

# THE BLACK RACE:

SOME REFLECTIONS ON ITS POSITION AND DESTINY,

AS CONNECTED WITH

OUR AMERICAN DISPENSATION.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE KENTUCKY COLONIZATION SOCIETY,

AT FRANKFORT,

ON THE 6<sup>TH</sup> OF FEBRUARY, 1851.

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## A D D R E S S .

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Gentlemen of the Colonization Society of the State of Kentucky :

It is now just twenty years since I was required to deliver a discourse, in this place, upon the same subject which is to occupy our attention at present, and on the invitation of the same society whose annual meeting we now celebrate. That occasion, like this, had been preceded by a great agitation in the public mind, upon topics of vast importance, connected with the position and destiny of the black race in this country, and therefore connected, more or less, with the question of their colonization. In that agitation, as in the one through which this state has very lately passed, it was my lot to hold and advocate opinions which did not commend themselves to a majority of the people. Now, as then, having proved myself faithful to my convictions, I shall prove myself faithful to the commonwealth. It is for the whole people to lay the great principles of the social state: it is for the smaller number to acquiesce: it is for all together to work out harmoniously the common destiny, upon the established principles of the government, and it is for all to commit to an overruling providence, the accomplishment, in his own good way, and his own accepted time, of his own great designs—ready alike to obey his call, or to be still at his command.

From a period still more remote than that I have just stated, this society has stood by its great work, and borne, from year to year, its faithful testimony. Perhaps no series of public discourses can be found, proceeding from a succession of abler men, or replete with more profound instruction, than those which have been delivered here, during the last twenty three years. The changes of that long period have been very great and most affecting, and they admonish us in a way to which we ought to give heed. But the principles of our great cause cannot change, and the spirit which prompts our devotion to it ought to survive all changes. The spirit of a wise and earnest philanthropy, laboring upon principles which it would seem impossible for a good man to disapprove—to accomplish objects at once beneficent and immense—and to accomplish them by means which great experience has shown to be effectual in themselves, and free from all just objection. The course of remark which I propose to myself on this occasion will, I trust, suggest to you some additional considerations sup-

porting this broad view of the subject, and illustrating the greatness and the goodness of the cause of African colonization.

The unity of the human race must be considered a fundamental and an accepted truth. Every department of knowledge has been searched for evidence, and all respond with a uniform testimony. The physical structure, constitution, and habits of the race—the mode in which it is produced, in which it exists, in which it perishes—every thing that touches its mere animal existence, demonstrates the absolute certainty of its unity—so that no other generalization of physiology is more clear and more sure. Rising one step, to the highest manifestation of man's physical organization—his use of language and the power of connected speech—the most profound survey of this most complex and tedious part of knowledge, conducts the enquirer to no conclusion more indubitable than that there is a common origin, a common organization, a common nature, underlying and running through this endless variety of a common power, peculiar to the race and to it alone. Thus a second science—philology—has borne its marvelous testimony. Rising one more step, and passing more completely into a higher region, we find the rational and moral nature of men of every age and kindred, absolutely the same. Those great faculties by which man alone—and yet by which every man—perceives that there is in things that distinction which we call true and false, and that other distinction which we call good and evil; upon which distinctions and which faculties rests at last the moral and the intellectual destiny of the entire race; belonging to us as men, without which we are not men, with which we are the head of the visible creation of God. So has a third science—the science which treats of the whole moral constitution of man, embracing in its wide scope many subordinate sciences—delivered its testimony. If we rise another step, and survey man as he is gathered into families, and tribes, and nations, with an endless variety of development, we still behold the broad foundations of a common nature reposing under all—the living proofs of a common origin struggling through all—the grand principles of a common being ruling in the midst of all. So a fourth, and the youngest of the sciences—ethnology—brings her tribute. And now, from this lofty summit survey the whole track of ages. In their length and in their breadth, scrutinize the recorded annals of mankind. There is not one page on which one fact is written—which favors the historical idea of a diversity of nature or origin—while the whole scope of human story involves, assumes, and proclaims, as the first and grandest historic truth, the absolute unity of the race. And then, mounting from earth to heaven, ask God—the God of truth—and He will tell you, that the foundation truth of all his work of creation and of providence, is the sublime certainty that our race was created, in his own

image, and of one blood; and thereupon, when they had fallen, he offered to them a common salvation, through his only begotten Son, made manifest in their common nature! ✱

Most pregnant and most practical, is this great truth. A common origin and a common nature must, in common circumstances, produce a common development and a common destiny. That the development and the destiny of every portion of our race have not been in all respects similar, is therefore to be attributed to the diverse circumstances which have attended the career of the different parts of it. There was in all the same original capacity to be elevated with the highest—the same original liability to be sunken with the lowest. A long course of fortunate events may develop a condition of greatness and glory, while a long course of misfortune may produce a terrible degradation. But the loftiest has no guarantee against decay, and the lowest are still capable of being redeemed. Dangers common to humanity forever impend over us, and glories forever beckon us to arise from the dust. A bond of common brotherhood unites every portion of the race; it is felt the most keenly by those who are the most exalted; and, even in the most abject, its weak pulsations still live to attest the depth of the truth, that our race is one. It is in the life and doctrine of Jesus Christ that this profound instinct of human nature finds itself exalted into one of the grandest truths of religion, and invested with the peculiar sanction of heaven. In him, the conception of this universal brotherhood, which nature teaches—and all knowledge fortifies—becomes a precious, living truth.

The reality of immense diversities in the condition, development, character, and destiny of different portions of our race, must be accepted as a truth, even more obvious than its unity. Those diversities seem to extend to every thing that is consistent with the idea of that unity. Nothing but that impassable barrier, is proof against the force and variety of their manifestations. They have had their origin at a very early period of the existence of the race. The most powerful causes, physical, social, and moral, have conspired to produce and to perpetuate them. We cannot hesitate to pronounce these causes, in many respects constant, and their effects established. And these effects become causes themselves, of many subsequent events in the fate of nations, and produce consequences the most momentous and enduring. It is easy to comprehend that a race originally one, must have passed through circumstances very different as to different portions of it, and that these circumstances, whatever they may have been, must have operated with a constant and immense force, to produce such differences in their physical and moral condition as we find exhibited all over the earth. And it is not more difficult to perceive, that these differences, when established, become the fruitful source of



other, and, if possible, still more important consequences. It is not, perhaps, so obvious, yet it is not less true, that all these diversities would, under similar circumstances, be reproduced, even if we could now obliterate them all; and that, therefore, the only part of wisdom is to accept them as they are, and make all our efforts to ameliorate the condition of the human race proceed on this unquestionable truth. We need not doubt that in the course of human progress, and under the divine administration of a gracious providence, all these things will turn to the furtherance of what is good; and that in the grand consummation of all that progress and all that providence, every portion of our race will be assigned to that portion of our earth, and led to that destiny, which are the best and the highest for it. It is thus that the diversity, as well as the unity of the race, becomes a most fruitful truth; and the efforts of the most advanced portion of it, for the benefit of the most sunken—America for Africa—precisely in the mode which recognizes at once, that we are one, and yet that we are different—is the true and the complete solution of the vast problem, and of our duty under it. It remains for us to do that duty, in all its fullness.

The course which has been run by those great classes of our race into which the learned, with more or less accuracy, have divided it, and the achievements and the fate of nations, composed of one or other of them, may be considered the inevitable result and exponent of those peculiar circumstances which took them, one after another, out of the great common brotherhood, and made them what they were. The strong, the active, and the sagacious—the brave, the earnest, and the wise—whatever made them thus—were thus made as the condition of their triumph; and being thus made, their triumph over the timid, the weak, and the ignorant—whatever made them timid, weak, and ignorant—was just as sure, from the beginning, as it is this day. In the struggle of nations—without the marvelous and unusual interpositions of God—the race is to the swift, and the battle is to the strong. And that all the more certainly in a state of being, where God's curse is upon man, and upon the earth, and upon all its products; and the sweat of the brow and the sweat of the brains are the only remedies in a case where the principle of population is boundless in its power, and the production of bread lies in comparatively narrow limits. Then follows the process of fructifying the earth with human blood. The end of that is, confusion and sorrow, ruin and despair—the shadow of death—and the sum of all, endless slavery!

National independence, viewed from the summit on which we stand, may strike the beholder as a thing easily won and kept. The nations have found it much otherwise. Far the larger part of the history of mankind is a record of the subjugation of races and states, success-

ively, by each other. And probably the independence which we prize so highly could not be maintained for a single day, if the tyrants of the earth were able to subvert it. It is good for us to bear in mind—and it may quell many an evil passion—that the abiding condition of our national independence is, to maintain a strength equal to that of all our enemies united. So, too, from the lofty eminence on which we are placed, personal freedom may appear to us the simplest and the surest result of every proper social organization. The human race has not found it so. It has desired to be free—it has deserved to be free—it has struggled to be free; nay, to be free has been the object of its most fixed desire, of its highest desert, of its fiercest struggles. But yet it has not been free. To preserve a perfect equality of rights, and to preserve those rights perfectly—which are the two conditions of civil liberty—and at the same time to recognize and maintain that inequality of condition, which is the inevitable result of the progress which liberty itself begets—this is the grand problem which the nations, after so many ages, have not yet solved, and, therefore, are not yet free. To preserve our national independence—to secure our personal liberty—to advance in the career of civilization—this is what we are doing. But we should bear in mind, how many have tried and how few have succeeded in the same career; how long, how peculiar, and how fortunate was our previous training, both personal and national, for these great attempts; and how serious are the dangers which still threaten us.

Not a few of these dangers connect themselves with that black race about which this society concerns itself, in a qualified manner—for a portion of which it is endeavoring to establish a national and a free existence on another continent; the servitude of another portion of which, in our own country, makes so conspicuous an element of our social state; and the degraded condition of the third, and larger portion of which, scattered over immense portions of the earth's service—either in slavery or in the first stages of social existence—presents such a deplorable feature of our common humanity. An immense race, embracing an eighth part of the human family—a race doomed, through far the greater part of recorded time, to general degradation and personal servitude; long outcast from the family of man and from the great common brotherhood. Now in this grand era of the world, its destiny is bound fast to ours, and, in some sense, is to be solved with it. The feeble parasite has found, at last, a clift of adamant, to which it may cling. Can the Anglo-American bear through in triumph, not his own destiny only, but that of the black race also? It is a notable question, and a notable conjunction of many acts of God and man has brought it about.

The topics, into the bosom of which the preceding deduction has

fairly brought us, are far too great and numerous to be treated fully on an occasion like this. I shall, therefore, content myself with noticing, generally, such only as are of special interest at the present moment, and as bear more or less directly on the designs of this society. I have to regret that exact statements on those points, touching which statistical facts are of great value, are at present impossible, in consequence of the returns of the national census taken during the past year, not having been, as yet, digested and published. It is of necessity, therefore, that the principles discussed, and the facts involved, must be stated, generally; though I am sensible that this must detract from any value these remarks might be supposed to possess.

The negro race was brought to this continent at a period almost as early as the white, and continued to be brought here, legally, for a period of nearly two hundred years, and clandestinely for some years after their importation was prohibited. At the adoption of the declaration of American independence all the thirteen colonies tolerated negro slavery. At that era, the African slave-trade was in full operation, and no civilized nation condemned it, while most of them participated in it. Of the thirteen states which formed the old confederacy, and all of which tolerated slavery, six continue to tolerate it, and seven have abolished it. Of the eighteen states admitted into the union since the adoption of the federal constitution, nine are free states and nine are slave states. Of the present thirty-one states composing the union, fifteen are slave states and sixteen are free states. Of the seven original states which abolished slavery, each one did it of its own accord, and by its own act. Of the nine free and nine slave states admitted into the union, each one was so admitted by act of congress, composed of senators and representatives elected from all the states in the union, at the respective periods of their admission. In the mean time, the foreign slave-trade was abolished by act of congress, above forty years ago, and as soon as the federal constitution permitted it to be done. During this period of seventy-five years, counting from 1776, almost the entire class of free blacks in the United States has come into existence, having been created by voluntary manumission, in the slave states, and by general manumission, by public authority, in those states that abolished slavery. It is probable that the greater portion were set free voluntarily in those states which still tolerate slavery, as considerably the larger portion of the free negroes in the United States have always resided in those states. The entire colored population of the United States may be estimated at about one-tenth part of the absolute population—the free portion of the negro population at about one-fifth part of that race, and about one-fiftieth part of the whole population. It is probable that above three-fifths of the entire population of the nation live in the free states,



and the remaining two-fifths, or somewhat less, in the slave states; and that the slaves constitute not far from one-fourth part of the entire population of the slave states. I repeat that these estimates, made in advance of the returns of the census of 1850, may not prove exact, though probably not far wrong. A remaining fact of great significance, belonging to the period I am running over, is the attempt, by means of African colonization, to plant the germ of a real nationality in the bosom of this black race—an attempt now persisted in with great tenacity, and much success for above thirty years.

This comprehensive statement exhibits the position of this great question of the black race, as it touches our American dispensation, at two eras, seventy-five years apart, and also the movement of it during that long period. It leaves no doubt of the reality, and the tendency of an immense progress highly favorable to that race—yet faithful to the high destiny of the country itself—and to the public obligations, in the faithful observance of which, that glorious destiny is involved. The slave states have permitted their citizens to manumit many thousands of slaves; and in this manner many millions of dollars have been given up by masters, through motives of humanity alone. Seven states which once tolerated slavery have abolished it, by the unquestionable exercise of their sovereign power. Congress has admitted into the union more states than originally composed it, leaving to each, at and after its admission, to tolerate slavery or reject it, at its pleasure; and an equal number has done each. With a common consent of the nation, the foreign slave-trade has been prohibited, and punished as a crime against the human race. To crown the whole, a spontaneous movement, as entirely national as any that has marked our career, has manifested and established itself, seeking the removal of the free blacks of America, with their own consent, to Africa, and their settlement there in freedom and independence. And multitudes of slaves, whom their masters do not consider it advisable to emancipate in this country, are held subject to be sent to Liberia, as the means can, from time to time, be obtained for that purpose. These facts, taken all together, and considering their relative dependence—the immense field they cover—the long period through which they have been developed, and their connection with other and immense interests, may be fairly said to establish the existence of a general sentiment, at once moderate in its aims and powerful in its impulse. There are, no doubt, those who demand a different and far more vehement progress—as there are, also, those who assert that a point has been reached already dangerous to the interests of the slave states; and recent events have given to both of these extreme opinions an importance, all the more ominous, as their advocates, who could agree in nothing else, have agreed in a common assault, under cover of them, upon the

union, and the constitution of the country. We may not, therefore, pass them by in silence.

For myself, I am not only ready to admit, but I earnestly contend, that no question touching the black race in this country, should be allowed for a moment to compromise the far higher and more important interests of the white race in it, and of the country itself. I desire the prosperity of every nation in the world; but, above all, I passionately desire the glory of my own. I earnestly invoke God's blessing upon every race of men; but, above them all, I cherish with devotion and with hope, the advancement of my own. I love liberty, and rejoice greatly when the down-trodden recover it, and mourn when its struggles, any where, are defeated. But the liberties of my own race, and my own country, are precious to me out of comparison with all beside. I have never ceased to compassionate this black race, and to labor, in every way that seemed to me proper, for its ultimate redemption; and perhaps the greatest sacrifices of my life have been in its cause. But I frankly admit, that there is no conceivable question in which that race, or any race is involved, for which I would peril, in the slightest degree, the sublime career which is open before my country—much less provoke or tolerate an assault upon the integrity of the constitution, or the perpetuity of the union. Never were such hopes set before any people—never was such a destiny offered to any nation, as God has placed within our reach. The contempt of our posterity, the execration of mankind, the abhorrence of endless generations, would inadequately avenge the folly, the disloyalty, and the impiety which could lead us to make shipwreck of such a dispensation. We must not do it—nay, we must not allow it to be done. The nation must be just to every part that composes it. It must forbear to the last extremity—even when it is right, and the rebellious parts are wrong. We are brothers—we are christians—and we are free. But the highest duty the nation has to perform, is to avert national ruin. Our glorious institutions have been steeped, from the beginning, in the blood of patriots. Dreadful as the alternative would be, better steep them also in the blood of traitors, than let them perish in utter ignominy.

So far from exasperating these frantic strifes, the friends of African colonization have a peculiar interest in composing them. They know it is not for them to hasten the designs of God; and they are content to await the guidance of his adorable wisdom. They know, too, that all the madness of men cannot frustrate the settled ends of Providence, nor avert those great conclusions whose seeds lie buried in past ages, and whose catastrophe is as inevitable as the stroke of death. They have no interest in exasperating one portion of the country against another, or the strong against the feeble race. It is the gen-

tle and the generous—not the fierce and turbulent emotions of the human soul—to which their appeal lies. It is to solve great and difficult questions, for the common good and the common glory, and, if it were possible, with the common consent—questions which, not they, but time, and progress, and the inherent force of events have made, that their great mission addresses its healing labors. If the fair defense of their grand and single aim begets discussions on other points, the fault is not theirs, but of those who, upon grounds hostile to each other, and all independent of the precise end they have in view, would obstruct their great, beneficent, and patriotic purpose. The exclusive subjects of their labors are the free black race in the United States. Their sole design as to them, is to create out of them a free, civilized, and christian commonwealth in Africa. To prevent their success, the north is roused upon the plea, that by this means slavery will be more permanently established in America; and, the south is convulsed upon the pretext, that by the same means slavery is endangered. And so, opposing parties, forgetting their mutual hostility, jointly attack principles which protect both, and a cause which would bless both, in the same spirit in which they attack the county which cherishes both.

The effect of African colonization upon negro slavery in the United States, is an aspect of the question which could hardly be overlooked. I have just stated that extreme and directly opposite conclusions have been arrived at. It can hardly be fairly denied that the interests, both of the slaves and their masters, as well as the general interests of the country, would be promoted by the removal of an anomalous and unfortunate class occupying the position generally presented by the free blacks throughout America. Nor can it be questioned that many motives growing out of any clear view of the subject, are presented to the benevolent owners of slaves, favoring emancipation connected with colonization. That there is any serious probability, however, that the number of slaves in this country will ever be considerably reduced, by means of foreign colonization, or upon such motives alone as arise from that quarter, is not, I presume, believed by many well informed persons. I have never entertained the opinion that slavery, as an institution, could be shaken by any considerations except those great and absorbing ones which control the human conscience, or dictate with the power of irresistible necessity to the human will. The sense of self-preservation may do it—a clear view of personal interest may do it—a profound idea of duty may do it—the abiding force of religious principle or religious emotion may do it. All these suggestions contemplate its voluntary abolition, by the act of the master, or of the state. There are other modes, fiercer and more effectual—foreign conquest, domestic strife—the combined questions of bread, labor, and population, practically discussed under the



usual auspices of famine and pestilence. All these are methods the world has seen often enough to know by rote; and if this union is dissolved, there are those now alive who may see one or other of them enacted over again. God forefend, both that calamity and its cause. So it is—slavery is here—for good, as some profess—for ill, as most believe. For good or ill, it is here beyond the power of foreign colonization to shake its existence, or materially diminish its numbers. The parasite has clung to the wall of adamant—the African is bound to the car of the Anglo-American! He must bear him through in triumph—he must perish with him by the way—or he must destroy him outright. That car cannot pause to re-adjust this doomed connection, any more than the adamantine spheres can cease to wheel, unshaken, in the hand of God, that the planets may adjust their casual perturbations. Bear him through in triumph—perish with him by the way—or destroy him outright! The good, the brave, and the wise, alone are worthy to ask or to answer—which? When idle chatterers are done, let them take up the great parable—and when they make their exposition, let them settle in the depths of every constant and intrepid heart—that if the south will be true to the country, the country will be true to her; that if the north will be true to the country, the country will be true to her; and if the country will be true to her destiny, God will be true to her!

Surmounting such questions, our cause extricates itself from dilemmas which belong rather to the country than to it, and which, at the most, involve only one, and that an incidental portion of its ground. Its direct connection with slavery in America, if it has any at all, lies chiefly in this—that the particular objects of its care—the free negroes of America—are each one a proof that slavery in America is in a process of amelioration; and that it affords the means to such as choose to use them in that manner, of a further and real—though possibly slight and incidental—yet if men so please, illimitable amelioration. The mass of slaves in America—considerable in itself, but insignificant when compared with the whole black race—stands back in the rear. If they were forgotten in our estimates, it would rob this cause only of one feature of its grandeur; a feature, I admit, momentous to us as American philanthropists and patriots. There are other, and perhaps to all but ourselves, far more impressive features. Here around us, are more than half a million of liberated slaves. Yonder, in the great world without, are a hundred, possibly a hundred and fifty millions of blacks. There before us, is the vast African continent, the original home, and still the seat and centre of the race. Here is our sublime design, to organize a real and enduring nationality, in the bosom of this race, in its original seats. High above all, is the cross of Christ—and profusely rich through all, are the



hopes of established freedom, where there was bondage before, and exalted civilization where barbarism had reigned.

There is, perhaps, no instance in the history of society, of so small and so unimportant a portion—as the free negroes have always been of the population of the United States—occupying so large a share of the public attention. They have, probably, never exceeded the fiftieth part of the entire population of the nation. As a political element, they have never been worthy to be considered. As affecting, in any way, the national wealth, power, or development, their weight is inappreciable; and their increase, by natural propagation, has borne a very low proportion to that of any other class or portion of the people. Yet the attention of the benevolent and humane has been long and earnestly directed to them; legislative enactments so numerous and peculiar as to form a distinct code, have been made about them in most, if not all, the states; political and religious parties have made various and opposite principles, relating to them, fundamental points in their very organization; the most violent popular agitations and excesses have been produced in nearly every part of the country, by discussions and proceedings connected with them; and an earnest public sentiment, covering a long track of years, and directed to various objects, has manifested itself in numerous voluntary organizations concerning them, most of which have professed to be, and some of which have been, really national. It is obvious, that to explain such a condition of affairs, there must exist something extremely peculiar, in the position of such a class, and its relations to others around it. During more than thirty years the public mind has been earnestly directed to this subject; and surely it has had the means of being informed and satisfied in regard to the great bearings of it. It is not saying too much, to assert that it is informed and satisfied. The mind of the nation can hardly be said to be more conclusively settled upon any question which is still held under discussion at all, than as to the anomalous position and injurious influences of the free black race in America. It is satisfied still further, that most of the peculiar vices, hardships, evil influences, and dangers of that race, are traceable immediately to its anomalous position—are incapable of effectual remedy, while it remains unchanged, and that it ought to be changed. This is the deliberate, the general, and the just sense of the American people on these questions. The friends of African colonization, taking the lead in the dissemination of these great truths, have gradually diffused them through the nation. They made them the basis of their project for the removal of the free blacks, and have constantly urged that this was the true solution of the established facts and undeniable principles involved in the case. Of those who opposed them, some—though fortunately the number is not now very large—have contended

that the case admitted of no remedy whatever, and have been content to leave it to be settled as events might determine. Others, constituting a party numerous and intolerant, in several of the slave states, have held the opinion that any remedy, no matter how effectual it might be, or how unobjectionable in itself, must necessarily produce, in the process of its application to the condition of things actually existing, other evils, more serious and unmanageable than those it professed to remove—evils far too serious to be tolerated by the slave states, even for the accomplishment of great good, or the removal of great mischief. A third class, equally numerous, perhaps, with the last, and still more intolerant, constituting throughout many of the free states, the most obnoxious and unscrupulous party which has participated in these discussions, has proposed for remedy such a change in the social, civil, and political condition of all American institutions, as will admit the free blacks, indiscriminately and absolutely, to an equality with the whites—drawing after this sweeping revolution, a hundred others, as immense, as absurd, and as impossible as itself. These statements exhibit, I think, all the shades of opinion which are held with sufficient distinctness to give character to existing parties, on the great questions of any remedy—and if any, what?—for the condition of the free black race in this country.

Without discussing the principles of any of these parties—the whole of which are hostile to those on which the scheme of colonization proceeds—they sufficiently reveal how the whole subject is complicated with the interests and institutions of the country. Although slavery is not a national institution, and although its existence and its regulation are subjects under the exclusive control of the states, respectively; yet the complete national recognition of it, and the important and somewhat difficult duties assumed by the nation, in connection with that recognition, give to the institution itself, and to every thing that can be supposed to affect it, even incidentally, a national importance which the whole history of the country has shown to be immense—and which recent, and indeed impending events, prove to be capable of becoming, at any moment, eminently critical. So, too—although the existence and regulation of the institution are purely matters of positive law—yet in the very nature of that existence and that legal regulation of it—there exist moral principles, and there are involved moral duties, whose determination is as much religious as it is legal, and concerning which it is no more possible to exclude the action of the church of God, than that of the civil power. That civil power, which is an institution of God, must determine for itself things appertaining to itself; but the church of Christ, which is also an institution of God, must in like manner determine things appertaining to it. Where slavery is established and regulated by law, the church

has no other concern with it than it has with all other civil institutions; but it has exactly the same concern with it that it has with other civil institutions—that concern extending to and covering the entire aspects and relations of the subject which are exclusively moral. In the determination of these, as well as of the national relations of the subject, before alluded to, a great and most exciting difference of opinion has manifested itself throughout the country; and, in this aspect, as in the other, calamitous results have occurred, and others still more serious have been threatened. It is from the absolute nature of the subject, wherever slavery exists in any portion of a federal union, or in the bosom of any christian commonwealth, that agitations and dangers of the kind alluded to are liable to occur; and our plan of colonization, and the considerations it has to suggest, so far from aggravating existing evils, or creating new ones, is, in truth, a remedy for them all—perfectly effectual, as far as it is actually applied, and capable of whatever application men or states choose to make of it. The fury of sectional madness, and the frenzy of religious fanaticism, find nothing in the principles of this great movement to excite or to nourish those frantic passions which, under so many opposite manifestations, have sought one common and diabolical end—in the division of all the churches, the hostility of the states against each other, the dissolution of the national union, and the overthrow of the federal constitution.

So far as the existence of the free black race in any part of the country is the occasion of any evil, or the pretext of any wrong, it is capable of a perfect remedy. Let them be restored to their father land. If individual charity is not adequate to the object, public munificence surely is. As to them, they have no interest which excuses, much less which can justify, a purpose to remain amongst us in their present condition; and all the experience of the past, and every indication of the future, prove that nothing better for them is to be expected here. As for us, it is certain that we have no interest which can be promoted by their continuance in this country, compared to the advantages we should reap from their removal. And surely it cannot be doubted, that every general consideration, exterior to ourselves and to them, points out their settlement in Africa as an event pregnant with unmixed and immeasurable advantage. Hitherto, they have been found willing to emigrate, as rapidly as the means at the disposal of the various societies made it proper, or the condition of the several colonies rendered it prudent, to send them. And this may continue to be the case. There are, however, various causes in operation which may beget a different result. In proportion as the public mind has become fixed in the conclusion that they ought to be removed, it has manifested a restlessness at the extreme slowness of the



operation, and its past inefficiency in retarding their increase in this country. At the same time, efforts, more or less strenuous, have been made to induce the federal government to give aid, or afford facilities to the object, and to enlist the state governments in direct efforts to promote it. Commensurate with all these things, have been the ceaseless endeavors of our enemies, to alienate the minds of the free blacks from us. The combined result of all these causes may some day present a totally new aspect of the subject—one in which the means that might be wisely used may exceed the willingness of the free blacks to emigrate. There are other causes, pointing in the same direction, which cannot be overlooked. While the slave states are becoming more and more reluctant to see any increase of free blacks in them, and, in some instances, showing an inclination to expel those already free; the free states are also exhibiting a more fixed purpose to prevent their accumulation in them. In the mean time, it may be confidently asserted, that in all the slave states which permit the manumission of slaves, persons will be found who will exercise this right, and thus steadily augment the number of free blacks, in a ratio greater than their natural increase. It must be allowed that the absolute prohibition of manumission—which already exists in several states—is an act far more oppressive, both as to the master and the slave, than the removal, by law, even against their wishes, of the manumitted slaves. Considering the whole case, every interest involved requires us to examine more carefully than has hitherto been done, the principles which should guide our conduct, under circumstances which, it seems to me, are to be contemplated as by no means improbable. It has been a fixed principle of all the colonization societies, that any removal of free blacks, in which they participated, must be with the consent of the persons removed; and it is not easy to see how voluntary associations, or limited corporations, such as all of them are, could adopt any other principle. But this does not touch, much less settle, the questions really involved. The cause is much more extensive than the societies, and must necessarily increase, even when they decrease. Already, the societies have surrendered, in a great measure, the whole control of the matter in Africa, and it has fallen there into the hands of the communities they have established on that continent. In this country, the intervention of the states, or any one of them, may place the domestic aspect of the subject, also, on a new footing. My own belief is, that this will probably occur, before any serious impression can be made even in retarding the increase, much less reducing the numbers of the free blacks amongst us. The power of each of the states is uncontrolable over the subject, within its own borders. All the states, and especially the slave states, have interests at stake, sufficiently important to demand a public interposition. This



should take place, whenever it occurs, in a manner consistent with the character of a great and just commonwealth. The responsibility of the acts to be performed, should be openly assumed, and the acts themselves discharged, in a manner at once effectual and humane. It is we who are to judge, who are to act, and that for those dependant upon us, as well as for ourselves. And our responsibility for the judgment and the act, is far less to the free blacks, than to our own consciences, to mankind, and to God. If it is our deliberate judgment that they ought to be removed, let us remove them. Let us so do it as for the common good of all—not sordidly and wickedly—but with a compassion and a conviction, as earnest as the force which necessity may oblige us to employ.

The influence of the circumstances which surround us, is decisive upon the bulk of mankind. It is only the greatest and the most virtuous whom they do not control. The free blacks, in every part of the United States, and from the commencement of their existence as a separate class, have occupied a position every way peculiar, and certainly not favorable to their general progress. Still, however, while that position has exposed them to many vices and much suffering, and has held out to them most inadequate inducements to high or sustained efforts, it has been attended with certain advantages, which have greatly exceeded those enjoyed during the same period by the bulk of the human race. They have lived by the side and under the shadow of a highly civilized and most energetic race. They have been protected by the freest institutions in the world, and have seen the power and value of that, which they have not been allowed to enjoy fully. They have received, as a race, through successive generations, a training by which they have been educated in the great duty and art of sustained toil, which, while it is the elemental curse of humanity, is also the elemental point of all its progress; and they have acquired, to a certain degree, all the arts and trades which flourish around them, as the incidents of a high state of social development. They have possessed themselves, to a certain extent, of that which, in a higher sense, we call knowledge; and it would not be true to say of them, as a race, that they are wholly uneducated. The manners, the habits, the wants, and the attainments, of a civilization—low as compared with ours, respectable as compared with the average of the human race, and exalted as compared with the bulk of their own race—have been attained by them. And to crown all, the almost universal belief, and to a considerable extent the practice of the christian religion, has become their heritage, in the house of their bitter pilgrimage. Christ and his gospel are in their midst, far more really and substantially than in the midst of many nations we call christian. If we will consider these things fairly, we cannot doubt that these people

are in a condition, if they were but placed in circumstances favoring such a result, to assume a very different position from any they have hitherto occupied. It was a conclusion eminently reasonable and natural, from such premises, that such a race might be colonized, with the utmost certainty of a great and beneficent influence thereby, upon themselves. The experiment has been made, and has produced, in this sense, more than was promised—perhaps more than was expected. Similar experiments have been made with every considerable race into which the human family is divided, and every part of the earth has been the theatre of these experiments. I think no record exists of any more decidedly successful, or at a similar stage of it, more hopeful. I believe no instance has occurred in which results more cheering, and apparently more pregnant with further and immense results, have been produced under so many discouragements, with such limited means, and in so short a time; and certainly the progress of no single experiment has been more eminently free from great disasters. We have colonized this race—such as it was—with all the odium which its enemies could accumulate upon its head, and without any attempt on the part of its friends to vindicate or defend it. Silently accepting the character given to it, or, perhaps, too often ourselves testifying too unreservedly to its degradation, our great conclusion has been—let us remove it. We have done so, in sufficient numbers, and for a sufficient length of time, to exhibit clearly the nature of the fruits that will be borne. We have sent somewhat under 10,000 of them some 4,000 miles off, across the ocean. Nearly thirty years have been occupied in doing this. We have done it, almost entirely, with our individual resources. We have planted them in their new homes. We have committed to their own hands the administration of their own affairs—the organization of their own social state—the making of their own laws—the establishment of their own forms of government. With the deepest anxiety—yet without the slightest effort to control the result, except by reason—we have watched the progress of our work, as we patiently and steadily urged it forward. Now we turn to our country, and confidently—might I not almost say proudly?—surely I may say gratefully—invite her to look upon it. There are those people—a free and christian commonwealth, far off on the verge of human civilization; a small, but an enlightened and well regulated state. Industry prospers amongst them; the arts of common life flourish to a degree; commerce is regularly pursued; trade adopts its established laws; agriculture is establishing its conquests. All the social institutions which adorn and bless life, exist on the model they learned from us. Political institutions like our own, are established with a cordial and unanimous consent, and administered with firmness, regularity, and justice. Schools are established,

and the young are educated. Churches are erected to the living God, and Christ's gospel is preached to a believing people. Just, brave, and prosperous in peace and in war, they have followed our great example; they wrong none—they fear none. And now, bound by equal treaties to some of the greatest empires of the earth, they have been received into the family of nations, and their new banner, like another star set on the sable brow of night, flashes along the coast of their father-land! Yes, it is a child of our country!—outcast it may be—but still a child! And the day will come, when it will vindicate, in glory, all that it has won in tears. In this, as in every analogous case, a change in the condition of these men has wrought a corresponding change in their character. The good that is in them finds ample scope for exercise, and adequate motive for exertion; the evil is no longer pressed with ceaseless temptation, and aggravated by a constant sense of wrong. So it would be, as to all their brethren, situated as they once were. And the simple and truthful recital of what has actually occurred, seems to me to present to every benevolent and every enlightened mind, an overwhelming argument in favor of the similar removal of the whole free black race from the United States. This, at least, is within the compass of our means and our authority—this, at least, every view of our duty, and their interest, would seem to suggest.

In the long annals of the human race, there has never existed a powerful and highly civilized state, in those immense and fervid regions which lie under the equator—and which, encircling the globe, and extending northward and southward to the tropics, embrace so vast a portion of the earth's surface. Forty-seven degrees of latitude in the central portions of the earth, covering five-sixths of the African continent, three-quarters of South America, the extreme southern portions of Asia and of North America, and multitudes of the islands of the sea—amongst them some of the most extensive and fertile of all—have been condemned, since the creation of the world, to be the abode of ignorant and scattered—for the most part feeble and semi-barbarous—and to a deplorable extent, savage and brutal tribes of men. And yet there was never an era in those protracted annals when the existence of a power of the first class, in any portion of that vast circumference, would not have been an event so decisive in the history of the human race, as to have altered the whole current of their history, and modified the subsequent destiny of the whole race. The grand necessity, this day, of the human family, considered as one great brotherhood—the overpowering want which human progress, considered in its widest scope, this day exhibits, is the reclamation of that immense circumference from the reign of ignorance and barbarism, and the establishment, throughout its vast extent, of the triumphs



which man, elsewhere, has won. If it had pleased God to erect, in the central regions of South America, extending from ocean to ocean, a confederacy like ours—or if he had planted it across the bosom of Africa, under the equator—or if he had made Australia the theatre of its glory; how universal and how immeasurable would have been the influence which would have penetrated and pervaded the inter-tropical world—an influence which must have been felt, in some degree, by the remotest tribes of men! Alas! alas! what would it not have prevented—what would it not have achieved! The imagination is lost in the contemplation of the magnitude and the grandeur of the good which, it seems to us, must have followed—and the heart is smitten with astonishment, as it glances over the unfathomable misery, which, it would seem, must have been averted! What a lesson of God's patience, and man's folly!

To us has been reserved a portion of this sublime work, on one of its widest theatres. We have planted a civilized state in Africa, under the equator. We have laid the foundations of an empire, whose priceless heritage is, a free constitution and an open bible. We have done, by God's mercy, what all past ages needed, but could not achieve. Will our country and our age at last comprehend and complete our work? The central continent of the earth, so long buried in darkness, is at length invaded by the true light. Let heaven and earth bear witness against all who may seek to extinguish it.

There is a surprising grandeur in every result to which this work tends. Each of the great divisions of the human family seems destined to a development, in many respects peculiar to itself; and each one has been led through a pupilage, at once fitted to conduct it to the destiny which awaited it, and to prepare it for it. And this pupilage of nations and races, has been painful and protracted in the double ratio of their ignorance and degradation when that pupilage began, and the height and the duration of the renown to which it was to conduct them. Israel groaned in bondage for more than four centuries, and then pined and expired, under forty years of pilgrimage. But Israel crossed Jordan at last—with a nationality the most marvelous that the world ever saw—which has survived through eighteen centuries, without a country or a government, and under a conspiracy of the human race against it. This is a miraculous nationality, and we look not for the like again. But it was, nevertheless, a nationality created, as to second causes, by the events through which Israel passed, and sustained by the hopes which Israel has cherished. And so every nationality is thus created and thus sustained. And so God leadeth every race, onward through its own destiny, till the highest summit any portion of mankind can reach, will exhibit the combined result of the highest development that each part had attained. Beyond that there remain-



eth only, that the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of the Lord and his Christ!

The largest, the most enduring, and in all respects the most remarkable example—which history affords us of a race without a nationality, and therefore without what could be properly called a distinct civilization—is this black race. And surely the pupilage through which it has passed, has been without example, bitter and protracted. How much has it not required to prepare it for its final destiny? Shall we therefore say—nothing awaits it? We cannot say this, without contradicting all that is true in detail, or profound in conception, in the history of the past. Let us rather believe, that an exalted destiny may be in the career to which it tends. Unto this, are all the testimonies of the past—unto this are all the indications of the present. The principles which are at work throughout the earth can scarcely fail to produce it. The exigencies which control all human things, present a combination which can hardly allow it to fail. Slowly—perhaps remotely, yet inevitably—there appear to await the black race a nationality, a civilization, and consequently a share in the affairs of this world, immeasurably different from any thing it has hitherto exhibited.

To us has been reserved, again, an immense, perhaps a controlling portion of this great work. Our colonies in Africa occupy the central portion of that seacoast of the negro's fatherland—which, so to speak, faces inward to civilization. Behind them, stretching across the continent, are four thousand miles of fertile territory, inhabited, though not densely, in chief part by the black race, in the first stages of an opening civilization. North and south, for at least a thousand miles in each direction, is also a fertile country, inhabited mainly by the same race, in a condition similar to that already stated. A land four thousand miles long from west to east, and two thousand miles broad from north to south—larger, by far, than the Roman Empire—the home of the black man, and the grave of all besides—now peopled with more than a hundred millions of inhabitants. All things conspire to the same grand result. The state we have planted, is precisely so situated as to receive from without and to propagate within, the best influences which all other nations can exert. The immense race, and the vast continent behind this state, and around it, are placed exactly in those circumstances most favorable to the exercise of all such influences from such a quarter. And the state itself has been created, and will be indefinitely augmented, from those materials, which, of all that existed, are the best fitted for this, as well as for all the other great objects connected with African colonization. It is impossible to avoid the conviction, that such causes must be followed by corresponding results. Already they have manifested themselves, and the native population which has voluntarily sought the protection of the colo-

nists, and subjected themselves to the genial control of their laws, is represented to be about twenty times more numerous than the colonists themselves. We have sent out less than 10,000 colonists; but their laws and institutions are respected, and to a good degree obeyed, by nearly 200,000 persons. Imagine a like result—but even in a much lower degree—produced by every 10,000 additional colonists sent out—or, if it be thought more rational, by every 25 years of effort. How manifest is it, that before we shall have removed the mass of our free black population, or before a single century shall have elapsed, a powerful nation will have been created, and the ultimate redemption of the black race in Africa placed on a footing as secure as that on which the prosperity of any existing state rests! Or, if any one thinks proper to do so, let him double, triple, quadruple, the time, the toil, and the risk. In the creation of an empire—in the redemption of a race—in the regeneration of a continent—in the consummation of a work whose benefits all nations will reap, and from which no evil can arise to any human being, we can well afford to toil long, to risk much, and wait God's time. We set before our hearts, sublime ends; and rejoicing in our day, over such fruits as our works may bear, we point to the luminous track, in which they who are to follow us should tread, and rejoice the more, that they shall reap far more abundantly than we.

The slavery of 2,000,000 of human beings is a question of awful magnitude, and invests all that can be supposed to bear upon it, even indirectly, with an importance which no thoughtful mind can disregard. The fate of 500,000 free blacks, and their posterity forever, is a matter which no one—and especially no one situated as we are—can lightly pass over. The destiny of 150,000,000 of blacks, concentrated chiefly in Africa, and abiding still in heathen degradation, if not barbarism, cannot be contemplated with indifference by any pious heart. The duty, the interests, the danger, and the glory of our own country, as connected with all these great questions, challenge the consideration of every wise and patriotic man. And the general influence of them all, and the effects of any course we may take in regard to them—all the consequences of all that may befall us, for good or ill, by reason of them—all these things considered in their bearings upon the career and destiny of the human race; present subjects of enquiry, whose very magnitude oppresses us. The Kingdom of God in the world—the salvation of at least an eighth part of the human race—and that a part most peculiarly committed in trust to us—these are topics which ought to lie immediately upon the christian heart. Now, every one of these thrilling subjects, enters more or less into every fair and complete consideration of the question of the black race, and of the cause and claims of African colonization, as bearing upon that

question. Surely, they do not err who say, that taken in all its extent, the question of African colonization is one of the grandest and most fruitful which this generation has been required to determine.

Thirty-two years ago—before I had arrived at man's estate—I had occasion to examine this great topic, at the period of its first presentation for public patronage, and before ulterior steps had been very decisively taken. Struck with the grandeur, the simplicity, the completeness, and the feasibility of the great and humane conception, I have never ceased to cherish the profoundest interest and confidence in this cause. I have witnessed all the vicissitudes, all the changes of opinion, all the varying aspects of the question, during those two and thirty years, and am somewhat familiar with what has been done, both in this country and Africa, during that long period, and with the public and personal history of most of the principal actors, in all that has occurred. Fortified by an experience of this description, and by the observations and reflections of so many years, I solemnly declare that the more I have examined the principles which are involved, and the more I have observed their practical results, the more has the subject seemed to me to be invested with unanswerable reasons challenging our cordial support, and exalted motives commanding our earnest sympathy. I deem such a testimony more valuable than any argument from me, and therefore give it. And whatever weight it may be thought to have, deserves to be increased by the fact, that I have never had a constant, or an intimate connection with any of the societies organized to promote this cause; and have seen much to disapprove, in much that has been done. It is the great cause—and not all the modes of its manifestation, nor all the methods of its advocacy, nor all the acts of its chief managers—that I have vindicated through good report and ill report. And it is that I now avouch, from my inmost soul, to be the cause of justice, humanity, and wisdom—the cause of living hope to a vast and suffering race—the cause of my country's prosperity and renown—and, above all, of my Master's glory!