

July 13, 1833

Paul, Nathaniel

Speeches Delivered at the Anti-Colonization

Meeting in Exeter Hall, London

Presscopy—Friends Historical Library Swarthmore College

The Rev. N. PAUL then came forward and said—

In rising to address an audience of this description, I shall not offer an apology, because I consider it to be unnecessary. Nature has furnished me with an apology in the complexion that I wear, and that shall speak in my behalf. (Cheers.)

Allow me to say that Mr. Garrison has, for many years past, devoted himself exclusively to the interest of the slaves and the free people of color in the United States of America. He requires, however, no commendation from me, or from any other gentleman whatever; ‘the tree is known by its fruits,’ and ‘out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.’ But if there be any necessity for calling evidence in favor of that gentleman, there is an abundance, demonstrating that he has acted a most disinterested part on behalf of those whose cause he has espoused. It has been his lot to make large sacrifices, in order that he might be enabled to pursue the object of his heart’s desire. He might have swum upon the tide of popular applause, and have had the great and the noble of our country on his side, who would now have been applauding him, instead of persecuting him as the disturber of the peace and tranquillity of the nation, if he had not lifted up his voice on behalf of the suffering slaves. (Hear, hear.)

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To my certain knowledge, when he commenced his career, it was under the most unfavorable circumstances. No one stood forward in his defence, and he was under the necessity of adopting and pursuing a system of the most rigid economy, in order that he might be sustained while he was engaged in the important work he had undertaken.

[The CHAIRMAN here rose and said — I see that the gentleman, who wishes to speak in favor of the colonization scheme, is withdrawing; but if he will wait till our regular business is gone through, I shall be happy to sit any length of time to hear an advocate of that Society. (Cheers.) Let us, however, first know that he is authorized to speak on its behalf. If our friend, Dr. Hodgkin, whom I see sitting by his side, will declare him to be the representative of Mr. Cresson, I shall be most happy to have a fair discussion — it is what of all things we wish for. We want the points at issue fairly met. (Cheers.)

The Rev. Mr. ABRAHAMS said, that he had long been a resident of North America, and he wished to vindicate the American Colonization Society against the calumrious aspersions that had been cast upon it. He was as much a friend to the blacks as any one present.

DANIEL O'CONNELL, Esq. said — It will be unnecessary to put the gentleman under the necessity of showing that he comes here in a delegated capacity. If he remains here till

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The Rev. N. PAUL resumed — But it is not merely the sacrifice that Mr. Garrison has made, or the rigid system of economy that he has adopted, that speaks on his behalf; but the suffering that he has endured likewise recommend him to the attention of every philanthropist. This gentleman has suffered forty-nine days incarceration in a prison in the city of Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, because he had the hardihood to engage in defence of the suffering slaves in that State. The fact of Mr. Garrison's imprisonment has been loudly sounded throughout this country. The agent of the American Colonization Society has seen fit to represent Mr. Garrison as a mere pamphleteer, as the editor of a negro newspaper in the United States, and as a convicted libeller. This is the manner in which this gentlemen has been spoken of in this country, by the agent of the American Colonization Society. And does that agent suppose that by such mere slang he can lower Mr. Garrison in the estimation of the British public? The simpleton reminds me of another of whom I have heard, who, for some cause or other, became exceedingly exasperated at the

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moon, and stood the whole night angrily shaking his fist at it, but could not reach it.

(Cheers.)

I make no complaint against the agent of the American Colonization Society for stating the fact that Mr. Garrison was convicted, and thrown into prison in the United States; it is a fact, and he had a right to the advantage of it whenever he saw fit. I only blame him because, in stating it, he did not tell the cause why — who the persons were at whose instigation it was done — or the character of the court that condemned him. Inasmuch as that gentleman did not perform that part of his duty, if you will allow me I will undertake to discharge it for him.

Perhaps it is not generally known that in the United States of America — that land of freedom and equality — the laws are so exceedingly liberal that they give to man the liberty of purchasing as many negroes as he can find means to pay for, (hear, hear,) and also the liberty to sell them again. In consequence of this, a regular system of merchandize is established in the souls and bodies of our fellow creatures. It so happened that a very large number of mercantile gentlemen resided in the city of Baltimore and its vicinity, who were engaged in this traffic; and Mr. Garrison had the impudence, the unblushing effrontery to state, in a public newspaper, that this traffic was a direct violation of the laws of God, and

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contrary to the principles of human nature.

(Cheers.) This was the crime of which he was convicted. And now I will tell you the character of the judicial tribunal before which the conviction took place. Allow me to say, and let that suffice, that the judges of the court were slaveholders, (hear, hear,) and the jury likewise. Had it been the case that such men as WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, THOMAS CLARKSON, THOMAS FOWELL BUXON, JAMES CROPPER, and in addition to these, the honorable gentleman who sits on my right, (Mr. O'CONNELL,) (cheers,) and had these gentlemen in the place where Mr. Garrison resided pursued the course they have adopted in this country, they would have been indicted, convicted, and thrown into prison. In regards to my friend on my right, (Mr. O'Connell,) I know not what they would have done with him: he could have expected no quarters whatever. (Laughter and cheers.) I believe he has more than once arraigned the American Republic before the British community, before God, and before the world, as the most detestable political hypocrite in the world. And this is not all. I may say, in addition, that that Court and that Jury would have convicted the whole Anti-Slavery Society of this country, and would have transported them all to Liberia as the punishment of their crimes. (Laughter and loud cheers.)

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These are the causes and these the reasons why our friend, Mr. Garrison, was imprisoned; and as I said before, tho' I have no complaint to make against the agent of that benevolent institution, as it is called – the American Colonization Society – for stating that Mr. Garrison was cast into prison; yet I submit that, in connexion with it, he ought to have told the reason why it took place. But I shall leave this GARRISON to itself. It possesses, I believe, ammunition enough to defend itself from any attack that may be made upon it, either by the agent of that Society, or the gentleman who has appeared here to plead on its behalf this morning. (Loud applause.)

I now come directly to express my views in relation to the American Colonization Society.

As a colored man, and as a citizen of the United States, it necessarily follows that I must feel more deeply interested in its operation, than any other individual present. In relation to the Society, I know not which is the most detestable in my view – its CRUELTY, or its HYPOCRISY. Both of these are characteristics of its whole operation.

I brand it as a *cruel* institution, and one of the most cruel that has ever been brought into existence by the ingenuity of man. If I am asked, why it is cruel? I answer, in the first place, because it undertakes to expel from their native country hundreds of thousands of unoffending and inoffensive individuals, who,

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in time of war, have gone forth into the field of battle, and have contended for the liberties of that country. Why does it seek to expel them? Because the God of heaven has given them a different complexion from themselves. (Cheers.) I say it is a *cruel* institution, because it seeks to rob the colored men in that country of every right, civil, political or religious, to which they are entitled by the American Declaration of Independence. It is through the influence of that Society, to the everlasting disgrace of a land boasting of liberty and equality, that there are laws enacted which absolutely forbid the instruction of the slave, or even the free person of color, in the use of letters. I say it is a *cruel* institution, because in addition to this, it has also been the means of having laws enacted which prevents them from meeting together to pay homage to their Creator, and worship the God who made them. I might go on enumerating instances of cruelty, and show to this meeting that even combinations have been formed in what are called free States, under the influence of this Society, not to give to the colored man employment, but to rob him of the means of gaining his livelihood, that he may thereby be compelled to leave the land of his nativity, and go to Africa.

In the next place, I condemn the Society

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Again I repeat, it is *hypocritical*, because it professes to be the friend of the free people of color, and to pity their present condition; and hence it says, ‘It seeks to promote their welfare.’ That gentleman (Mr. Abrahams) tells us that he is acquainted with the people of North America, and that this Society is formed, in part, for the benefit of the free people of color. Does that gentleman know that when an effort was made at New-Haven, two or three years since, to establish a College for the instruction of the free people of color, – notwithstanding New-Haven is within the boundaries of that part of the country which is called the ‘free States,’ – yet the supporters of the Society came forward, held a meeting, and passed the most spirited resolution against

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Wishing to be brief, and knowing that there are gentlemen present who will address you with more interest than I can, (hear, hear,) I will make but one remark more, and that respects the designs of this Society, with regard

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Mr. Garrison has well remarked that the free people of color, in the United States, are opposed to this Society. I will venture to assert that I am as extensively acquainted with them, throughout both the free and slave States, as any man in that country; and I do not know of a solitary colored individual who entertains the least favorable view of the American Colonization Society; but, in every way, they possibly could, they have expressed their disapprobation of it. They have said to the Society, '*Let us alone.*'

The argument which is brought by the friends of the Society in favor of colonization is, that the white population of America can

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