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VOL. III.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.]

OUR COUNTRY IS THE WORLD—OUR COUNTRYMEN, ALL MANKIND.

THE LIBERATOR.

[From the Emancipator.]

CORRESPONDENCE ON THE COLONIZATION SOCIETY.

From many citizens of New-York, and Rev. R. G. Carter, Secretary of the American Colonization Society, Washington City.

NO. I.

TO THE SECRETARY AND BOARD OF MANAGERS OF THE AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY.

GENTLEMEN—
It cannot be unknown to you that many inquiries are made respecting the principles and plans of the important institution whose interests are committed to your charge. You are aware that in answer to these inquiries are sought in the speeches and addresses made in support of the Society, and published by order of the Board of Managers, in the Annual Reports of the Society, and in the columns of the African Repository, published also by order of your Board, there will be found such a diversity, not to say contrariety of sentiment and opinion, as to afford no room for a satisfactory solution of the prominent questions. If referred to that clause of the constitution of the Society, which specifies and limits its objects, it is known that construction has been given to this clause, differing as widely from each other, as the conflicting sentiments afloat in the community, on the general subject.

These circumstances, it is well known, have given rise to many doubts, and some serious contentions respecting the character, aims, and tendencies of your important society, among those who have formerly united, without any dissent, in the support of its cause. Now these perplexities have diminished, either by the proceedings of the late annual meeting of your society in Washington City, or by the more recent visit of Mr. K. S. Finley, late Agent of the Society, to this city, in connection with the Resolutions adopted at the meeting held here on the subject.

With these introductory remarks, which we trust will sufficiently apologize for the liberty we are taking, we beg leave, very respectfully, to submit to your Board, a few plain questions, soliciting an explicit answer to each, with the view of terminating all uncertainty and doubt, in respect to the principles, aims, tendencies, and purposes of the American Colonization Society.

The questions are these:

1. Is it, or is it not, among the purposes and aims of the Society to effect the ultimate and complete extinction of Slavery, in the United States?

2. Are, or are not, the operations of the Society considered by you a sufficient and adequate system of measures for the accomplishment of that object?

3. Is it, or is it not, claimed by the Society that its operations ought to be considered as covering the whole ground of desirable effort respecting emancipation?

4. Do, or do not, the principles and plans of the Colonization Society involve the position that expatriation from their native soil is to be made the *sine qua non* of the emancipation of the enslaved?

5. Would, or would it not, comport with the principles and plans of the Society to transport from their native land the free people of color, should the enactments of the State governments deny them the right of a continual residence within their jurisdiction?

New-York, March 7, 1833.

ARTHUR TAPPAN,
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WILLIAM GOWELL,
JONAS LEAVY,
LEWIS TAPPAN,
S. P. HINES,
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C. G. FINNEY,
G. R. BARKER.

NO. II.

LETTER FROM MR. GURLEY.

Office of the Colonization Society,
Washington, 28th March, 1833.

GENTLEMEN—
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 7th inst. containing sundry inquiries in regard to the principles and purposes of the American Colonization Society; and I now make the following communication not without hope, that the character of our institution may be exhibited in its truth and simplicity, and in a light which must secure to it the approbation and support of all intelligent Christians.

Before attempting to reply to the several questions which you have proposed, it is desirable to consider, for a moment, the condition of our colored population, both free and the enslaved; and the schemes which might suggest themselves to a philanthropic mind, for their improvement.

Of the free it may be remarked, that they are accessible to our charities, like any other

unfortunate portion of our population, and we are unrestrained in regard to any efforts which we may think proper to adopt for their benefit.

By the constitution of the country, and the laws of the States where slavery exists, the slaves are recognized as property, nor can any benefit be done for them but with the consent of their proprietors.

Though the first class are nominally free, yet it is manifest, that various circumstances in this country, operate to prevent their enjoyment, here, as a people, of the best blessings of freedom. Many powerful causes, some of them dependent on the will of men, and some of them independent of it, throw around them such embarrassments, and so tend to depress their minds and place obstacles in the way of their improvement, as to leave scarce a hope that they can ever attain, here, to an equality with the whites. And the same remark will apply to the slaves, should their unconditional emancipation ever be effected.

Nothing, then, can be more evident, than that the separation from us of our colored population, and their establishment with our own consent, as a distinct community, in a land where all circumstances would concur to their benefit, and if it be clear that their residence in this country be injurious to the general welfare, and that their settlement in Africa would be an inestimable benefit to their brethren there, it seems impossible to deny a character of humanity and benevolence to the scheme of African colonization.

It may be said, with truth, that more might be done than has been done for the education and general improvement of the free people of color while residents in the United States; but it cannot be denied, that the combined powers of humanity and religion can do for them here, what they may do for them in Africa.

It may be said, that more may be done than is now done to produce a disposition favorable to the unconditional emancipation of slaves; but it cannot be said, that such a disposition is not being produced, instead of increasing such a disposition; or that should such emancipation ever be effected, there would not exist as valid and even stronger reasons than at present for the prosecution of this scheme.

With these preliminary remarks, I now proceed to make a brief reply to the several questions contained in your letter.

1. It is, or is it not, among the purposes and aims of the Society to effect the ultimate and complete extinction of slavery in the United States?

If the meaning of this question be, whether the Society has for its purposes, or for its effect the ultimate and complete extinction of slavery by any direct action on the system, by interfering with, or disturbing, any of the legal rights or obligations connected with it, we would answer, that we do not, and we do not intend to do so. Its direct and exclusive object as set forth in its constitution, is to colonize with their own consent the free people of color of the United States. It touches no man's property, and does not interfere with the weak man's hold upon his real or imaginary interests. It no more affects, by any coercive power, the system of slavery, than does the Bible, the Tract, or the Missionary Society, a great and noble enterprise, and whose objects we have mainly contributed to its support, were moved to give it origin, and have been moved to sustain it, by benevolence towards the enslaved as well as towards the free; whether its early friends and the great body of enlightened men who now advocate its claims, do it in the hope and belief, that in the prosecution of it, they will secure a more speedy and effectual way to the voluntary manumission of slaves, that they consider the plan of the Society sufficiently large, should it be adopted by the slave holding States, to render safe and practicable the ultimate abolition of slavery, and that they cherish the expectation, that it will be adopted, as a powerful, if not the most powerful incentive to the vigorous prosecution of their cause.

2. Are, or are not, the operations of the Society considered by you a sufficient and adequate system of measures for the accomplishment of that object?

3. Is it, or is it not, claimed by the Society that its operations ought to be considered as covering the whole ground of desirable effort respecting emancipation?

4. Do, or do not, the principles and plans of the Colonization Society involve the position that expatriation from their native soil is to be made the *sine qua non* of the emancipation of the enslaved?

5. Would, or would it not, comport with the principles and plans of the Society to transport from their native land the free people of color, should the enactments of the State governments deny them the right of a continual residence within their jurisdiction?

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benefits as the most extensive and important, though not the most immediate.

2. "Are, or are not, the operations of the Society considered by you a sufficient and adequate system of measures for the accomplishment of that object?"

We know of no operations that can be instituted to promote the peaceful and voluntary abolition of slavery, which promise so much for the accomplishment of that end as the system of measures adopted by the Society. That this end can be accomplished, should the Society receive the united, liberal, and persevering support of all the humane and enlightened of our country, is hoped and expected with much confidence by the leading friends of the Society. "That any and every system of measures opposed to the Colonization Society will retard the abolition of slavery, I for one, fully believe. Whether slavery will be abolished in our country, through any means or measures, as speedily, as with a view to all great interests concerned, christian benevolence would desire, few will expect, who attend the slow progress of virtuous sentiment on this and many other subjects connected with the improvement and welfare of mankind.

3. "Is it, or is it not, claimed by the Society that its operations ought to be considered as covering the whole ground of desirable effort in respect to emancipation?"

Though we believe, that to the scheme of African colonization we do look for the largest and most extensive benefits to our colored population, yet we by no means assert that other means may not be devised and properly executed, for their relief and improvement. Each individual is bound, by all proper means, to do all in his power for their advantage, and it is left for him to judge in what way any such method his duties towards them shall best be discharged.

4. "Do, or do not, the principles and plans of the Society involve the position that expatriation from their native soil is to be made the *sine qua non* of the emancipation of the enslaved?"

To this I reply that the principles and plans of the Society involve no such position.

5. "Would it, or would it not, comport with the principles and plans of the Society to transport from their native land, the free people of color, should the enactments of the State governments deny them the right of a continual residence within their jurisdiction?"

The Constitution of the Society declares its object to be to colonize with their own consent the free people of color of the United States, and it could certainly engage in no measures which would violate its Constitution. Should any of the States expel their free people of color from their limits, it will be for these people themselves to decide what country they will select for their residence. And should they be urged by any necessity of circumstances to leave their native land, the limits of the United States, humanity and religion will alike dictate that they should be assisted to remove and establish themselves in freedom and prosperity, in the land of their choice.

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,
With great respect,
Your friend and serv't,
R. R. GURLEY.

Messrs. Arthur Tappan, George Bourne, Wm. Goodell, Rev. Mr. Leavitt, Lewis Tappan, S. P. HINES, Henry R. Piery, Charles W. Denison, Rev. L. D. Dewey, Theodore D. Wells, Rev. C. G. Finney, and George R. Barker.

P. S. It has not been in my power to submit this letter to the inspection of our Board of Managers. I believe it expresses, generally, their opinions.

NO. III.

REPLY TO MR. GURLEY'S LETTER.

New-York, June, 1833.

Rev. R. R. GURLEY, Secretary of the American Colonization Society, Washington City.

Sir—
Your communication of the 28th of March has been duly received, and considered with the attention its importance demands, and we are gratified with the fact that, on some of the points of inquiry proposed by you, your answers have been definite, we are compelled to add that they have not been in every instance so satisfactory.

We have thought it our duty to state this, and to specify the particulars to which we allude.

Before attempting this, it may be proper to remark, that our inquiries respected the Society, and not its individual members. The very fact that conflicting views had been taken of the principles and tendencies of the Society, by different members, gave rise to the inquiry proposed by us, and the direct object was, to learn, officially, the views of the Society itself. So far, therefore, as your communication falls short of this, it falls short of the end we proposed. From the errors and interjections in your letter, it would appear to have been prepared with a view of obtaining for it that sanction of the Board, which, from your postscript, we regret to per-

ceive, it was not in your power to obtain. Our regret is mainly founded on the conviction, that a great and increasing demand, on the part of public sentiment, is pressing on the Board, continually, for an answer to these and similar questions, now afloat in the official arena, and which nothing short of an official and explicit answer from the Board, can either meet or satisfy.

With these remarks, we proceed to examine your communication. One of the first positions advanced by you, requiring our notice, is that which predicates of the condition of the free people of color, embarrassments and difficulties, tending to depress them, some of which you say, are 'independent of the will of man.' With our views of the oneness of the human family, their dependence on a common Creator and Parent, and the extent, perfection and immutable obligation of the great law of love, we find ourselves at a loss to understand what difficulties can embarrass any portion of the race, or prevent their improvement, aside from the transgression of that law, by the free exercise of the 'will of man.' Nor can we conceive of any modification of circumstances, or change of time or place, which will either suspend the obligations of that law, or produce effects which will answer as a substitute for conformity with it. Instead of seeking for such circumstances, therefore, we should urge, by every moral motive, a conformity to the law of love, which 'worketh no ill to its neighbor.'

But not to dwell minutely on the preliminary parts of your letter, we proceed to notice your answers to the questions propounded by us.

In your answer to our first question, we cannot but perceive that we are not only left without the Society's answer to the question—a deficiency we have already noticed, and which appears to you, as a defect, but that we are not informed by you that your own views of the Society include the idea of its extinction of slavery in the United States.

We are only told that you conceive to be the views of certain individuals, more or less numerous, connected with the Society. So that if the sanction of the Board had been obtained, to the draft you seem to have prepared for charges against the Society, and which we have mainly contributed to its support. Our question was not whether the Society affects 'by any coercive power the system of slavery,' but whether it affects it, at all, through any influence of the kind. You have not, we observe the absence of any expression of opinion by you, that it does so. The statement of your own or others' opinions of its tendency to destroy the Society, and which we have called upon to support a statement, which the American public have been accustomed to inquire and learn what results the Society itself, 'as such,' intend to produce. This is a question you have not affirmed us, as we can perceive, in your answer to our first question.

Your answer to our second question does not, in our view, exactly meet the point inquired by us. You say, that the operations promised most for the cause of emancipation, but whether the colonization scheme was considered adequate, of itself, to effect the object, 'is a question which we do not feel called upon to answer, if it is accomplished, if the Society is duly supported. How, or by what means, does not clearly appear. Perhaps the answer is partly merged in the one next following.

Under this item—the third—it gives us pleasure to perceive that, although our question is not directly answered, you accord to your fellow citizens the right of exercising the good of the colored people, through other instrumentalities than those of the Colonization Society, without any censure for the exercise of the right of private judgment, in the public exercise of their duties. This we regret to say, has not always been done, by the agents and friends of your Society, who have not always refrained from casting upon the advocates of direct emancipation the same opprobrious epithets of 'fire-brand' and 'incendiary' that are heaped upon them by the open advocates of slavery. And where this has not been done, we have frequently noticed the presence of the same sentiments in favor of your Society, entirely precluding and denying the possibility of any other mode of benefiting the colored people. At a recent Colonization Meeting in this city, conducted by Mr. Finley and others, the following resolution was adopted:

"Resolved, That in view of the facts that have been presented at this meeting, the public exercise of the right of seeking the scheme of the American Colonization Society presents the only practicable and rational plan for the improvement of the moral condition of the people of color already free in the United States, and the hope which the philanthropist and christian can safely indulge for the ultimate abolition of slavery in the United States."

If this resolution was not designed to effect a censure on all attempts at direct

emancipation, without colonization, we do not perceive for what purpose it was penned and accepted. To the spirit of such proceedings, your letter presents a contrast, as our honorable to your own feelings, and gratifying to ours.

Your reply to our fourth question, strikes the eye, at first glance, as extremely explicit and satisfactory. But on a moment's reflection, and especially on comparing it with other parts of your letter, difficulties are seen to present themselves, and in attempting to solve them, we are led to the conclusion that our first impression of its import was not a correct one. The first impression was, that the Society, having ultimate emancipation in view, as one of its prominent objects, was too liberal in its policy to insist that expatriation from their native soil was to be made the *sine qua non* of the emancipation of the enslaved. This was the answer sought by us, which we hoped to obtain, and, if it had been supplied, we had obtained, at least, on behalf of the 'leading friends' of the Society, if not from 'the Society' as such. But on examining the views of Gen. 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