

REV. CHARLES B. RAY,—Mr. Chairman, when I look around and see those present whom we all want to hear, I had much rather be silent than to be heard. But I have had a resolution placed in my hands by the Committee with a request that I would offer and sustain it by a few remarks. I will remark, Mr. Chairman, before I read the resolution that there is one question, which when it is to come before any meeting, when it is to be grappled with, whether in this city, or almost anywhere else in this country, our whole people never fail to be present to consider it. Everybody wants to have something to do with branding Colonization, and you have only to give notice that a meeting is to be held for that object and the house is full, fuller than it can be made by the discussion of any other question. But to the resolution.

Resolved, That in the principle at the basis of the American Colonization scheme, we recognize the fostering spirit of American caste—the spirit which would degrade us in the Church, which would eject us from the literary institutions of the country, and heap insult upon us in our every endeavor for elevation.

The Committee, in sending me this resolution, requested that I would offer it and accompany it with a very few remarks, not exceeding ten minutes in length. If I occupy ten minutes, this audience will not expect from me, even had I the ability to give it, any outburst of eloquence. It will take ten minutes, Mr. Chairman, at least, on any other subject than this, to get up the steam so as to break forth in words of eloquence if one has the power to do so. But I do not claim to have any such power.

The resolution which I have read declares, that the principle, &c. of the American Colonization Society fosters American caste. Sir, I would say more than this:

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it creates American caste, and then like all other affectionate parents, it nurses dearly, and takes the best possible care of its child that it die not, but live to do its work. And however terrible that work may be to the destiny of the coloured people of this country, Colonization cares not. Sir, what is this caste? Why, it is an attempt to divide men invidiously into classes, and to create non-intercourse between those classes, making it reproachful for those claiming to be superior to associate with, or visit the inferior; forbidding all intercourse under the penalty of losing ones standing. American caste proscribes the coloured people, and makes their complexion a badge of disrespect and contempt, which forever bars them from intercourse with their brethren of a white skin. It singles them out as a class not to be visited, cared for, or linked by any ties, to those who claim to be of superior standing.

This resolution says further that this principle is at the basis of the American Colonization Society—

What is that principle? If I understand it at all, it is this; that the two races (it is very careful to use the term *race*, as though there were different races of men and most of necessity use it in order to maintain itself) cannot coexist together in the same country, and therefore the 'coloured race' must be sent out of the country. And if they are not sent out of it, they must needs be a proscribed class, a degraded and ill-treated class. I say ill-treated, for though they dislike the term as it has reference to their acts towards us as a people, it is nevertheless the fact. This proscription then, is the very foundation of the Colonization scheme. They say that the two races cannot coexist in the same land, therefore we must be turned out of it.

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But the resolution proceeds further: 'That the spirit of American caste would degrade us in the Church.' It follows as a matter of course that if the two races cannot coexist together, then they cannot worship together, and if from any cause they do come together into the same place of worship, they must be separated; there can be no intercourse between them there; the coloured class must be assigned to some obscure corner. In some churches they must not even be seen; seats are raised higher than their heads in which they are put, where they can neither see nor be seen. This I have known to be the fact in some churches. A special gallery is erected, nearer, to be sure, the place where we are all aiming, but designed to separate them even from the sight of those who forsooth would lose caste if they were to allow us to mingle with them in the house of God. Such is the treatment we receive in the house where the friends of Colonization *prefer to worship God!* Not very acceptable worship methinks toward that God who is no respecter of persons. But if it is acceptable, it must be on the principle that He is a forgiving God.

'They would eject us from our literary institutions.' This follows as a natural consequence; if they can neither coexist in the same country, nor worship in the same church, they must not mingle in the same literary institutions. Our sons and daughters must not drink from the same fountains of knowledge with theirs. It will never do, say they, to allow them to be educated in the same schools and seminaries; if so, we shall lose caste by mingling with that proscribed class. We must keep up this caste, we must maintain our own respect, dignity and standing; therefore we cannot suffer the sons and

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daughters of coloured men to commingle with our own. To our sad experience Mr. Chairman, we know that these things are true; and the history of the movements and operations of the Colonization Society proves that the scheme tends to degrade us in ejecting us from the literary institutions of the country. Yes, opposition [and ...] [...meet] us at every step in our endeavor for improvement in learning, and when we attempt to secure an education for ourselves we have to meet Colonization and battle with it. If we attempt to seek equal political privileges, there too, we have to meet the spirit of Colonization. If we claim civil rights, the spirit and influence of Colonization is amongst us, which says, you must not live here; you cannot live here on equal terms with the whites; this is not your home, and you must go to your own country. In every way in which we attempt to rise we meet this spirit. And to Colonization and its operations probably more than to any other single cause is to be attributed this unjust prejudice. Colonization has strode through this country, falsifying the coloured men, misrepresenting us, and speaking lies of us by saying that we were the most degraded of all classes that could possibly exist in civilized life. Colonization has made the people believe all this, and has produced in the public mind that conviction more than anything else. It has infused into it wrong notions and false views of coloured men, and has thereby waked up wrong feelings, which have led to ill treatment of us. Those feelings are sometimes very honestly entertained, we have no doubt, but much of it is dishonest and hypocritical. In all such views which have so governed men in their course and worked death to us, there is more of the fruit of the Colonization scheme than of any existing institution

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in this land, more than even Slavery itself.

Yes, sir, I repeat these views with regard to us have waked up all the feelings that have been manifested, and induced the course of conduct that has been pursued toward us, and we must hurl back the charges to the source from whence they emanated.

The speaker who preceded me spoke of his grandfather having taken a part in the great battle for freedom in this country. I can say the same of some of my ancestry, who shouldered their muskets and went out against the foe of this land. Why then may not the sons of these patriots claim, in common with others, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in the land that gave them birth? This is our home, and I may reiterate the sentiment already uttered, here we mean to live and here to die.

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