

It is useless to disguise the fact, or to attempt to delude ourselves on this subject, *the time has come* when the state must either adopt a *decisive course of action*, or we must at once *abandon the contest*. We cannot again petition—it would be idle to remonstrate, and degrading to protest. In our estimation it is now a question of *Liberty or Slavery*.—It is now to be decided, whether we shall maintain the rights purchased by the precious blood of our fathers, and transmit them unimpaired to our posterity, or tamely surrender them without a struggle. We are constrained to express our solemn conviction, that under the protecting system, we have been reduced to a state of “colonial dependence, suffering and disgrace,” and that unless we now fly with the spirit which becomes freemen to the rescue of our liberties, they are lost forever. Brought up in an ardent devotion to the Union of the States, the people of South Carolina have long struggled against the conviction, that the powers of the Federal Government have been shamefully perverted to the purposes of injustice and oppression. Bound to their brethren by the proud recollections of the past, and fond hopes of the future, by common struggles for liberty and common glories, acquired in its defence—they have been brought slowly, and with the utmost reluctance, to the conclusion, that they are shut out from their sympathies, and made the unpitied victims of an inexorable system of tyranny, which is without example in any country claiming to be free. Experience has at length taught us the lamentable truth, that administered as the government now is, and has been for several years past in open disregard of all the limitations prescribed by the Constitution, the Union, itself, instead of being a blessing must soon become a curse. Liberty we are thoroughly persuaded, cannot be preserved under our system without a sacred and inviolable regard not merely to the letter, but to the true spirit of the Constitution; and without liberty the Union would not be worth preserving. If then there were no alternatives but to submit to these evils, or to seek a remedy even in Revolution itself, we could not without proving ourselves recreant to the principles hallowed by the example of our ancestors, hesitate a moment as to our choice. We should say, in the spirit of our fathers, “we have counted the cost, and find nothing so intolerable as voluntary slavery.” But we cannot bring ourselves for one moment to believe that the alternatives presented to us are revolution or slavery. We confidently believe that there is a re-