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EQUALITY OF RIGHTS FOR
ALL CITIZENS, BLACK AND
WHITE, ALIKE

Rev. F. J. Grimke

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Equality of Rights for All Citizens, Black and White, Alike.

A DISCOURSE DELIVERED IN THE
FIFTEENTH STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, WASHINGTON, D. C.;
SUNDAY, MARCH 7TH, 1909.

BY THE PASTOR
REV. FRANCIS J. GRIMKE, D. D.,

*"They enslave their children's children
Who make compromise with sin."*

*"Though the heel of the strong oppressor
May grind the weak in the dust,
And the voices of fame with one acclaim
May call him great and just,
Let those who applaud take warning
And keep this motto in sight—
No question is ever settled
Until it is settled right."*

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Equality of Rights for all Citizens, Black and White, Alike.

BY REV. FRANCIS J. GRIMKE, D. D.

I CORINTHIANS 16:13.

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

It has been my custom for many years to speak during the inaugural week on some phase of the race question. I have done it because usually at such times there are representatives of our race here from all parts of the country, and an opportunity is thus afforded of reaching a larger number than would be possible at any other time. Such occasions, it seems to me, should be utilized in the interest of the race, in the discussion of matters pertaining to the race. The inauguration of a President is an event in which the whole nation is interested, and which emphasizes the fact of citizenship, as perhaps nothing else does, coming as it does after the election, and growing out of it. On such occasions it is well for us therefore, especially at this juncture of our history, not to be unmindful of our own citizenship, of our own status in the body politic.

We have just been celebrating, all over the country, the centennial of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, our great war President, and this inauguration coming so soon after, makes it especially a good time to talk about some of the questions which grew out of the War, and which were settled by it. And this is what I want to do this morning.

Over forty years ago the great struggle ended, the "irrepressible conflict" came to a close. It marked an epoch in the history of our country, and in the history of the black race in this country. Certain great questions, which had agitated the country for years, were settled, and settled for all time.

The first of these questions had to do with the nature of the relation existing between the States and the General Government. Was each State sovereign, in the sense, that it could withdraw from the Union whenever it saw fit, whenever it thought it had sufficient reason for so doing; or were these States bound together in a union, "one and inseparable, now and forever," in the language of Webster? In other words, when the Constitution was adopted what was the meaning of the Preamble—"We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America?" By this did they mean to constitute themselves a nation or a mere confederation of sovereign and independent States? Mr. Calhoun and those who followed his lead took the latter view and strenuously maintained the doctrine of Nullification and Secession. This was the view held by all the political leaders in the South in 1860. The election of Abraham Lincoln, which was looked upon as dangerous to the interest of slavery, brought to a crisis the long and growing antagonism between the North and the South. The

feeling generally in the South was that the time had come for a separation, that it was no longer possible for the two sections to work together in harmony. Accordingly, acting upon what they felt to be their inherent right as sovereign and independent States, they resolved to dissolve the Union by withdrawing from it. The initial step in this movement was taken by South Carolina. In Convention assembled, December 20, 1860, it passed an ordinance of secession. Within six weeks similar conventions were called, and similar action taken by the States of Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas.

After Fort Sumter was fired upon four other Southern States followed—North Carolina, Virginia, Arkansas, and Tennessee. The Union, so far as the South was concerned, was now a thing of the past.

These eleven Southern States, having withdrawn from the Union, proceeded to organize themselves into what was known as the Southern Confederacy, with Jefferson Davis of Mississippi as president, and Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia as vice-president, and to make preparation to defend their rights, as sovereign and independent States. The North, in the meantime, who took a different view of the matter, who did not believe that the Union could be dissolved at the pleasure of any State, under the leadership of Abraham Lincoln, began to take steps to suppress the rebellion, to bring back by persuasion, if possible, but if not, then by force, these rebellious States. Thus began our great Civil War, which ended in victory for the North. The forces of the Confederacy were beaten, and the cause of the Union triumphed.

It is now no longer a question as to whether we are a nation, or a confederation of sovereign and independent States. That question is settled, and settled once for all by the issue of the War. It is not likely that any Southern State will ever again attempt to withdraw from the Union, or to act on the assumption that it has the right to do so. Even if it is foolish enough to entertain such a view, it will be sure never again to act upon it. The issue of the War has removed forever from the field of serious discussion this question of the right of a State to secede. The ghost of secession will never again arise to disturb the peace of the Union. The stars and stripes, the old flag, will float, as long as it floats, over all these States, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the Lakes to the Gulf. If the time ever comes when we shall go to pieces, it will not be from any desire or disposition on the part of the States to pull apart, but from inward corruption, from the disregard of right principles, from the spirit of greed, from the narrowing lust of gold, from losing sight of the fact that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but that sin is a reproach to any people." It is here where our real danger lies—not in the secession of States from the Union, but in the secession of the Union itself from the great and immutable principles of right, of justice, of fair play for all regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. The fact that the Union has been saved, that these rebellious States have been brought back into it, will amount to nothing unless it can be saved from this still greater peril that threatens it.

The secession of the Southern States in 1860 was a small matter compared with the secession of the Union itself from the great principles enunciated in the Declaration of Independence, in the Golden Rule, in the Ten Commandments, in the Sermon on the Mount. Unless we hold, and hold firmly to these great fundamental principles of righteousness, of social, political, and economic wisdom, our Union, as Mr. Garrison expressed it, will be "only a covenant with death and an agreement with hell." If it continues to exist it will be a curse, and not a blessing.

Our brave boys in blue, whose bodies lie mouldering in the grave, but whose souls are marching on, settled the question of the Union of the States. It is for the patriotic men who are living to-day, and those who are to follow in their footsteps, to deal with this larger and more important question. It isn't enough that these States are held together, they must be held together on right principles—principles of justice, of equity, of fair play, of equality before the law for all alike. Whether there is patriotism, political wisdom, moral insight and stamina enough to lead men to forget their differences on minor matters and to unite their forces for the attainment of this greater and more important end, remains to be seen. There are so many who are controlled by their petty prejudices, whose views are so narrow and contracted, that they seem incapable of appreciating the things of prime importance, the things that are fundamental in the life of the nation, and upon which its future peace and prosperity depend. The fear of rebellion is forever gone. It is not so, however, with regard to the danger of which I am speaking—the danger of the nation divorcing itself from sound political and moral principles.

* * * * *

Another question that was settled by the War was that of slavery. In 1619 the first cargo of slaves was landed at Jamestown, Va. In 1776, the date of our Declaration of Independence, the number had increased to over five hundred thousand. In 1865, at the close of the Civil War, there were between three and four millions in the country. It was the institution of slavery that really brought on the War. The South seceded in order to protect itself against the growing sentiment of the North in favor of freedom. It wanted to get to itself where it could perpetuate indefinitely the institution of slavery without being annoyed or its rights called in question. It had no objection to remaining in the Union, provided the institution of slavery was not interfered with. It insisted upon its right, not only to hold slaves, but the right to carry them in any part of the country, and to have their property right in their slaves respected in every part of the country. This was the meaning of the Fugitive Slave Bill. It conceded the right of the master to claim his slave in any part of the country, and made it the duty of the United States Government to protect him in that right.

In spite of the passage of this bill, it was clear, however, that such was the growing sentiment of the North in favor of freedom, that it became more and more difficult to enforce it. Every year it became more and more evident that the nation could not be half free and half slave. If slavery was to be maintained therefore, and the South

was more and more determined that it should be, there was nothing left for it to do but to get out of the Union. And this it made up its mind to do.

When the War began, there was no thought on the part of the North of abolishing slavery. It was undertaken solely for the preservation of the Union, and this Mr. Lincoln made perfectly plain in his First Inaugural Address. He said: "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so. Those who nominated and elected me did so with the full knowledge that I had made this and similar declarations, and have never recanted them. I now reiterate these sentiments; and, in doing so, I only press upon the public attention the most conclusive evidence of which the case is susceptible, that the property, peace and security of no section are to be in any wise endangered by the new incoming administration. I add, too, that all the protection which, consistently with the Constitution and laws, can be given, will be cheerfully given to all the States, when lawfully demanded, for whatever cause, as cheerfully to one as to the other."

The South did not believe in the sincerity of these declarations, however, and was determined therefore to persist in the course which it had marked out for itself. And, hence the war, which began with no thought of interfering with the institution of slavery, had proceeded scarcely eighteen months before Mr. Lincoln issued, as a war measure, the Emancipation Proclamation. On April 9, 1865, the war ended, and by December 18 of the same year the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution had been ratified by twenty-seven States out of thirty-six, and became a part of the fundamental law of the land. According to this amendment: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." The great issue of slavery, which had agitated the country for years, was at last settled. The war, which was begun, on the part of the South, with the idea of perpetuating slavery, and, on the part of the North, with no idea of interfering with it, ended with its abolition. The war which began with the nation half free and half slave, ended with the nation all free. It will be impossible ever to think of the great change which has come over this country, as embodied in the Thirteenth Amendment, and not think of the men who took part in the great struggle which made it possible—the anti-slavery host, the boys in blue, the Sumners and Stevenses in the halls of legislation, and the martyred Lincoln. The more we come to realize what this change means to the nation, the farther we get away from the blighting effects of slavery upon both races, and the more we come into the enjoyment of the blessings of freedom, the more will we honor the memory of these men who were wise enough to see the evil of slavery, and brave enough, and patriotic enough to risk their all in the effort to save the nation from the curse of it.

Another question that was forced upon the country by the suc-

cessful issue of the war was as to the civil and political status of the emancipated millions. The fact, that as a nation we were no longer to be half free and half slave having been settled, the further question as to whether there were to be citizens and citizens, some possessing rights which were denied to others, or whether all citizens were to be civilly and politically equal before the law, forced itself upon public attention. The answer that was given to this question at that time we have in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. The position which the nation took at that time was in favor of the equality of all citizens before the law. That great principle has been definitely incorporated in the organic law of the land. We are not to be half free and half slaves, nor are half to be citizens and half not; all are to be citizens alike; all are to stand on the same plane of equality. This is what the nation said at the close of the war; this is the great principle which it wrote into the Constitution. It is the great principle upon which all true democracy rests; and it is the great principle upon which this Government must rest if it is to be loyal to democratic principles, and is to live and prosper. In these amendments the manhood of the Negro is recognized. His civil and political equality is recognized. He is not discriminated against. He is not known by the color of his skin, or by his race identity, he is regarded just as other men are regarded. The New Republic, with slavery eliminated, started out with this broad principle upon which to build its new national life. On the other hand the men who fought to destroy the Union, who fought to perpetuate slavery, founded their new government, the Southern Confederacy, on the very opposite principle. Alexander H. Stephens, in his Great Cornerstone Speech, as it is called, delivered at Savannah, Ga., March 22, 1861, said among other things:

"The new constitution has put to rest forever all agitating questions relating to our peculiar institution, African slavery as it exists among us, to the proper status of the Negro in our form of civilization. This was the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution. Jefferson, in his forecast, had anticipated this as the 'rock upon which the Union would split.' He was right. What was conjecture with him is now a realized fact. But whether he fully comprehended the great truth upon which that rock stood and stands may be doubted. The prevailing idea entertained by him and most of the leading statesmen at the time of the formation of the old constitution was that the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of nature; that it was wrong in principle, socially, morally, and politically."

"It was an evil they knew not well how to deal with, but the general opinion of the men of that day was that somehow or other, in the order of Providence, the institution would be evanescent and pass away. This idea, though not incorporated in the constitution, was the prevailing one at the time."

"The constitution, it is true, secured every essential guaranty to the institution while it should last, and hence no argument can be justly used against the constitutional guaranties thus secured, because

of the common sentiment of the day. Those ideas, however, were fundamentally wrong. They rested upon the assumption of the equality of races. This was an error. It was a sandy foundation, and the idea of the government built upon it; when the storm came and the wind blew, it fell."

"Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests upon the great truth that the Negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and moral condition."

"This, our new government, is the first in the history of the world based upon this great physical, philosophical and moral truth. This truth has been slow in the process of its development, like other truths in the various departments of science. It has been so even among us. Many who hear me, perhaps, can recollect well that this truth was not generally admitted even within their day. The errors of the past generation still clung to many as late as twenty years ago. Those at the North who still cling to these errors with a zeal above knowledge, we justly denominate fanatics."

In these words Alexander H. Stephens sets forth clearly the pro-slavery idea of citizenship in this country. In this scheme of citizenship the Negro has no part; and he has no part because he is looked upon as an inferior. "Subordination to the superior race is declared to be his natural and moral condition." His inferiority is asserted to be a "great physical, philosophical, and moral truth."

And this is exactly the Southern view today; and is exactly the programme to which it is committed. Its whole attitude to-day is in harmony with the great principle upon which the Southern Confederacy was founded—the non-recognition of the Negro as an equal in any respect—socially, civilly, politically. The South holds to this view just as tenaciously to-day as it did when Mr. Stephens made his Great Cornerstone Speech in 1861. The Ku Klux Klan, the White Caps, the Red Shirt Brigade, tissue ballots, the revised constitutions with their grandfather clauses, Jim Crow Car legislation, the persistent effort of the South to disfranchise the Negro—all these things have grown out of the idea that the rightful place of the Negro is that of subordination to the white man, that he has no rightful place in the body politic. Representative Driscoll of New York, in his speech in the House of Representatives February 22, 1908, on the subject of Jim Crow Cars in the District of Columbia, points out clearly what the Southern attitude is on the race issue. Among other things he said:

"You make the same argument in defense of your constitutions, election laws, and regulations, and say that on their face they do not discriminate against the Negroes who are entitled to vote. But you know, and we know, and the whole country knows, that your constitutions and election laws, and your social code, and your Jim Crow cars are all designed and enforced for the purpose of discriminating against the blacks in order to make them feel at every turn that they are an inferior people and subject race, and that they must recognize this discrimination at every point where they meet with the white people in the ordinary relations of life."

Continuing, he says:

"You assert that you are the Negro's best friends. Then why do you wish to humiliate and degrade him? Why do you treat him in all political and social matters as an inferior, and keep constantly before his mind that he is practically without the pale of the law?" It is upon this moral and political heresy that the Southern Confederacy was built; and it is upon this moral and political heresy that the South is seeking to built its institutions today. And it is seeking to do this notwithstanding the fact that the nation at the close of the war wrote into the Constitution itself the very opposite principle, as evidenced by the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. These amendments know no man by the color of his skin; these amendments make no distinction among citizens; these amendments recognize the equality of all alike before the law. In them there is neither North, nor South, East, nor West, white, nor black—all are recognized alike as citizens of one common country, and as equally interested in its welfare; and all are accorded alike the same rights and privileges upon the same condition. The successful termination of the war, not only saved the Union, but made it possible to write into the Constitution itself these great amendments, abolishing slavery and defining citizenship and the rights of citizens under that instrument. For all of which we should be profoundly thankful—thankful to God, and thankful to the noble men and women who helped to make these results possible.

While we are rejoicing in the changes that have come, and changes for the better, let us not lose sight of the fact, however, that the great principles that were supposed to have been settled by the war, and the amendments which grew out of it, are again imperiled, and by the same enemy. The Southern Confederacy, which rested upon Negro slavery and upon the doctrine of Negro inferiority, of Negro subordination, was overthrown by the victorious army of the North, but the spirit of the men who organized that Confederacy still lives and is just as determined as ever to make its influence felt, to have its will prevail. And its will is:

(1) To reduce the Negro, within its own territory, to a position of civil and political inferiority; to deprive him of the right to vote, and to exclude him from all Federal appointments; and

(2) To extend that condition of things to all the other States of the Union. In other words, to make not only the South, but the whole country, a white man's Government. This is its programme, and to this end it is steadily working.

A part of this programme is has already carried out. It has, as a matter of fact, already deprived us of the right to vote within its territorial limits. And to the other half of the Southern part of this programme, our elimination from all Federal offices in the South, it is now addressing itself most vigorously. And never before, during all the years since freedom, has it felt as hopeful as it does now of succeeding in this. It is one of the conditions which it has laid down and which it insists must be accepted by those in power in the North who are anxious to build up a Republican party

in the South, to break down the old party lines that have separated the whites of the South from the whites of the North. Never, it says, will the chasm which separates the one section from the other be closed as long as Negroes are put in office by the General Government. This is the test now to which the North must be brought, the test by which the sincerity, the honesty of the Republican Party in its expressed wish to have the South affiliate with it, is to be determined. Put in that way the temptation to weak-kneed Republicans is very strong to yield, to lay the Negro as a peace offering upon the altar of conciliation between the whites of the North and the whites of the South. This concession to race prejudice the South has been demanding for years. It has insisted over and over again that these Federal offices shall be filled only by white men. And the only reason why there remains to-day any colored officeholders in the South is because it has been powerless to remove them or to prevent their appointment. That power has been with the General Government. And to the credit of the General Government, be it said, it has always resisted this unrighteous demand. We have had in the White House Republican Presidents for many years, and some of them have been weak, woefully weak, on the rights of the Negro; but even the weakest of them have had character enough, manhood enough, enough of the spirit of right, of fair play, in them to say, No! to the clamors of these men who would put their heels upon the neck of this struggling race and keep it forever down. Let us hope that the time will never come when a Republican President, the representative of the party that was led by Lincoln, that had in its ranks men like Sumner, and Chase, and Giddings, and Stevens, the old party of Freedom, will ever be found joining hands with the men who sought to rivet upon this black race the fetters of slavery, and who are trying now to reduce it to a condition that is even more galling than slavery.

The presence of representatives of our race in the Federal offices in the South is important. (1) It is important for the race. It is the only thing that remains to remind us of our citizenship and to encourage us to feel that we still have some political rights remaining to us. (2) It is important also to the white man. It is a reminder to him that the Government has not entirely abandoned us to his tender mercies; that it still recognizes us as citizens. The Federal Government owes it to the race, especially as it has connived at its disfranchisement, to see to it that this evidence of our citizenship, of our political rights, is never wanting in the South. I hope that President Taft will see the importance of this matter, and will not allow himself to be influenced by the ravings of Southern Negro-haters, in Congress or out of it, or by the seeming prospect, which is only a delusion, of the Southern whites flowing into the Republican party, as the price which they offer, to induce him to take away this last vestige of citizenship that remains to us in the South. And I hope that the representatives of our race who have the ear of the President will see to it that the matter is properly presented to him, and that they will use their influence to preserve to us this sole remaining evidence of political equality in the South.

In this connection let me say also another thing. I hope that the colored men in office in the South will not so far forget the nature of the issue at stake, the great principle involved, as to be willing to stand aside, provided they are taken care of outside of the South. The man who consents to such an arrangement, thinking only of himself, and not of those whom he represents, is a traitor to his race, is playing into the hands of the men who are seeking to rob the race of every right, civil and political. And the man who counsels such a course is also a traitor to his race, is also playing into the hands of the men who are seeking to rob us of every right, civil and political. If the time ever comes when black men are shut out of Federal offices in the South, in deference to a bitter Negro-hating sentiment, let it never be with their consent or approval, never mind how great the bribe may be. If they must go, let them go protesting as they go; let them go standing up like men, and not skulking away like selfish cowards. One of the most discouraging things about this race problem is that when a crisis is reached it is so difficult to get colored men themselves to stand up like men, to be true to principle. They are so bent on looking out for themselves, for the loaves and fishes, that the interest of the race counts for nothing with them. If they are taken care of, they are satisfied, and are ready to enter into any arrangement that will keep them still feeding at the public crib. This, alas, is the spirit that is met with everywhere among the so-called Negro leaders, and this is one of the things that is so discouraging, and that makes it so difficult to do anything. Until the manhood of the race is built up; until love of principle gets the mastery over selfishness, we can't hope to do very much, to present a very formidable front to the enemy. As long as our so-called leaders are in the struggle simply for what they personally can get out of it, the race will suffer through their leadership.

The other part of the programme on the race question which the South has formulated, and which it is seeking to carry out, has to do with all the territory lying outside of the South, with the rest of the States that make up the Union. Before the war the question around which Southern sentiment crystallized was that of slavery. They were not content with maintaining the institution within the limits of the Slave States, but were constantly reaching out for more territory. They were not content with having slavery sectional; they wanted to make it national. They were not content to hold their peculiar views themselves; they wanted to force them upon the whole nation. And this they attempted to do; this they insisted upon doing. But the North, although it listened deferentially, as it is too apt to do—although it allowed itself for a while to be brow-beaten, to be bullied by the South—finally gave it to understand that it did not approve of its views, and would not accept them; that it had views of its own, and that it would stand by those views. And it did stand by them, when the time came with its treasure and its best blood.

The South to-day is at the same old business. The issue now is not slavery, but the civil and political equality of the Negro within

the body politic. It isn't possible any longer to hold him as a slave, but it is possible to deprive him of his rights, to take away from him his citizenship in fact, if not in name.

The South does not believe in the civil and political equality of the colored man; does not believe that he should vote, and doesn't believe that he should hold office. And, so far as Southern territory is concerned, it says, it shall not exist. Through one device or another we have already been stripped of our civil and political rights in the South. We are governed, but have no part in the Government—in the making of laws, in the levying of taxes, in legislation in any shape or form; we are tried and convicted, but always, or so nearly always as to make it the rule, by a white jury, by men who from the start are prejudiced against us; we are permitted to testify, but our testimony counts for nothing against the word of a white person. The presumption always is that the white man is innocent until he is proven guilty; the presumption, in case of a colored person, is always that he is guilty until he proves his innocence, which is well-nigh impossible, especially if his accuser happens to be a white person. The disposition always is to accept the statement of the white man against the black man, and never the statement of the black man against the white man. The disposition always is to incriminate the one and to clear the other where there is any conflict between the two.

And yet, notwithstanding this shameful condition of things, the South is not yet satisfied. It isn't enough that it has deprived us of our civil and political rights within its own territory; it isn't enough that within the South itself we have been reduced to a political non-entity, have been placed where the South thinks we belong, and where we ought to be kept; but it is now actively engaged in pressing these views upon the whole country. It is not content to have this condition of things exist in its own territory: it wants it to obtain all over the country. It is working just as zealously now to nationalize its views on the civil and political status of the Negro as it did to nationalize its views on the subject of slavery. Wherever Southern men are found, with here and there an exception, in Northern pulpits, editorial chairs, professorships in colleges and universities, in places of business, they are always actively engaged in propagating this moral and political heresy in regard to the Negro's proper place in the nation, in urging their views upon others.

The South failed in its efforts to nationalize its views on Negro slavery. Will it fail in the present crusade upon which it has entered and which it has been steadily pursuing for many years? Is the civil and political status of the race in the South, under the dominating influence of Southern ideas, to become its status all over the country? Will the North, ultimately, come to accept the Southern view of the race question, or will it reject it and insist upon the maintenance of our rights even in the South itself? It is around this question, as around the slavery question before the war, that the battle in the Republic is to be waged for years to come. The South is just as arrogant to-day as it was then, and is just as confi-

dent of the correctness of its position and of the ultimate triumph of its views.

In an article recently published in the *Evening Ledger* of Birmingham, Alabama, after asserting, in a boastful manner, that the position taken by the South on a number of questions is correct, it closes with the statement:

"On the race question we are also right, and all the country is coming to our position, led by Booker Washington."

Whether Mr. Washington is correctly represented here or not, it is not my business to inquire into. Mr. Washington is quite able to take care of that matter himself. It is to the tone of the article particularly to which I am directing attention—its confident assertion that the South is right on the race issue, and that ultimately its views are to prevail. And in this confidence it is strengthened by the belief, as is asserted in this article, that it has the sympathy, the co-operation of the most popular and widely recognized leader of the race itself. That it should believe that it has the approval, the sympathy of any self-respecting Negro, to say nothing of any of the leaders of the race, in its effort to degrade it, to deprive it of its civil and political rights, is most astounding. It shows not only its low estimate of the race as a whole, and the little respect it has for the manhood even of the leaders of the race, but also discloses to us one of the grounds upon which its confidence in the ultimate triumph of its views rests. For, if it has won over the most conspicuous representative of the race itself now living, why may it not also win over the white people of the North and West, of the rest of the country?

I do not believe that Mr. Washington is in sympathy with this effort on the part of the South to degrade the race, but the fact that these people believe that he is in sympathy with them, that he accepts their view on the race question, encourages them in the course which they are pursuing. It is unfortunate, to say the least, for any colored man, and more particularly for one of prominence, to give aid and succor to the enemy by making it possible for his position on matters vital to the race's interest to be misunderstood, and so misunderstood as to be quoted in support of the other side—the side that is avowedly in favor of narrowing our opportunities, of curtailing our privileges, of setting us apart as an inferior race, and of dealing with us as such, in all the relations of life. I do not believe, as a matter of fact, that Mr. Washington has any more sympathy with the Southern view of the race question than I have, and I am sure I haven't a particle. My only regret is that Mr. Washington hasn't expressed himself a little more clearly, so as to render impossible these misapprehensions, these perversions, of his views by the enemies of the race, to the detriment of the race. * * *

Nor do I believe the Southern view of the race question is going to prevail.

In the days of slavery if the South had been content with slavery within its own territory slavery might have continued to exist until to-day; but it was not content; and, in the very effort to force its views upon the whole country, met its defeat. And the same thing

is going to repeat itself in this new crusade upon which it has entered, if I am not greatly mistaken. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution are a part of the organic law of the land; and, while for the present, so far as we are concerned, they are inoperative, and inoperative with the connivance and consent of the North, they are not always going to be inoperative; the man who presides at the White House, and the men who sit in Congress, are not always going to be recreant to their high trust, false to their sacred oath of office to obey the Constitution, and to see that its provisions are enforced, and enforced in every part of the country, South as well as North. Nor will the conscience of the nation always slumber; public sentiment is not always going to acquiesce in this trampling upon law and upon the sacred rights of one class of citizens by another.

Representative Driscoll of New York, in his speech in the House of Representatives, already referred to, clearly indicates, it seems to me, what is likely to be the attitude of the North in the final adjustment of this question.

"I make no pretense," he said, "as an expounder of the Federal Constitution, and yet I venture the opinion that this amendment is repugnant to that instrument. It provides that no State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States, and what States cannot do certainly the National Government cannot do. Negroes are citizens of the United States, and this proposed law would abridge their privileges and immunities."

What our rights are under the Constitution is thus seen to be clearly understood. The acquiescence of the North in the deprivation of those rights in the South is not because of ignorance, is not because it doesn't recognize the right of the Negro to what he is deprived of. Again, he says:

"Early in this session, when the revision of the penal statutes was under consideration, you tried to repeal or amend the sections which were enacted by Congress for the execution and enforcement of the Fifteenth Amendment, and you failed. Now you presume to cross the Potomac and introduce 'Jim Crow' cars into the Capital of the Nation. Should you succeed in this you would not stop. You would endeavor to establish the same rule and the same discrimination against the colored people with reference to all railroads doing interstate commerce throughout the country. You are making a grievous mistake. If we do not understand your viewpoint on the race question, you do not understand us or appreciate the sentiment and temper of the people throughout the North and West. You may be able to terrorize, intimidate and subdue the Negroes, but you cannot cajole or intimidate the overwhelming mass of the white people of our country. They are patient and long-suffering, and have much sympathy for you in your efforts to solve the race problem, but there are limitations to their patience."

Note what he says: "The people of the North and West are patient and long-suffering, but there are limitations to their patience."

They are not always going to acquiesce in the present condition of things; are not always going to allow the South to trample upon the Constitution.

Whether they are moved by considerations of justice to the Negro or not, the time is coming when their own self-interest will compel them to act, to insist upon an entirely different arrangement.

The ultimate triumph of our cause is assured:

(1) In the fact that the suppression of the Negro vote in the South gives that section an undue advantage in Congress and in the Electoral College—an advantage to which it is not entitled, and which is sure, sooner or later, to be challenged by the other sections of the country. To allow that condition of things to continue is not only a wrong to the Negro, but is a wrong to the white people of the other sections of the country as well. It is just as certain politically, therefore, as the truth of any proposition in Euclid, that that arrangement is not going to last. It is bound to be annulled sooner or later. It isn't in human nature to allow it to exist always, and it is certainly not in accordance with sound political wisdom to do so.

(2) The triumph of our cause is assured in the fact of the growing intelligence and thrift of the race itself. Even Dr. Lyman Abbott, who has not been over friendly to the race, says: "Never in the history of man has a race made such educational and material progress in forty years as the American Negro." And if that be true, and that it is true there can be no doubt, how is it possible for us, in this great democratic Republic, to be permanently deprived of our civil and political rights? It cannot be done. In the fact, therefore, that we are not standing still, but are steadily pressing forward along all lines of improvement, is the assurance that the South is not going to succeed in its present unholy and unrighteous crusade in seeking to deprive us of our rights as American citizens. It failed in the slavery agitation, and it will fail in this. It met its Waterloo then, and it will meet its Waterloo again, sooner or later.

(3) Another encouraging sign in this matter is the attitude of our newly elected President Mr. Taft, as set forth in his speech in New York City before the North Carolina Society; in his letter to Mr. Stone on the proposed disfranchising amendment to the Maryland State Constitution, and in his inaugural address. No Republican President within my recollection has met the issue of the so-called Negro problem as squarely as he has done. Most of them have beat about the bush, have sought in every possible way to evade it, either from cowardice or for political reasons; but the issue in these three documents is met directly, and, as it seems to me, in an honest, straightforward way. In the speech before the North Carolina Society he says:

"I am not going to rehearse the painful history of reconstruction or what followed it. I come at once to the present condition of things, stated from a constitutional and political standpoint. And that is this: That in all Southern States it is possible, by election laws prescribing power qualifications for the suffrage which square with the Fifteenth Amendment and which shall be equally admin-

istered between the black and white races, to prevent entirely the possibility of a domination of Southern State, county or municipal governments by an ignorant electorate, white or black. It is further true that the sooner such laws when adopted are applied with exact equality and justice to the two races the better for the moral tone of the State and community concerned."

"Negroes should be given an opportunity, equally with whites, by education and thrift, to meet the requirements of eligibility which the State legislatures in their wisdom shall lay down in order to secure the safe exercise of the electoral franchise. The Negro should ask nothing other than an equal chance to qualify himself for the franchise, and when that is granted by law and not denied by executive discrimination, he has nothing to complain of."

"The proposal to repeal the Fifteenth Amendment is utterly impracticable and should be relegated to the limbo of forgotten issues."

On the Lily White movement he also says: "Nor can we sympathize with an effort to exclude from the support of Republicanism in the South or to read out of the party those colored voters who, by their education and thrift, have made themselves eligible to exercise the electoral franchise."

On the subject of education he has also expressed himself with equal clearness: "Primary and industrial education for the masses, and higher education for the leaders of the race, for their professional men, their clergymen, their physicians, their lawyers and their teachers."

In his letter to Mr. Stone in regard to the Maryland amendment he also says: "The whole law ought to be condemned. It is not drawn in the spirit of justice and equality, having regard for the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, and I sincerely hope that no Republican and no Democrat who desires equality of treatment to the black and white races will vote for it."

In his inaugural address he says:

"Any recognition of their distinguished men, any appointment to office from among their number, is properly taken as an encouragement and an appreciation of their progress. And this just policy should be pursued."

In this connection he adds, however:

"But it may well admit of doubt whether in the case of any race an appointment of one of their number to a local office in a community in which the race feeling is so widespread and acute as to interfere with the ease and facility with which the local Government business can be done by the appointee, is of sufficient benefit by way of encouragement to the race to outweigh the recurrence and increase of race feeling which such an appointment is likely to engender. Therefore the Executive, in recognizing the Negro race by appointments, must exercise a careful discretion not thereby to do it more harm than good.

He also adds:

"On the other hand, we must be careful not to encourage the mere pretense of race feeling manufactured in the interest of individual political ambition."

He does not say, mark you, that he will not appoint colored men to office in the South; he simply raises the question as to the expediency of it, in certain localities, in view of all the circumstances.

He also adds:

"Personally I have not the slightest race prejudice or feeling, and recognition of its existence only awakens in my heart a deeper sympathy for those who have to bear it or suffer from it."

Most of this is very encouraging, and it is our duty to believe that these utterances of our newly elected President are made in good faith; that these are his honest convictions, and that it is his purpose to square his official life with them. If the laws in the South, regulating the franchise, are not in accordance with the Constitution, or are not administered impartially to both races alike, we shall expect him, and will have the right to expect him, based upon his utterances and upon his oath of office by which he is bound "to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States," to bring that fact to the attention of Congress and to recommend the enforcement of the penalty prescribed by the Constitution—the reduction of the representation of such States. No President, consistent with his oath of office, can allow that condition of things to go on, can allow the condition of things as it exists in the Southern States to-day to go on, without at least calling attention to it officially in his message to Congress. And this we hope President Taft will do, and thus strengthen our faith in the honesty of his declarations in his New York speech and in his letter on the suffrage in Maryland. I cannot believe that the nation is always going to leave its loyal black citizens to be despoiled of their civil and political rights by the men who sought to destroy the Union. A better day is coming, and coming soon, I trust.

While we are waiting, however, for the nation to come to its senses—waiting for a revival of the spirit of justice and of true democracy in the land—it is important for us to remember that much, very much, will depend upon ourselves. In the passage of Scripture read in our hearing at the beginning of this discourse, three things we are exhorted to do, and must do, if we are ever to secure our rights in this land: We are exhorted to be watchful. "Watch ye," is the exhortation. We are to be on our guard. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." There are enemies ever about us and are ever plotting our ruin—enemies within the race and without it. We have got to live in the consciousness of this fact. If we assume that all is well, that there is nothing to fear, and so relax our vigilance, so cease to be watchful, we need not be surprised if our enemies get the better of us, if we are worsted in the conflict. (2) We are exhorted to stand fast in the faith. In the faith that, as American citizens, we are entitled to the same rights and privileges as other citizens of the Republic. In this faith we are to stand, and stand fast. We are not to give it up; we are not to allow anyone, white or black, friend or foe, to induce us to retreat a single inch from this position. (3) We are exhorted to quit ourselves like men, to be strong. And by this, I understand, is meant that we are

to stand up in a manly way for our rights; that we are to seek by every honorable means the full enjoyment of our rights. It is still true—

“Who would be free himself must strike the blow.”

And, if we are ever to be free from invidious distinctions in this country, based upon race, color, previous condition, we have got to be alive, wide-awake to our own interest. If we are not, we have no right to expect others to be; we have no right to expect anything but failure, but defeat. And we deserve defeat if ours is the spirit of indifference, of unconcern. We are not going to secure our rights in this land without a struggle. We have got to contend, and contend earnestly, for what belongs to us. Victory isn't coming in any other way. No silent acquiescence on our part in the wrongs from which we are suffering, contrary to law; no giving of ourselves merely to the work of improving our condition, materially, intellectually, morally, spiritually, however zealously pursued, is going to bring relief. We have got, in addition to the effort we are making to improve ourselves, to keep up the agitation, and keep it up until right triumphs and wrong is put down. A programme of silence on the part of the race is a fool's programme. Reforms, changes in public sentiment, the righting of wrongs, is never effected in that way; and our wrongs will never be. A race that sits quietly down and rests in sweet content in the midst of the wrongs from which it is suffering is not worth contending for, is not worth saving. This is not true of this race, however. We are not sitting down in sweet content, let it be said to our credit. I thank God from the bottom of my heart for these mutterings of discontent that are heard in all parts of the land. The fact that we are dissatisfied with present conditions, and that we are becoming more and more so, shows that we are growing in manhood, in self-respect, in the qualities that will enable us to win out in the end. It is our duty to keep up the agitation for our rights, not only for our own sakes, but also for the sake of the nation at large. It would not only be against our own interest not to do so, but it would be unpatriotic for us to quietly acquiesce in the present condition of things, for it is a wrong condition of things. If justice sleeps in this land, let it not be because we have helped to lull it to sleep by our silence, our indifference; let it not be from lack of effort on our part to arouse it from its slumbers. Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, while they were crying to their god, “Peradventure he sleepeth.” And it may be that he was asleep; but it was not their fault that he continued asleep, for they kept up a continual uproar about his altar. And so here, sleeping Justice in this land may go on slumbering, but let us see to it that it is due to no fault of ours. Even Baalam's ass cried out in protest when smitten by his brutal master, and God gave him the power to cry out, endowed him miraculously with speech in which to voice his protest. It is not necessary for God to work a miracle to enable us to protest against our wrong; He has already given us the power. Let us see to it that we use it. If we are wise we will be able to take

care of ourselves. If we are not wise, however, if we adopt the policy of silence, and if we continue to feel that it is our duty to follow blindly, slavishly, any one political party, we will receive only such treatment as is accorded to slaves, and will go on pleading for our rights in vain. The only wise course for us to pursue is to keep on agitating, and to cast our votes where they will tell most for the race. As to what party we affiliate with is a matter of no importance whatever: the important thing is our rights. And until we recognize that fact, and act upon it, we will be the football of all political parties. John Boyle O'Reilly, in speaking on the race question years ago, said: "If I were a colored man I should use parties as I would a club—to break down prejudice against my people. I shouldn't talk about being true to any party, except so far as that party was true to me. Parties care nothing for you, only to use you. You should use parties; the highest party you have in this country is your own manhood. That is the thing in danger from all parties; that is the thing that every colored man is bound in duty to himself and his children to defend and protect." And that is good advice. It embodies the highest political wisdom for us as a people.

The exhortation of the text is, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." And this is the message that I bring to you, who are here this morning, and to the members of our race all over the country. We must be watchful; we must hold firmly to our faith in our citizenship, and in our rights as citizens; and we must act the part of men in the maintenance of those rights. In the end the victory is sure to be ours. The right is bound, sooner or later, to triumph.

"Before the monstrous wrong he sits him down—
One man against a stone-walled city of sin.
For centuries those walls have been a-building;
Smooth porphyry, they slope and coldly glass
The flying storm and wheeling sun.

"No chinks, no crevice, lets the thinnest arrow in.
He fights alone, and from the cloudy ramparts
A thousand evil faces gibe and jeer him.
Let him lie down and die; what is the right
And where is justice in a world like this.

"But by and by earth shakes herself, impatient;
And down, in one great roar of ruin, crash
Watch-tower and citadel and battlements.
When the red dust has cleared, the lonely soldier
Stands with strange thoughts beneath the friendly stars."

And so, in the end, will it be with this great evil of race prejudice against which we are contending in this country, if, like the lonely soldier, we show the same earnestness, the same patient determination, the same invincible courage. A better day is coming; but we have got to help to bring it about. It isn't coming independently of our efforts, and it isn't coming by quietly, timidly, cowardly acquiescing in our wrongs.