

holder and give him all that he might ask, the thing began to grow so hard, and the light shining through the darkness began to be so strong, that even the gleam of gold might not hide it from the eyes of the most interested; and they resolved that come what would hereafter, the territory of the United States should be free; that come what would, slavery should never progress beyond the boundaries of the States in which it existed. They then contemplated nothing more. They elected a President who was bound to carry into operation their will expressed by his election.

Then came slavery to its fair, legitimate place; for true to all the instincts of the institution, with all the light that God and religion, and education, and freedom, and Christ, had thrown upon it, it would rather rule in hell than serve in heaven; and it ruptured the bonds that bound the Southern country to the North, because its extension was stopped. Do the advocates of slavery think what this war is? Do the gentlemen that think three years is so short a time for opinion and conviction to change, think how near this war has come to an end? Do they think the mother whose son went out in the pride of his manhood to die for his country, and whom she believes has been slain by the upholders of slavery, will teach her children that come after that boy, to maintain slavery in this land? Will the father, strong pro-slavery man as he may have been, who has sacrificed perhaps his three sons in saving his country, and who believes them to have been destroyed by the upholders of slavery, teach other children and raise up another family to support slavery? Think you this is the operation of the human mind? When you have taken from a man all that is highest, dearest, and best, do you think he will aid you to take more from him? Do gentlemen think of the treasure that has been spent and the blood that has been spilled? Do they remember that all the free men of the North, who, either by sickness, or by wounds, or by sudden death upon the battle-field, have gone down to the grave protesting against slavery, were a body of men most of them in the prime of life and with a bright future before them, nearly equal in number to all the slaveholders of the South? I tell you that the blood of redemption has been shed, man for man.

Are the people of this country to forget all that? More treasure than they ever accumulated through all their traffic with the South, they have spent gladly to preserve their country. They are prepared to double it; they are prepared to triple it. They are prepared to give their last son, and the fathers are prepared to go; but they will not have this war now to cease until slavery shall be forever crushed. Though the land of the North be depopulated, though its treasure be depleted, this war has now gone so far, and they have

seen so clearly that slavery and slavery alone is the cause of this war, that I stand here to-day believing and praying that this war shall not cease until slavery shall be abolished through the length and breadth of this land.

A wiser and more eloquent man than I foresaw this long ago. Patrick Henry said in Virginia that if the time ever came when she raised her arm against the Federal Government, one proclamation by the President of the United States would be enough to free every slave in the South. The time has come. It is now simply a question of endurance, and a question of time.

Slavery exists only by local law. The civilized world deny its existence as property. As property, as a question of international law, it does not exist. There is no power existing in the United States to-day to make the thing claimed upon the floor of this House as property, recognized by any nation with which it has amicable treaties. It exists only by local laws. It is within the power of the law of the State clearly and beyond dispute, to put an end to its existence whenever it may so please. Gentlemen forget that slavery has been a test question for some years, not only here but in every State in the United States. They apparently forget, what they ought to have known, that when the tide upon which they have been riding so triumphantly in its flow, should begin to ebb, the institution of slavery was gone. They might have known that whenever the time should come when the voice of humanity and of God could be heard, there would be no half-way measures. There would be no gradual sweeping it away; but quick as was the evil to come, quick would it go, if haply with the sin we might throw off the consequences, if having sown the storm we might forbear to reap the whirlwind, or the whirlwind setting forth might haply be stayed, and no more be visited upon our people.

Every reason which has been alleged or given for maintaining slavery could be given with equal justice by Barbary for holding its Christians prisoners in bondage. No less a man than Benjamin Franklin made this statement to Mr. Jackson, and showed that every argument urged in favor of African slavery would exactly apply word for word to the case of Christian prisoners languishing upon the shores of Barbary. Fourteen millions of immortal souls are brought from Africa in the African slave trade, in different parts of the world, and this is right. This, gentlemen tell us, is the legitimate offshoot of the Christian religion. For this Christ came into the world that nations should be founded on slavery; that men should control the bodies and souls of their fellows, the Son of God died upon the cross. But I will not condescend to meet an argument—assertions of such a kind as this. I leave it to the enlightened sense of the world. I will not put