

either with the section of "bigoted dotards" or "shallow and reckless empirics." It is my purpose, conceding that in some form, the majority of this Convention have predetermined to abolish the legal status of negro slavery in the State, to inquire how it can be done on sound and statesmanlike principles, which will secure the rights of all and leave no blot upon our State history, engraven so deep that time will never efface the stain, nor repentance restore the purity of the State name.

And, firstly, in discussing the proposed article I recognize the fact that we have to deal with the *real* issues of the present, and the coming events and changes already foreshadowed in the future. It is, Mr. President, an idle task to be looking back at the obsolete issues of the past. Let the dead bury their own dead. Act up to the demands of the living issues of the present.

In representing in part, as I do, the largest slave-holding county in the State of Maryland, I am *not* here as a "champion of slavery, as an element of political power," but I trust that in the views I am about to express, I will be true to those principles which are the basis of all our rights of property, and which the great and good men of the State and the country have announced as unchanging—not yesterday to be affirmed—to-day to be denied and denounced.

Slavery, as an "element of political power," has never been made the basis of *popular* agitation in Maryland prior to the candidacy of Mr. Lincoln for the Presidency. Until that time there was no *anti-slavery* party in the State. And it does shock me to hear men who have been well known as the *firm* friends of the Constitution—men who voted to place the present article in our State Constitution prohibiting the Legislature from passing any law abolishing the relation of master and slave—men who cringed to and fawned and flattered all who were *pro-slavery*, now not only *change* their opinions professedly—for this is *allowable*—but they have the effrontery to avow that they have been emancipationists for years—nay, all their lives. They have certainly moved about in false colors, disguised robes and with simulated faces—as wolves in sheep's clothing, or sheep in wolves' clothing.

Mr. President, I cannot entertain *respect* for the opinions and sentiments now avowed by many Maryland men. Whence comes this sudden conversion? A conversion which now pronounces those dogmas which only a year or two ago were the

height of "*treason*," to be the purest test of loyalty and the highest standard of exalted patriotism. Pardon us, gentlemen, if after being indoctrinated by you as chief rulers in the Synagogue of the Union with such just principles, we have not so soon deserted the maxims of our Gamaliels, and do not so readily chime in with you in your plaudits and advocacy of a policy you so recently taught us was "*treason*," and destructive of all hope of a reconstructed and glorious Union. When the 48d section of article second of the Constitution of the State was reported in the Constitutional Convention which framed our present organic law, no voice was raised against it. It was adopted unanimously. Journal of the Maryland State Convention p. 281, Debates of Convention vol. 1, page 150. Slavery was not then considered such a *curse*, nor did its perpetuity in the State then, in the opinion of certain gentlemen now high in public positions, endanger the permanency of our form of government. And the journal shows that upon the same day when this clause was adopted Governor Hicks, Shriver, Fiery and others, who are now the earnest advocates of emancipation were present. In this same venerable building where we are now gathered, Governor Bradford only a little more than two years ago in discussing the "guarantees of national success," expressed but "*one* apprehension that could cause a doubt." He says: "It is not so much the fear of any assistance that secession is likely to receive from abroad, nor the aid and comfort which *treason* at home may convey to it, as the possibility of a *treason* far more potent for mischief, and which, if not suppressed, is calculated to inflict upon the cause of the Union the severest blow it has yet encountered. I refer, of course, to that emancipation policy lately thrust so unexpectedly on popular attention." Contrast his message to the last General Assembly in which the Governor cannot omit allusion to the question of emancipation lest it might appear like an indifference which he is far from feeling. He says (page 28) "I have the less reason for withholding any such opinion as it has undergone no change, and is such as I have frequently heretofore expressed. I believe to-day, as I have done for years, that if we had long ago provided for the gradual emancipation of the slaves of the State, we should now be, as regards all the material elements of public prosperity, far in advance of our present position."