

that slavery was not an evil and a wrong "*per se*," yet in the latter portion of his remarks labored very industriously by the citation of various passages from the Bible, to prove that slavery not only had not the sanction of Divine authority, but was in entire conflict with the teachings of the inspired volume. How he reconciled the first with the latter portion of his speech I was much at a loss to perceive. But as the gentleman is not now in his seat I will not pursue the investigation further.

Nor do I mean to consume the brief period of time allotted me by the rules of the Convention in replying to the biblical arguments that have been advanced against the institution of slavery. Suffice it to say, that the candid inquirer after truth will find scattered throughout the sacred pages not one but many passages which stamp the system of slavery with the seal of Divine approbation, and that they who extract a verse here and a line there, perverting them from their obvious meaning and true import, convey to the impartial observer the highest evidence of the inherent weakness of the cause they advocate.

To the gentleman from Talbot, (Mr. Valiant,) I have but a word to say on this point. He who comes into this Hall to teach me lessons on the subject of morals and the obligations and injunctions of the Divine Law, must come with hands undefiled with the guilt of that which in others is a wrong and an insult to the majesty of high Heaven.—The gentleman undertakes to tell us that in holding negroes in slavery we are daily doing that which is clearly prohibited by the law of God. That we who are slaveholders daily and hourly transgress that law, and therefore sin. Yet in the very same speech the gentleman tells us that he is himself a slaveholder, and has long been of that class whom he would now hold up to the judgment and condemnation of mankind. Does he not perceive in what an unenviable position he places himself, and that his professions of repentance now and his willingness to give up his negroes without one cent of compensation, and to make a free-will offering of them upon the altar of his suffering country, does not relieve him from the embarrassments? Whence, let me ask, did the gentleman derive his title to the slaves now held by him? Did he voluntarily go into the market and purchase them? If so, these lectures on the sin of slaveholding, permit me to tell him, come with ill grace from him. Did these slaves pass to him as an inheritance from a devoted father or a dear mother, who have passed from the scenes of earth and been summoned to their final home. If so, I sincerely regret, for the gentleman's own sake, that in his over-abundant zeal to strike a heavy blow at the sin of slaveholding, he has not seen fit to spare from desecration the memories of his own departed kindred.

Next in the order of this discussion comes the gentleman from Caroline (Mr. Todd), with those far-famed words of the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal." Despite the earnest and labored argument of the gentleman, I should not give this portion of his remarks even a passing notice but for the fact that this argument is a favorite one in the mouths of abolitionists, and I understand the gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Abbott) has given notice of his intention to move the incorporation of an article in the bill of rights of this State, embodying substantially the language of the Declaration of Independence.

Now, sir, in the sense in which the gentleman and his co-laborers in the abolition cause construe these words, so far from the views therein asserted being "self-evident truths," I maintain that they are directly opposed to all truth. All men, I insist, are not "created equal" but entirely unequal. This inequality is manifested in their physical, mental, social and political conditions. The idea of equality is alike repudiated by reason and discarded by common sense. You find this endless variety and inequality existing not alone in the human creation, but you find it written on every leaf of that book of nature, from which the gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Abbott) took his text a few days since and which he seems to have studied so closely. You find it extending throughout the animal, mineral and vegetable creations. The fishes sporting in the bosom of the trackless ocean assert its existence. And to-night from the heavens above ten thousand stars in the infinite variety, splendor and inequality of their existences will look down in confirmation of this truth.

But, Mr. President, in what sense did our Revolutionary sires understand these oft-quoted words of the Declaration of Independence, now in my humble apprehension so unjustifiably sought to be perverted from their true and obvious meaning and import? The occasion, the circumstances by which they were surrounded, the whole section from which these words are taken clearly indicate to my mind that nothing more was intended than a remonstrance against the right of the King of England to rule them, an assertion of their equality before the world as a people and the right in themselves to self-government.

Gentlemen upon the other side and all those who have embarked in this abolition crusade insist that they meant to assert the equality of the negro, and that his right to liberty was "inalienable." I deny that the author of the Declaration of Independence, that the illustrious band of men who signed it, that the immortal patriot whose form now looks down upon us (referring to the picture of Washington) understood or designed that these words should be understood in any such