

For Frederick Douglass' Paper.
LETTER FROM JOHN W. LEWIS.

ST. ALBANS, Vt., April 12th, 1854.

FRIEND DOUGLASS:—Bad, muddy roads, and a worn-out body, is a sufficient excuse to one to be at home for a little while. After about eight months' driving and lecturing among our Green Mountain towns and communities, I have betaken myself to Freedom's battlement, where I can look over the field of conflict. I see much to encourage and much to awaken new zeal and devotion to those heaven-born principles, which lay at the foundation of human happiness.—Vermont is so noted for anti-slavery character, that she is supposed to be a little ahead of all her sister states in this great American confederacy. True, she is too far from the sea coast to be identified in the commercial interest of the nation—consequently, she is not directly affected by the power of cottonocracy. And yet she is Yankee all over; and you know that where there is the spirit of speculation, you will always find a real live Yankee. Vermont grows her own wool, and makes abundance of maple sugar. One would think she would hold on to real, genuine anti-slavery, independent of Louisiana or the Carolinas. But practical independence, even among the Green Mountains, is a rare commodity. Vermont anti-slavery has always been too much polluted by national political party expediency.—You meet a Vermonter, and call him a pro-slavery aristocrat, he will appear as mad as a March hare; then tell him that the present crisis demands stern, inflexible opposition to American slavery, civilly, politically, morally, and religiously, and you will at once perceive Yankee ingenuity. "O," says he, "I am as much opposed to slavery as anybody; but here is the trouble." Expediency will always get a *but* in the way.

A distinguished Vermont clergyman said last summer, addressing his audience, "I am opposed to slavery; it is an evil; I would be willing to see the poor black man free and happy; but the God of Nature has put into the heart of the white man a principle of distinction. It is a natural instinct, as a

part of his human nature, so that he cannot have a colored man as a brother." Men, servile, aristocracy would be ready to shout Amen! to this, as a sentiment congenial to its proscriptive character. Now, if what this Divine says is true, then Peter's position was false before Cornelius and his household; and Gabriel mistook the character of God, and the policy of his divine government, when he announced to the world the doctrine of peace and good will; and the angelic choir were premature in singing it.

Such sentiments at once eclipse the glory of the advent of Christ, if true. But such are some of the elements of modern theology, while under the monopoly of slavery influence. Said another minister in this region, "Our brethren are honest, notwithstanding they are in an error, but they have so long been in the habit of indulging in this spirit of distinction; they must be allowed to go to heaven in their own way; the attempt to drive them from their position by any truth, would be productive of greater evil than letting their influence be where it is." Now, if all this is true, then the gospel fails in accomplishing its legitimate design. This is not the theology of the popular religionists of Vermont alone; it is the Christianity of the popular current Christianity of the leading sects of the nation. Often my heart grows sick as I look at the mass of the community greedily swallowing down the corrupted theology of sects that is every day destroying their manhood, and making them the dupes of bigotry. Now, sir, I am so sceptical, I have no faith in nine-tenths of the preaching that is called Gospel in this country. Men and women, whose natural sympathies have led them on to the ground of humanity to see the force of moral obligation, about as much as the blind man under the healing influence of Jesus Christ, when he saw men as trees walking—are taught that they must come into the church, then they must submit to truth, (not shown that that truth is striped of love to God's poor;) and in going through the process of ecclesiastical initiation, they are made good Methodists, or

Baptists, or Presbyterians. It will require more than a microscope view to discover a particle of anti-slavery in them. The fact is, God made them free, noble, magnanimous. The church has made them cold-hearted, misanthropic, so far as it relates to the band of universal brotherhood embracing all mankind.

Stern old winter has left us. During the month of March he was rather severe on us, often shaking his white locks rather savagely in a cold north-easter. But we are rid of him now for the present. And now all nature is in a merry dance in gladsome delight, under the genial rays of an April sun. Nothing can surpass the beauty of a Vermont summer, in the opening and progress of spring and summer. It is too beautiful for slave-hunting ground—although this State is in close proximity with the Old Empire and Bay States. It is said the soil of Vermont was never trod by a slave owned in the State. It would be a bad place for slavery. Our Green Mountains would be to the slave what old Scotland's were to Robert Bruce—a safe fugitive's retreat.

By the way, we have had another stampede through our place, from old Virginia. Two young men, hotly pursued, came to our village. Our citizens, not having the fear of the Fugitive Slave Law before their eyes, did just as Christ, in Matt. 25th, 35th, and 36th, told them. They are now safe in Canada.

I am really glad to hear that the Western Underground Railroad has so much busi-

ness, as to turn a little in this direction. I assure you, that we shall endeavor to keep the Vermont road in good condition for Southern travel.

Yours, as ever, for Freedom,

JOHN W. LEWIS