

CHAIRMAN HARRIS: The next speaker will be Mr. F. Eugene Corbie of the College of the City of New York.

MR. CORBIE: Mr. Chairman and Fellow Students: The last speaker has practically taken away from me all that I intended to say. Nevertheless, I shall try to be a little more fundamental and attempt to go into the psychology of the things that make for discrimination, so that you may have something to work upon. If psychology is anything, discrimination is bad, because it makes for differences which must manifest themselves sooner or later.

Moreover, the thing that you call culture is not something that can be picked up on the streets. All that makes for your civilization is something that you have got by contact. If you as a superior race, so called, having all the things that make for your culture, attempt to adjudge me because of my poor standards, and at the same time you keep me in an environment that makes for crime and debasement, I say you are not logically clear when you talk of my inferiority.

So when we ask you to stop discrimination and give us the right to come to the fountain of life, yea into your very colleges where you get your best, so that we may assimilate of your best, we are asking only that we, too, be given the right to develop ourselves as manfully and as womanly as you, in order that in time we, too, may make a contribution to your glorious civilization.

When we talk about equality we are not asking the right to marry a white woman, because we feel that no social legislature can dictate to one human being how this man or that woman shall determine her life, or who shall be his or her wife or husband. We feel that that is an individual contract which society itself regulates. Moreover, the psychology of setting up standards is bad. Sometimes I wonder where is that spirit of moral virtue which should permeate your soul. When I look back and see my race transformed from its blackness until today it is so hypothetically white, when I see there is very little inter-marriage among the races, and then when I hear the clamor for purity of race, I wonder where the white women are and what they are thinking of that double standard of morality which is set up by white men.

On that count let me say that if you have due respect for your women, believe it, too, that we are human, and we love to respect our women. Respect yourself, sir, and I ask you out of common decency of mind, don't make my household a house of debauchery. If you are going to say your white women must be pure, we want ours to be pure.

Now when we ask that, what is the contribution which the black man has made that entitled him to a fair share of the rights of citizens? You have the gift of genius and you see your inventions manifesting themselves. Have you ever thought of the cotton seed as the gift of Africa? Did you think of that genius that today has been the nucleus of your very big economic life? Have you thought of the sacrifices in human flesh and labor that have enriched you so?

And after all, is it not right that you give us the chance to be men and women? Think if you will of the fact that although you lashed us with the whip as we toiled for you, transplanted and transformed, we accepted your God, and when we hadn't your reason to appeal to, we appealed to the Christ that you gave us. And then we sang the song of love. That is our contribution. We ask you to give us not the chance to be beggars, but the right to live. Give us the chance to be men and women, so that carrying on in the spirit of love eternal, we may be able to live here as one common people, associated, friendly, but by no means familiar; that your contribution and my contribution shall stand out for emulation in time, so that when life with us shall be no more, the black race we represent will leave something for the coming black race, and race pride as such, without race hatred, will be a manifest thing for the good of the universe.

CHAIRMAN HARRIS: The next speaker will be Mr. Robert A. Mallory of Cornell University and Auburn Theological Seminary.

MR. MALLORY: Mr. Chairman and Fellow Students: I am reminded through all this discussion on the race problem of those two British Tommies who were in a shell hole in France with the shells bursting around them on every side. One of them became disgusted, and to him the other said, "Well, if you know of a better hole, go to it."

We are in this problem, this great, deep, broad problem of the race question, and I know that we cannot evade it. If any of you know how to evade it, go to it. The rest of us have got to stay and face it.

It is a hard task which we have before us, one which challenges every bit of energy and sympathy we possess. We are not convinced "God's in His heaven, all's right with the world." We are convinced rather that mankind by his stupidity and hardness of heart has brought our struggling civilization into a most miserable mess, and God is here present among humanity, striving his hardest to straighten it all out.

There is in the Declaration of Independence the assertion that