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*C. (B)*



# THE RACE PROBLEM.

GREAT SPEECH OF

 FREDERICK DOUGLASS, 

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE BETHEL LITERARY AND HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION,

IN THE

METROPOLITAN A. M. E. CHURCH,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

OCTOBER 21, 1890.



**ERROR IN MAKE UP.**—After reading first page  
of speech pass to page 5 and then to pages 4 and 6.

*Wash. D.C.*  
*1890*

Members and Friends of the Bethel Literary and Historical Association: I esteem it a great privilege to be with you and assist in this your first meeting since the close of your last winter's term. The organization of your association was an important step in the progress of the colored people in this city. It is an institution well fitted to improve the minds and elevate the sentiments not only of its members, but of the general public. Nowhere else outside of the courts of law and the Congress of the United States have I heard vital public questions more seriously discussed. The men selected to address you know very well that what they may utter is subjected to close scrutiny and severe discussion. Mere rant, bombast, and self-inflation may pass elsewhere, but not here. For this reason, and for my own self-respect, I shall endeavor to say only what I believe to be the truth upon what is popularly called "The Negro Problem."

My first thought respects the importance of calling things by their true names. This importance cannot be over-estimated or over-stated. Truth is the fundamental, indispensable, and everlasting requirement in obtaining right results. No department of human life can afford to dispense with truth. The carpenter cannot join his timbers without having the parts of contact perfectly true to each other. The mason cannot build a wall that will stand the test of time and gravitation without applying the plumb and making the wall vertical and true. No train or cars is safe on the road where the relations of the rails are not true. No shot is certain of its aim where the gun-barrel is not true. As in mechanics, so in politics, morals, manners, metaphysics, and philosophies, nothing can stand the test of time and experience that does not stand on the unassailable, indestructible, unchangeable, foundation of true. Considering how important this truth is, it seems strange that falsehood should hold such sway in the world. One main advantage by which error is able to darken, blight, and dominate the minds of men is the skill of its votaries in using language deceitfully, in pandering to prejudice by misstating and misapplying terms to the existing relations of men. It has been well said that in an important sense words are things. They are especially such when they are employed to express the popular sentiment concerning the Negro: to couple

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breath, and saw in the Negro's baptism a menace to the peace and stability of society, as well as of slavery. For to baptize the Negro and admit him to membership in the Christian church was to recognize him as a man, a child of God, an heir of Heaven, redeemed by the blood of Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost, a standing type and representative of the Saviour of the world, one who, according to the apostle Paul, must be treated no longer as a servant, but as a brother beloved. Viewed in this light, his admission to baptism, and to the church was a matter for the gravest consideration. It touched the money nerve of the Christians of that day, for their wealth was largely invested in Negro flesh and blood. It was well said that the proposition was novel, extraordinary, and full of danger. It would impair the value of the slave, and it would put in jeopardy the authority of the master: they were right, and if the Negro is to be regarded as a Christian, he could not be regarded as a heathen, and as the Bible sanctioned only the enslavement of heathen, the Negro Christian could not be bought and sold, enslaved and, whipped, according to the requirements of the relation of master and slave. From every view they could then take of the proposition to baptize the Negro was rank radicalism and deserved stern resistance at its inception.

To the credit of the church and its ministers, it must be said that one learned and able divine, in the person of Dr. Godwin, was equal to the situation. He met the arguments of the opposition to Negro baptism in a book of 200 pages, in which he endeavored to show that baptism would not impair either the value of the slave or the authority of the master. His argument was a curious one. It divided the Negro into two separate parts, giving one to the Lord and the other to the slaveholder, and leaving nothing whatever of soul, body or spirit to himself. Baptism, he said, freed the Negro from the bondage of the devil, but not from the bondage of his earthly master. The controversy over this problem was long and furious, and the Negro only won a partial victory after all. The matter was finally settled, as usual, by a kind of compromise. The Negro was baptized and admitted to the church, but a sort of second table was set for him. He could take the Lord's supper only after his white brethren had finished eating the bread and drinking the wine. He was not even allowed to enter the same door of the

sanctuary by which his white brethren entered. A separate door was cut for him in the wall, a sort of hole in the wall, leading to a high and dark place in the gallery, where his presence could give no offense to the Lord's white children on the floor.

It is strange that this state of things did not disgust and repel the Negro, make him an infidel, and drive him from religion altogether, but it did not. He clung to religion all the same. Believing that half a loaf was better than no bread, he took what he could get of the church, kept on praying and singing, and sometimes shouting. He could pray as fervently for the conversion of the scoundrel who tore his flesh with the lash, as for his best friend. He was made to think that his offensive black skin on earth would be changed for a white one in Heaven. It was a strange fancy, but quite a natural one when we see the importance given to color in the problems before us in our day.

Another problem greatly disturbed the conscientious during the

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his name with anything in this world seems to damage it and damage him likewise. Hence I object to characterizing the relation subsisting between the white and colored people of this country as the Negro problem, as if the Negro had precipitated that problem, and as if he were in any way responsible for the problem. Though a rose by any other name may smell as sweet, it is not in good taste to give it a name that suggests offensive associations. There are, on the other hand, things that are in themselves revolting, and should not be given fair-seeming names. The slaveholders understood this principle well enough. Slavery lost something of its offensive aspect when it was called a domestic institution or a social system and other like names. Emancipation was made to look dangerous when it got itself called an experiment, although slavery itself was an experiment, and liberty is the normal condition of man. "The Negroes were the cause of the war." said Mr. Lincoln, and straightway the loyal soldiers of the Republic began to kick and beat the poor Negroes on the banks of the Potomac, and the Irish began to hang, stab, and murder the Negroes in New York. It is dangerous even to a dog to be given a bad name. I am, therefore, in favor of employing the truest and most agreeable names to describe the relation which at present subsists between ourselves and the other people of the country.

Again, another advantage to error and one which is often employed with marked skill and effect in the presentation to the minds of men of what may be called half truths for whole truths, and thus making a sweet and wholesome truth the cover for a bitter falsehood. A counterfeit nearest in likeness to what is genuine is always most likely to impose upon the unskillful. A lie ceases to be very dangerous when it parts with its ability to deceive. The devil is less dangerous as a roaring lion than when transformed as an angel of light.

The application of these homely truths and familiar examples will become apparent in the discussion I propose of what is popularly but improperly called the race problem. It seems that the American people have a special liking for this mathematical formula as applied to the Negro. They seem determined to keep his brain forever employed and his time forever occupied in solving a great variety of problems, and generally to his disadvantage. As soon as he solves one another is propounded to him, and when he thinks, good, easy soul, his work is done he finds a new one invented, a new burden imposed, and a new hardship inflicted. There may be rest for the weary, but there seems at present no rest for the Negro. He has been solving problems during all his history.

I have before referred in this place, I think, to the fact that the Negro was confronted 200 years ago by what was considered a great religious problem, one which was very difficult of solution. That problem was: Ought the Negro to be baptized in water and admitted to membership in the Christian church? This was, as I have often said, considering time of it, a tremendous problem. As in our day in regard to Negro problems, the opinions of

the wise and great were strongly pronounced and much divided. The right of the Negro to baptism was fiercely disputed, especially by those who owned them as slaves. What is plain to all now was dark and doubtful to many then. It is easy to fancy that men spoke of it with bated

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time of slavery. It was this: Can a Negro contract a valid marriage? If he could, and could enforce his right to his wife and children, it would prove an inconvenient limitation on the power of his master. If what God has joined together no man shall put asunder, the right to sell the wife from the husband and the husband from the wife must cease. In the minds of the men who had to deal with it no such limitation in the right of the master could be allowed or tolerated for a moment. The master must have the right to buy and sell as he pleased, was the solution of that problem. One terrible evil of this solution of the marriage question is still seen in our land. Unable to contract valid marriage, the Negro felt himself unrestrained, and licensed to do as he pleased. He was not expected to limit his conduct by any rule or principle of morality or decency, but took to himself the freedom of the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air. He had in law no wife, no family, no children, and did not own himself. The consequence of this state of things may be seen very often in our own city at the police court and elsewhere, and the strange thing is, the very people who are responsible for this immorality and crime make merry over our wretchedness and talk solemnly about the terrible Negro problem

Happily for us, and happily for our common country, as we shall see later on, the Southern solution of this Negro problem has now been unsolved by the act of emancipation and the superior civilization of the loyal American people over the people of the old slaveholding States.

Another troublesome problem presented to our Christian country was whether the Negro should have the help of the Bible with which to get to Heaven; whether, in fact, the command to search the Scriptures imposed any obligation or duty on him. Our Southern brethren, with whom we have always been profoundly sympathetic even unto this day, decided this problem against the Bible, and against the Negro, as usual. They made it a crime, to be punished with banishment, imprisonment, and stripes, for any one to teach the Negro to read. Yet the descendants of these same men, with the education of their fathers, and with the antecedents of their fathers, are now asking us in piteous tones to allow them in their superior wisdom and goodness of heart to solve what they are pleased to call the Negro problem of to-day. They are crying out lustily to the nation, like demons tormented before their time, "Hands off! We want no Federal authority, and want only local self-government. We want to be let alone!" They tell us that they know the Negro, and that they can manage him better than anybody else. They can manage his wages, his voting, and his education, and all that pertains to him. I hope the nation will not let them do any such thing. They have shown a strange inaptitude for such a task. The point with them is not what is right, but what will best suit themselves.

But again, in the history of the Negro we had another perplexing problem. It was this, and this was in some sense a national problem: Can the Negro be made a soldier? This, too, was very serious problem for the country, for it was a matter of Union or no Union, of life or death. For at one time it needed all the material which the nation could command to settle the problem of our national existence. It will be remembered that at the beginning of the war it was given out that no Negro need apply. He was

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not to be allowed to shoulder a musket, carry a knapsack, or wear a Union uniform. The glory of the battle-field was to be won wholly by white men. The Negro might dig but not fight. He might be a servant, but not a soldier. He might carry a pick-ax, but never a musket.

In considering this problem the nation, strangely enough, shut its eyes to the fact that in the history of the Revolution the Negro fought bravely for American independence, and in the war of 1812 he even extorted praise for his valor from the stern lips of General Andrew Jackson. His fighting qualities were nobly admitted by the hero of New Orleans. In spite of this it was insisted that the Negro was a born coward; that could never make a soldier: that he would run at the sight of a gun. Time and events however helped the Negro and the Nation in the solution of this problem, as I think they will help in the solution of any others that may arise. Fort Wagner, Port Hudson, Vicksburg, James Island, Olustee, Petersburg, Richmond--a cloud of witnesses rise before us to solve the problem of the Negro's soldierly qualities.

Whether the Negro could be educated, was another problem, and I think this has been solved to the satisfaction of all candid men. He would be a dishonest man, or an amazingly stupid one who, in the face of the thousands of Negro teachers, the hundreds of Negro preachers, doctors, lawyers, authors, and editors, with which the country is now studded, should insist, as it was once insisted, that education was impossible to the Negro. the Negro.

But the greatest problem for the Negro was whether he could with safety be made free. Good men knew that slavery was wrong, but how to get rid of it was the great question. Neither the pulpit, nor the press, nor the statesman could see a solution of the great problem, and yet that problem has been solved. The Negro is free, and the country is cleansed of its greatest curse, crime, and scandal.

There were terrible things to happen upon the passing away of slavery. The freedom of the slave was the signal of ruin. There was to be no more cotton, no more sugar, no more work done by the Negro, and the South was to become a howling wilderness. But against all these dark forebodings, these pictures of dismal terror, the late was made short work of the whole problem. That sturdy old Roman, Benjamin Butler, made the Negro a contraband, Abraham Lincoln made him a freeman, and General Ulysses S. Grant made him a citizen, and not one of these terrible things have happened.

But now, though all this has been done, though slavery has been abolished, though the Negro has been freed, though he has become a citizen, though the Union has been saved, in part by his valor, the Negro is not to be let off quite yet. He is to be made the victim of a new deal by precipitating upon the country a false issue. He is to face another problem.

Now that the Union is no longer in danger, now that the North and South are no longer enemies: now that they have ceased to scatter, tear, and slay each other, but sit together in halls of Congress, commerce, religion, and in brotherly love, it seems that the negro is to lose by their sectional harmony and good will all the rights and privileges that he gained by their former bitter enmity.

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This, it is found, cannot be accomplished without confusing the moral sense of the nation and misleading the public mind; without creating doubt, inflaming passion, arousing prejudice, and attracting to the enemies of the negro the popular sympathy by representing the negro as an ignorant, base, and dangerous person, and by presenting to those enemies that his existence to them is a dreadful problem. With their usual cunning, these enemies of the negro have made the North partly believe that they are now contending with a vast and mysterious problem, the mere contemplation of which should cause the whole North to shudder and come to the rescue. The trick is worthy of its inventors, and has been played for all that it is worth. The orators of the South have gone North and have eloquently described this terrible problem, and the press of the South has flamed with it, and grave Senators from that section have painted it in most distressing colors. Problem, problem, race problem, negro problem, has, as Junius says, fitted through their sentences in all the mazes of metaphorical confusion.

In speaking of this subject in another place, I said what I say now, that these Southern people have outwitted the North in this problem business. Like skillful prestidigitators, they have turned the attention of the spectator to a distant object while they have manipulated the thing in hand. They imitated the cunning of the hunter who draws a red herring across the path of the game to divert the hounds.

The true problem is not the negro, but the nation. Not the law-abiding blacks of the South, but the white men of that section, who by fraud, violence, and persecution, are breaking the law, trampling on the Constitution, corrupting the ballot-box, and defeating the ends of justice. The true problem is whether these white ruffians shall be allowed by the nation to go on in their lawless and nefarious career, dishonoring the Government and making its very name a mockery. It is whether this nation has in itself sufficient moral stamina to maintain its own honor and integrity by vindicating its own Constitution and fulfilling its own pledges, or whether it has already touched that dry rot of moral depravity by which nations decline and fall, and governments fade and vanish. The United States Government made the negro a citizen, will it protect him as a citizen? This is the problem. It made him a soldier, will it honor him as a patriot? This is the problem. It made him a voter, will it defend his right to vote? This is the problem. This, I say, is more a problem for the nation than for the negro, and this is the side of the question far more than the other which should be kept in view by the American people.

What these problem orators now ask is that the nation shall undo all that it did by the suppression of the rebellion and in maintenance of the Union. They ask that the nation shall recede from its advance in the path of justice, liberty, and civilization. They boldly ask that what was justly and gratefully given to the negro in the hour of national peril shall be taken from him in the hour of national security. They ask that the nation shall stultify itself and commit an act of national shame which ought to make every lover of his country cry out in bitter indignation and unite as one man to oppose. A demand so scandalous and so shocking to every sentiment of honor and gratitude.

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And from whom does this demand come? Not from who gave their lives to save the nation, but from those who gave their lives to destroy it. Not from the free and loyal North, but from the rebellious and slave-holding South. Not from the section where men go to the ballot-box with the same freedom from personal danger as they go to church on Sunday, but from that section where personal safety is endangered, where Federal authority is defied, where the amendments to the Constitution are nulified, where the ballot-box is tainted by fraud, and red-shirted intimidation makes a free vote impossible. It comes from the men who led the nation in a dance of blood during four long years, and who now have the impudence to assume to control the destiny of this Republic as well as the destiny of the negro.

And what are the reasons they give for demanding of the nation this retreat from its advanced position? They are these: They tell us that they are afraid, very much afraid: they are alarmed, very much alarmed, by the possibility of negro supremacy over them. This is the calamity from which they would be delivered, and with eloquent lips and lusty lungs they are calling out: "Men and brethren, save us from this threatened and terrible danger!"

My reply to this alarm is easy. It is that the wicked flee when no man pursueth: that the thief thinks each bush an officer: that the thing they pretend to fear can never happen, and that blank absurdity is written upon the face of it. The eagle, with fierce talon and bloody beak screaming in terror at the approach of a harmless black bird would not be more absurd and ridiculous. The superior intelligence of the whites, the comparative ignorance of the blacks, the former dominion of the whites and the former subjection of the blacks, the habit of bearing rule of the whites, and the habit of submission by the blacks make black supremacy in any part of our common country utterly impossible.



But supposing such an occurrence possible, what hardship would it impose? What wrong would it inflict? Who would be injured by it? If the blacks should get the upper hand, their rule would have to be regulated by the Constitution and the laws of the United States. They could not discriminate against white people on account of race, color, or previous condition without findings the iron hand of the nation laid heavily on their shoulders. The white people of the South are the rich, the negroes the poor; the white people are the landowners, the negroes are the landlers. The white people of the South are numbered with the ruling class of the nation. They have behind them every possible source of power. They have railroads, steamships, electric telegraphs, the Army and the Navy. They have the sword and the purse of the nation behind them, and yet they profess to be shaking in their shoes lest the 8,000,000 of blacks shall come to rule over them and their brethren, the 50,000,000 of whites.

Now I am here to say that there is nothing whatever in this supposition. I can hardly call this invention a cunning device, for the pretense is too open, too transparent, too absurd, to rise even to the dignity of low cunning. It is an old ragged pair of trousers, and an old mashed and battered hat of the last century stuck upon a pole in a field where there are neither crows nor corn. It is the cry of fire by the thief when he would divert the officer of the law. It

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is as I have said, a red herring to divert the hounds from the true game, and the strange thing is that any class of our citizens, white or black, can be deceived by it.

But black supremacy is not the only string on the harp of a thousand strings upon which our Southern brethren play. They are not merely afraid of black supremacy, but they are afraid of ignorant black supremacy. Now, this danger is just the one to appeal to the sympathy of the North. The Northern people are not in love with ignorance or illiteracy. They deplore it; they hate it, and take every means in their power to banish it from their States. They naturally sympathize with any people in deploring it and who are making honest efforts to remove it from among them. Hence they are pouring out millions of dollars to aid the South, and are sending competent teachers there to enlighten the ignorant and to lift up the black man and white man alike from the darkness and ignorance to which they had been doomed by slavery and by those would-be negro problem solvers.

But it is worthy of emphatic remark that the men in the South who are loudest in their outcry against the ignorance of the negro are not those who wish to have him instructed, but those who would make his ignorance a reason for depriving him of the rights secured to him under the Constitution.

But again, when before in the history of the Southern people have they been alarmed by the presence of ignorance among them? When before did they ask the nation to assist them in stemming the tide of ignorance? The whole history of the legislation of the South--by the South I mean the ruling class of the South--is on the side of ignorance. Their laws have made it a crime to enlighten the black man's ignorance. It has been the policy of the ruling class there to oppose education not only for the blacks, but for the poor whites as well. But as I have said, this cry is raised not for help to educate the negro, but as an excuse for taking from him the right of suffrage, by which he can in some measure promote his own education and the education of those about him.

But admitting what I do not admit, that the ignorance of the negro is recognized by the South as a source of danger, and admitting the sincerity of Southern men who are professing to deplore it, I have to say to them: If you could stand the negro when he was a slave, you can stand it now that he is free, at least a reasonable length of time for his education. Clearly enough, the remedy is not in the abridgement of his rights, but in the education of his mind. It is not in evading the plain provisions of the Constitution, but in teaching him the duties imposed by the Constitution; not in taking away his vote, but in teaching him how to use it.

To me there is something very audacious and insolent rather than pathetic and persuasive in the language employed by Southern men on this question. There is something of the old-time Southern swagger and assumption in their tone and bearing--a tone and bearing which is entirely out of date, out of place, and out of harmony with the age body of our time--a tone and bearing which invites rebuke rather than sympathy, disgust rather than approbation.

Such men as Senator Butler, of South Carolina, should remember that there is such a thing as modesty as well as decency for men of such antecedents as theirs and that it is neither modest nor decent

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for them to coolly propose the expulsion of citizen innocent of crime from the State of South Carolina, or from any other State in the American Union. It is only a little while ago that Senator Butler and his clas were in arms against the Government which these same negro citizens loyally and bravely endeavored to save from their disloyal hands.

But let me say again, the South neither really fears the ignorance of the negro, nor the supremacy of the negro. It is not the ignorant negro. but the intelligent North that it fears; not the supremacy of a different race from itself, but the supremacy of the Republican party. It is not the men who are emancipated but the people who emancipated them that disturb its repose. In other words the trouble is not racial, but political. It is not the race and color of the vote. Disguise this as it may, the real thing that troubles the South is the Republican party, its principles, and its ascendancy in Southern States and the nation. When it talks of negro ignorance, negro supremacy, it means this, and simply this, only this. It uses the word negro simply as a means to the end of awakening popular prejudice and enlisting its influence in favor of its bad cause, a cause for which they have shown themselves capable of committing every description of frauds the most scandalous, and cruelty the most barbarous. We all know that the negro problem would vanish into thin sir, would utterly disappear like the mist before the morning sun, if the intelligent negroes of the South would renounce their connection with the Republican party and support only the Democratic party. What the South wants, and what it means to have peaceably if it can, or forcibly if it must, is a solid Democratic party South and Democratic rule in the nation. There is not an intelligent man at the South that does not know this, and there is not an honest man at the South, who, if he would speak candidly on the subject, would deny this. The trouble is that the people of the North do no see this in its true light. Honest themselves, they cannot readily believe that others are not alike honest. It is in some sense creditable in them that they have never believed in the story of outrages committed against the negro voters of the South, because they themselves would not be guilty of such outrages, they have been easily imposed upon by the pretended fear of a negro supremacy professed by the South.

But let me be more intelligible. My idea about the problem business is this When a case has been in litigation before a court of highest resort, and that case has been solemnly adjudicated in that court, that case is finished and all the parties to it must submit to the decision or become law-breakers and criminals. The case goes into history hence forth res adjudicata. It is settled. If this beneficent rule did not exist there would be no end to ligation and no reponse for the public mind.

To make my meaning still more clear: When in England a few years ago Northampton saw it fit to send Mr. Bradlaugh, and infidel, to represent it in the British House of Commons, and he was not allowed to take his seat, the admission of an infidel to the House of Commons was a problem: but when he continued to knock at the door of the House till he was finally admitted the infidel problem, so far as the right of membership of that House was concerned, was solved.

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Again, we are not the only people whose rights have been denied on the ground of race. Our brother Shem has had a taste of proscription as well as ourselves. No Jew was at one time eligible to membership in the parliament of Great Britain, but after long years of agitation of the question, Mr. Baring, an eminent Jew, was admitted to a seat in parliament. The Jewish problem, when Mr. Baring was seated, was ended, I mean this: When the American people declared their independence of Great Britain and made good that declaration by victory in a seven years war, the problem of American independence was solved, and there was never anything afterwards concerning it which could be called problematical. It was a fixed fact, and has remained such until now, and will remain so, I trust, forever.

There is a grand agitation now in progress in Great Britain for local self-government, at the head of which are Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell. If Great Britain shall grant home rule to Ireland, the Irish problem will be solved, and it will be nonsense thereafter to speak of it as an unsolved problem. Our American women are asking for a sixteenth amendment to the Constitution, whereby they may vote. They ought to have it. If the American people shall adopt such an amendment, the women problem will cease to exist.

In like manner, when the negro was declared free by the highest authority in the land, when the whole system of his bondage was broken up, when he was invested by the organic law of the land with the title, dignity and immunity of an American citizen, and when it was declared that any discrimination made by any State against him on account of race or color was unlawful, I hold that his race condition could no longer be considered a problem. The thing was done: it was finished. The nation had taken its position and all the parts of the nation must ultimately adjust themselves to the whole. The individual States may be great, but the United States is greater. The mountain will not and cannot go to Mahomet, so Mahomet must and will in the end go to the mountain. Herein is the ground of my hope. The trend of civilization, the power of large bodies to attract small ones, the force of national greatness, the inclination to the stronger rather than to the weak in human forces will ultimately bring the individual States in line with the Federal body. I affirm that while the National Government shall remain in the hands of the Republican party and under the principles of that party, no State will or can permanently disfranchise any of its citizens because of race or color or previous condition. Attempts may be made to do this, but the race problem in that respect is solved, and the case cannot be permanently reopened.

But I am asked, what of the future? and will the various peoples of this country ever be thoroughly assimilated? or, to speak more plainly, will they ever intermarry? My answer is, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." We should not cross the stream till we have come to it. Whether such marriages will ever become common or not is no matter of vital concern to anybody at this day. It is mere speculation and is utterly without practical importance, so far as the rights of the American people are concerned. It touches no question of politics, statesmanship, or religion.

Individual interests, personal preferences and public sentiment

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may be safely left to regulate the relations of the races in respect of intermarriage. Such, I think, is the view that common sense will take of it, but such does not seem to be the view taken of it by some of our people--white, black and mixed. There seems to be a fascination about the subject which makes it impossible for men to let alone. They thrust it into our faces on all occasions, in season and out of season, and seem distressed because we cannot solve the problem for them. Some of them say that the repugnance of the white race of the black makes marriages between them impossible, and yet they proceed with great warmth and eloquence to denounce it as a thing to be closely watched and guarded against, and by no means encouraged. If the thing is impossible to happen no one should be afraid that it will happen.

I noticed while at my post in Hayti that even the Senate of the United States was compelled to listen to a learned disquisition upon this subject of race intermarriage from the lips of the eloquent, learned, and distinguished Senator from Kansas. I have always entertained for that gifted gentleman the highest respect. When he is right he is very right and when he is wrong he is very wrong. There is no halfness in his character and composition. He is either all or he is nothing. In the present instance he happens to be not only all wrong, but very wrong. His argument against the admixture of the race is intense but narrow, brilliant but unsound, learned but inconsistent and illogical. He not only contradicts the facts and the science of the case but contradicts himself. He asserts that only the bad qualities of each race inherited by a mixed race, and at the same time he permits himself to say that he attributes whatever ability I happen to possess to the Caucasian side of my parentage. So good a logician as Senator Ingalls should not have allowed himself, almost in the same breath, to knock down the whole superstructure of his argument. Mr. Ingalls is a brave and a generous man, and I am surprised that these qualities were allowed to forsake him on the occasion referred to. Had he listened to the manly side of his character he would have never allowed himself to slay with his brilliant rhetoric a million of his colored fellow-citizens. He took advantage of his position on the floor of the United States Senate to deal us a blow which we had no means of parrying. His advantage was great, and the ignoble character of his attack must be measured by the greatness of his advantage. Had any colored man of spirit and ability been a member of the Senate to reply to his assault. Mr. Ingalls would not have been inconsistent with his well-known chivalric qualities. But the case was otherwise.

If it be true that good qualities are not transmissible in such unions; if it be true that only evil, and that continually, must descend to the children of such parents, it may be well asked why any of the mulatto or quadroon children and grandchildren of our earlier statesmen are found anywhere outside of the thick walls and iron-barred windows of our prisons. Why are they walking our streets and employed in our houses as trusted servants and stewards? Why are they our teachers, professors, and preachers? Why are they respected and treated as gentlemen and Christians in every part of the world except our own? Oh, no, Mr. Ingalls! Your argument will not hold. It will not bear the test of either reason or experience. Your language is the language of alarm, and the question you

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should put to yourself is. What if, in a nation of a hundred millions there should occasionally happen a marriage between two different varieties of the human family? Who would be hurt by it? Who, outside the parties themselves, should give themselves any trouble about it? The sun would not cease to shine, the rain to descend, nor the grass to grow. Men would not cease to go to and fro in the earth, or knowledge cease to roll onward. If the country has endured, during 240 years, lawless relations on a broad scale between the two peoples, it should not go into paroxysms of alarm over what may possibly take place under lawful conditions.

And now comes Mr. Isaiah Montgomery, of Mississippi, with his solution of the pretended Negro problem. I have spoken of him elsewhere, and I take back nothing that I have said either of this remarkable man, or his remarkable address. He has surrendered to a disloyal State a great franchise given to himself and his people by the loyal nation. He has taken the work of solving the nation's work of the nation's hands. He has virtually said to the nation:

"You have done wrong in giving us this great liberty. You should give us back a part of our bondage." He has surrendered a part of his rights to an enemy who will make this surrender a reason for demanding all of his rights. He has conducted his people to a depth from which they will be invited to a lower deep, for if he can rightfully surrender a part of his heritage from the National Government at the bidding of his oppressors, he may surrender the whole. The people with whom he makes this deal are restrained in dealing with the rights of colored men by no sense of modesty or moderation in their demands. They want all that is to be had, and will take all that they can get. Their real sentiment is that no Negro shall or ought to have the right to vote. Yet I

have no denunciation for the man Montgomery. He is not a conscious traitor though his act is treason: treason to the cause of the colored people, not only of his own State, but of the United States.

I wish the consequences of his act could be confined to Mississippi alone, but I fear this cannot be. Other colored men in other States, dazzled by the fame obtained by Mr. Montgomery through the Democratic press, will probably imitate his bad example. I speak of this Montgomery business more in sorrow than in anger. I hear in the plaintive eloquence of his marvelous address a groan of bitter anguish born of oppression and despair. It is the voice of a soul from which all hope has vanished. His deed kindles indignation to be sure, but his condition awakens pity. He had called to the nation for help--help which it ought to have rendered and could have rendered but it did not--and in a moment of impatience and despair he has thought to make terms with the enemy, an enemy with whom no colored man can make terms but by a sacrifice of his manhood. There is no need here of an analysis of Mr. Montgomery's address. Its character is known and it has nothing to commend it but its ability and plaintive eloquence and the man, the place, and the circumstances under which it was delivered. The logic of the speech would have conducted magnanimous men to a prompt rejection of the surrender, for it was an appeal to all that was noble, grateful, and generous in hearts of Mississippians. They should have said, "No, Mr. Montgomery: your people have been our best friends when we needed friends, and we scorn to take from you the franchise

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accorded to you by the wisdom and magnanimity of the National Government"

Ladies and gentlemen: I have been requested to say an encouraging word to our people before I leave for my post of duty at Port-au-Prince, and if I have not already said such a word I find it quite easy to do so now. From every view I have been able to take of the moral and political situation of our cause, before and since my arrival in the country, I am hopeful. I have no doubt whatever of the future. I know that there are times in the history of all reforms when the future looks dark; when the friends of reform are impatient and despondent; when they cannot see the the end from the beginning; when the truth that is plain to them compels them to reject the honesty of all who receive it. When they meet with opposition where they expected co-operation; when they met with treachery where they expected fidelity, and defeat where they expected victory. I, for one, have gone through all this. I have had fifty years of it, and yet I have not lost either heart or hope. It is true that we have been sadly disappointed in the action, or rather non-action, of the Fifty-first Congress. The platform of the Republican party adopted at Chicago plainly committed the Republican party to some measure of protection to the Republican voters of the South. We had right to expect the pledge there given would find fulfillment in the action of this Republican Congress. We have been disappointed, sadly disappointed. Following the advice of a new leader from Pennsylvania, but a leader not of the Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner mold, this Congress has preferred protection to commerce and property to protection to personal and political liberty. We had hoped that it would adopt either the Federal election bill or the Blair educational bill. It has done neither. The omission is, on the face of it, discouraging. But what then? Shall we get mad and denounce and renounce the Republican party? Has that party sinned away its day of grace? Are there no remaining reasons for giving it our confidence? I entertain no such thought. The Federal election and educational bills are not dead, nor are their Senate and in the House may permit delay but they will not suffer defeat. The president of the United States is true to his trust. No man since General Grant has stood by us more firmly than has General Harrison. He has let it be known openly and emphatically that he is for stepping to the very verge of constitutional limitations to secure honest elections, a free vote, and a fair count in every State in the Union, and he is not the man to take any steps backward.

I admit that during many years to come the colored man will have to endure prejudice against his race and color, but this constitutes no problem to vex and disturb the course of legislation. The world was never yet without prejudice. There exists prejudice in favor of and against classes among men of the same race and color.

There is prejudice between religious sects and denominations; between Catholic and Protestant; between families and individuals. The time may never come this side the millennium when men will not ask "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" But what business has government, State or National, with these prejudice? Why should grave statesmen concern themselves with them? The business of government is to hold its broad sheild over all and to see that

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every American citizen is alike and equally protected in his civil and personal rights. My confidence is strong and high in the nation as a whole. I believe in its justice and in its power. I believe that it means to keep its word with its colored citizens. I believe in its progress, in its moral as well as its material civilization. Its trend is in the right direction. Its fundamental principles are sound. Its conception of humanity and of human rights is clear and comprehensive. Its progress is fettered by no State religion tending to repress liberal thought: by no order of nobility tending to keep down the toiling masses: by no divine right theory tending to national stagnation under the idea of stability. It stands out free and clear with nothing to obstruct its view of the lessons of reason and experience.

It may be said, as has been said, that I am growing old, and am easily satisfied with things as they are. When our young men shall have worked and waited for victory as long as I have worked and waited, they will not only learn to have patience with the men opposed to them, but with me also for having patience with such. I have seen dark hours in my life, and I have seen the darkness gradually disappearing and the light gradually increasing. One by one I have seen obstacles removed, errors corrected, prejudices softened, proscriptions relinquished, and my people advancing in all the elements that go to make up the sum of general welfare. And I remember that God reigns in eternity, and that what ever delays, whatever disappointments and discouragements may come, truth, justice, liberty and humanity will ultimately prevail.

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