undertaking. The plan proposed, is, in itself, simple, and such as money-making companies are even now pursuing. The object is to form agricultural establishments in those tropical countries, on a system adapted to free labour, the result of which will furnish the best argument to the planter, to induce him to change the present system for one which promises better returns. Such establishments might be undertaken by the different companies, individually or unitedly, with great advantage. In addition to the great end of abolishing slavery, destroying prejudice, and effectually improving the condition of millions of unborn souls, they would reap a good interest for their capital.*[Note in original text: English Capitalists, have, it is said, lent nearly seventeen millions sterling to the new states, which sickly and enfeebled Spain gave birth to, as weak in power as they are mighty in territories.
foreign to our subject, but they, nevertheless, impress the mind with this fact—that the burthen of debts incurred, cannot but add to the difficulties of the states, and augment their embarrassments, which must inevitably impede the growth of improvement. At the same time, it will call the attention of the stock-holders to the plan proposed, who will find their interest greatly connected with its success. While, from the present state of things, they are sensible of the little probability there is of receiving a dividend on the money already invested, they might, by uniting their interests, obtain from the governments of those extensive countries lands in lieu of interest. They might then employ their capital to much better advantage than in mining-bubbles, by establishing colonies on the plan proposed. The lands thus employed, will not only yield a sure and handsome return, but by the increase of an industrious population, contribute to bring the resources of the country into full operation, upon which alone the chance of the ultimate reimbursement of the original capital principally depends. Thus will a sum of money, now lying useless and inactive, be made, by judicious management, productive of much good, and be the means of diffusing happiness to hundreds of thousands, and, at the same time, accelerate the prosperity of a country, destined for the habitation of millions and millions of souls.]

But ere I proceed, it will be necessary to lay before the reader the capabilities of lands in a tropical latitude; he will then be enabled to judge of the population which those regions are calculated to maintain, and, consequently, of the system of education, and proportionate ratio of cultivated minds, which the communities will require, in order to keep the intellect from becoming stagnant, as well as to counteract those evils, which laziness, an evil natural to warm climates and plenty, produces on the human mind.

A quarter of an acre of the banana tree will yield sufficient for the principal food of a family of ten persons; one quarter of an acre will produce from forty to fifty bushels of sweet potatoes; half an acre will give between twenty and forty bushels of maize and pease; and twenty Trees of coffee, if allowed to grow high, will give from two to three quintals yearly. Upon such a limited spot as one acre of land, a family of ten persons may actually raise provisions in a greater variety, and partake of more luxuries, than the plantation negro now enjoys; for the whole that he is allowed at present per week, is a peck of corn or a quota of plantains and a few herrings. If the family be enabled to
add another acre of land, they may plant a quarter of an acre of sugar-
cane, and raise sufficient small stock, such as fowls, pigeons, rabbits,
and pigs, as to permit them to have animal food some part of the
week. During the remainder, with their pepper-pot, pigeon-pease,
cucumber, tannia,\textsuperscript{82} and yam soup, which may be seasoned with the
bene plant;\textsuperscript{83} their boiled corn flour, roasted or fried plantains, or
potatoes, the family may have a good dinner, and thank their Maker
for luxuries, of which many of their fellow creatures are deprived. As
for their clothing, the present cost of each negro does not exceed 3l.
per annum, which sum, with economy, will amply provide them with
clothes suited to a warm climate. But this item will entirely depend on
the industry of the family, who will provide themselves with clothing
according to their circumstances, either by spinning, weaving, or other
work. If, however, the plantation consist of four or five acres, they may
have very decent clothing, as also pasture ground, to maintain a horse
and cow, raise a few sheep or goats, and augment the variety of animal
food, as well as other comforts. Thus it will be seen, that, with a
plantation of five acres,\textsuperscript{84} a family of ten persons will live in a degree
of comfort, provided their exertions be seconded by industry and
religious habits, which a consistent system of education is alone
capable of inculcating. And I will venture to assert that, provided this
object be principally attended to, a farm of ten acres would enable
them to move in a degree of refinement, and ensure to them more
temporal comforts, than generally falls to the lot of the middling
classes of farmers inhabiting those countries in Europe, which boast of
a population of 200 souls to a square mile. But the reader will be apt
to ask, why has this state of things never as yet been realized in
tropical climates? The reason is clear; such a state is incompatible with
a system of slavery, and the vices to which tyranny and an abject
debased spirit give rise. It can only be realized in a state of freedom,
when equal laws may be the patrimony of all classes of society, of the
rich, as well as of the poor; it can only be realized in territories whose
dense population can ensure stability to the government, and energy
to the laws, both of which are incompatible with a thinly scattered
population in an extensive territory, whose laws are based on tyranny
and slavery. What an immense population the vallies of Aragua,\textsuperscript{85} and
many other territories in Venezuela, might render happy, if that
government were concentrated within itself, instead of being united to the unwieldly territory of New Grenada, an union, which will oblige the short sighted Bolivar to accept a crown, which his people, distracted by intrigue, and division of interest, must, sooner or later, force on his reluctant brow. The fertility of rich lands in a tropical climate and the capability of maintaining a more dense population than any other country, cannot at first glance be seen, from the system of agriculture at present pursued by the great planters of the British, Dutch, French or Danish settlements, though an estimate may be formed from the Spanish creole settlements. The frugal Spaniard of Europe, transmits his frugal habits to his creole descendants. With the lassitude occasioned by climate, want of education, a field of action for the exercise of his higher faculties, and the abundance with which nature supplies him, he is naturally inclined to lead a lazy and indolent life. If you visit one of the settlements in the interior of Porto Rico, or any other Spanish colony, amongst the peasantry, or that class of individuals, generally known under the name of Guagiros, you will there see a true picture of the degradation of the noble nature of man, when plenty, or the attainment of temporal enjoyment, is made the aim of his existence. The principal furniture of the house is a water jar, calabashes or cocoa mugs, cooking utensils, and stoves; a few plates, some wooden benches round an immensely large wooden table, two or three cots folded up in a corner of the room, and hammocks hung up in every direction, in which the members of the family rock their lives away. From the roof, you will see suspended, several branches of plantain, jerked beef or pork, sausages, and the like, and cocoa-nuts, melons, and other tropical fruits strewed about the floor; go when you will, you will find the hammocks in motion, while cards are briskly moving at one corner of the table; one and all, men, women, and even children, with cigars in their mouths. This class of people seems to exist but for the pleasure of sleeping away their lives, in their beloved hammocks. If a plantain be within reach, when hungry, they will prefer it to a dainty dish, rather than leave their hammocks. No consideration will induce them to move, unless compelled by necessity, or for the gratification of any of their characteristic passions; to play at cards, attend at a cock-pit, or go to mass. But when once he is roused to business, he appears to go about it with so much alacrity, that one will scarcely recognize in him the lazy hammock-ridden Guagiro. He, however, soon flags, and relapses into his accustomed
apathy, spending whole days and weeks in a vegetating state of torpidity. If you inquire into the means which a family of Guagiros have for their subsistence, you will find that whether they possess a large or a small tract of land, it consists of a plantanal or plantain ground, which requires no further attendance after once planted, than to cut down the luxuriant shoots, and clear the ground once every year or two; you will next find a few coffee trees for the use of the family, a small patch of sugar canes, all of which cost little or no trouble to raise. Sometimes they will have a small patch of potatoes or yams, which, with a few fruit trees, a horse, a cow, and a pig, completes the paradise of a Guagiro. Café con leche, coffee, with milk; cream-cheese crumbled in it; and roasted green plaintains, is their favourite breakfast and ready meal. Some will indulge in an ollia or soup at mid-day, while others will content themselves with a piece of broiled tasajo, jerked beef or pork, with boiled or roasted plantains, yams or potatoes. The supper is again café con leche, and the day closes but to usher in another of the same moral inanity.

We thus see that plenty, the palatable nature of the food, and the little trouble the grower has in procuring it, are the principal evils with which the inhabitants of tropical countries have to contend. Also that from such a state of ease, and in the absence of a dense population, regulated by a suitable government and cultivated minds, laziness must be the natural result, unless the system of slavery force man into action by the instrumentality of ambition, cupidity, and the luxuries and vices of a tyrant. M. de Humboldt⁸⁸ goes further than I do in my calculations respecting the prolific produce of the plantain tree. He asserts that an acre of the plantain is capable of maintaining fifty persons, and hence it may be said to be one of the best gifts of the Author of nature for the support of man, as it is a plant which, without much labour, can be cultivated, reaped, and prepared, and forms a nutritious and agreeable food. The plantain, when green, furnishes a nutritious food, either roasted or boiled; when ripe, it possesses a sweet taste, rendered more delicious from an agreeable tinge of acid peculiar to the fruit. Whether it be boiled, roasted, or fried, it forms the best relish imaginable. There are many districts of white creoles amongst the Spaniards who live solely on this delicious and nutritive vegetable, without ever tasting bread. To give an idea of the nourishing properties of this plant, it will be sufficient to observe, that with all the laborious toils of the field, and the waste natural to the human frame
in a warm climate, yet the greater part of the slaves live exclusively on it, without any other relish than a herring.

The sweet potato forms another nutritious plant. The yam likewise, when boiled or roasted, is used in lieu of bread. This is generally a favourite vegetable amongst the creoles, particularly if eaten with a salt relish. The cassava, which is obtained from the yuca, or manioc, forms another favourite diet. This farinaceous substance is, like the arrow root, obtained from the root of the plant. Of this flat cakes are made, or the flower is dried and may be preserved for use for years. By mixing it with boiling fish-water, or beef broth, seasoned with lime-juice and pepper, it makes a palatable food, and requires no other relish. The cake, as well as the flour soaked in water, is used, particularly amongst the French, in preference to bread. We next find the tania of different classes; its leaves make the finest spinach possible, and its root furnishes a more nutritious food than the Irish potato. In short, the tropical climate possesses so many vegetables which may be easily raised, and which are in their nature so agreeable to the palate, that unless the country be populated in proportion to its capabilities, and under the influence of highly cultivated minds and a RELIGIOUS SPIRIT, nothing can secure them from the trammels of slavery in its various shades, and the vices attendant on an easy and indolent life.

The position I take will be fully illustrated by referring the reader not to Africa but to the state of the inhabitants of the East and West Indies, as well as those of South America. The former having a dense population, with a portion of arts and sciences, but without the influence of Revelation; the latter with a thin population, consequently destitute of either art or science, possessing but a very imperfect idea of religion: both countries with tyrannic nabobs surfeited with luxuries earned by the hard labours of the multitude of poor rice or plaintain eaters. But if emancipation in America and the West India Islands be not allowed to cut a road for itself as chance may direct, but its steps beguile by the sure leading-strings of a consistent practical religious education; if the cultivation of the soil be directed so as to bring the energies of the mind into healthful exercise, that it be kept from being surfeited by plenty, and impoverished by the apathy and laziness it creates, then the communities, although small, may be formidable to others, and unitedly live happy and free within themselves. The arts and sciences will then keep pace with that degree
of civilization which a closely united people is capable of, while a practical religious education will prevent civilization from degenerating into effeminacy, selfishness, cunning and deceit; a state which must be allowed to have ever proved the forerunner of injustice, corruption and slavery.

One objection, however, the philosopher may start against a high state of intellectual or moral attainment in a climate where the seasons are characterized with so great a degree of sameness as that experienced in tropical countries, where those marked changes from winter to summer are not felt, and hence the mind cannot experience those springs and falls to which it, in some measure, owes its energies. That warm climates are not inimical to the cultivation of science, the East Indies and ancient Egypt will fully prove. I will allow that the mind requires incentives, and a change in the field of action for the exercise and development of its precious powers. But if the imagination be kept from ranging in an extensive wilderness of plenty; if all the resources of the inventive mind be put in requisition by confining the population to the limits which the capabilities of the land, its local advantages, diversity of soil and productions, demand, agriculture will necessarily improve, and with it all branches of industry, and the comforts which such a state is calculated to produce will naturally create a sufficient field for the expansion and enlargement of the mind.

As I am addressing the religious, I am sure to be understood when I, in continuation, observe, that all the speculations of short-sighted philosophy will only prove true in that state of existence where the individual is moulded by education to act upon the principle that society, or the world, are objects of interest only so far as they contribute to his peculiar gratification. Then man may require different seasons to force his powers into action—then self-love, ambition, vain-glory, and the like, may prove as so many spurs to the development of some isolated power. But when a practical religious education shall bring the mind to a state far different to that of which mere morality is capable; when the mind is operated upon by those ever-varying and progressive stages of excellence which the word of God is alone capable of leading it into; when the word of God shall mould it to do the will of a creator who delights in the happiness of the individual, but as a part of the whole human family; then, instead of manifesting one or two isolated and detached powers which may
be forced into action by the mere selfish bias of the individual, he will identify his happiness, and value it only as it contributes to that of the whole; which was, indeed, the aim and end of the creation. The noble mind, not confined by a selfish aim, but taking for its range the limits which the Creator has given for its end, will then unrestrainedly expand its powers; their degree of excellence being innate, and not tuitive.

Having expatiated upon the capabilities of tropical lands, and the influence they are calculated to produce on the character of the individual, and on society at large, and having previously argued the necessity of altering the present system of sugar establishments, I will now suggest to the united companies a plan which, if introduced with systematic perseverance, will, by the irresistible force of example, soon become general, and will show to the mistaken landed proprietors of those countries their true interest.

Let us suppose that a healthy location be chosen on both sides of a navigable stream, near to some populous town, and that, on its borders, a number of small plantations are located, of from two to ten acres of land each; that for every two or three hundred of these plantations there be established a sugar manufactory, the mill of which shall be worked either by the force of water, wind, or steam, which, when not employed in grinding the cane, may be used in sawing wood or grinding grain. Let each family, independent of their principal occupation or pursuit, grow from one to five acres of sugar-cane. When the season for grinding arrives, which is generally in the latter end of the fall, ten, twenty, or more families may, as neighbours, unite in cutting down the cane, and carrying them in boats to the manufactory. By paying the toll, which time and experience may fix, each shall be entitled to his portion of sugar which is to be assessed by competent judges amongst themselves, not with a saccharometer in the hand, but with the spirit of neighbourly consideration. On such an occasion, the best feelings will be excited. This festive season will be mutually hailed with joy. When the neighbours thus join with social and disinterested feelings, each will be prompted to vie with the other in showing kind and friendly assistance, and the sugar-making season may be rendered the means of cementing their family connexion. A faint picture of this may be imagined, if we figure to ourselves the description given us of the vintage season in wine countries. The planters of one-eighth or a quarter of an acre of cane, if they be not
able to join them, can have at home a small wooden mill and a boiler; and the neighbours of more humble means may unite at home, and assist each other in preparing the sugar for the use of their families throughout the year. Such and similar establishments the united companies might, in time, be enabled to form; and, while labouring to effect this great good, and to prepare a happy state of existence for the future inhabitants of those extensive waste lands in America, their labour would richly repay them for their capital thus employed, in the increased value of the lands.

The plan proposed will be comprised under the following heads:—That chartered societies be organized, in different parts of the civilized world, uniting their interest and plan of operation in the common aim of abolishing slavery amongst those people who profess a belief in revealed religion; that their principal endeavour be to promote a general and consistent system of education, founded on the basis of practical religion and useful knowledge, and likewise to carry on agricultural occupations in the West Indies and in particular parts of the continent of America; that the societies endeavour to obtain, from the governments of Europe and America, first, a settled plan for effectually preventing the slave-trade, by equally contributing towards establishing a permanent force—say from 30 to 40 vessels—to cruise from the coast of Madagascar to the river Gambia or Senegal, which shall be considered as neutral, and possessing equal power over all vessels frequenting those seas in peace as well as in war; secondly, to have a period fixed when slavery shall cease in Europe as well as in the continent of Americas and its dependencies; thirdly, to promote the general system of transporting criminals to the West Indies and to certain parts of America, by entering into suitable arrangements with the different governments principally concerned; fourthly, to obtain from the different governments of America and Europe such regulations as may tend to promote the emigration of white population to America; fifthly, to obtain such privileges, from the different governments, in favour of the societies, as may be consistent with their laws and policy: such as that of remitting a reasonable portion of duties on the introduction of stores and other necessaries for the use of their establishments, as well as on all produce raised by them, and imported in any place for consumption.*[Note at Bottom of Page in original pamphlet: By this means, every individual in Europe, as well as in America, will virtually contribute towards the emancipation
of slaves; and the planter will not then complain that the European
does not, and is not willing to, bear a part in pecuniary sacrifices. He
will, no doubt, ask, What compensation is this to me, when the united
societies are alone benefitted? But the planter must bear in mind, that
the effect of the system adopted by the companies operates to increase
the value of his real estate when the general emancipation takes place;
and that, if these measures be not adopted, the property of the slave-
owner will daily decrease, from the spirit of insubordination which
must naturally augment among the slaves. Whereas, by enforcing such
measures, the services of the slave are secured to the master up to a
certain period, at the expense of the governments to which the
colonies may belong. But if the planter choose to avail himself of the
privileges granted in favour of the societies, nothing can prevent him
from joining in the same interest, and from partaking in the same
advantages.]

In order to carry these objects into full operation, it is proposed,
That the united companies do purchase suitable lands in the colonies
of their respective governments, and in such other countries as may be
deemed advantageous to the genius and pursuits of the emigrants.
That their object be simply to choose a good location in the vicinity of
some populous district, and on the borders of a navigable stream, to
establish plantations for raising such produce as may be most lucrative
and suitable to the interest and object of the societies.

That their establishments be conducted as much upon the system
of a penitentiary as is possible, and that order, system, and practical
religion be the discipline and main objects amongst the inmates.91

That the children be educated in a separate establishment, and
that their education be continued to the age of twenty-one. That it
principally consist, first, in training the mind to make the will of God
the main-spring of action; not to be drawn from moral books, but
from the pure word of the Bible, with the contents of which they must
be made familiar; not for faith only, but for the regulation of their conduct.
Secondly, that they have an insight into the principles of the natural
sciences, in order that they may have a practical knowledge of
agriculture or some other useful profession, upon a scientific
principle.*[Note at bottom of page in original pamphlet: This may be
objected to by persons who confine education to that class of society
called high. This heathenish theory has had its reign long enough in all
conscience! To their Greek and Latin, their tasteful arts or writings,
&c., the poor will give up all pretensions. But, really, the Bible and the book of nature are the patrimony of all men, be they poor or rich. Surely every being who is endowed with the faculty of knowing and of being operated upon by the justice and mercy of his Creator, has an equal right to be made acquainted with them.]

That at the age of twenty-one, the children thus educated be considered free, but should any of them not possess the means of beginning the world, he may with his wife be allowed to serve the proprietors for a term of years, and his services shall be considered as an equivalent for a small plantation, of from two to ten acres, at which time the proposed new system of agriculture will be considered to be fully established. Such is the plan offered to the consideration of those who are actuated by principle, and not by feeling, and who are willing to do more than meet and pass condemnatory resolutions. Stir yourselves and ask the aid of God: He desires that you may do his will, fear not the magnitude of the undertaking, nothing is too great with the divine assistance, everything is so without it. The plan may appear great in viewing the result, but in reality the means are simple. At its commencement, however, it may only be traced, and, like a skeleton map, the divisions be filled up by degrees. The principle on which the plan is founded, is both natural and feasible, for what can be more simple than a system of education? without it nothing can be effected. By commencing a system of improvement, founded on the solid basis of practical religion, you will attack prejudice with the only weapon likely to subdue it; you will then avert the vengeance of retributive justice; and atone by the labours bestowed on succeeding generations, for the cruelties inflicted on their forefathers; and you will then ward off the calamities, with which that hemisphere is threatened, and introduce such a state of society as will be a blessing to it and to the world at large. But the united societies can do no more than endeavour to unite the minds of men in one general plan of operation, for the establishment of small communities, where a system of education, consistent with the religion professed, is made general, and a course of agriculture pursued suitable to the soil, climate, and policy of the country. They alone cannot make as great an impression, if the governments do not second their efforts, they should direct their attention to the only means there is of promoting an effective system for improving the rising generation. In this great object the welfare of both Europe and America are inseparably united. The improvement is
easy and practicable, particularly in America, by adopting a consistent and useful system of education, where the children of the poor of all classes may be trained to the practical knowledge of the precepts which the word of God enjoins, and have a competent knowledge of nature, until the age of twenty-one.

This system will be found to be as natural and as necessary to the youth, as the air which it breathes. Give the child an opportunity of coming within the influence of the word of God and the secrets of nature, uncontaminated by studies of heathen morality, and he need not apply to the classical scholar to teach him wisdom, taste, or even refinement. Let such a system of education be general, and legislators need not study the Roman codes in order to institute laws for the suppression of crime. Indeed, if the governments of civilized countries would consider their true interest and duty, a general education would occupy their principal attention. To understand, and to be trained to act up to the dictates of the Bible, and the easy and simple knowledge of nature, is, and ought to be, the patrimony of every person. And were this generally the case, there would be less occasion for Sheriffs, Prisons, and Soldiers. Such a system of education may be made general, particularly in tropical climates, with very little expense; nay, one might almost venture to say, that, in process of time, the establishments would be capable of maintaining themselves. This will not appear extravagant, when we reflect that the system of education proposed, is that of teaching by practice and not by theory, and that the student is to remain in the establishment until the age of 21: also, that it is in a climate where clothing will not be expensive, and a soil where an acre of plaintain will maintain 50 persons. I do therefore solemnly call on the British government in particular, and on all the other powers possessing colonies, to enforce the education of the rising generation of blacks on their masters, and to take them under their own special superintendence. All the planters in a district may join in appropriating a piece of ground for this purpose; and their slaves, thus educated, will prove better subjects to them. When the general emancipation shall take place, they will find themselves surrounded by well-informed, grateful, people, instead of savage enemies, and what may be lost in the nominal property the planter has in the slaves, will be gained by the increase of the value of real estate. If this, or some other system, preparatory to the emancipation which sooner or later must take place, be not commenced by the
planteers, this appeal, amongst others, will testify against them, and they will stand condemned in the eyes of future generations, for whom they are preparing unspeakable miseries. On the other hand, I will venture to say, to all those in England who, operated upon by mere morbid sensibility, will press for a partial emancipation in their colonies: "Consider that the number of English slaves is very small, when compared with the total, and that the English slaves are not far removed from the African savage in civilization: nay, in many respects, they are more vicious, for they have the vices of the African, and also of the Christian, without their virtues." I will lastly direct their attention to the 28th chap. Of Isaiah, from verse 23 to the end.\textsuperscript{92} "Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech. Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley, and the rice, in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Bread \textit{corn} is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise \textit{it with} his horsemen. This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, \textit{which} is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working."

Imitate then the works of the Creator! Plough the ground before you sow the seed! Take the pains to cultivate, if you desire to reap good fruit!

To the different powers of Europe, and to the united states of America and Mexico, I will say that the slave-holding countries, if allowed to go on as they have done, besides entailing on future generations immense trouble, will, in a great degree, retard the progress of improvement. It is impossible that the slaves or slave-holding states, can extricate themselves from the thraldom of slavery. It cannot be expected. You must therefore take them under your own tutelage, direct their councils if they will, or force them to the measure if they will not.

I will now in conclusion add, that the like establishments recommended in the West Indies and in America, may with little expense and trouble be formed on the coast of Africa: not in the latitude of Sierra Leone,\textsuperscript{93} or Liberia,\textsuperscript{94} but more towards the North or
South of the line. I will rather make the colonization system insinuate itself by degrees upon the tropical latitudes, than plunge into them at once. Numerous establishments may be commenced on small scale, indeed, at first, under the protection of the established naval forces. When the colonies are in a prosperous train, and the slave-trade completely at an end, the vessels may be employed in transporting such free families as may wish to remove to the African settlements. There are many ways to induce them to emigrate. It may be done by a grant of land, or any other allurement which the policy of the governments may think fit to offer. By this means that huge continent of Africa, which has for so many years baffled the efforts of the whites, in the repeated attempts to civilize its inhabitants, will yield to Missionaries of their own colour. They, with the Bible in their hand, will exclaim to their countrymen, "Behold the descendants of those whom you, by your inhumanity, forced from their homes to slavery, but grieve not, 'You have thought it for evil, but God meant it for good.' We have been carried as slaves, and we served as slaves under the yoke of idolatry, superstition, and ignorance, but we are no more so. This blessed book has secured our freedom; those who enslaved us, operated upon by its influence, made us first worthy of our freedom, and have now broken our chains. They have sent us to offer it to your acceptance." By this means, the present generation may, if it please, secure in the most effectual manner, the civilization of the benighted sons of Africa, and justify the ways of God to man. It will clearly demonstrate that, although the original slave traders were acted upon by selfish motives, to the condemnation of their souls, they were nevertheless made instruments of the hand of providence, "to bring about his work, his strange work"; and to show that the Lord, by his inscrutable ways, advances mankind to the light of revelation, from one providential step to another; that the Creator leads his free agent man, with a cord of love towards himself, to that state where the influence of his word will indisputably reign alike in the hearts of men; when God will be all in all, when he will be one and his name one.

Chris Monaco is an independent scholar and documentary filmmaker. He is a contributor to American Jewish History and the Florida Historical Quarterly and is currently working on a full-length biography of Moses Elias Levy.

NOTES:

1. A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery made a significant impression on English
abolitionists and resulted in the formation of a new antislavery society that incorporated Levy’s principle tenets. See “Abolition of Slavery,” the World (London), September 10, 1828.

2. Jacob Rader Marcus, United States Jewry 1776–1985, 4 vols. (Detroit, 1989–93), 1:313. “The social idealism of the Jews was satisfied with the hazy hope in the ultimate Coming of the Kingdom of Heaven when every man would live at peace under his own vine and fig tree.”


5. This universal approach was also unique among English abolitionists. In 1828 Levy noted that “all persons who had taken up this question, had looked at one or two parts of it without entering on a general consideration of the subject.” See M. E. Levy, address to the Surrey Anti-Slavery Society, the World (London), October 31, 1827.

6. Levy’s slave ownership first appears in the “Matrikel” records of Saint Thomas. In 1805 three “full-grown” slaves are listed as part of the Levy household. See “Notorial Protocol for St. Thomas,” David Levy Yulee Papers, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville (hereafter cited as PKY). After Levy returned to his Florida sugar plantation he complained that he had only “ten hands.” Having exhausted his funds, Levy suggested to Moses Myers of Norfolk—who was indebted to him for the sum of $10,000—that he repay half the obligation in the form of “field negroes in families.” See M. E. Levy to Moses Myers, January 2, 1829, Myers Family Papers, Jean Outland Chrysler Library, Norfolk, Virginia (hereafter cited as JOC). By 1839 Levy sold thirty-one slaves for $15,000 in Saint Augustine, Florida, thus apparently ending his slave-owning status. See Bill of Sale, Moses E. Levy, December 4, 1839, Deed Book N, 572-3, Saint Johns County Records, Saint Augustine, Florida (copy in possession of the author).

7. In 1828 abolitionist theory was divided between “gradualism” and “immediatism”—although preference for immediate freedom was beginning to predominate. See Thomas D. Hamm, God’s Government Begun: The Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform, 1842–1846 (Bloomington, Ind., 1995), xvii. As an adherent of the gradualist approach, Levy’s status as slave owner is not as contradictory as it may first appear. Levy chose what he perceived to be an objective strategy motivated by “principle, and not by feeling” and was convinced that gradual emancipation was the lesser of two evils. In contrast, advocates of “immediatism” viewed the mere act of slaveholding as sinful and beyond justification.

8. Levy’s ideas for eliminating slavery are summarized in [M. E. Levy], A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery, Consistently with the Interests of All Parties Concerned (London, 1828), 12.

9. Certain similarities occur between Levy’s Plan of 1828 and his 1818 scheme for the settlement of European Jews in America. Both concepts presented small-scale agricultural communities as the ideal model for settlement. The education of both boys and girls was also of foremost importance. A curriculum that emphasized the Bible, natural science, and agriculture, as well as the rejection of “classical” authors,
appears in both instances. See M. E. Levy to Samuel Myers, November 1, 1818, Myers Family Papers, Manuscripts Collection #480, Box 3, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio (hereafter cited as AJA).

10. Miscegenation was far more frequent in Latin American countries than in other slave societies. Undoubtedly, Levy’s promotion of this practice was influenced by his tenure in Puerto Rico and Cuba. Historical evidence suggests that while intermixture resulted in lessened racial tensions, it also created an extensive caste system based on color gradation. See Jay Kinsbruner, Not of Pure Blood: The Free People of Color and Racial Prejudice in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico (Durham, N.C., 1996), 1–2, 19–33; David Brion Davis, The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture (Ithaca, N.Y., 1966), 275. It is noteworthy that while Levy’s ideas concerned non-Jewish groups of the lowest socioeconomic stratum, he also believed in safeguarding Jewish “racial” integrity: “The race of Jews has miraculously been continued unmixed with the people of the nations through which they have been scattered.” See M. E. Levy to John Forster, 1828, in John Forster and M. E. Levy, Letters Concerning the Present Condition of the Jews: Being a Correspondence between Mr. Forster and Mr. Levy (London, 1829), 17.

11. In contrast, many of Levy’s contemporaries viewed emancipation as an exclusively Christian concept and their reform efforts assumed a distinct Protestant missionary zeal. As a result, the abolitionist cause in Britain became inextricably linked with attitudes of religious supremacy. For one example see Rev. Daniel Wilson (bishop of Calcutta), Thoughts on British Colonial Slavery (London, 1827). Some proponents managed to imbue their arguments with anti-Semitic bias. See Rev. Andrew Thomson, Slavery not sanctioned, but condemned, by Christianity: A Sermon (London, 1829).


14. Levy’s extensive knowledge of Christian theology can be seen in Forster and Levy, Letters.

15. M. E. Levy to the Editor, the World (London), October 31, 1827.


17. Caution and anonymity also surrounded Levy’s efforts to establish a new, radical form of Judaism in America. Dismissing traditional ritual as well as rabbinic literature and authority, he envisioned agrarian communes that looked to the Hebrew Bible for inspiration. “Those you bring to our Society must be as secret as Masons,” he cautioned Samuel Myers of Norfolk who acted as his emissary to prominent American Jews. Myers subsequently contacted such notables as Mordecai Noah and Joseph Marx. See M. E. Levy to Samuel Myers, November 1, 1818, Joseph Marx to Samuel Myers, March 2, 1819, and M. M. Noah to [Samuel] Myers, February 28, 1819, Myers Family Papers, AJA.

18. On Moses Levy’s birthdate (July 10, 1782) see M. E. Levy to Mr. and Mrs. [David] Yulee (Saint Augustine), October 1, 1852, Yulee Papers, Box 40, PKY. This contradicts historian Joseph Gary Adler’s claim of July 11, 1781, in “Moses Elias Levy and Attempts to Colonize Florida,” Jews of the South: Selected Essays from the Southern Jewish Historical Society, ed. Samuel Proctor, Louis Schmier, and Malcolm Stern.
Further confusion is evidenced by the author's inclusion of June rather than July 1781 in the footnotes. An earlier, unpublished version of Adler's manuscript indicates that his source, a report from the U.S. District Court in Philadelphia, was actually a reference supplied by historian Malcom Stern. Further documentation relating to Levy's quest for citizenship upholds the date of 1782 rather than 1781. M. E. Levy to Rachel [Levy] Henriques, September 1, 1853, Yulee Papers, PKY.

For more on the family of Moses Elias Levy see Haim Bentov, "The Ha-Levi Ibn Yuli Family," in East and Maghreb: Researches in the History of the Jews in the Orient and North Africa [Hebrew], ed. E. Bashan, A. Rubinstein, and S. Schwarzfuchs, 6 vols. (Ramat Gan, 1980), 2:141-45; Joseph Toledano, La Saga des Familles les Juifs du Maroc et Leurs Noms (Tel Aviv, 1983), 232. For a contemporary and highly critical portrait of Eliahu Levy see Samuel Romanelli, Travail in an Arab Land, trans. Yedida K. Stillman and Norman A. Stillman (1792; reprint, Tuscaloosa, Ala., 1989). In Romanelli's narrative, Eliahu Levy—"his face spotted with pox marks" and "craftier than any serpent or than all the beasts of the field"—emerges as the quintessential sinister character. The Stillmans dispute Bentov's assertion that Romanelli is biased and unreliable, and they affirm the validity of Travail in an Arab Land as an invaluable and highly accurate primary source.

Apparently the title "grand vizier" was first used in an 1846 newspaper article shortly after Moses Levy's son David, a United States senator, changed his name to Yulee. See Florida Herald and Southern Democrat (Saint Augustine), February 2, 1846. Fanciful accounts of the Yulee family still persist in various books and newspaper articles. See Allen Morris, Florida Place Names (Coral Gables, 1974), 92; Stuart McIver, "Flight of a Favorite Son," in Sunshine, the Magazine of South Florida, April 14, 1996.

21.Chris Monaco, "Moses E. Levy of Florida: A Jewish Abolitionist Abroad," American Jewish History 86 (December 1998): 382-83 n. 27. Eliahu maintained several residences among the imperial cities of the country and in Tangiers his family resided in "a large building which had formerly been the royal offices for estate taxes." See Romanelli, Travail in an Arab Land, 78.

22.Eliahu's conversion (Romanelli, Travail in an Arab Land, 142) is supported by Moroccan rabbinical court records. However, Romanelli was incorrect in his assumption that Levy died shortly thereafter. See Bentov, "Ha-Levi Ibn Yuli Family," 141-45.

23.Florida Herald and Southern Democrat, February 24, 1846. Eliahu almost certainly reverted to Judaism after residing in Gibraltar. See Bentov,"The Ha-Levi Ibn Yuli Family," 141-45: "If Elijah [Eliahu] went abroad, it was surely so that he could return to Judaism there."


25.M. E. Levy to Rachel [Levy] Henriques, September 1, 1853, Yulee Papers, PKY.

26.Levy's partners were Emanuel Benjamin and Solomon Judah Robles. Benjamin's brother Philip—father of Judah P. Benjamin, U.S. Senator and Confederate secretary of state—was also a business associate but was not an actual partner in this firm. See Tidende (Saint Thomas), October 30, 1815; Y. O. Bro-Jorgensen to Mary MacRae, July 4, 1950, box 1, Yulee Papers, PKY.

27.For a history of Levy's relationship with the Ramirez family see M. E. Levy,
letter to the editor, *Florida Herald and Southern Democrat*, February 1, 1843, and January 23, 1843. For additional background on Ramírez see René Velázquez, “The Intendancy of Alejandro Ramírez in Puerto Rico, 1813–1816” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1972). While Levy’s public statements about Ramírez were quite laudatory, privately Levy harbored a deep sense of distrust toward the Spanish and viewed his employment as a means to an end. “I am engaged as it were in the Service . . . to a nation the most inimical to Our Brethren . . . If I am in any ways to Revenge Myselfe on that nation, it'll be by making them an indirect means of repairing the wrongs they have done us not by doing them harm but by making them do us good.” See M. E. Levy to Samuel Myers, November 1, 1818, Myers Family Papers, AJA.

28. Monaco, “Moses E. Levy of Florida,” 384. For more on Levy’s purchase of Florida land, see “Item No. 3—Messrs. Hernandez & Cheavitean in account with Fernando M. Arredondo,” August 3, 1820 (Havana), in U.S. House, 27th Cong., 2d sess., 1842, H. Rept. 450, 135. Almost half of the purchase price of $36,000 was bartered in the form of 15,000 pounds of copper kettles. Hernandez and Cheavitean (alternately spelled Cheaviteau) were Levy’s agents in the transaction. By the 1850s Levy had accumulated 100,000 acres of Florida land.


31. The present town of Micanopy is located ten miles south of Gainesville.


33. Levy departed New York City for London in May 1825. See M. E. Levy to Moses Myers, May 19, 1825, Myers Family Papers, JOC.


35. Ibid.

36. [Levy], *Plan for the Abolition of Slavery*, 19.

37. Ibid., 26.


40. *A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery*, 6. Italics have been added for emphasis.

41. M. E. Levy to Samuel Myers, November 1, 1818, Myers Family Papers, AJA. Also see Marcus, *United States Jewry 1776–1985*, 1:364–69. The ideals of social equality were also reflected in Levy’s activities as a Freemason. See Levy, *Address Before the Temperance Society*, 11–12.


43. *World* (London), May 19 and July 9, 1828.

44. “Abolition of Slavery,” the *World* (London), September 10, 1828.

45. “Public Meeting of the Jews Respecting the Russian Persecution,” the *World* (London), December 26, 1827.

46. Moses Levy wrote this document during a time of intense financial and emotional pressure. Litigation in the United States prevented Levy from selling any of
his land holdings and his large expenditures toward establishing a Jewish refuge forced him to mortgage his Florida property while in London and Paris. In July 1827 Levy wrote to his friend Moses Myers, "my property is in the mean while likely to perish & my children ruined at all points." Shortly after returning to Florida, Levy declared that his "funds were exhausted beyond measure." See M. E. Levy to Moses Myers, July 26, 1827, and January 2, 1829, Myers Family Papers, JOC.

47. Levy arrived in the West Indies in 1800 and departed Florida in 1824 in order to raise funds for his Jewish colony. This is the twenty-four-year period to which he refers. In addition to his mercantile pursuits he owned sugar plantations in Puerto Rico and Cuba. See Monaco, "Moses E. Levy of Florida," 378-79. Levy also lived for a time in Curacao. See M. E. Levy to Samuel Myers, May 4 through November 3, 1819, Myers Family Papers, JOC.

48. This is the only overt reference to Levy's history of slave ownership.

49. Levy believed that slavery created in children"feelings inimical to the spirit of brotherly love." See M. E. Levy, an address to the "Second Meeting of the Catholic Mission, for the purpose of discussing the subject of Slavery," the World (London), June 18, 1828. At this time Levy had suffered two setbacks regarding his two sons, Elias and David. Elias appeared to be on a self-destructive course when he dropped out of Harvard in 1823. Levy described his son as a "mere idler, without any aim or object in view." See "Extract from letter of M. E. Levy to [Jonathon] Dacosta," September 18, 1845, Yulee Papers, PKY. David also disappointed his father in 1827 when he abruptly left the Moses Myers household in Norfolk to live with his mother in Saint Thomas. David, the future United States senator from Florida, complained of "languor and apathy." See David Levy to Moses Myers, April 17, 1827, and M. E. Levy to Moses Myers, July 26, 1827, Myers Family Papers, JOC. In Levy's address to the Surrey Anti-Slavery Society—the World (London), October 31, 1827—he relates the problems of rearing children who are taught "to look down and despise" the slaves who waited on them: "Thus the worst and most malignant ideas were engendered in the mind of the white."

50. Levy always affirmed a broad-based approach when addressing social ills. For instance, when he considered intemperance he blamed the ethic of "individualism" for the continuation of the problem. See Levy, Address Before the Temperance Society, 7.

51. The "inveterate source" to which Levy refers is almost certainly the influence of his former wife, Hannah (Abendanone). Married on Saint Thomas in 1803, Hannah and Moses Levy had four children. Their relationship was filled with intense acrimony and they separated several years before their divorce was granted in 1818. In 1845 Levy believed that "her character follows me in that of her children." See M. E. Levy to [Jonathon] Dacosta, September 18, 1845, Yulee Papers, PKY; "Notorial Protocol for St. Thomas," Yulee Papers, PKY.

52. The author's belief in the interconnectedness of all human thought and action was an essential component of his world view and led him to a total commitment to social reform. Similar sentiments appear throughout his writing: "For one nation operates on another as one man upon another, until by parity of reasoning we include the whole of the human race." See Levy, Address Before the Temperance Society, 7.

53. Thomas Denman was a prominent jurist and abolitionist. The anniversary meeting to which Levy refers was held at the Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, London, on May 3, 1828. See the World (London), May 7, 1828.

54. The author shows his dual nature as both pragmatist and reformer. His
personal experience demonstrated that blacks and whites could never truly unite on
the same social plane. Even in Latin America, where free blacks often served in militia
units, social stratification and racial prejudice stymied the "social and economic

55. Antislavery beliefs became incorporated into Quaker thought by the
mid-eighteenth century. See Davis, Problem of Slavery in Western Culture, 330.

56. Abolitionist rhetoric frequently warned of rebellious blacks bent on revenge,
and the successful slave rebellion on Santo Domingo (Haiti) figured prominently in
such arguments. The island achieved independence in 1804. See Dwight Lowell

57. Although Levy exhibits the racial prejudices typical of the nineteenth century,
his argument stems from a concern for social equality. In contrast, proslavery literature
used African physical characteristics as proof of "natural inferiority" and subhuman
status and dismissed education as being futile. See Richard H. Colfax, Evidence Against
the Views of the Abolitionists, Consisting of Physical and Moral Proofs, of the Natural
Inferiority of the Negroes (New York, 1833).

58. In addition to the Haitian insurrection, the Bussa Rebellion of 1816 (Barbados)
and the ill-fated 1822 attempt by former slave Denmark Vesey in Charleston, South
Carolina, also contributed to the impending horror of slave insurrection. Uprisings by
slaves were by no means confined to the early nineteenth century. Numerous
incidents occurred throughout the eighteenth century as well. See Davis, Problem of
Slavery in Western Culture, 138–39.

59. The usage of New Guinea was meant to convey a state of barbarism. Notably,
the crucial emotional appeal in Levy's argument is fear of retribution and of the
decline of civilization.

60. During this time in England a number of abolitionists were calling for a
boycott of sugar. One view was that "every twenty-five people who eat West Indian
sugar, keep at least one slave to make what they consume." See "What Does Your Sugar
Cost?" A Cottage Conversation on the Subject of British Negro Slavery (Birmingham, 1828),
5–6. In contrast, Levy stressed pragmatic, long-term goals "offered to the
consideration of those actuated by principle, and not by feeling." See [Levy], Plan for
the Abolition of Slavery, 29.

61. Levy appealed to the self-interest of the slave owner in an effort to further the
cause of gradual emancipation. More typical of abolitionist literature is the pamphlet,
A Picture of Colonial Slavery, In the Year 1828, Addressed Especially to the Ladies of Great
Britain (London, 1828). Such publications emphasized the indiscriminate use of the
cart whip as well as the moral degradation of the slave owner. The "great question" for
Levy was not whether criminal abuses existed but "whether they were to keep some
thousands of their fellow-creatures in their present state of debasement," a state that
not only injured blacks but—in both a moral and a spiritual sense—increased whites as
well. See M. E. Levy, address to the Surrey Anti-Slavery Society, in the World
(London).

62. This same point was made by Moses Levy when he addressed the Surrey
Anti-Slavery Society: "The slave-holder had a right to turn round upon them and say,
'if you all wish to remove slavery, you are all bound to come forward and assist. The
evil, such as it is, was introduced by your fathers, but the money gained by it has found
its way into your pockets' " (in the World [London]).

63. This stipulation was later modified by Levy's followers to offer freedom to
those slaves who, "for a period of seven years, have evinced themselves worthy of it, by their moral and religious conduct." See "Abolition of Slavery," the World (London).

64. Levy placed education as the primary element in his scheme: "[Emancipation] must begin with children: let them emancipate their minds, and when they have education and virtue, they [will] become free." See Levy, address to the Surrey Anti-Slavery Society, in the World (London).

65. Lord Melville was home secretary and secretary of war under William Pitt.

66. The formation of a United Association of governments was apparently too radical a concept for the new antislavery society that was formed in accordance with A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery. This particular requirement was not included in the organization's charter. Britain's burgeoning sense of nationalism would have been at odds with such a utopian idea. See "Abolition of Slavery," the World (London); Monaco, Moses E. Levy of Florida, 392.

67. The author demonstrates his practical experience as a merchant shipper in the West Indies. Levy owned and operated a fleet of commercial sailing vessels. See M. E. Levy, letter to the editor, Florida Herald and Southern Democrat, January 23, 1843.

68. By the 1820s Britain maintained a squadron of vessels that intercepted slave ships along the African coast.

69. The stipulation for diverting British criminals to the West Indies was incorporated into the platform of the "Society for the purpose of abolishing Slavery throughout the civilized world" two months after the release of Levy's Plan. See "Abolition of Slavery," the World (London).

70. It is ironic that the evils of West Indian slavery were better known in England during the 1820s than the equally abusive realities of transportation. See Robert Hughes, The Fatal Shore (New York, 1987), 197, 282-83.

71. In 1831 Demerara was incorporated into British Guiana (now Guyana).

72. The term creole was used in Latin America, and in the Caribbean in general, to distinguish between any native-born person—black or white—and those born in Europe. It was originally a distinction of great pride among the white inhabitants. See Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage, 1st ed., s.v. "creole."

73. A western region of present-day Columbia consisting of tropical rain forests and swamplands.

74. During these years Levy established sugar plantations on the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico.

75. Levy also used the image of the submissive slave in a rebuke to certain English Jews who refused to support his defiant stand toward the Russian ukase of 1827: "It appears as if they are like the negroes in the West Indies, who are so accustomed to look up to and receive every thing at the hand of their master . . . that even when the cart-whip is unmercifully laid on their backs, they mechanically shriek at the smart of every lash, Thank ye, Massa!" See "Public Meeting of the Jews respecting the Russian Persecution," the World (London), December 26, 1827.

76. During this time Levy not only had won the trust and confidence of Alejandro Ramírez, the intendant of Puerto Rico and future superintendent of Cuba, but also had the support of the governor general and the bishop of San Juan. This privileged position would have allowed him access to the most "opulent" planters in Cuba—despite his status as a Jew. While Levy presents this incident in the third person, it is undoubtedly his own personal experience. He frequently placed such anecdotes in the third person, apparently from feelings of modesty. For example, see the "collapsed
cargo" incident—an experience that almost resulted in his death—in Levy, Address Before the Temperance Society, 14. For more on Levy’s unique position in Puerto Rico and Cuba see M. E. Levy, letter to the editor, Florida Herald and Southern Democrat, January 23, 1843, and February 1, 1843.

77. The right of marriage among slaves, while long accepted by the Catholic Church in Latin America, was frequently ignored by slave owners. As David Brion Davis notes, “There is considerable evidence to suggest that slaves benefited very little from having their marriages recognized by law.” See Davis, Problem of Slavery in Western Culture, 252–53 n. 44. However, abolitionists invoked marriage as one method of slave empowerment, of “righting the slave, restoring him to himself.” See Amy Dru Stanley, “The Right to Possess All the Faculties That God Has Given: Possessive Individualism, Slave Women, and Abolitionist Thought,” in Moral Problems in American Life, ed. Karen Halttunen and Lewis Perry (Ithaca, N.Y., 1998), 130 n. 15.

78. By 1828 Spain had relinquished control of New Spain (Mexico) and of Central and South America and retained only Cuba and Puerto Rico as colonies in the New World.

79. Levy held particular scorn for office seekers of all nationalities. In one description of the East Florida frontier he concludes, “This Country is as full of office hunters or more so than Spain.” See M. E. Levy to Moses Myers, April 22, 1823, Myers Family Papers, JOC.

80. Apparently Levy used “bubbles” to mean a “delusive scheme.”

81. One quintal is equal to 100 kilograms (220 pounds).

82. Tannia is a tuber, four to five inches long, commonly used in Caribbean cuisine. It is also known as malanga, tayo, or cocoyam. See Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage, 1st ed., s.v. “tannia.”

83. The author is referring to sesame seed and oil that is called “benne” throughout Latin America. See ibid., s.v. “benne.”

84. Five acres was also the amount of land that Levy envisioned giving to Jewish colonists in the United States: “Each man must own 5 acres of land from which he can’t depart.” See M. E. Levy to Samuel Myers, November 1, 1818, Myers Family Papers, AYA.

85. A state of northern Venezuela bordered by two Andean mountain ranges.

86. The former viceroyalty of New Granada incorporated the area of present-day Columbia and was taken by Simon Bolivar in 1819.

87. While Levy castigates the native population for indolence, the comfortable scene he creates is hardly consistent with the dreaded picture that he evokes earlier: “Crime will receive some check from the dread of transportation to a climate considered unhealthy.” [Levy], Plan for the Abolition of Slavery, 16.

88. The German naturalist, Alexander Von Humboldt, wrote extensively of his expeditions to Central and South America. English translations from the original French retained the usage of De Humboldt rather than “Von.”

89. A hydrometer used to measure sugar content.

90. This cooperative system of sugar production is quite likely the same formula Levy planned for his Jewish agrarian communities in Florida.

91. During the 1820s the penitentiary was held as a model for reform and was an actual improvement over the conditions of traditional English jails. The penitentiary was an “intermediate penalty, combining ‘correction of the body’ and ‘correction of mind.’” Quoted in Michael Ignatieff, A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the

92. Levy had a particular regard for Isaiah and often used passages from the prophet in his writing. For example, Isaiah figures prominently in correspondence to Levy’s daughter Rachel in which he reviewed all the major events of his life. See M. E. Levy to Rachel [Levy] Henriques, September 1, 1853, Yulee Papers, PKY.


94. Former slaves from the United States and the West Indies settled on the coast of Liberia—located south of Sierra Leone—beginning in the 1820s.