

wide world, a written Constitution containing so noble and perfect a truth, as is implied—indeed, it may be said, expressed—in this language. It goes beyond the English system; and goes beyond ours in Maryland. There is no removal by the address of any, or all the other departments of the government. Nothing but misconduct, a charge of misbehavior in office, sustained by proof, will remove a judge of the United States. And how, sir, was this received by men thoroughly imbued with that American spirit, that love of republican liberty, which forms the best security for our hopes? The *Federalist*—not only one of the ablest publications, but decidedly the ablest of that day, coming, as it did, from the pen of Mr. Madison and other patriots—considers this, as one of the brightest gems in the Constitution of the United States. (Mr. Chambers here read, from the *Federalist*, several passages to the point.)

The most distinguished American jurists, (he said,) have concurred in the opinion. Wilson, Tucker, Story, all, who have deeply and thoroughly investigated the subject, all concur, in regarding this principle, as the great sheet anchor, by which our national ship of state is secured.

(He here read several of these authorities, and said:)

I would invoke, Mr. President, for these opinions, the most devoted attention. I do not claim it for the sake of my own argument, but because it is the written recorded counsel of men, who were ornaments of the age in which they lived—men of undoubted intelligence and wisdom, and of undoubted purity. Sir, I speak from no motive to obtain approbation from any quarter; I speak from a deep, a solemn, and abiding conviction, that I am addressing men about to perform a duty, the consequences of which will be felt for weal or for wo, through all time, by every portion of our community. If the question were merely to take one man from the bench, and put another in his place, it would be comparatively insignificant. But here the highest possible obligations teach us to regard ourselves, as the guardians of all the immense interests involved in this great subject. An experiment, which is tried to-day, and, if it fails, leaves us to-morrow to return to our condition, is a trifle. If it affected only our pecuniary interests, they might be repaired; if it operated, only upon matters of party dominion; it might be submitted to, for a time. But here is a step proposed, which can never be retraced; here are interests far beyond the temporary possession of political power or wealth; interests dear to every human being in society, in every relation they bear to each other, and for all coming time. The rights at stake are the rights of persons, the rights of property and of reputation. And pray, sir, what other rights, as *citizens*, can we have? All we hold dear, is included. I disclaim, with disdain, all political influences. Upon other occasions I have felt them, nor have I disguised them; but on a great subject like this, affecting all portions of the State, party considerations sink into utter and absolute insignificance. Parties will rise

and rule, and pass away; but the administration of law and justice, and the protection and security of all our rights, civil and social, should be perpetual. I hope every gentleman here will forget not only his political interests, but his political prejudices and antipathies, if he has indulged any. The poor, the injured, the oppressed, the helpless—the orphan—the desolate widow—all, who are objects of the care and concern of government—all appeal to us, as the guardians of their interests; all, who now or who may hereafter occupy a place in these classes, in the long line of generations yet to succeed us; all call upon us to provide for their security. If you fail to provide for them, and to do it now; the neglect can be repaired by no human power. They can look for it no where, but in the firm and unbending course of the law; and, if now, by our action, that course be checked; if the fountain be now polluted, or its stream disturbed; no time, no power hereafter can restrain the erratic current, or purify its source.

We have seen the opinion of the sages who framed our admirable system of government for the United States. Let us now, for a moment, attend to the lesson taught us by those distinguished men who framed our own State institutions. Veneration and respect have universally been accorded to them. Their devotion to free principles of government was unbounded, their intelligence unquestioned. Their work, and all we know of them, commend them to our highest regards. Above all, they lived at a period and under circumstances which led them to employ all their noble faculties, without any mixture of sectional, personal or party feelings or interests. All were patriots, all pursued one common object—the common good. Ambition and the love of office, had not exerted their evil influence upon their passions and prejudices, nor warped their judgments. All were governed by the high and holy sense of duty to the State.

I am not to be told, Mr. President, of the progress of the age, the change in men and things since their day. It is most true, we have witnessed astonishing changes, such as our ancestors, even in '76, never thought of, in the wildest dreams of fancy. But, in what departments are those changes? Surely not in the eternal laws of truth and morals. These are co-existent with the Deity. They are eternal as his throne. They came down to man with the immortal spirit which his Maker breathed into him as his life. Progress may be made in arts, in science, in the various applications of the great principles which govern matter, in the discovery of new principles, if you please, as well as in the modification and application of such as are known, and in all inventions which adapt such principles to the use of our race. But the laws of moral truth and moral propriety are immutable. You may adapt the great principle and power of steam to the propulsion of the car, or you may adopt the still more wonderful, but subtle power of the electric fluid, in the transmission of thought. But the obligations of the moral law are the same amid all these vast changes.