

Sojourner Truth's Address;

Delivered in Representative Hall, by invitation of the Legislature, June 2, 1881.

Friends—What a wonderful thing God has done to spare me for your sakes. It seems so many years that I have been here, and for a time robbed of every God-given right. I can't read or write, and could not even spell my own name if it was before me. Although robbed of father, mother, sisters and brothers, see how the Almighty has built me up for a great cause; and whilst I stay upon this earth I want to do good—not only for myself but for others.

I have come here to-night to see about a thing that fairly shocked me. It shocked me worse than slavery. I've heard that you are going to have hanging again in this state. Before God, only think of it! When I had thought for so many years that I lived in the most blessed state of the union, and then to think of its being made the awful scene of hanging people by the neck until they are dead. Where is the man or woman who can sanction such a thing as that? We are the makers of murderers if we do it. Where do you get this spirit from? Years ago I found out that the Religion of Jesus was forgiveness. When I prayed, "Father, forgive me as I forgive those who trespass against me," I found that was against hanging. Where is the praying man or woman who can stand up and advocate the hanging of a man until he is dead? When a man kills another in cold blood, and you hang him, then you murder in cold blood also. I want you to think of these things. But some of you say, don't you believe in the Mosaic laws? I've got nothing to do with the Mosaic laws. I know nothing about any but Jesus' laws. When a prisoner is put into jail to be hung the ministers go to convert him, and they pray that God will forgive him. When he is converted they put a rope around his neck and swing him off; but that is not Jesus' law.

Here is where you manufacture the laws, I suppose, but they are not all fashioned after God's laws. These things come to me by day and night, and I want to say to you that it is not right to destroy that which we cannot make. We should love our neighbors as we love ourselves; and when we do this the spirit of hanging will not rest in our hearts. If a child of mine should be murdered, I can't bring it back by having somebody else murdered. I want the women to think of these things, for they can help the men to make the laws, and I long to see the day when justice will be done.

But they tell me that we must abide by the public laws. I won't sanction in my heart any law that upholds murder. I am against it! I am against it! In olden times it was "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," but the Savior taught us better things than these, and commanded us to love one another. I talk to a great many people, but none older than myself. I hate to see these younger people, who have every advantage to learn, keep traveling the road of life and

ishness. When I was a child I did not know anything about God, and my mother could not tell me. They expected to see Jesus come out of some of these rain clouds up in the sky. I remember her sitting out of doors on a stone weeping. It was among the low Dutch people in the state of New York. She said, "I'm looking up to the stars which shine upon your brothers and sisters sold far away, and when you are sold look up to them, for they will shine upon your mammy and daddy." That was the low Dutch way of speaking, for she could not speak a word of English. I asked her who made the stars, and she said God. I then asked her where God was, and she told me in the sky. She said when my master and mistress were bad I must pray to him, and he would make them good. That was what my poor old mother told me. When master and missus were cruel I used to do as my mother told me, and grew up in this way, talking to God, till I found out Jesus.

When I was a child and heard about Jesus Christ, I thought he was some big man like Napoleon Bonaparte, or George Washington, living off in some part of the country; but as I grew up the truth came to me, and I found out there was a Jesus who was to go between me and God. I see so many people who have destroyed their minds by so much foolishness and nonsense. They read so many stories and novels that don't amount to anything that their power of thought is destroyed. Meditate on all the great and good things God has created, and think that Jesus commands us to love one another, and you'll never want to hang anybody.

When people talk about Jesus coming out of the clouds in the heaven they realize that the cloud is inside of them. How can they expect to see him in the clouds, when he said to his disciples, the kingdom of heaven is within you? Dear children, learn of him who was meek and lowly. Meditate on all these things, and behold the light. Some people go to meeting every Sunday all their lives, and they never think about anything. They are like the door that swings in and out. They don't know any more when they go out than they do when they go in. You see that by the spirit that is in them. The best education that you can have is to know what you are. Find out yourself. When you have done this you won't be looking for this thing or that thing, and waiting for God to come. He is with you now, all the time, and what more can you want? Brighten the mind so that you can have a spiritual view, and see all the glories of the creation. It is foolishness to talk about what the beginning was and what the ending will be. There never was a beginning with God, and there will be no ending, for he is from everlasting to everlasting.

See the progression that has been made in temporal things. When I was growing up all the way that we could travel was with oxen, horses, and sloops. These things have all come for your benefit, but you don't give God any glory, or you would not want to go back to the awful system of hanging. The advocates of such a barbarous thing have murder in their hearts.

to you in this capitol to-night will never die. He who sanctions the crime of hanging will have to answer for it. I believe that God has spared me to do good to this white population which has done so much good to the black race. How wonderful God turns things. I feel thankful that you have been willing to allow a poor old creature as I am to come to your building to bless you, and wipe away all malice. Then don't make the crime of murder, for whoever sanctions the hanging of a man or woman by the neck is a murderer.

Dear children, had I the tongue of an angel I could not express the love which I have for this generation; and I have been praying by night and by day to keep murder out of Michigan. It is the most inconsistent thing in the world for a minister to work for the conversion of a human being, and then, as soon as he is converted, hang him by the neck until he is dead, dead, dead. If we could only hang the devil we would do a good thing; but we can't catch him. The man is hung and the devil slips out of him.

I believe I am the oldest person that has ever appeared before an audience in this nation, or in any age, since the apostles or Methusalem (who was a pretty old man) flourished, but howsoever I wanted to come here and tell you that I have lived long enough to know that hanging is a great wrong. The laws of God are far beyond the laws of man, and I hope some of you congressmen, or whatever you are, will bear these things in mind. That man who makes a law for hanging has got a heart blacker than my face, and there is no love or forgiveness in him. He is ready to kill in cold blood.

I should like to see you make a law that would hang whisky out of the United States, for I believe that it is at the bottom of a great many crimes. In a great many cases it is not the man who murders, but whisky. There is one trouble about this temperance work. You get a man to sign the pledge, and that is all there is of it, when you ought to get him work, and carry food and clothing to his poor starving wife and children. Treat them as human beings should be treated, and fewer temperance converts would backslide. God's law is the law of forgiveness. There is a spiritual telegraph which impresses these things upon the brain, if our minds have not been destroyed by foolishness and nonsense. That is the way all this temporal progress has come about. These things have been telegraphed out all these wonderful things. The perfect mind rejoices in the beautiful world in which we live, and I see you all again near-by afar.

The newspapers of my childhood used to have pictures of hell. I bought one once in New York, and there was one whole side covered with such a picture. On one side was a narrow stair leading to heaven; and the rest of the picture was a terrible abyss, the smoke rolling out of it, and numberless human beings burning around in the flames. There was the old Evil One, with a long snout and tail, stirring the others up with a pitchfork, and when I gazed upon this picture I said, "My God, dat is hell, sure

who can remember these things. When I got older I found out there wa'n't no such thing as hell, and that the narrow stairs only showed the narrowness of the mind that conceived the picture. I have found out and know that God's brightness and goodness and glory is hot enough to scorch all the sinners in the world.

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Sojourner closed her remarks, by an allusion to the great progress in temporal things, such as the electric telegraph, the locomotive, the telephone, etc., and regretted that there had been no one in her age and generation to write a bible which should discard all Mosalaw laws, and teach "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Spiritual doctrines keep pace with all the wonderful inventions for the benefit of mankind. She exhorted her hearers to acts of kindness, and when told that the Wyckoff hanging bill had been defeated she shouted for joy, and declared Michigan to be the most blessed state in the union. The messenger boys passed their hats through the audience, and the collection amounted to \$23.60. She then sang a hymn in strong musical tones, and the audience dispersed.

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