

MY FRIENDS AND COUNTRYMEN:

I trust, by this time, you have known well my sentiments in relation to the American Colonization Society; and the great objects, which have been set forth, of a general union of interest, in funds and education, for the permanent establishment and furtherance of our prosperity, in this our native country.

In addition to what has been already said on the subject, I shall briefly set forth some of the leading causes of our wretchedness and misery; and the prominent motives of the Colonization Society in sending us away. Much theory has been used, in the discussion upon our civil and political situation, in this country. We have been branded, in many instances, — may I not say, in the highest court of the nation, courts of justice and equity, in public and family circles? — as being an inferior race of beings, not possessing like intellect and faculty with the whites. We are represented as being incapable of acting for ourselves; consequently not educated and qualified to be admitted into public places, to vindicate the integrity of our race, and the qualifications we are capable of acquiring. Many of our noble statesmen, orators and lawyers, have made our capitol ring with the empty sound of inferiority, — degradation, — the impossibility of tolerating equality with the blacks. Sacred writ has been carefully examined by these gentlemen of science, and construed to suit their narrow consciences. Prophets have arisen among them, who hold forth to the people, the continuation of our political thralldom, unless there be a general removal of all the free among us to the coast of Africa. Others argue, that, although they

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have good feelings towards us, and would do any thing for us, if we were out of their sight and out of hearing of their slaves, yet to admit us into their circles would be to pervert the present order of society, and the happiness of the good white citizens of the country. These are generally bible men, such as hold forth the true oracles of God; yet deny him, in their actions and words, the supreme control over all his creatures. There is hardly ever an action performed, whether good or bad, but there is generally a reason given for so doing; and he is a wicked, daring character, who cannot find a cloak, at any time, to cover his hideous crimes. The men who have been foremost, in withholding from us our dearest and most sacred rights, have always held out false colors to the community at large, (such as, inferiority, degradation, nuisance, pest, slaves, species of monkey, apes, &c.) to justify their inhuman and unchristian acts towards us, and to deaden the severe pangs of conscience that harass them. They would wish to appear innocent before the world; as doing unto all men as they would they should do unto them. Do they base their objects, in full, upon such frivolous excuses as these? No. The truth is, actions speak louder than words. It is my candid opinion, there would have been no Colonization Society formed for our transportation to the western coast of Africa, had there been no free colored people, and did not our numbers increase daily. If we, as a free body of people, had remained in the same character with slaves, monkeys and baboons, there would not have been so much excitement in the community about us; but as they see, by our improvement, (a

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great improvement, indeed, within forty years,) that the period is hastening on, when there will be no other alternative but we must rank among them in civilization, science and politics, they have got up this colonization scheme to persuade us to leave our slave brethren, and flee to the pestilential shores of Africa, where we shall be in danger of being forced to hang our harps upon the willows, and our song of liberty and civilization will be hushed by the impelling force of barbarian despots.

The present situation of our free colored people has awakened general concern, and aroused general sympathy in the community, so as to call for their charities to be appropriated, not to the advancement of civilization, education, arts and sciences, and the elevation of our moral, civil and political character in this country; but, on the contrary, to send us to an unknown land, that we can no more justly claim than the whites of this country can the continent of Europe, where we shall be forced to sever the bonds of affection with our slave brethren, and leave all that is near and dear to us, — the ties of country, and the graves of our fathers. Can such charities proceed from a christian source? I am persuaded, they are based upon prejudice, pride, ambition, jealousy, hatred, malice, and impure heart; from whence every other black art has its origin. And why? Because our color and features do not exactly resemble theirs. If their sympathies proceed from christian principles, why not adopt the measures taken by patriarch Abraham and his nephew Lot, as there is plenty of land on the right hand and on the left, to satisfy the calls of humanity? If that would not answer, why

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not purchase the Texas, or some other neighboring province, and cede it to us, as a pledge of their faith towards us, whom they have so long injured; and break the bonds of slavery asunder at the south, that two millions of us may, like ancient Israel, march forward with our flocks, our herds, our wives, and our little ones, to a country where we shall not be so much exposed to the seas and the pestilential vapors of the torrid zone? The reasons are obvious. Their hearts are hardened against us, like haughty Pharaoh's, who would not let Israel go, until visited by severe plagues and the judgements of an angry God, who cannot endure and will not uphold injustice exercised upon one of his creatures.

The profits arising from the sweat and blood of our brethren, together with the existing ignorance among us, is the cause of much interest and speculation among our enemies, both in the slaveholding and non-slaveholding States. So far as we become civilized and educated, so far their interest, in the bones and muscles of our brethren, is at stake[.] Hence the object of colonizing us on the shores of Africa; whom they represent as a pest, a nuisance; and who are likely to lead the slaves to insubordination. Many have bitterly denied these assertions; but as a specimen of their good feelings towards us, we will refer, for our satisfaction, to some of the late resolutions of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Louisiana; more particularly, the ordinances of Charleston, Savannah, and New-Orleans; where we, as free people, are not allowed to set foot upon their shores, except under certain restrictions; and in some of those places the masters

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of vessels are subject to a heavy fine, for bringing any of us into their ports; and the persons brought are imprisoned, and their backs lacerated with a cow-skin, cart-whip, or whatever unholy weapon the deluded hearts of slaveholders may direct them to. Many of those wretches are colonization men, who wish to send us across the Atlantic ocean, with the pleasing phantom of elevating us to rank, riches, wreaths and laurels. It is my opinion, that some of their hearts are so deluded, that, were it not for the blush of humanity and national honor, they would adopt similar measures taken by the French, at the commencement of the Haytian revolution, and colonize us in the depths of the ocean.

In thus speaking, I do not presume to suspect our white brethren collectively; for I believe we have sincere friends among them, who are day and night studying for our interest and welfare. We believe there are more than seven thousand of them who have not bowed the knee to the modern Baal, the god of prejudice, pride, and ambition.

Such [are] the existing animosities against us, that we do not feel very safe at home among our friends: how, then, can we feel secure in a colony established by slaveholders?

The truth is, brethren, God is at work; though, to some of us, reformation seems slow in its progress. Our situation appears abject and mean; that of our slave brethren, degrading almost with the brute creation. This state of things has remained for a long time; while almost every other relic of barbarism has been done away by the rapid march of reform. Yet, however, we have reason to be thankful, that

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much has been done, and is doing, to put a stop to the unjust existence of slavery. Some thousands of us have emerged from that deplorable state into nominal freedom, — a medium between genuine liberty and abject slavery. Genuine liberty consists of liberty of conscience and of person, both civil and political. We are placed in this intermediate situation, as the objects of God's particular care; the forerunner of some better enjoyment, which is hastening on with rapid strides. Nothing can prove more influential, in the setting forth a universal concern for our welfare in this country, our native home, than a general union of interest to raise funds and promote education. Our present situation will afford means to acquire these blessings, which are the avenues that will lead us to recover our long lost rights, guaranteed to us by the sacred declaration of our country's independence. These measures have been too long hid from us under the shades of obscurity, occasioned by ignorance, &c. We have remained silent too long, on the subject of our present thralldom, and suffered reproaches to be heaped upon us without answering to the many wrongs wickedly charged against us. Our hands have been too slack in offering our charities, to be appropriated to our general good; while the whites of every name and every denomination are bound together by this one, common tie — the public interest.

It is time, my brethren, for us to consider minutely, and weigh deeply, matters connected with our national welfare, and take the example of our white brethren, and do away every petty local prejudice,

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and rally around the standard liberty, and cast in our mites to the rearing up an edifice that will secure us from the devastating storms of slaveholding despots. We hope, that while we are calling upon our brethren to come forward and cast in their mites for our general support, that our sisters may possess the spirit that actuated a Miriam, a Ruth, an Esther, and many other females who have signalized themselves in the general cause of the people to whom they were attached, by subduing oppression in their weak way; and come forward, and lend their assistance to support this glorious cause, that we be no longer a by-word and reproach among our neighbors and the enemies of our welfare; that our national dignity may augment with our union, our funds, our civilization, and our education. The press is a powerful engine, and the only efficient means to communicate fully our present grievances and ultimate views of future happiness and prosperity to an enlightened public. We should be more forward, in patronizing the *Liberator*; for, from it, we may obtain a knowledge of the times and the current news respecting us, as a people. I sincerely hope, that the names of a Lundy, a Garrison, and many other champions in our injured cause, who have endured volleys of persecution, contempt, and even imprisonment, on our account, may never be effaced from the history of the reformers of national liberty; and may the motto of liberty be continually repeated among us, until the shackles of slavery be buried in the depths of oblivion.

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