

S P E E C H

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OF

SAMUEL H. BERRY, Esq.,

OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY,

DELIVERED IN THE

Constitutional Convention of Maryland,

JUNE 23, 1864,

IN OPPOSITION TO THE EMANCIPATION OF SLAVES.

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UPPPER MARLBOROUGH:

GEORGE W. WILSON—PRINT.

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SPEECH

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under the republican institutions, to the maintenance of which the citizen is most vitally interested, and without which no government can expect the free, full, and hearty support which all good and patriotic citizens desire to tender to their government. Not only do you propose to destroy a domestic institution, but to take from us forty millions of dollars worth of property without being able to assign a just reason founded in fact why this gross and unconvincing proof, yet it must be admitted by all who understand anything of the philosophy of government, that man would be better in a state of nature than the subject of any state or government which falls or is incapable of giving him protection.

SPEECH

The Convention proceeded to the consideration of the 23d Article of the Declaration of Rights, on its second reading, as follows:

"Article 23. That hereafter, in this State, there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except in punishment of crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted; and all persons held to service or labor, as slaves, are hereby declared free."

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. Mr. President. I approach the discussion of this question with great diffidence, more so perhaps than I have ever felt in entering upon the discussion of any question presented to my mind for consideration, and this is not so much on account of the vast pecuniary interest of my section of the State in the particular institution, which will be affected by the passage of this measure, as the great change which will be made in our domestic institutions, the striking down of the whole of the productive industry and source of wealth of the agricultural portion of the State and the violence and injustice with which it is attempted to be brought about by the majority of this Convention.

The magnitude of the question involved, and the paramount interest as affecting the future welfare of the State, must inspire the members of this body with an interest that will not be felt in the consideration of any other question which will claim our attention here.

The people of my portion of the State have, ever since the formation of your State government, and even before, been so intimately connected with this institution, (for the existence of which they are not at all responsible,) and are now so largely interested in its maintenance that it is with great difficulty I can approach the discussion of the question, either upon the grounds of morality or State policy; when I consider the proposition as reported by the committee, and the unjust, violent, and inconsiderate course pursued by the majority of the Convention on this subject, without a feeling of indignation and disgust, which I do not desire to exhibit on this floor.

We look upon this effort to abolish slavery as an outrage upon our rights, such as never before has been perpetrated upon any people; not demanded by either the advance in civilization, morality or the present condition of the country, but the promptings of a fanaticism which had its origin in the North, and which has been so diffused among the people of this State as to upset their reason and render them incapable of a just appreciation of the blessings of republican institutions.

It is a question which, if discussed fully, must necessarily involve the consideration of all those fundamental principles which

underlie republican institutions, to the maintenance of which the citizen is most vitally interested, and without which no government can expect the free, full, and hearty support which all good and patriotic citizens desire to render to their government.

Not only do you propose to destroy a domestic institution, but to take from us forty millions of dollars worth of property without being able to assign one sound reason founded in fact why this gross outrage should be perpetrated upon the slaveholders of Maryland.

It will not be denied, I suppose, by gentlemen on the other side, that this is entirely a domestic institution. Mr. Lincoln so regarded it in his inaugural address, and several of his messages afterwards sent to Congress, and he further declared that the Congress of the United States had no power to interfere with slavery in the States. His consistency in this respect you can fully appreciate when you consider his course toward this institution in the border States, and the reasons now assigned for a continuation of the war.— It is not only upon his authority that I claim it to be a domestic institution, but upon the authority of all the treaties upon the subject, and of the statesmen of the past, and never until this unfortunate condition of things did Congress attempt to legislate upon the subject except for its preservation and protection.

In the formation of societies the citizen was required to yield to the government certain of his natural rights for the benefit of the whole, and in consideration thereof the government undertook to protect him in all of his rights, particularly those of *life, liberty and property*. This consideration being the inducement to the compact, any government necessarily loses its force and virtue, and entirely fails of the purposes for which it was formed, when it does not secure to the citizen support and protection in those rights. And no government can expect from its citizens either obedience or support, which fails or is incapable of giving this protection. Burke, in one of his most beautiful and forcibly

written letters, takes the ground that man would have been more happy and would have occupied a higher social condition had he remained in a state of nature. He forcibly argues that all the bloodshed, troubles, and difficulties to which man has been subjected, are to be attributed to the formation of political and church governments. Whilst I cannot entirely agree with him in his conclusions, although they are supported by powerful reasoning and almost convincing proof, yet it must be admitted by all who understand anything of the philosophy of government, that man would be better in a state of nature than the subject of any State or government which fails or is incapable of giving him protection.

'Tis sad, indeed, Mr. President, to reflect for a moment upon the condition of our country, and particularly so to one who entertains an abiding hope in the greatness and future growth and happiness of his country. Like John Quincy Adams, I would sooner that my eyes had been closed in death than to have witnessed the present condition of our once happy land; a condition which all the statesmen of the past predicted would arise, when the politics of the country should become entirely sectional, which unfortunately was the case at the last presidential election.— The degraded condition to which the politics of our State and country has fallen, the demoralization prevailing everywhere, and the hands into which the direction and control of affairs are placed, is the only solution for the course of the majority here.

If a domestic institution, recognized and protected by the law, by what authority is it now attempted to be wrested from us? Is it by any authority of the Constitution and laws of the United States, or of the State of Maryland? I deny that any such authority exists.

It is true, that in time of war, in time of invasion by a public enemy, during the existence of martial law, private property may be taken for public use without the consent of the owner. This is from military necessity, but Story, and all the other writers upon constitutional law, lays down

the principle as fully established and recognized by all the civilized nations of the earth, that in all cases to justify it there must be a present overruling necessity for so doing, and in every case the owner of the property is entitled to compensation from the government.

I understand that the government claims the right to take possession of the able-bodied slaves, such as are capable of bearing arms, under this war power, as a military necessity, treating them of course as property. All such, of course, the government of the United States is responsible for. But the government in its policy has gone further; they now not only take those capable of bearing arms, but they forcibly take and declare free the families of those who enlist; they offer inducements to slaves of every age and sex to leave their owners and repair to Washington city, where a depot is established for them, and they are supported at the cost of the government; and they refuse to deliver them to their owners upon due process of law. It is true, that as a domestic institution the people of the State may abolish it, but there must appear a present necessity for so doing, and in all cases a just compensation must be awarded to the owner. Will the gentleman from Baltimore city, (Mr. Stockbridge,) show us when he comes to make his speech, any law or precedent authorizing the infliction of such an outrage upon the citizen? I defy him to show either law or precedent as ever recognized or practiced by civilized nations. I also admit that the property of any citizen who may be guilty of treason against the government may be confiscated under existing laws, but this can only be done by the United States Courts upon due proof, after a full and fair hearing in which the party accused must have the aid of counsel, processes for his witnesses, and trial by jury if he requires it.

This, Mr. President is a most important question, and we may well hesitate and ask ourselves if we are, in the present unsettled condition of the country, in the excited state of public mind, growing out of the daily scenes of butchery, bloodshed,

desolation, and destruction passing around us, in a proper state of mind to enter upon this change, or to fully and fairly consider it in all of its bearings, as it may affect the present as well as the future. I sincerely think we are not now in that frame of mind to attempt such an important change; we cannot raise ourselves above the passing scenes and the passion and prejudices which they necessarily produce, to enable us to give the question that calm, dispassionate, and wise consideration which its importance demands. We had better let *well enough alone*.

A great deal has been said here in reference to the present condition of the slaves and the benefits which will be conferred upon them in case they are manumitted in the State. Is that so? Will they be benefited by the change? Will they not rather become paupers and outcasts from society and an incubus upon the State that years will not enable us to rid ourselves of? Are they capable of self-government? Have they any governmental capacity?

Mr. President, I may well ask are we capable of self government? I had thought, until these troubles came upon us, that the long-mated problem had been solved and exemplified in the complete success and perfection of our institutions as applicable to a state of freedom. But the experience of the last four years has, in my mind, settled the problem forever. I now am convinced, sad as must be the reflection to all intelligent minds, that the white man with all his higher mental organization, created so by the great I Am in the economy of nature, is utterly unfit for self-government. What then must be the condition of the black man in a state of freedom, when you consider his inferior mental organization? What has been and is now the condition of the *black man* in every State and country in which he has been freed? Instead of improving his moral and mental condition, he has, in all cases sunk lower in the scale of degeneration, until he has become an outcast and a burden upon the government in which he lives.

Is it for the true interest of the slave that the gentlemen on the other side so zealously urge the passage of this measure? A measure, which, if passed, will result in more harm, both to the master and slave, than can now be conceived of. Are they prompted by the interest they feel in the future condition of the slaves? I deny that they feel the interest which their course here would indicate. It is a catchword. It is thought now to be popular and will lead to place. They have been caught in the whirlpool of fanaticism which is now making desolate our land. And it would be as well for the gentlemen to reflect for a moment upon the future condition of this race. A general, who was engaged recruiting negro soldiers in my section of the State, was asked by a gentleman in my county, how many negro recruits have you in your camp? He answered about ten thousand. How many died whilst in camp? About a thousand. How many do you suppose would have died had they remained home with their masters pursuing their usual course of life? I suppose from forty to fifty, and added that these inquiries were of very little consideration, the war would result in the abolition of slavery; it was necessary that they should take part to bring about this result even if the race was exterminated. This is the interest which you gentlemen feel in the welfare of the slaves, and it is only carrying out the manifest destiny doctrine of Mr. Seward that the two races cannot exist together.

Have not their condition been improved by their intercourse with the white man, although they have lived here in a state of slavery? Were they not brought from a land where savage barbarity prevailed?—Where civilization and christianity had never been able to penetrate and raise them above a state of savage nature? Have not their minds been enlightened here by the teachings of civilization and religion in their intercourse with intelligent beings? Have we not had in them many examples of true Christian piety, although an inferior and inappreciative race? We are told by some naturalists, that the dog

in his natural state cannot bark, but whines, and they only learn to bark from being brought in contact with human beings. If this is so of the dog, how much more so can this principle of imitation be applied to the African race, who are human beings, and are admitted to have a low order of intellect? I insist then that they have been benefited by having been brought among us; they have been civilized and christianized, and afforded all the lights of the Gospel, and their intercourse with the white race has elevated their minds and made them more intelligent. It was a step under the direction of the Controller of the universe by which they were brought into a state of civilization and within the pale of religion, and He now looks down approvingly upon the institution and success attending the change in their condition. It has done more, sir. It is well known that many of those who were found to be capable of receiving mental culture have been converted here and received into the churches, and afterwards sent back to their native land to try and civilize and give religious and mental instructions to those living there in a savage State. It is well known that Maryland has for years past appropriated large sums of money in support of a colony there, and offered many inducements to those who became free here to return to their native land and take part in this great work of civilization, but up to this time all efforts in this behalf have failed of success. No practical good has resulted from it, and the last Legislature of the State, composed as it was of a large majority of the boasted friends of this race, many of whom are now members of this Convention, refused to make further appropriation for the purpose.

Mr. SCOTT. Will the gentleman allow me to make an inquiry? I should like to know by what process they are brought to a knowledge of the Gospel when they are denied the means of instruction.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. Sir, it is a foul slander upon slavery as an institution to make such a charge.

Mr. SCOTT. There is scarcely a slave

State in which slavery has not forbidden the teaching of persons to read in Sunday Schools. I know in Virginia, men have been sent to the penitentiary for no other offence than teaching negro children to read in Sunday Schools.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. The gentleman knows nothing about the institution of slavery. He knows nothing about the laws passed by slaveowners in slave States for their protection. He knows nothing about the domestic control and management of them and the attention paid to their religious instruction. He knows nothing about the attachment of the slave to the master or the master to the slave, and the sacredness with which they are regarded as members of his family.— If his mind was more enlightened he would hold a better position here, and other views more consonant with justice, equity, religion and good government. Does the gentleman know that in every slave State in the Union, the very strictest attention is paid to the moral and religious welfare of the slaves? Does he know that in the far South the large planters have churches built on their plantations, and employ ministers at a salary of \$1,000 to \$1,500 per year with the view of instructing their slaves in the wise teachings of the Bible? There the master and slave in fulness of heart worship the same God under the same vine and fig tree.

Mr. SCOTT. That does not meet my objection, that they do not teach them to read. They have the Scriptures expounded to them, but they are not allowed to read for themselves.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. Is it indispensable that a man should know how to read, in order to understand the teachings of the Bible and to be a Christian?

Mr. SCOTT. That is my idea exactly.
Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. I tell the gentleman it is not indispensable.— Does he not know that religion is a thing of the heart, and virtue the promptings of the heart? When you teach one in the ways of religion, no matter how ignorant he may be in the rudiments of education, his mind will become enlightened and em-

bued with the principles of religion and virtue which will make him a good and Christian man.

They are not capable of self-government. History shows that they will retrograde rather than improve in a state of freedom.— They require a governing a directing hand. This is the experience of the past. Whenever they have been put in a state of freedom they have become demoralized, and there is not one instance where their condition has been improved.

Are they the equal of the white man? Do gentlemen on this floor desire to make them the equal of the white man in all the civil and social relations. This equality was never thought of until lately, under the new teaching of miscegenation. I suppose the gentlemen are for that. On, on, you go, step by step. You recklessly go from one thing to another. You first liberate them, then give them the civil rights of citizens, and then for intermarriage and the commingling of the races.

Mr. SCOTT. I rise to a point of order, which is this—Whether any gentleman has a right to impute to others arguments which they have never uttered and views which they have never advocated?

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. If the gentlemen had paid attention to my argument he would have found that I made no personal application of my argument and conclusions to any one gentleman here. I simply suggested the result of this movement. I suggested that it would end in this, and before my God I believe it will, if you go on as you have commenced the work of pulling down our State Government and destroying all the rights of citizens.

They are not mentally the equal of the white man; they are not physically the equal of the white man, for their organization is different, so intended by nature; a distinctive mark was placed upon them, and all the changes of time cannot efface it. Then is it proper, is it right, is it wise? Are you advantaging these people to make them free?

It has been said here that holding slaves is contrary to the teachings of the Bible.

Now, I want to show gentlemen, that in almost every book, from Genesis to Revelations, slavery is clearly recognized in the Bible. But, said the gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Cushing) day before yesterday, and the gentleman from Cecil (Mr. Scott) night before the last, that they thought we were driven to a *dernier* resort when we went to the Bible in support of slavery. What, Mr. President, to offer the evidence of the Bible in support of an institution a *dernier* resort; that book of all books, the fullness of every evidence, the fountain of all our hopes, and from which alone we can draw the motive to every action; the teachings of all truth, virtue and religion. What, sir, at this day of boasted civilization, at this day of advanced religious sentiments, to hold the Bible in so little respect, to proclaim such sentiments in an enlightened assemblage, must be revolting to every thinking mind, and I defy the gentlemen to offer any evidence that will be superior to the teachings of the Bible. Driven to extremity because we refer to the Bible, the book from which we draw our very life and breath; the teachings of the great I AM, the ruler and controller of all things. Driven to extremity because we resort to the Bible. Do the gentlemen believe in the Bible? Do they believe in the teachings of our Saviour? Have their consciences become so seared by the workings of fanaticism that even the Bible contains no teachings for them. If so, then God help them.

Now, I propose to show from the Bible that slavery is of divine origin. Will the gentlemen be astonished?

A VOICE. "Yes."

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's: The first reference I shall make is to the 14th chapter of Genesis, the 14th, 15th and 16th verses. I believe my friend from Cecil (Mr. Scott) is fond of reading the Bible, but I am afraid he has read it to little purpose.

"And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan."

"And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by nights, and smote them,

and pursued them unto Hobath, which is on the left hand of Damascus."

"And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also and the people."

Mr. SCOTT. That shows the propriety of arming slaves. [Laughter.]

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. They were fighting for their household and in support of their institutions, led by their master. Abram possessed servants, which he marshalled against his enemies.

Mr. SCOTT. Just what we are doing now against our enemies. [Renewed laughter.]

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. I now refer to the 16th chapter of Genesis.

"Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children, and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar."

"And, Sarai said unto Abram: Behold now the Lord hath restrained me from bearing; I pray thee, go in unto my maid, it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai."

Mr. SCOTT. I did not know you claimed Bible authority for that practice. [Great laughter.]

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. The gentleman seems to forget that this is simply a history of that age, and that the men of that age, having fallen from their high estate, possessed all the sinfulness and weakness belonging to our nature; that bad men lived then as now. And we can find in the Old Testament, in the history of the men of that age, a precedent for nearly every vice except roguery, such as is now attempted to be perpetrated by the majority of this Convention upon the slaveholders of Maryland.

"And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar, her maid, the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife."

"And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived, and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes."

"And Sarai said unto Abram: My wrong be upon thee; I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes; the Lord judge between me and thee."

"But Abram said unto Sarai: Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth

thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face."

"And the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur."

"And he said: Hagar, Sarai's maid; whence comest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai."

"And the angel of the Lord said unto her: Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands."

"And the angel of the Lord said unto her: I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude."

Mr. SCOTT. If the gentleman from Prince George's will permit me—

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. Not now.

I am astonished, Mr. President, that whilst the Holy Scriptures are being read there should be so much levity. I am astonished that gentlemen should not have more respect for themselves; for this body; for the Bible and its holy teachings, than to make anything read from it a subject of merriment. Do they not hear the Bible read at least once a week in their churches?

I next refer to the 17th chapter of Genesis, 12th verse:

"And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house or bought with money of any stranger which is not of the seed."

This reference shows that under the Mosaic dispensation slaves were bought with money; they were commodities of sale; they were sold in market, and were bought in that day—and slavery was recognized as right by the teaching of that day.

The 10th Commandment, recognized and held sacred by all Christians, certainly recognizes slavery. I shall not read it, as I suppose the gentlemen very well recollect the commandments, though they have forgotten many other teachings and precepts of the Bible.

I now refer to the 21st chapter of Exodus:

"Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them."

"If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing."

"If he came in by himself; he shall go out by himself; if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him."

"If his master have given him a wife and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself."

"And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free:

"Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever."

This goes further; this recognizes the separation of man and wife. It gives the option to the husband. If he determines that he loves his master, his wife, and his children, then the fact is set forth before the judges, and from that time he becomes a slave for life to his master, and all his children after him.

Mr. SCOTT. Does the gentleman read "a slave for life" or for what term?

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. "Forever." Now, the reverend gentleman from Caroline (Mr. Todd) said that under the Mosaic dispensation all slaves went out free at the great day of jubilee. Now, although he is a minister of the Gospel, he has read Scripture to very little purpose if he says he finds that in the Bible. It was only the Hebrew servant that went out free. None of the servants bought from strangers, not belonging to the Israelites, went out free; but they and their seed forever remained to their master and his posterity. I am afraid that the reverend gentleman from Caroline (Mr. Todd) is in the condition of a great many who lived during that period, when its dawn was trumpeted forth in tones so loud that it could be heard by the whole nation. The Bible says of them: "Blessed are they who know the joyful sound, for theirs shall be the great reward." The gentleman may have heard the joyful sound, but I greatly fear he does not know it—there is a marked distinction between hearing the joyful sound and knowing it. I am afraid he does not know the joyful sound; for his argu-

ment why slavery should be abolished in this State, and the manner he proposes to accomplish it, show an inconsistency with the Christian religion, with the profession of Christianity, which can only be accounted for by considering the age of immorality and demoralization in which we are now living. What, to take my property from me without just compensation? Is that Christian? Is it honest? And when I say it is honest, I mean to ask the question: Is it honest? Is it doing unto all men as you would that they should do unto you? And yet, at this time, we have men, not only professors of religion, but ministers of the Gospel, holding forth these views contrary to all religious teachings, and contrary to all principles of government.

Now, let us refer for a moment to the New Testament upon this question of slavery. The subject is not mentioned by our Saviour. He lived when the whole of Judea was a slaveholding country. He lived when there were some 60,000,000 of slaves in the Roman empire. Yet through all his teachings he did not once upbraid those who held slaves. He recognized slavery as a domestic institution under the law; and that it was wise and proper that slaves should be so held. He came not to destroy either the law or the prophets, but he came upon a higher mission. Those influences, however, I do not see prevailing to a great extent in this Hall. I now refer to the teachings of the New Testament upon the subject of slavery. In Ephesians, 6th chap., Paul says:

"Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ:

"Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

"With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men;

"Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."

And then I will read two or three verses from Colossians, 3d chapter:

"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God;

"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ."

And in 1st Timothy, 6th chapter, commencing with the first verse:

"Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed;

"And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

"If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

"He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmising," &c.

And then there is the first chapter of Philemon, which was referred to the other day; where it is not shown that at that day slavery was recognized, but Onesimus, a converted slave, was sent home by Paul to his master, and Paul stated that he would pay any charges against the servant, any loss which the master may have sustained by loss of his services. Need I refer to any more Scripture passages?

Mr. SANDS. I would like to have my friend read the the whole of the text the case of Onesimus. I am somewhat familiar with it, and would like to hear it read.

Mr. BERRY of Prince George's. I will read it, if the gentleman desires it. I commence at the tenth verse.

"I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds;

"Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and me;

"Whom I have sent again; thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels;

"Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the Gospel;

"But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly."

"For perhaps he therefore departed for a reason, that thou shouldst receive him forever;

"Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?"

"If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

"If he hath wronged thee or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account,

"I, have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it; albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides."

It would be useless for me to refer further to the Bible, in support of my position that slavery is a divine institution. It is just as much sacred, and so held under both the dispensations, as the rite of marriage. The same authority that said—"wives obey your husbands"—"Husbands, cleave unto your wives"—the same authority gave the injunction—"servants obey your masters." I say it is of the same divine origin, and can never be destroyed under God.

The difference between the gentlemen and ourselves, is that very difference that St. Paul suggested to the Athenians, on his visit to Athens. As he was passing by he saw a temple erected with the inscription "To the unknown God."—They are like the Athenians; they do not worship the God of my salvation. Whilst I worship the God of my fathers whose teachings are full of wisdom, truth and justice, they, like the Egyptians who made every beast their God, have erected a temple to the negro, at which they not only offer up their devotions at morn and eve, but it seems to claim their continual devotions.

We next come to consider whether the necessity of the times require that slavery should be abolished in this State. Is there any necessity for it?

What are the reasons assigned why slavery should be abolished in this State? They say that it affords material aid to the rebellion. Is that true? Is that applicable to the State of Maryland, or to any of the border States not in rebellion? I think the transverse of the proposition is true. I con-

tend that in the border States slavery aids and abets the Government of the United States in putting down the rebellion. What do you do by abolishing slavery in the State of Maryland? You take away at once \$40,000,000 worth of property; and almost as much in the yearly productive industry of the State. That property is now paying a tax for the support of the General Government as well as for the support of the State Government. Remove it and where are your taxes to come from? Will we be enabled to contribute to the same extent to carry on this war against the rebellion if our slaves are taken away, our productive industry paralyzed, from which alone we pay our taxes? Is it not rather the transverse of the proposition, as stated by the gentlemen, true? You take away \$40,000,000 worth of property now subject to taxation, and all the productive industry of the State, amounting to almost as much more yearly, which now contributes to the payment of taxes for carrying on this war. That proposition may be true in the case of States in immediate rebellion against the Government. But the Principle does not apply to Maryland, and I am astonished that men of sense should advance such argument.

I understand that the majority of this Convention propose to free the slaves without compensation. Now, I want it distinctly understood beforehand that I shall oppose the abolition of slavery, no matter under what phase it is presented to this Convention, and with God's will and the assistance of this strong arm will try to defeat the proposition before this people, if you pass it here. But was there ever heard such an outrage against the rights of the citizens of any State, as to propose to take from them \$40,000,000 worth of property—nay, more, at the time this war broke out the slave property in this State amounted to \$80,000,000.

Mr. BARRON. \$30,000,000.
Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. At the time of the breaking out of this war

negro men that were assessed at \$400, were worth from \$1,500 to \$2,000, and others in the same proportion. I say that it would be \$80,000,000 worth of property taken from the slaveholders of Maryland. I think I have shown that slavery in Maryland does not give material aid to the rebellion, that the argument is not applicable to us. But it is proposed to strike down this institution and without compensation. Now, where in the name of common sense do you get a precedent for this action? What right, under the law that governs all countries, have you to take my property without it becomes absolutely necessary to maintain your institutions?—Had you not just as well take my life? My life and my property are held equally sacred under the laws.

THE PRESIDENT. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BERRY, of Baltimore county. I move that the gentleman's time be extended.

Mr. DANIEL. I move to limit the extension to fifteen minutes.

Mr. BERRY, of Baltimore county, I accept that.

Mr. MILLER. I hope no limit will be put upon the gentleman's time, but that the precedent set in the case of the gentleman from Cecil (Mr. Scott) will be followed, and that the gentleman will be allowed to go on and finish his speech.

Mr. ABBOTT. The gentleman from Cecil (Mr. Scott) did not use over fifteen minutes.

Mr. DANIEL. Others of us upon this floor have been confined to that limit, and as the appeal is upon the ground of courtesy, I may say that we have allowed one of the gentlemen from Prince George's (Mr. Clarke) about three hours for one speech and two hours and a half for another.

Mr. CLARKE. I beg the gentleman's pardon, not quite two hours. I commenced at twenty minutes after eight o'clock, and concluded a few minutes before 10 o'clock.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. There seems to be some disinclination on the part

of the Convention to extend to me this courtesy.

Mr. SANDS. I trust the gentleman from Prince George's (Mr. Berry) will not take this as any mark of discourtesy. I at least do not oppose any motion to give any amount of time to him or any other gentleman, because I wish to be discourteous to him. But there are a large number of gentlemen here who wish to be heard, and our time is limited. I hope the gentleman will understand this, and not think us discourteous, we certainly do not mean it in that way.

The question was taken upon extending the time for fifteen minutes, and it was agreed to.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. I am very sorry indeed to trespass for so long a time upon the attention of this Convention. But I was induced to do so, supposing that the members of this Convention desired that everything that could be said in the way of argument as peculiarly applicable to this question, should be heard by the Convention from any of its members. I shall, however, abridge my remarks, and try to conclude what I have to say within the fifteen minutes.

I ask the question whether the gentlemen on the other side have either precedent or law for this proposed action against slavery? I deny that they have either precedent or law. They do not propose to do it under the war power. The General Government has the right to take slaves under the war power, but they in that case are taken as property, and they should take only those who are capable of bearing arms.

Many gentlemen have said we must look to the General Government for compensation for servants liberated under the action of this Convention. Now, is there any reason in this? If they are liberated by this Convention, which I denounce as an outrage against our rights, the State will be responsible to the owners, and for those freed by any action of the General Government the General Government is responsible; but responsible to whom? responsible to the individual citizen. No,

but they are responsible for all they have taken under the war power, to the master, through the Government of the State of Maryland. The Governor of this State has sworn to support the Constitution and laws of this State, and he is bound to protect the rights and interest of every citizen, even if it requires the whole force of the State to do so. He is required to pursue the same course for the protection of the citizen of the State, that the General Government is required to afford any citizen of any State when in a foreign country. But will they pretend to say that the Government of the United States is responsible for the slaves liberated by this Convention? Has the Government of the United States anything to do with the action of this Convention? If it has, I would like very much to know it, because I might then understand this pandering to popular opinion; this crouching at the feet of the powers that be, this seeking to lower the standard of true citizenship; this disposition to bow at the feet of the President.

The PRESIDENT. The Chair must say to the gentleman from Prince George's (Mr. Berry) that he is rather transcending the rules in thus reflecting upon the members of this Convention.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. I did not suppose I was transcending the rules. I use strong language because I feel that this is an important question, and one that should be heard and discussed in plain language. I do not mean to offend gentlemen. I cannot control their actions here, and do not propose to do it. If I were to speak here for a week and could bring to bear all the wisdom of Solomon, I could not inspire your minds with my standard of patriotism, or a spirit in which you would listen to and receive my teachings in the spirit in which I give them, nor do I suppose that a vote would be changed. But, as one of the gentlemen said yesterday, I intend to put myself right on the record.

Then, I say, do you suppose the General Government can be looked to to pay us for the negroes now held by their owners? The General Government has taken

a large number of them for military purposes, or under that pretence, a great many of whom are not capable of bearing arms, are not suited to the purpose for which they were said to be taken. But here we have one-half of the negro population of the State left on our hands almost valueless, consisting of negro women and children, which you propose to take from us. You propose to abolish slavery without payment, without making provisions for their future condition, and tell us to look to the general government for compensation for those you liberate by your State action. Do you suppose the General Government will pay for them? I say the government of the State is responsible to the citizen for both those the general government has taken and these freed by this Convention. And if I live I will be found beating at the doors of this State government until I am 90 years of age for payment, and if I am not paid then I will leave the claim to my children as a legacy to be prosecuted for all time to come.

Mr. BERRY, of Baltimore county. Do you expect to live so long as that?

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. I hope so. I will continue to demand for the slaveholder of this State what I say is but just and right for every slave liberated by the action of this Convention, or by the general government.

Among the reasons assigned why slavery should be abolished are, that it is immoral and irreligious, and that it prevents the natural progress of the State. Why, Mr. President, these arguments against slavery, after the arguments and evidences which have been offered in its support, are but the offspring of hypocrisy, to my mind equalling the hypocrisy which Gloster attributed to himself, when he said: But then I sigh, and with a piece of Scripture, Tell them that God bids us do good for evil, And thus I clothed my naked villany With odd old ends stol'n forth of Holy Writ, And seem a saint, when most I play the devil.

Much has already been said about our worn-out lands, and the difficulty of cultivating our farms under this system of negro slavery. Do gentlemen know anything about this? It is mere speculation.

They know as little about this as they do about most of the arguments which they undertake to offer to this Convention, why slavery should be abolished. They say that it will make room for the white man? that we will then have emigration here from the North. Well, God help us, if we are to have such as I have seen. I would sooner be without them. If I could I would build a wall about us. I would live within a shell, sooner than live and breathe such an atmosphere as they diffuse, coming as they would from the fetid atmosphere of the North, with all their isms, many of which are as black as purgatory. What? Coming here to diffuse their hated principles among us. May God deliver us from them.

Then it is said that schools would spring up among us, and education would receive a new impetus, instead of living, as we now do, in a state of ignorance. Gentlemen who state this as argument, show their ignorance of the laws of your own State. Since 1837, there has been in every neighborhood in most of the counties of the State, a free school established. The schools were established for the education of the poor, and they are supported by the county and State. And every facility for education is afforded the youth of the counties. We have an academy in my town, where boys who have received instructions in the primary schools after they have arrived at a certain age, can go and get a collegiate education, for we have excellent teachers, men competent to give a collegiate education. This system is fostered and paid for by the county, and by contributions from the State.

Why, the teachings they receive in the North only affords a vent to fanaticism. — They receive abolition teachings at their mothers' knees, and from the pulpit. It is inculcated in them so strongly that it becomes a part of their nature. They become skeptics and fanatics. The worst sort of religion and morals prevail there. One of their chief denominations do not believe in the Trinity? I think the largest denomination among the many they have. Had we not sooner receive the Bible as we

are taught it, than any such teaching. We rather keep rid of them than encourage emigration here.

Much has been said here about slave aristocracy. In that gentlemen again show their ignorance of our institutions, and our civil and social relations. I know nothing of slave aristocracy. With us it does not exist, and I am sure it does not exist in any part of the State. Virtue is the true guide to greatness with us. If a poor youth shows himself meritorious, he is taken by the hand, is educated and offered every facilities for advancement, and if he enters either of the professions, he generally is more successful than men of fortunes. We offer him the right hand of fellowship, and encourage him in every way to become a good and useful citizen.

It is said that the marriage relation is not recognized in slavery. Why, ever since the organization of the State Government, ministers of the Gospel have been authorized to marry colored persons, with the consent of the master, and I never in my life knew that consent to be withheld. — Such marriages are always held sacred, particularly by the master, and nothing but pressing necessity beyond his control makes a slave holder separate either man or wife, or parent or child. In the State of Louisiana, for years and years, there has existed a law which prevents the separation of children under fifteen years of age, from their parents, and is made a penal offence to do so.

Mr. SANDS. If my friend will allow me to make a remark here, I am sure he is aware that the provision in regard to marital relations among the slaves in Louisiana, do not exist because of any State law. — That is a part of the French code which existed there at the time we acquired that territory by purchase.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. In answer to that I will say that so much greater the virtue in retaining it as a part of their code. They would not change it, although their Legislature had the power to do so at any time. Instead of changing it they continued it in operation. They saw the virtue in it. It was a wise and moral pro-

vision, and necessary to keep the slaves happy and contented among them, and to make them useful Christian people.

I have notes here which would, perhaps, occupy me an hour longer, but I will not trouble the Convention except to say that whilst you in your mad career —

Mr. SCOTT. I move that the gentleman be allowed to extend his remarks till he gets through.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. I want only a few minutes more.

The question was taken upon the motion to give the gentleman further time, and it was agreed to.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. I only desire a few minutes.

The PRESIDENT. There is no limitation on the gentlemen's time now.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. I will not certainly intrude my remarks upon the Convention further than to say that you who are now engaged in this wild career against this institution, must take the responsibility upon your own shoulders. Not only in overriding all State laws, and ignoring the rights of the citizen, but in destroying an institution which is upheld by the law and the Gospel. Let me suggest to you who are prepared to do so much injustice, that before the vote is

taken you may have an opportunity of going into your closets and there communing with your God. I hope He will enlighten and teach you that fanaticism is not religion. That injustice is not justice; that falsehood is not truth, and He will make you wiser and lead you to look to this subject in a true light, and to consider whether your State or the slave be benefited by the passage of the measure, and to consider seriously of the injustice that will be inflicted upon the master. If you will do this and do it in sincerity and truth, and not under the excitement of the moment, but with a desire to be led to the proper conclusions, I think you will come back here better men, with different conclusions and different purposes, that you will, under His holy teachings, be able to say boldly upon this floor before High Heaven, that you will henceforward be governed in every action in life by the immutable principles of truth and justice, and not by the teachings of fanatical parties. Then, and not till then will you have done justice to yourselves, justice to the slaveholder and slaves, and justice to your State.

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Berry, Samuel H.

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Speech of ... delivered in the Constitutional convention of Maryland, June 23, 1864, in opposition to the emancipation of slaves. Upper Marlborough, George W. Wilson, 1864.

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