

doubted elsewhere. This is, then, a question of expediency. If that postulate be admitted, what follows?

Is this convention prepared to-day to say that in regard to this question of expediency, no time, no change can alter? Do we not find every day, every hour of every day, the expression of the opinion that time, progressive improvements, change in the opinions of men upon government, carry us along in a current that we cannot resist, and require corresponding changes of legislation? Have not we heard that urged upon this floor? Have not some of us been advertised in the newspapers as "fossilized," because we entertained the opinions of past days and of past times? Do we not daily and hourly hear the doctrine of the changes necessary in legislation to meet the wants and necessities of the changing circumstances of the day?

Then the convention must be prepared, in my judgment, before it can adopt this measure, to say that they have the wisdom to anticipate what is now in the womb of futurity, what time and circumstances are to produce, what results the actual working of their own doings here is to produce. Most important fundamental changes are here made in the fundamental condition of Maryland. Maryland goes forth to the world, after the adoption of this constitution, in a very different character and very different condition from what she was. Are the members of this body prepared to say that by any prophetic inspiration they can foresee all these matters, and now decide what it will be expedient to do, in the changed condition of the country, by those who are to succeed them? Are we wiser than they will be? Have we more material upon which to form a judgment? Are circumstances giving us a knowledge which they will be denied the benefit of? Are arguments and reasons denied to them which we have the benefit of? Is there any reason to justify any one member of this house in saying that he better knows what ought to be done ten, fifteen or twenty years hence, in regard to this matter, than he can judge both of the necessities of time and place, of the condition of the country and the wants of its citizens, than those who live at the time, and are acquainted and familiar with all around them?

I do trust and hope that gentlemen will see the impossibility of any man's placing himself upon a pinnacle from which he can obtain such a view of futurity as will entitle him to judge of and arrange matters connected with the future. We are taught to believe that the country is growing wiser, that the means of education are vastly improved. The next generation will have the advantage of all that we have; all the knowledge that we have will be transmitted to them. Improvements, if I am to judge of improvements by what I see here, are made

with a wonderful rapidity. Shall we say that wisdom is to die with us? that knowledge of the wants of the State shall die with us? We will not permit those who are to come after us to decide, and why? Not one individual member upon this floor has ventured to tell me, and I challenge the assertion of any one reason which can be entitled to so much weight as to determine this question.

This is a question about which very wise, very intelligent men differ. This is proved by past history. Emancipation has occurred in nearly all the States of this Union. There has never been a movement for the deprivation of property without compensation to its owner. The English people, a very intelligent people, under circumstances very much less calculated to produce excitement and feeling—because their colonies were provided for by the mother country, and the people of Great Britain proper, those in the islands of Great Britain, suffered no inconvenience, having no slaves among them—imposed upon themselves the burden of remunerating those with whom they had no personal intercourse, and paying them for property which was not at all held among themselves. They paid it out of their own treasury to the colonies, who were not called upon to pay.

You propose here to take property away from its owners, and you refuse payment for it. You impose upon them the burden of supporting it; for I tell you again that there is no alternative to them. The master must pay for the support of his manumitted slave, or they will starve in the street for the want of the common necessaries of life. To tell me that aged servants, and women with half a dozen children, are to provide for themselves, is to tell me what my own experience tells me is not entitled to credit. I have myself an aged servant that it costs me just as much to support as any other individual costs the party upon whom he is dependent. I have women and children that I cannot get rid of on any terms that a reasonable man would ask, who are an expense to me, perfectly incapable of supporting themselves. Nobody would take them. I have myself offered to hire out a woman if the person would impose himself the burden of providing for her children, but he would not accept such an unprofitable offer.

I say therefore that you not only take away the slaves without present compensation, and refuse to pay it hereafter, and yet you impose it upon us to continue to support these people, and after all this is done, you abandon the proper field of legislation upon the constitution, and undertake to dictate for all time what those who are to come after you shall do. This is unparalleled. There is not another instance of it in your constitution. As I said before, you inaugurate great principles. That is all right. But upon a