

The Rev. SELLA MARTIN next addressed the meeting. He said that before they had any hope of an early and complete solution of the question of slavery there was scarcely any difference of opinion about the desirableness of an early and complete solution of it. Even those who were in favor of the South, as was a section of the country, were compelled to make this general concession to the strongly anti-slavery people of Great Britain, viz.—that they hated slavery as badly as anybody else hated it. (Hear.) Whenever they were going to swallow the great whale of the South, they had to grease him with this kind of thing. (Laughter.) But now that they had got that early and complete solution in the fact of the abolition of slavery, very many people stood off and said, “Well, after all, wasn’t it done too quickly?” (Hear and a laugh.) “Did you do it in the right way, after all?” “Haven’t you involved the negro in more suffering by putting him in the difficulties consequent upon being cast into the midst of a harassing transition state than he used to go through in slavery?” Very many were asking these questions now. Well, what would they have? Supposing, even, that the negro suffered a great deal more in his body than when in slavery. What then? Did they mean to say he ought to have staid in slavery and suffered? Did they mean that some other plan might have been taken for his emancipation? Well, that another plan was not taken was not the fault of those who were in favor of abolition, and still less was it the fault of the negro himself. If there were those who were delving in the midst of the slime of past difficulties, and who everlastingly beat their heads against the fossilized remains

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of things that were gone, all that he could say was that they might be in the occupation of burying the dead. This, however, was a living question with them, and was one that pressed itself with such consistency and force for solution that those whose sympathies were right had not time to remember the faults of the method of reaching the result, but were only anxious to grapple with the difficulties that had arisen with or grown out of that result. (Hear, hear.) Now, they would find much to aid them if they wished to be captious, and to object and find fault. But if they just stopped for a moment, and asked what was the condition out of which these negroes came, and really analysed the evils of that condition, they would not harbor these objections long. Whatever might be the temporary sufferings of the negro in his transition state—whatever unfavorable features he might present for lack of self-reliance, for lack of the resources by which to make for himself a place in the community, and earn for himself and his family a livelihood—whatever suffering he might go through in the achievement of the end which was the earnest wish of all his friends, that he should be in the possession of independence—there could be nothing like a comparison in it with the sufferings born under slavery. The former, at least, had the advantage, that he was bearing a difficult only that he might go into a free and open arena of comfort and of peace. In slavery he was subjected to equal if not to greater difficulties—hope was everlastingly crushed out of him, and all aspirations made impossible in the direction of manhood. But then they must take things as they found

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them in the history of the world; and he did not expect that slavery—which struck its roots so deep in the soil—could be plucked up, unless a great hole was left, showing where the accursed thing stood. He did not expect that men who had become licentious and tyrannical would yield up their grasp upon the neck of their victims without a great struggle. He did not expect that the negro, in getting free of the devil, would be left without rending before the devil went out. What had been the case in the past? When God purposed to accomplish emancipation, in the history of the whole Church, one race had to go down that another should come up. The sacrifice of Jewish blood prepared the way for Hebrew freedom, and when the Hebrews themselves had become so terribly sinful that they could no longer occupy their place, they themselves had to go down that Gentile liberty and Christianity might prevail; and Jerusalem fell just when the glad tidings were preached to all the Gentiles. He did not expect, therefore, that the negroes in America would achieve their freedom without a sacrifice. They had already had a sacrifice of blood on the part of the white men, and the negroes involved in the evil must make their sacrifice in starvation and suffering before they could entirely reach the end; and as a negro, knowing their thoughts and their feelings, he said that they were prepared to brave all this. (Cheers.) Let starvation come, if it must come, while they were on the pathway of freedmen. Let them, too, stand out in the inclemency of the weather, and bear all its rigorous and pelting visitations, if people professing Christianity would, while able to relieve,

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stand and see this, and see the negro crushed by unfavorable conditions and temporary circumstances; since, in the bearing of all that, they were making a possible liberty and happier future for their own race, and helping to lift them to where they ought to be. (Applause.) They were ready to accept the conditions if the people here, having the power to avert them, said they must come, and that they must be borne. The situation would be still more striking if they could ever come to a realization of each man's personal history; if they could feel as he himself had often felt, and have to say, "I am a slave. Another man owns me. I am the son of a slave. Another man owns my mother. I am a slave, and a slave forever!" Could they realize that somebody should everlastingly dictate what one should do, and lash him if he did not do it, and under the exercise of an irresponsible power, force one's wife to dishonor and degradation; or having the children beloved of one's heart, and as lovely in the eyes of its parents as the children of any in this country, torn away and sold on the auction-block? It was galling that not only should a man himself remain a slave during his life, but that his children and his children's children should likewise be bound in continual slavery. Though they could not, perhaps, realize the state of the case, he could realize it keenly, and he felt not only a holy indignation but often an inexpressible, contempt for people that stood and pondered, and raised trivial objections in such a momentous matter as that before them—when poor men had to be raised from the lowest depths of helplessness, and despair, and suffering. (Hear and ap-

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Mr. Martin then proceeded to argue that gradual emancipation would have been incomparably worse than immediate emancipation. In fact, it would have been like gradually amputating a man's leg, or gradually pulling a tooth. It would just have been prolonging the pain and misery. It would have been taking away from the master all interest in the negro, and putting still under his control that negro in whom he had no interest. If he did wrong—and it was wonderful if he did not do wrong, for his master had been teaching him how to do it all his life—the magistrate, whipped him; and the master brought him all the more readily and frequently to be thus flogged, because he did not own him, and because, no matter when he died, he did not lose anything.

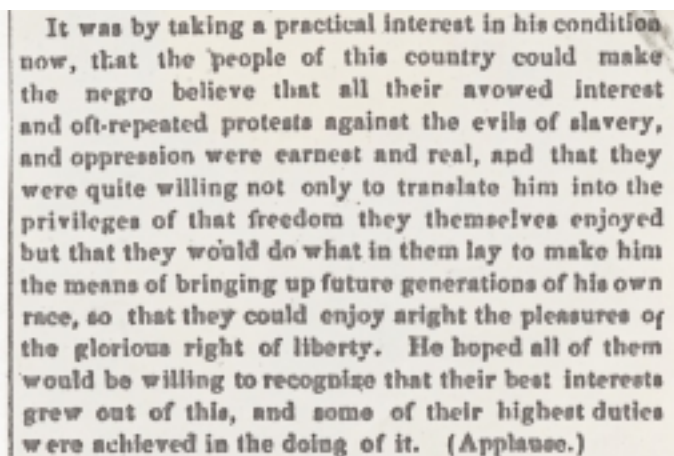
He then pointed out how the whole negro race had to suffer because part of that race was in bondage. They were everywhere from their color identified with degradation and servitude, and out of this one many more fictitious prejudices had arisen. The speaker here pictured graphically the difficulties they had to contend with in these very prejudices, and often the negro himself was well nigh led to believe that he was naturally inferior, and only fit for bondage. The negroes distrusted their own powers, because they had never been called on to exercise them as independent men. With all these difficulties around them, in addition to those of a natural character growing out of the war and the disorganization of labor, they could all see how necessary it was that something should be done for them at this crisis.

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It was by taking a practical interest in his condition now, that the people of this country could make the negro believe that all their avowed interest and oft-repeated protests against the evils of slavery, and oppression were earnest and real, and that they were quite willing not only to translate him into the privileges of that freedom they themselves enjoyed but that they would do what in them lay to make him the means of bringing up future generations of his own race, so that they could enjoy aright the pleasures of the glorious right of liberty. He hoped all of them would be willing to recognize that their best interests grew out of this, and some of their highest duties were achieved in the doing of it. (Applause.)



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