

from the moral point of view; the religious argument. And this, I confess freely, in the presence of the Convention, I have not fully understood, as presented by the opponents of this article. It is clear, however, that if they do not make slaveholding a religious duty—their arguments certainly approach that—they do at least deny most strenuously that it comes in conflict with any religious obligation. Now, sir, I do not propose to go at any length into the theological argument. The Bible has been brought here; it has been read at great length by my friends in various parts of the house. If it be so, that slaveholding is a duty; if it be so, that it be not a sin even, I would be ready for myself to abandon this question. I do not go to the Bible—I may say I have not gone to it at all as much as it was my privilege to have gone—I do not go to the Bible to learn facts of history. It is very condensed, and too minute, to give us any clear insight into the course of any historic events. But I take the Bible as unfaltering, unswerving in its declaration of principles, the only infallible guide to man upon this earth. And its principles are so simple, so plain, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, may learn them. I do not examine into the very doubtful lights of history there to learn what sort of slavery existed among the Jews. But when I open Moses' writings, and read, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"—I think I have got at a principle of universal application. And when I turn on from that and read in the Prophets: "Thus saith the Lord: ye have not hearkened unto me in proclaiming every man liberty to his neighbor; behold I proclaim a liberty unto you, saith the Lord; to the sword, to the famine, to the pestilence"—when, having read this, and seeing what is the denunciation of God, I look over this land at the present day, I see no reason to suppose that the Almighty One has changed. And when I turn from the Old Testament to the New, and read: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." I think again I have got at a great principle which may control every question which may arise between man and his fellow-man. And when I turn forward again, I read: "Go to, now, ye rich men, weep and howl, for your miseries that shall come upon you; the hire of your laborers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them that have reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." I think I hear again notes of warning to our land; and when I look abroad I see the comment upon the passage.

But we are told that the teachings of St. Paul; in the great case of Philemon vs. Onesimus, must control this question. Well, sir, for the sake of compromise, I am perfectly willing to compromise with gentlemen here upon the doctrine of that case; and will say

carrying out precisely the doctrine there, that the religious teachers may advise all these servants, when they shall be freed, to remain with their masters, "not now"—I quote St. Paul—"not now; indeed, as servants, but above servants; as brothers beloved, partners"—only asking that it may go upon the record that this thought of equality is a proposition of the opponents of emancipation. Do not charge it upon me; I only accept it as a compromise.

The great philosopher, Montesquieu, a century and a half ago, with a truer insight into the thing than some I see around me, disposed of the whole question. He found two facts; first, the fact that slavery did exist; second, the fact that we are a Christian people. And he said: It cannot be that these things are men, for if they be, the suspicion must come that we are not Christians; Christians could not hold men in slavery. And, therefore, he takes the matter boldly in hand, and denies the manhood of the negro, because of the incompatibility of slavery and Christianity, and brings forward a long catalogue of good reasons to show that they are not men. That position I can easily understand. And if Chief Justice Taney, when he announced the atrocious doctrine, uttered by him in the Dred Scott case, that black men have no rights which white men are bound to respect, had started out with the idea that they were not men, and followed Montesquieu, I could have understood that also. But to recognize their manhood, and then deprive them of all rights as men, is a very different thing.

I say, then, that in sound reason, upon the slightest examination of the doctrines of our holy religion, when we come to conform our laws to those laws, we must recognize their rights as human beings. And among those rights, our fathers said it was self-evident were life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I stand with the fathers: I will not demonstrate axioms.

But if it were otherwise; suppose this question came merely as one of policy, as an economical question alone, upon that ground we stand strong beyond all controversy. Gentlemen have assumed here that negroes will not work except in a state of slavery; and from that necessarily follows a long train of deductions. It follows that as labor is, after all, the grand source of national wealth, if it be necessary for a nation to accumulate wealth, there must be some source of labor upon which reliance can be placed. Well, sir, it has been discussed before to-day, whether the hope of reward, or the fear of punishment, were the greater incitement to human effort. And I do not propose to go into this old country-lyceum question. I think there are facts enough on all sides around us to settle that question forever.

But I do not propose to wander abroad to any great extent. I will remark, in passing,