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Johnson, Wm.

TO THE PEOPLE OF ARKANSAS.

When conventions are meeting in almost every Southern State, and your brethern are determining for themselves their future political associations, it is surely time that your sovereignty was convoked, and the position of Arkansas made known. You are not less free than they—not less capable of shaping your own destinies. A refusal to give you the legal opportunity for that action, would be a denial both of your right and your capacity for self-government. Agents of yours could not thus insult your intelligence and impair your liberties. It is our hope, therefore, that the present General Assembly will speedily provide for a convention, and that the delegates will soon convene, clothed with all your powers and ready to proclaim your sovereign will. It was by ordinance of such a convention that Arkansas became a member of the Federal Union. In like manner, she ought now to decide the question of remaining in the Union, or withdrawing from it. That is the issue which the perils of the times press upon you. One of higher moment could not be presented. Considering its magnitude, all citizens of the State—and especially such as hold office from you—are bound, in interest, honor and patriotism, to meet it directly, and announce their opinions with candor and plainness. It is in recognition of that duty that we now address you.

The objects for which the Union was formed are set forth in the preamble to the Constitution of the United States. They are there declared to be "*to establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.*"

For a time, these objects were mainly kept in view in the administration of the government. The result was a development of greatness, and a steady growth of prosperity, never surpassed in the world's history. But, at length, a spirit of hostility to the Southern institution of negro slavery manifested itself in New England. Like a leaven of poison, it spread through Northern sentiment, deepening in virulence, until the strength of the religious, social

and political systems was corrupted by its influence. Finally, on November 6th, 1860, by decisive majorities in all the Northern States but three, and by pluralities there, and without the vote of one single Southern State, it elected its candidates to the Presidency and Vice-Presidency, upon a platform *destructive of our rights, branding our institutions as infamous, decreeing the equality of the negro with ourselves and our children, and dooming us, in the end, with murderous certainty, to all the horrors of insurrection and servile war.*

The incendiary agitations, the unbrotherly assailment, the brutal and bloody raids, the more than devilish hatred against the South, characterizing this anti-slavery crusade, completely nullified the objects of Union. They have overthrown justice, destroyed our domestic tranquillity, denied to us all defence of our rights, disregarded our welfare, and deprived us of the chief blessings of liberty.

These intolerable wrongs have relieved the Southern States of any obligation to continue united with the hostile States of the North,—leaving them free to withdraw from the Union and confederate together, outside and independent of it. Nevertheless, they have made sacrifice of a just resentment, and restrained well-grounded apprehensions, so far as to allow their Senators and Representatives once more to meet in Congress with those of the North. It was right to expect that the fanatical portion of the latter,—who, with their constituents, had wronged the South, and violated the Constitution, and brought the Union in jeopardy,—would at once proffer full indemnity for the past and ample security for the future. That expectation met with no fulfillment: the merest thought of fulfilling it had no resting place in the mind of any Black Republican member of Congress.

When this became evident,—as it did within ten days after the two Houses convened,—self-respect and loyalty to their section would have justified all the Senators and Representatives from the South in vacating their seats and returning to their constituents. But still they were patient, forbearing, and willing to be reconciled.—In the form of resolutions raising special committees, and propositions amendatory of the Constitution, they urgently entreated the North to do justice. Except from that noble but powerless minority, the Northern conservatives, the only answer was a contemptuous silence, or an insulting refusal.

To those of you who have looked for an adjustment of the issues between the sections, two things will seem almost incredible: the humble moderation of the South, and the fierce, triumphant arro

gance of the North. The most "ultra" Southern demands,—and none among you will deem the word "ultra" applicable,—have been, that the Constitution of the United States should be so amended as to secure these objects :

1. A recognition of the right of property in slaves, in the slaveholding States that now exist or may hereafter exist, and in the District of Columbia, and in all the Territories during the territorial existence ; with a denial to Congress and the territorial legislatures of all power to prohibit slavery ; and a requirement that the United States shall protect all rights of property,—property in slaves included,—wherever the federal jurisdiction extends.

2. A provision for the admission of Territories as States, with or without slavery, as their constitutions may prescribe, whenever their population is sufficient to entitle them to one Representative in Congress.

3. A provision that slaveholders, while passing through or temporarily sojourning in non-slaveholding States, shall not be deprived of their slave property.

4. A provision that Congress shall never prohibit or interfere against the trade in slaves between the slaveholding States and Territories.

5. A provision that the fugitive slave law of 1850 shall be faithfully enforced ; with a denial of representation in Congress to States that nullify it, while their nullifying statutes remain unrepealed ; and the right to the owner of a fugitive slave, when robbed of his property, to recover the value against the county in which the injury may be committed.

6. Provisions making these new guarantees, together with the existing guaranty of representation upon the three-fifths basis, forever unalterable.

We believe there are not five hundred men in Arkansas who would tolerate the thought of accepting less than the foregoing propositions contain. Without such a settlement, there could be no end to the slavery dispute within the Union, except the ultimate extinction of our institutions, the overthrow of our civilization, the impoverishment of our people, the return of our rich fields to the forest, and other calamities beside which even these are but trifles. And yet we can and do assure you, and it may be implicitly received as true, that there is no hope earthly of obtaining these guaranties, or their equivalent, until we throw off our subjection to the hostile majorities of the North. The Black Republicans are unbending and relentless in their resolve to carry out the platform upon which Lincoln and Hamlin were elected. Lincoln himself, it is now definitely ascertained, is equally resolute in the same purpose. Whatever professions of "conservatism" may emanate from him or his followers—whatever assurances of a better disposition on his part may be given out by Southern Submissionists—they will be but empty words, intended to delay action, and reduce the South into acceptance of her own complete and irreversible ruin and degradation.

A victorious fanaticism never lowers its standard. The Black Republican party cannot do so without self-destruction. Its leaders recognize that fact; they are aware that their organization has but one element of cohesion, the anti-slavery sentiment. In all other respects, perpetual discord reigns in their ranks, and irreconcilable antagonisms distract them. While the slavery issue is kept alive, these differences will only sharpen their appetites for united assaults upon the South; but let that issue be fairly settled, and every shade of opinion upon other questions will become the nucleus of a separate faction, shivering the Black Republican organization, and leaving Lincoln without a party to sustain him. Such men will make no such sacrifice willingly. They will maintain their aggressive attitude and press it to its legitimate conclusion, the destruction of the slave States, on the one hand, or disunion, and perhaps civil war, on the other. By that course only can their sectional power be preserved. That being so, it is puerile to go to them for concessions—*they will concede nothing.*

If the South remains in this confederacy, she surrenders to Black Republicanism. The effect of that will be, that slavery will be fixedly limited and imprisoned within the States where it now exists. It will never be permitted to expand into the Territories. At the end of a certain period, the entire habitable area of the slaveholding States will be filled with whites and blacks. After this fated time of repletion, the increase of both races will still go on, with an accumulating ratio, from year to year, the increase of negroes predominating in the most frightful excess. The overburdened land will groan under the number of those it must feed; but still their numbers will increase. *Finally, there will be a conflict for supremacy of races, and the blacks will be exterminated; or else the white man must abandon his country forever to the negro.*

This is what Northern fanatics mean when they speak of “surrounding slavery with a cordon of free States, and confining it where it is, until, like the scorpion ringed with fire, it shall sting itself to death.” This is the platform of the Black Republican party—of the President elect; the platform upon which the Government is to be administered after the fourth of March next; *the platform of the Union.* Are you ready to accept it? Will you submit to it?

South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Louisiana and Texas have declared that they will not submit. One of them has already seceded; the others will most certainly follow. We believe that Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee,

Missouri and Kentucky will be out of the Union within sixty days. Whether they secede so soon or not, we hold that Arkansas should. The success of the Black Republican party has left about the Union nothing to make her continuance in it desirable; the secession of her sister "Cotton States" appeals to all her natural sympathies. Identified with them in interest and feeling, she should seek their destiny, and permit nothing to delay her in re-uniting with them, and building up a government that shall first acknowledge openly, and then protect honestly, all her rights.

Is any further appeal needed in behalf of the immediate secession of Arkansas? If so, there is one yet to be made, which would reach to colder hearts than yours, and inflame a more sluggish blood than you possess. The federal government—backed up by our Black Republican enemies, and by a few Southern traitors, yet more base,—is about to resurrect the doctrines of King George the Third, and Lord North, and of the Tories of 1776. As they made war on our forefathers, for asserting the unalienable right of self-government, so it proposes to make war on the seceding States, for the same cause. Already the movement is begun. The "Wide Awake" clubs of the Black Republican party are mustering for another raid. The Governors of Black Republican States are conspiring against us, and urging their people to be ready for the attack. Members of Black Republican legislatures are advocating the appropriation of millions of dollars, to put their militia on a war footing. It is believed that orders will be issued, if they have not already been sent, for reinforcing the federal forts throughout the South, and thus attempting to terrify us into submission to abolition rule, and to what is soon to be a foreign and hostile government.

Against this array, the seceding States stand firm and undaunted. The gallant Palmetto Republic will meet the first shock. Perhaps before you read this address, the blood of her sons will have been poured out as incense to liberty. When that shall happen, the chivalry of the South will rush to her relief, and, for every drop of Carolinian blood, scores of the invaders of her soil will be sacrificed. Arkansians are too brave and magnanimous to be unrepresented in that struggle; they will not be. They will not only perform their duty towards Carolina, but towards every other resisting State. Missouri especially, surrounded as she is by abolitionism, and more exposed than other States, must command the sympathy of all our people,

and the fraternal tribute of their arms and their blood, whenever needed.

Arkansians will admit no title to their affections in a government that contemplates the invasion of Southern States, and sets on foot a desolating war against them. That government is not the Union which our fathers made,—a Union of equality and consent. It is the Union they fought against,—a Union of tyranny and force. Let us imitate them, acting with the Southern States.

Any delay or hesitation on your part will only serve to embolden your enemies and make civil war inevitable. In that case, they will regard you as sympathising with them. The descendents of this generation, looking back to the great events in which we are actors, will charge to the account of Southern "Union men" and Submissionists at least one half the blood spilled in the contest. Let no such innocent blood be chargeable upon Arkansas. Let her promptly assume her proper place in the seceding column, and secure out of the Union the rights that have been wrested from her within it.

In thus acting, we will be entitled to the sympathies of the friends of genuine liberty throughout the earth. We will have the good wishes of thousands of true men in the very heart of the abolition section. All such will desire our success, not as a victory over the North, but as a victory against the miserable fanaticism that has degraded the North and broken up the American Confederation.

If we secede, and confederate together,—*under the present Constitution, with such amendments as will secure equality and forever prevent sectional agitation*,—our achievement will be written on the same historic page with that which rescued the continent from British dominion and made it free. The work will be similar in its progress and dimensions. When such a constitution is adopted and put in operation, the intellect and patriotism of the North will recognize the purity of our motives and the necessity of our conduct. The now weak sentiment of real conservatism will become strong in the non-slaveholding States. The Black Republican party will go down before it. All manner of fanaticism will be annihilated. The Northern and the Southern States will then stand face to face as equals.

Then may be realized that which is the main hope, if not the only one, of every patriot here,—a reconstruction of this entire Union, upon a basis embracing the security of the Southern people in every relation, and the unquestionable equality of all the States.

Then a new and still more perfect Union will take the place of the one now overthrown, as it superseded the first league of the thirteen colonies.

IMMEDIATE SECESSION IS THE TRUE AND ONLY PATH THAT LEADS TO THAT RESULT!

R. W. JOHNSON,
U. S. Senate.

T. C. HINDMAN,
House of Representatives.

WASHINGTON, D. C.
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