

mutual good. And among these rights is that of property—a right existing and exercised by every people from time immemorial—the divine writings clearly asserting the existence and enjoyment of this right. I might almost say this right of property existed at the first dawn of creation, for God bestowed upon Adam and Eve the fair garden of Eden. And we find this right again and again reiterated and acknowledged in the divine history. We find the ancient men of those days asserting their right to their wells, to their flocks and their herds, their men-servants and their maid-servants. And we find by tracing the pages of history that as society increased and multiplied, this right of property became more fixed and determined in its character, governed and controlled by certain established laws and principles.

This great right of property, existing as it does in our nation and State at the present date, or rather I might say at the time of the commencement of the existing war, was one well defined, governed by principles well known and comprehended by its owners. Property, Mr. President, is the wealth of a nation, and the substance of its people. It is that which forms the strong and binding tie of love and affection for our native land. Why does the humble peasant with his lowly cot, his few acres, his rude and almost valueless implements, esteem and love them? It is because they are his and he is protected in their enjoyment.

Now, if we desire to render a people unhappy, turbulent and dissatisfied, we can adopt no surer plan than depriving them of that which they are justly entitled to, without a just cause or a just compensation. It is dangerous in the extreme for a nation to adopt any measure which would interfere with this great principle and right, or which might render it unstable and insecure. Just so far as you render this right uncertain and insecure, so far do you weaken the confidence and affection of a people.

I do not propose to enter into an argument here to show that slaves are property. You that doubt the right, take the Scriptures and read them, study this great foundation of all government and law; and if you cannot discern this right by your own study take a "view of slavery" as compiled by the Rev. John Henry Hopkins, D. D., LL. D., Bishop of the diocese of Vermont, and it will aid you and throw much light upon a subject which to many is dark. But there is one thing we can learn in the sacred pages without the assistance of the bishop; that is, to cast the beam from our own eye, before beholding the mote in the eye of our brother.

Again, if you have doubts upon this point, read the decision of Judge Story in the case of *Prigg* (a citizen of Maryland) *vs.* The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania—16 Peters' Reports, p. 540, adjudged in 1842.

"The full recognition of this right and title was indispensable to the security of this species of property in all the slaveholding States; and, indeed, was so vital to the preservation of their domestic interests and institutions, that it cannot be doubted that it constituted a fundamental article, without the adoption of which the Union could not have been formed. Its true design was to guard against the doctrines and principles prevailing in the non-slaveholding States, by preventing them from *intermeddling* with, or *obstructing*, or *abolishing* the rights of the owner of slaves. The clause in the Constitution relating to fugitives from labor manifestly contemplates the existence of a positive, unqualified right on the part of the owner of the slave, which no State law or regulation can in any way qualify, regulate, control, or restrain. Any State law or regulation which interrupts, limits, delays, or postpones the rights of the owner to the immediate command of his service or labor, operates *pro tanto* a discharge of the slave therefrom. The owner of a fugitive has the same right to seize and take him in a State to which he has escaped, that he has in the State which he fled. The court have not the slightest hesitation in holding that under and in virtue of the Constitution, the owner of the slave is clothed with the authority, in every State of the Union, to seize and recapture his slave."

What changes have occurred since 1842? Then the ablest jurist of our land fearlessly maintained the right to slave property, not only existing when the slave was within a slave State, but attaching to the slave after he might enter a free State. Slavery exists, then, not only by divine right, but by the law of our land, as set forth by the Supreme Court of the United States, which is the supreme law of the land; and that right of property exists until the law is repealed or the decision reversed.

But there is one fact as regards this right, the majority of this body cannot deny—that many of them have held slaves, taken the benefit of their labor, and when it did not suit their purposes to hold them longer, have sold them to other masters. I would like to know how many in this body, through a conscientious conviction of the evil of the thing, have liberated their negroes. Although some may have preached the doctrine of Wendell Phillips and the higher law, few of us have put it into practical operation, by beginning at our pockets to remedy the evil.

But we are told this sacrifice must be made on the part of Maryland to save the Union. Now, I cannot see the point or force of this argument. Why should Maryland make this sacrifice over and above what is required of the other States? If the war expenses require it by way of taxation, let the burden be borne equally by all the States—not by Maryland alone. We are not quite rich