

breast, and these are truths and maxims, applicable as we conceive to the present question and to the persons whom your bill would have stripped of their property, without trial, or notice. Government was instituted for the happiness and protection of individuals, composing societies; the people have therefore a right, to form such government, as they think will most effectually secure their happiness and answer the purposes of their creation; and when the supreme magistrate presiding over several territories, united under one government, attempts to deprive the people inhabiting some part or parcel of those territories, of that liberty and safety, the laws of God and nature entitle them to, and that property, which by their industry, they have acquired, the people whose rights are invaded, are bound by moral duty, to resist such attempt, and if persisted in, to discard such unworthy magistrate, for perverting the purposes of his appointment, and to establish such constitutions, as wisdom and regard to the happiness of the members of such district or territory dictate, without destroying any rights acquired antecedently to such revolution, the possession and enjoyment of which, are compatible with the safety and happiness of such society. When the idea of acquiring and holding property is admitted as a necessary consequence of civil society, it seems to follow most evidently, that property once acquired ought not to be taken away, unless the holder transgresses some known law inflicting this punishment, or unless the holding such property is incompatible with the safety of the society.

Although the people, under the circumstances mentioned, have a right to alter the form of their government, and to establish a new one, if the principle we have adduced be not admitted, a contrary rule or principle must be adopted, and, upon every change or alteration of the government, all precedent right to property will be extinguished, and every individual left at large to seize that which before the revolution belonged to his neighbour, a position too extravagant, dangerous, and inconsistent with the happiness of mankind, to be admitted either in theory or practice. When the king and parliament of Great-Britain, in conjunction with and aided by a majority of the British nation, commenced hostilities against America, we were all subjects of the same government,