

LIBERTY, AND EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONVENTION

OF THE

COLORED PEOPLE OF VA.,

HELD IN

THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA,

Aug. 2, 3, 4, 5, 1865.

ALEXANDRIA, VA.:

COWING & GILLIS, BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS.

1865.

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COLORED STATE CONVENTION.

ALEXANDRIA, VA., Aug. 2, 1865.

Pursuant to a regular call of the Colored State Convention, a large representation met at Lyceum Hall, in the city of Alexandria, and at 10 o'clock A. M. The meeting was called to order by Mr. R. D. Beckley, of Alexandria, Va., and after some very appropriate remarks, on motion, Rev. G. W. Parker, of Alexandria, was appointed temporary Chairman, and Rev. Wm. E. Walker, of Petersburg, as Secretary.

Mr. Parker, on taking the chair, thanked the Convention for the honor conferred, and welcomed the delegates to the hospitalities of the city, and called upon Rev. Wm. Davis, of Norfolk, to open the proceedings with prayer, who, in a very feeling and appropriate manner, addressed the throne of grace. After which was sung the patriotic hymn, "My Country, 'tis of thee."

The chairman then notified the Convention that the first business in order was the appointment of a Committee on Credentials.

On motion, the following gentlemen were appointed: N. H. Anderson, of Richmond; Wm. H. Kelly, of Norfolk; and R. D. Beckley, of Alexandria.

The committee having retired to examine the credentials of the delegates, the Convention was then addressed in a very able, eloquent and patriotic manner, by Mr. Geo. W. Cook, of Norfolk; Peter K. Jones, of Petersburg; and Rev. Nicholas Rickman, of Charlottesville.

By request, Mr. Geo. W. Cook, of Norfolk, addressed the meeting, and in the course of his remarks said:

The great question before the colored people is, what is necessary to be done? We very well understand that we must work. We are charged with being unproductive. They say we will not work. He who makes that assertion asserts an untruth. We have been working all our lives, not only supporting ourselves, but we have supported our masters, many of them in idleness.

Peter K. Jones, of Petersburg, was next called on, and said, among other things: It gives me inexpressible pleasure to be with you to-day. While listening to the gentleman who has just addressed you, I was reminded of my boyhood days. When I was seven or eight years of age I would often sit at the

window by my mother, who has since gone to heaven, and would ask her why it was that so many colored mothers were marching down South with their little babes in their arms, and why many more were compelled to give up their children, leave them here, and themselves be sent down to Georgia and other extreme Southern States? And I often noticed that fathers, and brothers, and sisters, were torn away from their relatives and sent further South into slavery and bondage. This was continued until within a few months past, when slavery and treason were swept from our beloved land. I suppose it is the object of those present to decide what they would have. We should ask God to perpetuate our cause, and to overthrow those arrayed against us. I had no idea of coming to this Convention without my heart full of prayer to God to aid us, and I feel sure He will aid us. I, for one, shall never again think of looking back to slavery; no, never. "United we stand; divided we fall." If we keep together there is no weapon strong enough to divide us. I congratulate you to-day on this subject of freedom. Why are not more of you here? Some of our people have been paid to stay away by our former masters. They told us that coming here would hurt us at home. Yes, it will hurt us everywhere. It will have the effect of dividing us. The Government is ready to sustain you if you will help yourselves. I will exert myself to secure the right of franchise in every way that is honorable and just, and, if I die in the attempt, my children will reverence me for it the more, and, I hope, profit by my death.

The Union flag is again floating over every State from Maine to Georgia, and under that flag we are freemen. I do not come here to inaugurate war. We have had enough of war; but we will have our rights. They may say we will not work, but we have shown them that we have worked hard enough to get into this Convention, and we have worked up enough of greenbacks to bring us here, and the Government on the other side of the Potomac will back us up in what we do.

Rev. Nicholas Rickman, of Charlottesville, here took the stand, and in the course of his speech said: I am very little in the habit of talking, yet I cannot deny myself the privilege of saying something to add strength to what has been said. Being situated as I was, I was deprived of many privileges which others in the Convention have enjoyed; yet we all know enough to see with what dark chains we have been bound; but, thanks to God, we saw the first faint glimmer of light, and at last saw the darkness break away; and now we are here in this Convention. What brought us here? What are we to do and what can we do? We must be careful in every step we take. We have embarked on a wide sea. Have we any one to take the helm? Yes, we have One who has conducted us safely thus far, and He will see us safely through. Have we come here to make any compromise? No. We will contend to the last for our rights. There have been discords among ourselves, both as it regards politics and religion. Let us have no more of it, but let us work harmoniously together. Let us stand shoulder to shoulder, and battle the good cause through.

At the conclusion of Mr. Rickman's address, the committee on credentials appeared and made a report of gentlemen entitled to seats.

The following named gentlemen the committee decided as not entitled to seats, viz: Rev. Wm. E. Walker, of Petersburg; J. R. V. Thomas, of Portsmouth; and George Toamoth, of Portsmouth.

On motion that the report of the committee be received and

adopted, an animated and excited debate ensued; and on motion, the word "rejected," as in the above credentials, was stricken out, and the motion to adopt the report of the committee as amended was carried by an overwhelming vote.

The roll was then called, and each delegate answered to his name, as follows :

DELEGATES ELECT.

Alexandria Delegation.—R. D. Beckley, Charles Chinn, Rev. George W. Parker, Henry Marshall, Henry Malvin, Geo. Franklin, Wm. Claggett.

Williamsburg Delegation.—Edmond F. Jones, Richard Hill.

Culpeper Delegation.—Edward Ambler.

Columbia Delegation.—Temple Jackson.

Gloucester Delegation.—Elijah Monroe, J. W. Jackmon.

Charlottesville Delegation.—Nicholas Rickman, Fairfax Taylor, Ossian Johnson, P. A. Cross, B. H. Jenkins.

Petersburg Delegation.—Lewis W. Carter, Rev. Wm. E. Walker, William Lively, David Cain, P. K. Jones.

Richmond Delegation.—N. H. Anderson, Fields Cook, R. C. Hobson, R. W. Johnson.

Manchester Delegation.—B. T. Edwards, Jordan Smith.

Danville Delegation.—Henry Barksdale, Benj. Jackson, Lewis Scott.

Norfolk Delegation.—Edward W. Williams, Wm. Keeling, Geo. W. Cook, John M. Brown, Nicholas Barber.

Fairfax County Delegation.—Wm. Holman, Wm. W. Ford, S. H. Lee.

Farmville Delegation.—Edmond Johnson.

Yorktown Delegation.—Rev. John Cary, Robert Ruffin.

Hampton Delegation.—Robert Bailey, Wm. Davis.

Portsmouth Delegation.—Rev. J. R. V. Thomas, Joshua Wilson, George Toamoth.

Providence Church Norfolk Co. Delegation.—Rev. James Tyres.

Amherst and Nelson Co. Delegation.—Addison Washington.

Lynchburg Delegation.—Coleman Coles, Sam'l Kelser, Edward Carrington.

Warwick County Delegation.—Walter Williams.

Goochland County Delegation.—William Mosely.

Fredericksburg Delegation.—Rev. Wm. J. Walker, Edmond Brooks, J. H. Washington, James Brooks, Benj. Peyton.

HONORARY MEMBERS ELECTED.

Rev. H. H. GARNETT, *Washington*.

G. W. SIMS, *Washington*.

Prof. W. JOHNSON, *Baltimore*.

— JOHNSON, *Baltimore*.

J. P. DOUGLAS, *Alexandria*.

WM. L. IVES, *Alexandria*.

Col. J. G. C. LEE, A. Q. M., U. S. A.

Dr. PETTYJOHN, *Alexandria*.

Rev. — OWENS, *Alexandria*.

Capt. FERREE, *Alexandria*.

W. J. COWING, *Alexandria*.

Rev. C. ROBINSON, *Alexandria*.

ROBT. ROBINSON, *Alexandria*.

On motion, a committee of one from each delegation was appointed to nominate officers for a permanent organization of this Convention. They were, on motion, appointed by their respective delegations.

On motion, a committee of three was appointed to report rules for the government of the Convention. After a short absence, the committee on the nomination of officers reported the following gentlemen as permanent officers of the Convention, which was unanimously adopted:

President—R. D. BECKLEY, Alexandria, Va.

Vice Presidents—FIELDS COOK, Richmond, Va.

JOHN CARY, Yorktown, Va.

Secretary—Rev. Wm. E. WALKER, Petersburg, Va.

Asss. Secretaries—Rev. JOHN M. BROWN, Norfolk, Va.,

BALLARD EDWARDS, Manchester, Va.

Cor. Secretary—N. H. ANDERSON, Richmond, Va.

Treasurer—GEO. FRANKLIN, Alexandria, Va.

On motion, a vote of thanks be tendered to the Rev. Geo. W. Parker, for the able manner in which he has discharged his duties as temporary chairman.

After some very appropriate remarks from the Rev. Geo. W. Parker, Mr. N. H. Anderson and R. C. Hobson, were then appointed to conduct the President to his seat, who, on taking his seat, thanked the Convention for the distinguished honor conferred upon him, and earnestly solicited the co-operation and assistance of the Convention in the maintenance of order. The other officers also respectively tendered their thanks for the honor conferred.

The committee on rules for the government of the Convention, then reported Cushing's Manual of Parliamentary laws, which was accepted. They also reported that the session of the Convention should commence at 10 o'clock A. M., and close at 2 P. M., to meet again at 3 o'clock P. M., and continue till 5 P. M., and to meet again at 7 P. M.

On motion, a committee of three be appointed to select speakers for the evening, whereupon the following gentlemen were announced: Rev. Highland Garnett, Rev. John M. Brown, and Fields Cook.

The committee on rules also reported that there should be no smoking in the Hall during the business of the Convention; also that no member should speak more than ten minutes on any one motion, nor but three times on the same. Committee—R. C. Hobson, Geo. H. Franklin, E. F. Jones.

The President appointed Rev. Jordan Smith as Chaplain of the Convention.

On motion, a business committee of five were appointed, consisting of Rev. John M. Brown, of Norfolk, Va.; N. H. Ander-

son, of Richmond, Va.; Wm. Mosely, of Goochland, Va.; Rev. J. R. V. Thomas, of Portsmouth, Va.; Nicholas Rickman, of Charlottesville, Va.; P. K. Jones, of Petersburg, Va.; Henry Barksdale, Danville, Va.; and on motion, two others were added.

On motion, the Convention adjourned to meet at 7½ o'clock P. M.

WM. E. WALKER, *Secretary.*

R. D. BECKLEY, *President.*

EVENING SESSION.

The President called the Convention to order at 7½ o'clock. Prayer by the Rev. Jordan Smith, of Manchester. Proceedings of the morning session read and approved.

The President then appointed Henry Malvern, of Alexandria, and John Davis, of Richmond, as Sergeant-at-Arms.

The President having resigned his seat as a member of the finance committee, Edmond F. Jones, of Williamsburg, was appointed in his stead. Roll was then called.

On motion, Rev. G. L. Dickson was elected as an honorary member of this Convention; also Rev. Highland Garnett and Sampson White, and Rev. — Owens, of Alexandria, were unanimously elected as honorary members of the Convention.

The Rev. Highland Garnett was then introduced to the Convention, and in a very able, powerful, and eloquent manner, addressed the Convention for over an hour and a half. The Rev. John M. Brown then followed in a short, spirited, and telling speech. Mr. Fields Cook declined speaking owing to the lateness of the hour, according to appointment.

On motion, a vote of thanks be tendered to Rev. Highland Garnett and J. M. Brown, for their speeches delivered in our hearing.

On motion, a committee be appointed to wait on Quartermaster J. G. C. Lee, for the loan of a flag to place in the Hall over the platform. Committee—R. D. Beckley, G. W. Parker.

On motion, the Convention adjourned, to meet at 10 o'clock A. M., to-morrow, Thursday morning. Benediction by the Rev. Sampson White.

WM. E. WALKER, *Secretary.*

R. D. BECKLEY, *President.*

MORNING SESSION.

ALEXANDRIA, VA., Aug. 3, 1865.

The Convention was called to order by the President at 10 o'clock A. M. Prayer by the chaplain, Rev. Jordan Smith, of Manchester. After which, the roll was called, and most of the members answered to their names.

The committee on credentials then reported the following named additional delegates as entitled to seats in this Convention: Amherst and Nelson counties—Addison Washington; Lynchburg—Coleman Cotes, Samuel Kilson, Edward Carrington.

The proceedings of the previous meeting were then read and adopted.

On motion the above named gentlemen were admitted as delegates.

On motion, Rev. G. W. Parker, J. P. Douglass, G. W. Sims, Prof. Wm. Johnson and ——— Johnson were elected honorary members of the Convention.

The President then stated that the Committee had waited upon Capt. J. G. C. Lee, A. Q. M., U. S. A., who had tendered the Convention the use of the flag which now graced the stand, and stated that any further accommodations he could render he would be glad to do so. On motion, a vote of thanks was tendered to Capt. Lee for the interest he manifested in behalf of the Convention.

On motion, the Treasurer was authorized to furnish the Convention with stationery.

Mr. Washington raised a privileged question, and after a sharp debate, participated in by Rev. H. H. Garnett, Cook, Hobson, Brown, Walker and others, it was decided by the President that the whole debate was out of order.

Rev. John Cary, of Yorktown, was then called upon and addressed the Convention in a short but interesting speech, at the conclusion of which the Business Committee announced themselves ready to report. Rev. J. M. Brown then came forward and made the following report:

THE APPEAL.

We, the delegates of the colored people of the State of Virginia, in Convention assembled at Alexandria, Virginia, to act and advise what is thought best to be done for the interests of the colored people of the State, and to give expression of our feelings and desires, do hereby appeal to the conscientious, sympathetic, and just judgment of the American people, solemnly declaring that

we desire to live upon the most friendly and agreeable terms with all men; we feel no ill-will or prejudice towards our former oppressors; are willing and desire to forgive and forget the past, and so shape our future conduct as shall promote our happiness and the interest of the community in which we live; and that we believe that in this State we have still many warm and solid friends among the white people, and that this portion of them will do all they can for our improvement and elevation; that for this they have our kind thanks and our constant prayers that the Lord of Hosts may bless them, and strengthen them, that they may strive to give us, as a people, that which is just and right before God and the civilized world.

But, while we are free to acknowledge all that we have said above, we must, on the other hand, be allowed to aver and assert that we believe that we have among the white people of this State many who are our most inveterate enemies; who hate us as a class, and who feel no sympathy with or for us; who despise us simply because we are black, and, more especially, because we have been made free by the power of the United States Government, and that they—the class last mentioned—will not, in our estimation, be willing to accord to us, as freemen, that protection which all freemen must contend for, if they would be worthy of freedom; and that, while we confess that the state of things which now exist was not of our making, yet we believe it was the intention, and is the will of God, that it shall be as it is, and for which we give him our everlasting thanks.

We have ever been a people of docility and obedience, though we have felt for years that the condition of slavery was a curse upon us imposed by might, and not by right, yet we have submitted without any act of ours to avenge ourselves upon those who had so long oppressed us, as a race of men. Many of them treated us as brutes of the field. In all this we confess we see the hand of an all-wise God, who has seen fit to hold the passions of His African children until He saw fit to stir the passions of the two sections of the country—that both North and South should suffer for the sin of slavery. This having been done, it has left us in a state of chaos and disorganization; and while we sympathize for the condition of the country, we do believe and recognize in it the hand of an all-wise God, and believe He will do all things right.

In this state of chaos and disorganization are we assembled here to-day, to appeal to the citizens of the State of Virginia and to the Government of the United States for that protection which we so much need, and for which freemen in all ages have contended. We in our present condition are without protection, so far as the laws of the State are concerned, and but for the strong arm of the military, we feel that we have no where to look for that protection which is essential for the safety of our persons or our property, our wives or our children, for while we had in our former owners their protection, we have now in them none, and we are left to the assaults of the vile and vicious to do with us as they please, and we are left without redress.

We claim, then, as citizens of this State, the laws of the Commonwealth shall give to all men equal protection; that each and every man may appeal to the law for his equal rights without regard to the color of his skin; and we believe this can only be done by extending to us the elective franchise, which we believe to be our inalienable right as freemen, and which the Declaration of Independence guarantees to all free citizens of this Government and which is the privilege of the nation. We claim the right of suffrage:

- 1st. Because we can see no other safe-guard for our protection.
- 2d. Because we are citizens of the country and natives of this State.
- 3d. Because we are as well qualified to vote who shall be our rulers as many who do vote for that purpose who have no interest in us, and know not our wants.

4th. Because our representation as heretofore felt in Congress was not in accordance with our own wishes, and therefore we feel that it is right and our privilege to vote for the men who shall so represent us.

5th. Because we believe that the time has come when the colored people are to be felt as a power in this Government, either for good or evil, and that there is no way so calculated to make him subservient for good as to make him a good and loyal citizen.

6th. Because we believe it will be the means of restoring the balance of power which shall harmonize the conflicting elements which are now so rife in the South.

7th. Because we believe that if the white men will look at the subject in its proper light they will see the necessity of granting us this privilege, as they will find in us friends that will ever vote for men who shall be true to the State and loyal to the United States, and because nothing short of equality in law will ever secure to us the wants which every freeman needs and must enjoy if he will be at peace at home and in the community in which he lives. With these considerations we do most respectfully and earnestly appeal first to the citizens of Virginia that they give ear to our humble petition, that in the reconstruction of the laws of this State they do in the prayer of this Convention and before a just God so harmonize their laws as there shall be no distinction before law on account of color, and that every man may expect justice before the tribunals of the State, and then shall righteousness go forth as brightness, and truth as a lamp that burneth.

Mr. Brooks desired the report adopted by sections.

Mr. Garnett regarded the report as most able and complete, and hoped it would be adopted as a whole.

Mr. Washington said there was nothing in the report which he could not and did not enthusiastically endorse. The paper, he thought, would do credit to any deliberative body, and desired it adopted as a whole.

Mr. Hobson spoke at some length. He paid a glowing tribute to the framers of the address, and thought that there was not one word too much or one sentence wanting in the report, and hoped it would be adopted *nem con.*

Wm. E. Walker, of Petersburg, desired that there should be a correction made where the expression in the address read—"our former masters." He moved that the word "masters" be stricken out and the words "our former oppressors" be substituted therefor. The amendment was adopted.

Mr. Williams, of Norfolk, spoke at some length on the general question. He contended for the rights of universal suffrage in a most powerful and convincing argument, which was listened to with breathless attention.

Mr. Anderson then moved the previous question, but withdrew it at the suggestion of Mr. Cook.

Mr. Davis, of Hampton, followed in a very feeling address, in which the cruelties of slavery were very graphically portrayed. Having been a slave himself, and having suffered its worst oppressions, he spoke from "the book," and carried the feelings of the entire audience with him.

Mr. Lee, of Fairfax, wished it understood that the paper now under consideration was the production of our own people, and not the work of our northern friends. He knew this charge would be made, and it was well to forestall it.

Mr. Scott, of Danville, rejoiced that slavery had at last been ground under the heel of the Government—under the heel of our great and beneficent Government, into impalpable powder. God bless that iron wheel which had been rolled across this continent and set the captives free! How have we longed—how have we watched and prayed for this great day—this day when we can

breathe the free air of an American citizen and worship the God of our fathers under our own vine and fig tree. Can any one blame us for rejoicing because the galling chains of slavery have been stricken from our limbs? We bear no hatred toward our former oppressors. We will forget and forgive—forgive all those who have treated us as the beasts of the field, but while we forget all the innumerable wrongs which our people have endured for hundreds of years past, let our opposers remember that we are now free, and if they would have by-gones be by-gones they must treat us as kindly as it is our desire and intention to treat them.

Mr. Jones, of Williamsburg, then spoke in favor of the adoption of the address. He stated the difficulties under which the people of this section of the State labored in securing delegates. The old slaveholders of that section of the State did everything in their power to prevent delegates from attending this Convention, but nevertheless delegates were present from there who were not afraid to give expression to their opinions. He, for one, endorsed every word contained in the address, and desired the whole world to know it.

Mr. Carter, of Petersburg, felt proud of the able paper presented for the consideration of this Convention, and hoped the address would be adopted without further alteration. It was worthy of the wisest heads in the country. It is said, Mr. Speaker, that our heads are very hard. The charge is no doubt true, and God had a wise purpose in making them hard. If they had not been our brains would have been dashed out long ago, and it is owing to this fact that many of us are permitted to meet here to-day to consult on our downtrodden condition.

Mr. Keeling, of Norfolk, spoke ably in favor of the adoption of the report of the committee. While he was aware that the loyal people of the North had done all they possibly could do for the elevation of the colored race, he was aware that a great work was yet to be done by the colored people themselves. Let us ask, let us continue to petition, until we are set equal before the law with all men. The people of Massachusetts have done what they can—the balance remains for us to do ourselves. Let us go to work in earnest—let harmony and good feeling characterize our actions, and all will be right in the end.

Mr. Marshall, of Alexandria, followed. He contended that there was no real prejudice between the white and black race of this State. We had slept together in childhood—we had toiled together in manhood, until our interests had become common.

While in slavery the old flag waved over us. God allowed it to do so, and God and the old flag yet remained to us as great shields of living, enduring light. Let us bless and reverence them both.

At the conclusion of Mr. Marshall's remarks, three rousing cheers were given for the Stars and Stripes, and the inspiring song of "Rally Around the Flag, Boys," was sung with most excellent effect.

The question on the adoption or rejection of the report of the Committee was then put, and the report unanimously adopted by a rising vote.

A motion was made to suspend the rules in order to take a recess of twenty minutes. The motion was lost.

The address of "Rights and Wrongs" was then read by the Chairman of the Committee, and some verbal corrections proposed.

Mr. Garnett wished the word "demand" stricken out, as we were not prepared and did not intend to fight in the event that our *demand* was not granted. It would be more respectful, as humble petitioners, to use the word "ask" instead of "demand," and therefore he proposed the change. The suggestion was accepted, and after some further verbal corrections the address was adopted by a unanimous vote, as follows:

OUR WRONGS AND RIGHTS.

As a branch of the human family we have for ages been deeply and cruelly wronged, and by a people with whom *might constituted right*. We have been subdued not by power of ideas, but brute force, and deprived not only of many of our natural rights, but debarred the privileges and advantages freely accorded to other men. We have been made to suffer well nigh every cruelty and indignity possible to be heaped upon human beings. We have been taunted with our inferiority by people whose statute-books contain laws inflicting the severest penalties on whomsoever dared to teach us the art of reading God's Word. We have been denounced as intensely ignorant, while at the same time debarred from taking the first step toward self-enlightenment and national and personal elevation. We have been declared incapable of self government by those who refused the right of experiment in that direction, and have been denounced as cowards by men who first refused to trust us with a musket on the battle field.

As a people we have been denied the ownership of our bodies, or a right to our *wives*, our *homes*, our *children*, and the *products* of our *labor*. We have been compelled, under pain of death, to submit to injuries deeper and darker than the earth ever witnessed in the case of any other people.

We have been forced to silence and inaction; to look on the infernal spectacle of our sons groaning under the lash; our daughters ravished; our wives *violated*, and our firesides desolated, while we ourselves have been led to the *shambles*, and sold like beasts of the field.

When the nation in her hour of trial called her sable sons to arms, we gladly went and fought her battles, but were denied the pay accorded to others until public opinion demanded it, and even then it was tardily granted.

We have fought and conquered, but have been denied the benefits of victory.

We have fought where victory gave us no glory, and where captivity meant cold blooded murder on the field, and no *black man flinched*. We are taxed, but denied the right of representation; we are practically debarred the right of trial by jury, and institutions of learning which we help to support are closed against us.

Such being our wrongs, we submit to the American people and to the world the following declaration of rights, asking a calm consideration thereof:

"All men being born free and equal, no man or Government has a right to annul, repeal, or render inoperative, this fundamental principle, except it be for crime; therefore, we ask the immediate repeal of all laws operating against us as a separate class of people.

"That as natives of American soil we claim the right to remain upon it, and that any attempt to remove, expatriate, or colonize us in any other land against our will is unjust, for here we were born, and for this country our fathers and brothers have fought, and we hope to remain here in the full enjoyment of enfranchised manhood and its dignities. As citizens of the republic we claim the rights of citizens; we claim that we are by right entitled to respect; that all due attention should be given to our needs; that proper rewards should be given for our services; that the immunities and privileges of all other citizens and defenders of the nation's honor should be conceded to us. We claim the right to be heard in the State Legislature, in all the courts of the country, and the halls of Congress. That emerging as we are from the long night of gloom and sorrow, we are entitled to, and claim the sympathy and aid of the entire Christian world. We invoke the considerate aid of mankind in this crisis of our history, and in this hour of our trial."

These are a portion of our rights as men, as patriots, as citizens, and as children of a common Father; and that we may realize and retain them, this is our

purpose. We confide our cause to the just God, whose benign aid we most solemnly invoke.

Three cheers were then given for the President of the Convention and the authors of the addresses adopted, for Fields Cook, Rev. Dr. Garnett, and others.

[The above Appeal was from the pen of Fields Cook, of Richmond, Va., and the recitation of "Rights and Wrongs" from the pen of the President of the Convention, R. D. Beckley, of Alexandria, Va.]

On motion, the report was received.

On motion, the resolution was adopted by sections.

Rev. Mr. Garnett regarded the report as able and wise, and hoped it would be adopted as a whole.

Rev. Wm. E. Walker suggested that the term resolutions, heading the document, be stricken out, and the word appeal substituted therefor.

On motion, the Convention adjourned until 3 o'clock, P. M.

R. D. BECKLEY, *President*.

WM. E. WALKER, *Secretary*.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The President called the meeting to order at 3½ o'clock, P. M. Prayer by the Chaplain.

The roll was called and the minutes of the previous meeting read and approved.

A letter from Rev. Clement Robinson, of this city, addressed to the President, was read by the Secretary. The letter was ordered to be received and printed as a part of the proceedings of the Convention. It is as follows:

BOSTON, MASS., *July 27, 1865.*

CHAIRMAN R. D. BECKLEY, Alexandria, Va.

RESPECTED SIR:—I am apprehensive that I cannot be personally present with you in your approaching State Convention; however if I am not present on said day, (viz., 2d August,) let my name and influence stand among the representatives of the various religious denominations.

The object for which the Convention is called is a noble one, and the end your Convention looks for is superlatively great. You have before you a future pregnant with eternal blossoms of success. Only let your Convention, when convened, form such resolutions as shall demonstrate to the public your knowledge of what has been done by our brave, heroic boys at the most imminent points of danger and death. And then plead for the right of suffrage to the President and to Congress by all the noble and heroic deeds of our brave soldiers, and by the golden laws of a higher tribunal. The people here are all alive

to that all-important cause you represent. We had a meeting last night in Tremont Temple for that sole object. We are looking hourly for Chief Justice Chase and General Grant to address us on the subject.

Now, let the greatness of the cause you represent—the more than four millions of whom you are the representative—the brave and heroic actions and deeds of our soldiers during this terrible four years of conflict, carnage, and blood, and the bright future before you, so very pregnant with halos of glory, inspire your Convention with more than human inspiration to look beyond the clouds of seeming impossibilities.

I have the honor, sir, to be yours for the cause you represent so faithfully.

C. ROBINSON,

Pastor Beulah Baptist Church, Alexandria, Va.

Rev. G. W. Parker, from the Finance Committee, reported that the expenses so far incurred amounted to \$79.15, and recommended that a tax of \$2.50 be imposed on each delegate for the purpose of defraying the same, or any other expenses which may be incurred by the Convention. The report was adopted, and on motion the Convention adjourned.

R. D. BECKLEY, *President.*

WM. E. WALKER, *Secretary.*

EVENING SESSION.

President R. D. Beckley in the Chair.

Prayer by the Chaplain.

The roll was called and the members severally answered to their names and came forward and paid the tax imposed.

The reading of the minutes of the preceding evening were dispensed with.

A song being called for, "Our Country" was then sung.

The Chairman of the Business Committee presented an address to loyal citizens and to Congress, which was then read, and after some discussion, on motion, the address was laid on the table until to-morrow.

Rev. Highland Garnett wished to be included in the list of paying delegates, and paid the tax, \$2.50. Prof. Johnson also paid something, amount not stated.

Mr. W. L. Ives, of Alexandria, was then introduced to the audience. He spoke in his usual happy style, and entertained the audience in the most creditable manner.

He was followed by Captain Ferree, who was enthusiastically received, and who spoke with much warmth, eloquence and ability, for some time.

The collection taken amounted to \$137.20.

The Chairman of the business Committee presented a series of

resolutions. They were received, and on motion laid on the table till to-morrow morning.

A letter was then read from the Lynchburg church. The letter was received and laid on the table.

The President then called for a song, and the "Flag of the Free" was then sung, and received with much enthusiasm and frequently applauded.

On motion, a vote of thanks was tendered to the gentlemen who addressed the meeting.

On motion, a vote of thanks was tendered to the Lincoln Monument Association for the entertainment they had afforded them.

R. D. BECKLEY, *President*.

WM. E. WALKER, *Secretary*.

MORNING SESSION.

FRIDAY, August 5th, 1865.

The Convention was called to order at 10 o'clock by the President.

The session was opened with prayer by the Chaplain.

The roll was then called and the members severally answered to their names.

The minutes of the previous meetings were then read and approved.

On motion of Mr. J. M. Brown, Mr. Robert Robinson was elected an honorary member of the Convention. Messrs. Brown, Cook, Hobson, Parker and others opposed accepting any gentlemen as honorary members who were not in attendance. Objection overruled.

Mr. N. H. Anderson moved that all honorary members be exempted from taxes.

Rev. J. M. Brown desired the motion withdrawn and gentlemen be left free to do as they please. Motion withdrawn.

On motion, Capt. Ferree, Wm. L. Ives and Dr. Pettijohn were then elected as honorary members of the Convention.

The Committee appointed to wait on Gen. Butler reported through Mr. Keeling, of Norfolk. He said they had waited upon the General, who said his engagements would not allow him to be present. He sent his best wishes to the Convention, and advised them to be prudent and cautious in their deliberations, as their proceedings would be looked upon with much interest all over the country; yet he assured them that the time was not far distant when they would be in possession of all their rights.

On motion, the report was received and the Committee discharged.

The President then suggested that Mr. Fields Cook be invited to address the Convention in place of General Butler—objected to, as the next thing in order was the unfinished business of yesterday.

Mr. Cook respectfully declined interfering with the regular order of business, especially as he could not fill the place of Gen. Butler.

The following letter was then read by the Secretary. The letter bears the post mark of Washington, D. C., and is directed to Fields Cook and others, of the Colored State Convention, Alexandria, Virginia:

Beware! beware! beware! Fields Cook, you and other negroes will die before the autumn leaves fall upon the unavenged graves of the many Southerners who are buried through our land. You are never to be on an equality with the whites, though superior to many of them; but you, and many of you, will die soon if this Freedmen's Convention, &c., &c., continues, particularly here in Virginia! So beware! The South must and shall be avenged! The combined powers of Heaven and earth cannot prevent it. The black man, like the Indian, will, in a few years, pass from this land. Slavery, as it was called, was Virginia's only anchor. Beware! you are all doomed!

Mr. N. H. Anderson, of Richmond, Va., objected to the reception of the letter, while Mr. Hobson thought it of sufficient importance to claim the most solemn consideration of every one present.

Mr. Fields Cook then followed. He said that the letter had been addressed to him and others, that his life was of but little importance, but let him die where or when he might, so he died in the discharge of his duty, his work he hoped would be fulfilled. Such letters could not intimidate him. He should continue to go forward in the discharge of his duty, let the consequences be what they might.

After the remarks of Mr. Cook the whole convention joined in singing "My Country 'tis of thee."

Mr. Brown resuming, said that the letter should receive due attention, that in the event of the untimely death of any member of this Convention, it would be well to preserve it—it should be kept as a relic.

Mr. Garnett thought the letter should receive no attention from the Convention. The author of the letter was a mean, contemptible coward. There were thousands of men who actually felt as the writer did, living in the State, and doubtless many in the city of Alexandria, and he would not be surprised if the

scoundrel had not been in the Convention during its session, and stepped over to Washington and dropped it in the post office; such men would not dare to accomplish what they threatened. He would treat the letter as he would the cowardly skulk who wrote it—*kick it out*.

Professor Johnson, of New York, spoke in opposition to the reception of the letter. He thought that the importance which its reception would give to the letter would frighten the people of color throughout the State. It was written by some mean, contemptible, cowardly scoundrel, and the best way of disposing of it was to unceremoniously kick it under the table.

Rev. Wm. E. Walker followed with the remark that the importance we had already attached to it was far more than it deserved, and that the time had passed when *we, as colored men*, were to be deterred from asserting our rights. Threats and denunciation now fail to intimidate us. The only power under heaven that we respect, fear, and feel it our duty at present to obey, is *Uncle Sam*. As for the worthless fellow who wrote the letter,

"A whip ought to be placed in every honest man's hand,
To lash the rascal naked though the world."

On motion, the letter was thrown under the table by a unanimous vote.

The next business in order was the unfinished business of yesterday evening—the address which was laid on the table until this morning's session.

On motion, it was taken up, and read the second time, and after some considerable debate, was, by a large vote, tendered to the author.

A series of resolutions were then presented by the chairman.

On motion, the resolutions be adopted by sections, which were read and adopted, as follows:

WHEREAS, The great and all important question now agitating the public mind—and par-
amount to all others in the country—is what are the rights of the colored man, and

WHEREAS, We, constituting a portion of that class denominated colored, claim to be one
in interest and in destiny with the people of the United States, as we and our fathers have
from sixteen hundred and twenty until now, both by our sweat and our blood, helped to make
the country what she is in wealth, in power, and in greatness; and

WHEREAS, The immutable laws of truth and justice entitle us to the same rights in the
same Government with all others, all laws and proscription to the contrary notwithstanding.
Therefore,

1. *Resolved*, That we, as men and citizens, do hereby pledge ourselves, that one's course
shall be the other's course, and that we shall use all proper and lawful means to prevent and
protect each other against an invasion of our civil rights, and to use our efforts to secure
all other rights of which we are denied.

2. *Resolved*, That we claim to be a part of the United States, as represented in the preamble
to the Constitution of the United States. Also as a part of the people which the Declara-

tion of Independence declares to be free and equal, and we believe that the framers of the Constitution and originator and signers of the Declaration of Independence never contemplated otherwise than a perfect equality before the law to all the inhabitants of the Government.

3. *Resolved*, That all opinions entertained or expressed to the contrary show an acquaintance with the history of the country, and of the Constitution of a number of the States; because colored men voted in all the colonies, and even women and slaves voted in New Jersey, and bore arms long after the adoption of the Federal Constitution. They also voted in North Carolina and Tennessee until about thirty or thirty-five years ago, and the Hon. John Bell, on the floor of the Senate of the United States, said that he owed his seat twice in Congress through the influence of negro voters. These are facts that cannot be dealt lightly with, although it is maintained by some that this Government was made for white men.

On motion the third resolution was reconsidered, pending which, on motion, the Convention adjourned.

R. D. BECKLEY, *President*.

WM. E. WALKER, *Secretary*.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Convention met at 3½ o'clock. President R. D. Beckley in the chair. Prayer by Rev. Wm. E. Walker. Roll called and minutes of the morning session read and approved.

The third resolution being in order, on motion, the whole was reconsidered and returned to the author.

Rev. H. H. Garnett moved the appointment of an executive committee, to consist of the President and a member of each delegation, who shall have power to name the place and time for the next annual Convention, and to call the same.

On motion, the President appoint said committee.

The President then appointed the first named persons as reported in their respective delegations as they stood on the roll:

COMMITTEE.

N. H. Anderson, Richmond, Va.; Edward F. Jones, Williamsburg, Va.; Henry Barksdale, Danville, Va.; James H. Banister, Culpeper County, Va.; Edward W. Williams, Norfolk, Va.; Temple Jackson, Columbia; Elijah Monroe, Gloucester County, Va.; Wm. Holland, Halifax County, Va.; Nicholas Rickman, Charlottesville, Va.; Edward Johnson, Farmville, Va.; Lewis W. Carter, Petersburg, Va.; Rev. John Cary, Yorktown; Robert Bailey, Hampton, Va.; Rev. J. R. V. Thomas, Portsmouth, Va.; Walter Williams, Warwick County, Va.; Wm. Moseley, Goochland County, Va.; Rev. Jas. Tynes, Providence Church; Rev. Wm. J. Walker, Petersburg, Va.; Addison Washington, Amherst County, Va.; Coleman Coles, Lynchburg, Va.

The President was then instructed to appoint a committee on printing, whereupon the following gentlemen were appointed: Rev. Wm. E. Walker, Petersburg, Va.; G. W. Parker, and Charles Chinn, Alexandria, Va. The committee was then in-

structed to have five thousand copies of the proceedings printed for distribution.

A report from the finance committee was then made and accepted.

The following resolution was submitted and adopted:

Resolved, That a committee of one from each delegation be appointed to confer with the Freedmens' Bureau, at Richmond, for the purpose of establishing Common Schools throughout the State, or in such sections as may be found practicable.

Rev. Sampson White objected, because he thought it a subject that should be brought before the legislature. The resolution was unanimously adopted, and the President appointed the second named gentlemen on each delegation as said committee:

COMMITTEE.

Charles Chinn, Alexandria; Jordan Smith, Manchester; Benj. Jackson, Danville; Wm. Keeling, Norfolk; J. W. Jackson, Gloucester; Fairfax Taylor, Charlottesville; Rev. Wm. E. Walker, Petersburg; Wm. Davis, Hampton; Walter Williams, Warwick; Rev. James Tynes, Providence Church; Addison Washington, Amherst and Nelson; Fields Cook, Richmond; Richard Hill, Williamsburg; Edward Ambler, Culpeper; Temple Jackson, Farmville; Robt. Ruffin, Yorktown; Joshua Wilson, Portsmouth; Wm. Mosely, Goochland; Edward Brooks, Fredericksburg; Samuel Kelser, Lynchburg.

Rev. Wm. E. Walker offered the following resolution:

Resolved, That a vote of thanks be tendered to the citizens of Alexandria for their kindness and courtesy to the members of the Convention.

On motion, the resolution was unanimously adopted.

Rev. Wm. E. Walker was appointed speaker for the evening.

On motion, the Convention adjourned to meet at 7½ o'clock P. M.

R. D. BECKLEY, *President*.

WM. E. WALKER, *Secretary*.

EVENING SESSION.

Meeting was called to order at 7½ o'clock P. M. President R. D. Beckley in the chair. The roll was called and the minutes of the afternoon session read and approved.

On motion, Rev. Wm. E. Walker be tendered five dollars for the laborious and arduous duties as Secretary during the session of the Convention. The motion was amended by striking out five and inserting ten. Mr. Walker promptly declined the offer, which was received with applause.

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Mr. Brown, of the business committee, then offered the following resolutions, which were adopted by a rising vote:

We, the American citizens of African descent of the State of Virginia, in Convention assembled, in the city of Alexandria, this 4th day of August, A. D., 1865, do adopt the following preamble and resolutions:

WHEREAS, In the darkest hour of American history, when treason and rebellion swept over the South, we remained loyal to the Government of the United States, and when the Government called us to arms we gladly came forth to fight her battles, and to protect the flag that had enslaved us.

AND WHEREAS, As peace is restored to the land, and the sound of the drum, or the tramp of troops, or the boom of cannon is heard no more, and the States so late in rebellion are about being restored to their relation in the Federal Union under pretended loyalty:

Resolved, That any attempt to reconstruct the States, so late in open rebellion against the General Government, without giving to American citizens of African descent all the rights and immunities accorded to white citizens so late in open arms and hostility against the Government of the United States, is an act of gross injustice done to the loyal blacks, who compose the great loyal element of the Southern States.

2d. That a petition be sent to Congress in the name of this Convention, respectfully, yet most earnestly requesting them not to receive the Senators and Representatives elected from this State—Virginia—to seats in the Congress of the United States, and to keep the States under military control until all the rights and immunities accorded to white citizens shall be accorded to us.

AND WHEREAS, Good rulers make good and true subjects. This is illustrated in the case of Queen Victoria on the one hand and Louis Napoleon on the other; and whereas this rule holds good with reference to ruler, from parent to king;

AND WHEREAS, The reason why American rulers, and especially those in the Southern States, have been so thoroughly detested by colored men, is because they have invariably hated us, and have joined hands with our oppressors, and in many cases were our enemies and our oppressors.

AND WHEREAS, In the process of reconstruction and reappointing the officers of this State, we cannot look upon any one act, either by the provisional government of the State of Virginia, or by any person holding office, either by the appointment of Gov. Peirpoint, or as the result of any election ordered by his authority, have proved friendly to us, but in every case have they sought to degrade us. Therefore,

Resolved, That we, the members of the convention of colored citizens of Virginia assembled, do most respectfully, but earnestly call upon Governor Peirpoint to define his position in reference to the repeal of all the black laws of Virginia which oppress and degrade us; also, in reference to the franchise of colored citizens of Virginia.

Resolved, That unless he does this favorably, we cannot regard him as our friend.

Resolved, That the very dubious course of the Governor has left both us and all true friends of the Union in great uncertainty as to his fidelity to the principles upon which he was exalted to his position as Governor of Virginia.

Resolved, That we thank all true friends of our race of all schools, but especially Hon. Charles Sumner, Benjamin Wade, Henry Wilson, Generals Terry and Turner, who have so recently suppressed the election of our enemies, but none have a greater share of our love and respect than General B. F. Butler, who first decided the fate of slavery.

After which, three hearty cheers were given, and a tiger for General Butler.

After the adoption of the preamble and resolutions, the Lincoln Monument Association sung with excellent effect "The Glory of the Free."

A motion was then made by a prominent member of the Convention, to reconsider the motion made and carried at a previous meeting, to return the "Address to the Loyal Citizens and Congress of the United States of America," to the author.

This was carried; yeas 42, nays 5. The motion that the Convention adopt the "Address," was then made and carried with the same result.

AN ADDRESS

To the Loyal Citizens and Congress of the United States of America.

We, the undersigned members of a Convention of colored citizens of the State of Virginia, would respectfully represent that, although we have been held as slaves, and denied all recognition as a constituent of your nationality for almost the entire period of the duration of your Government, and that by *your permission* we have been denied either home or country, and deprived of the dearest rights of human nature: yet when you and our immediate oppressors met in deadly conflict upon the field of battle—the one to destroy and the other to save your Government and nationality, *we*, with scarce an exception, in our inmost souls espoused your cause, and watched, and prayed, and waited, and labored for *your* success.

In spite of repeated discouragements we continued to flock to your lines, giving invaluable information, guiding your scouting parties and your minor expeditions, digging in your trenches, driving your teams, and in every way lightening the labors of your soldiers; concealing and aiding your soldiers who were escaping from the prison pens of a barbarous foe, and when reluctantly permitted, we rallied by myriads under your banner, and by the heroism illustrated at Fort Wagner, Port Hudson, Miliken's Bend and before Petersburg and Richmond, we demonstrated our capacity to understand the *ideas* of the contest, and our worthiness to stand side by side with the bravest in fighting it out.

When the contest waxed long, and the result hung doubtfully, you appealed to us for help, and how well we answered is written in the rosters of the two hundred thousand colored troops now enrolled in your service; and as to our undying devotion to your cause, let the uniform acclamation of escaped prisoners, "whenever we saw a black face we felt sure of a friend," answer.

Well, the war is over, the rebellion is "put down," and we are *declared* free! Four fifths of our enemies are paroled or amnestied, and the other fifth are being pardoned, and the President has, in his efforts at the reconstruction of the civil government of the States, late in rebellion, left us entirely at the mercy of these subjugated but unconverted rebels, in *everything* save the privilege of bringing us, our wives and little ones, to the auction block. He has, so far as we can understand the tendency and bearing of his action in the case, remitted us for all our civil rights, to men, a majority of whom regard *our devotion to your cause and flag* as that which decided the contest against them! This we regard as destructive of all we hold dear, and in the name of God, of justice, of humanity, of good faith, of truth and righteousness, we do most solemnly and earnestly protest. Men and Brethren, in the hour of your peril, you called upon us, and despite all time-honored *interpretation of constitutional obligations*, we came at your call and you are saved; and now we beg, we pray, we entreat you *not* to desert us in this, the hour of *our* peril.

We *know* these men—*know* them *well*—and we assure you that, with the majority of them, loyalty is only "lip deep," and that their professions of loyalty are used as a cover to the cherished design of getting restored to their former relations with the Federal Government, and then, by all sorts of "unfriendly legislation," to render the freedom you have given us more intolerable than the slavery they intended for us.

We warn you in time that our only safety is in keeping them under Governors of the *military persuasion* until you have so amended the Federal Constitution that it will prohibit the States from making any distinction between citizens on account of race or color. In one word, the only salvation for us besides the power of the Government, is in the *possession of the ballot*. Give us this, and we will protect ourselves. No class of men relatively as numerous as we were ever oppressed, when armed with the ballot. But, 'tis said we are ignorant. Admit it. Yet who denies we *know* a traitor from a loyal man, a gentleman from a rowdy, a friend from an enemy? The twelve thousand colored votes of the State of New York sent Governor Seymour home and Reuben E. Fenton to Albany. Did not they know who to vote for?

If all the colored men of that great State could have voted in 1862, Horatio Seymour would never have left his home, and the brave, noble and chivalrous Wadsworth would have kept the honor of his State untarnished through those two dark and memorable years. How many colored men voted for McClellan? How many failed to vote for Lincoln and Johnson, and could every colored man in the land have voted, what countless thousands

would have been added to the majorities of the latter? All we ask is an *equal chance* with the white *traitors* varnished and jappanned with the oath of amnesty. Can you deny us this and still keep faith with us? "But," say some, "the blacks will be over-reached by the superior knowledge and cunning of the whites." Trust us for that. We will never be deceived a second time. "But," they continue, "the planters and landowners will have them in their power, and dictate the way their votes shall be cast." We did not know before that we were to be left to the tender mercies of these landed rebels for employment.—Verily, we thought the Freedmen's Bureau was organized and clothed with power to protect us from this very thing, by compelling those for whom we labored to pay us, whether they liked our political opinions or not! In addition, there is something said about assigning freedmen and refugees forty acres of land each, and a chance for pre-emption and purchase when it is confiscated or sold for taxes. The noble and gallant soldier at the head of that Bureau said the other day to one of his subordinates, "If you find a man working the freedmen as slaves, set off his house, garden and yard, take possession of his land, and set the freedmen at work upon it yourself."

Have the employers of white voters always controlled their votes? Let the history of elections answer. But some of our friends fear we might vote with our former masters. What if we did? Whose business is it? If they legislated according to the old ideas, we would never do it a second time; and if they legislated according to the new idea, we would vote for them again. Is it against us that we are known to possess a high regard for *gentlemen*—that we like to be with them—that we prefer them to the rude, the vulgar, and the unworthy (other things being equal)—that we would not vote for traitors, nor at the dictation of mitred priest nor rich rumseller? Can the mass of the white voters say as much? Is any one more skeptical now as to our capacity to use well the ballot, than almost all of you were two years ago as to our ability to use the bayonet? And yet how soon were those doubts swept in oblivion, and we affirm that the same course in regard to the ballot—trying it—will be followed by the same result. Only give us the chance, and we promise you, before God and mankind, that, by patient industry, by wise economy, by prudence and uprightness, by intense loyalty, by unremitting zeal in the cause of learning, of culture and intelligence, we will justify and vindicate before heaven and earth the wisdom of your course, and will demonstrate that the *right* way is the *safe* way.

In view of the late occurrences, can any one of you doubt for a moment our fate, if left to the Legislatures and Governors of these restored States?

Look at Governor Peirpoint, of this State—elected by men of unconditional loyalty, and by all supposed to be loyal to freedom and equal rights. Before he is in Richmond a month he gives completely over to the "Virginia element," deserting his former friends, and calls together the Legislature for the purpose of *re-enfranchising* the rebels of Virginia, and coolly tells them they have nothing to do with negro suffrage! Behold the potency of wine and fine dinners!

When the United States Court sat at Norfolk and the Grand Jury indicted fifty-seven of the leading traitors of Virginia, the District Attorney, through some strange chicanery, kept twenty of them off the list. He doubtless has his reward in the promise of their votes and influence to place him in Congress.

These are the men who have been regarded as *our friends*, and if *they* do such things, what may we expect from those whom you regard as our enemies?

We are "sheep in the midst of wolves," and nothing but the military arm of the Government prevents us and all the *truly* loyal white men from being driven from the land of our birth. Do not then, we beseech you, give to one of these "wayward sisters" the rights they abandoned and forfeited when they rebelled until you have secured *our* rights by the aforementioned amendment to the Constitution.

Let your action in our behalf be thus clear and emphatic, and our respected President, who, we feel confident, desires only to *know* your will, to act in harmony therewith, will give you his most earnest and cordial co-operation: and the Southern States, through your enlightened and just legislation, will speedily award us our rights. Thus not only will the *arms* of the rebellion be surrendered, but the *ideas* also.

The issue is too momentous, the stake is too incalculably great, to admit of delay or quibbles about the constitutionality of the thing.

Good faith, honor, gratitude, justice and right, are the elements of law that are higher than all constitutions or statutes of men's exalting; and you have only in your omnipotence to say "let it be done," and it will be done.

It is this quibbling and compromising that have ground us to powder in the past, and plunged you into the vortex of civil war; and you by the Living God, to deliver us from a repetition of this grinding process, and your children from the recurrence of your late calamities.

Trusting that you will not be deaf to the appeal herein made, nor unmindful of the warnings which the malignity of the rebels are constantly giving you, and that you will rise to the height of being just for the sake of justice, we remain, yours for our flag, our country and humanity.

Rev. Wm. E. Walker was then introduced, and addressed the Convention, "on the relation which the Colored people of this country sustain to the American Union."

The address was received with marked attention, and elicited much applause.

After the address, a number of other gentlemen addressed the Convention, occupying five minutes each, amidst the greatest enthusiasm and delight.

Rev. Wm. E. Walker offered the following resolution, which was adopted :

Resolved, That as to the question whether we are citizens of the United States or not, we refer all those who say we are not to Chancellor Kent, Chief Justice; Attorney General Bates, in his famous decision in 1862, and last, though not least, to the acts of that eminent and distinguished Statesman and Jurist, Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase.

Rev. John M. Brown submitted the following resolutions, which were also adopted :

Resolved, 1. That we thank the Government of the United States for the Emancipation Proclamation, the amendment to the Constitution of the United States, as well as all other acts of Congress in our interest.

2. That we most profoundly sympathize with all who have been made to suffer by the war, but we most profoundly thank God for all the results of the war, viz : The freedom of our race, and the prospect of the speedy restoration of all our rights as men.

3. That we thank Congress, especially for the establishment of the Freedmen's Bureau, and especially do we thank the President for the appointment of that *brave and Christian* soldier, Major General O. O. Howard, as its Chief, giving us the assurance that all of the interests of our people will be cared for.

4. That in the appointment of Colonel O. Brown, as Assistant Commissioner for the State of Virginia, we have a *tried, true, and earnest* friend, and pledge him our hearty co-operation.

5. That in the appointment of Prof. W. H. Woodbury, as Superintendent of the schools for colored persons in the State of Virginia, we have a *zealous worker* in the cause of education, and a *fearless champion of the African race*.

6. That we most heartily thank all the Northern associations for all the efforts which they have put forth for the education of our people, and pledge our co operation in every particular.

7. That we thank God for the restoration of peace, with liberty to serve Him according to the dictates of our consciences.

8. That we most deeply regret that when peace came our nation had to mourn the loss of her chief, Abraham Lincoln, and we take this method to assure all true lovers of republican institutions and impartial justice, that no portion of the nation more deeply and profoundly mourn the loss of our dear friend, and we do most deeply sympathize with all who mourn, but most especially with his bereaved and saddened family, and we pray God to sustain his illustrious predecessor, Andrew Johnson, and make him more than a match for his wily foes.

9. That we return thanks to Almighty God, the giver of all good and perfect gifts, for all things, and especially for the freedom of our race, and that in all the strength of our manhood we agree to agitate, agitate, agitate, until our manhood is respected.

The following preamble and resolution was offered by Rev. G. W. Parker, and unanimously adopted :

Inasmuch as we are permitted to see and enjoy the wonders of God's mercy, in the peaceable assemblage of a Convention of our people from different parts of Virginia, and of the country, and to be able here to erect our Ebenezer, saying "Hitherto has the Lord helped us;" and as we believe, also, that whatever advantage we have obtained as a people in connection with, and growing out of the late rebellion, has been by the special interference and blessing of God in answer to prayer—as he said, "I have seen, I have seen, the affliction

Resolved, That while we, under the cheering influences of this delightful, and we trust profitable convocation, would thank God and take courage, we at the same time feel that there still remains in the present crisis an increased necessity for earnest prayer and supplication; and we would, therefore, appoint the 1st day of October, 1865, as a day of humiliation and prayer to Almighty God, that what He has thus generously begun, he will carry forward by inclining the people of the State, and the authorities thereof, and of the citizens and authorities of the Government, to be favorable to our cause, until we shall enjoy all the privileges which it is the gracious purpose of our God to give, and we would earnestly and respectfully call upon all Christians to engage with us for the accomplishment of this object.

On the eve of adjournment, the President arose, and in the most feeling and impressive manner, addressed the Convention, and spoke of the necessity of calling upon Almighty God for assistance in this our great struggle for our rights. During the delivery of this address, which it was impossible to note, the audience became deeply affected, and by request of the President, they all knelt in solemn prayer to Almighty God, with Rev. John M. Brown, who invoked the throne of grace in a manner that will long be remembered by all who were present.

After the hymn, "Blest be the tie that binds," the Convention adjourned *sine die*.

R. D. BECKLEY, *President.*

WM. E. WALKER, *Secretary.*