

Mayville, Chautauqua, Co., N.Y.

Nov. 7th 1893.

Rev. Bishop Turner,

Atlanta, Ga.

My dear Sir: Yours of the 20d is rec'd.

I have the highest regard for you especially because you propose to do something. I am not fond of a man who, when things go wrong talks always and waits for the Lord or somebody else to find a remedy. A man had better make some mistakes than never make a move to accomplish anything at all.

Of course, the whole American people are responsible for all that happens on American soil. That has always been my position. The sin of the North, however, has in the main been ~~from~~ that of apathy and ignorance: that of the South of purpose and intention. The North, as a rule, wishes the colored man not only to have all his rights but to become the very best he can make of himself. This is witnessed by the millions voluntarily given for his education by her people. This is without personal interest on their part. The South has given by taxation because colored voters put the free school into their law and they dare not face the world's disapproval by taking it out. But there is no pretense anywhere at the South of any desire that the colored man shall be a self-controlling automatic factor of the collective life, -- or in other words, be a Man.

While both are guilty, there is a wide difference in the guilt. the one means to keep the colored man down; the other does not do what it ought to help him up.

Your idea of a remedy is to give both an equal dose of blame. I think that course, discourages your friends and neutralizes the most hopeful factor of the future.

You think the colored man must work out his own salvation. I think he must work for it, with all true-hearted white men to help him and even then both will have a hard enough job on hand.

But I do not like to discuss such things, since people are so apt to waste their strength in disagreeing rather than in doing, when they come to discuss methods before joining hands to achieve.

I do not believe salvation is ever found in running away from evil. Peoples are like individuals. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you," is true of both. God loves a brave people and despises the submissive. That is my notion of history. He did let the Israelites run away from Egypt, but He killed all but two of them before he would let them enter Caanan. Any people that will demand their rights, persistently, sagaciously and stubbornly, will get them in this age, because when their demand is heard there will rise up every day, more and more to echo it.

You speak of asking Congress for a hundred million dollars. I think if it were granted, it would be fatal to both races. A people that would give that sum rather than do justice to another, would not be worth saving. It would be a waste of divine favor to attempt to develop anything good out of a people in which the sense of right-doing had been so utterly destroyed. In like manner, I believe a people who would ask for or accept such a donative in lieu of their birthright as Christian men and women, would not be likely to achieve anything of consequence elsewhere. Sand is just as essential in peoples as in mortar.

I believe that every dollar the colored people raise and apply to carry the war of just demand into the hearts and consciences of the white people of the United States and the world, will bring a larger return in justice and manhood than a thousand dollars obtained by asking their oppressors to furnish the money to enable them to escape from bondage. If I were a colored man, I would rather my blood moistened a bit of American soil and my name were blotted off the earth, than have the future point at me the finger of scorn as an Esau who sold the righteous inheritance of his people for a mess of transportation pottage.

I do not claim any right to advise--I have never offered the colored man any advice. I did try to get your ministers to make the 31st of May in each year a "Supplication Day" in which all your people should join to pray God for deliverance from evil. They did it --once! Why did they not keep on? It is not for me to answer. I can only state my feelings and what I would feel and do under such conditions. I tell you frankly, Bishop, without any desire to reflect on you or any other, that if I were a colored Bishop, nay, if I were a colored minister or even a colored man, I would make my name immortal on the earth as well as win a crown of exceeding brightness in Heaven, by preaching a crusade of Prayer, Protest and Perseverance in demand for right. If the colored people will get together and demand one thing of God and that thing JUSTICE--the recognition and security of their rights, --and then apply their united strength to secure and hold that place among the American people to which He has mysteriously appointed them in His Providence, the way will not be long or difficult, in comparison with that which other peoples have travelled to attain liberty. But as long as they try merely to

show the Lord that He is in error and seek only to convince Him that they ought to be in Africa rather than here, I am afraid they will not be of much account as doers of His will anywhere.

This is what I would feel and what I would undertake and with God's help, accomplish, if I were a colored man. I would not rest day or night, until every colored minister and every colored church had pledged themselves to devote one day in each year, and one service in each month to prayer for the colored people of the United States. That is the only way unity of purpose can be secured. And until unity of purpose is secured one might as well scatter chaff to the wind and expect to gather a harvest as spend his time in devising methods by which something might be done.

When 3,000,000 of people unite in asking God to show them how to obtain justice, not cringingly asking that He will incline the hearts of their oppressors to mercy, they are just as certain to get it as the sun is to shine. God works by natural law in human as well as material affairs, and he has planted ~~justice~~ in the American heart an instinct of justice, through which he stands ready to answer such prayer whenever it is stoutly and truly made.

But to ask God to incline human hearts to mercy, when they should render justice, is a prayer never yet answered in human history and not likely to be.

I shall try to be in Cincinnati, --but not to take part in the Convention. The call does not include me. I always refuse to attend "white" meetings and of course cannot endorse, "colored" ones. Besides that no man has a right to go to a convention to oppose the purpose for which it is called. I hope to be among the audience however, to see and hear the men who will be there. I want to determine



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for myself whether I am mistaken in the manhood of the colored man of today or not. It is folly for me, a white man, to keep demanding justice for the colored citizens of the United States if they are not going to stand by me and uphold my hands in such demand. I believe I can be an interpreter and ambassador for them in the great court of public opinion whence all law and all justice must come in the American Republic.

But I have no notion of undertaking that task on my own motion or responsibility. I know a quarter of a million of the white people of the North who are willing to engage in such a work; but it is not for them or for me to undertake to make any substantial inroad upon prevailing sentiment unless the colored man stands by us and gives us his hearty support and fervent Godspeed. I want to know from personal observation whether the colored men or those who assume to speak for them, are to work with us, against us, or merely to leave us to do what we may without any concert of action or approval or responsibility on their part.

If either of the latter hypotheses be correct, I feel that the time has come for me to cease troubling myself about these things and give my attention more fully to the problem of "ways and means" for my own little group of human wayfarers.

I am willing to work for those whom I believe are the victims of injustice, but have no call to help them unless they desire help and are willing to co-operate in my work, both with effort and approval.

Please let me know what will be your address in Cincinnati. I have some lecture engagements which may not permit me to be there at that time, as they mean "bread and meat" and I may desire to write you. I write thus at length today, because I shall have no time to write again in some weeks.

Yours very truly,