

Abraham Lincoln's speech fragment on Slavery

s.l., circa 1857-1858.

Autograph manuscript, 1 page.

...dent truth. Made so plain by our good Father in Heaven, that all feel and understand it, even down to brutes and creeping insects. The ant, who has toiled and dragged a crumb to his nest, will furiously defend the fruit of his labor, against whatever robber assails him. So plain, that the most dumb and stupid slave that ever toiled for a master, does constantly know that he is wronged. So plain that no one, high or low, ever does mistake it, except in a plainly selfish way; for although volume upon volume is written to prove slavery a very good thing, we never hear of the man who wishes to take the good of it, by being a slave himself.

Most governments have been based, practically, on the denial of the equal rights of men, as I have, in part, stated them; ours began, by affirming those rights. They said, some men are too ignorant, and vicious, to share in government. Possibly so, said we; and, by your system, you would always keep them ignorant and vicious. We proposed to give all a chance; and we expected the weak to grow stronger, the ignorant, wiser; and all better, and happier together.

We made the experiment; and the fruit is before us. Look at it-- Think of it-- Look at it, in its aggregate grandeur, of extent of country, and numbers of population, of ship, and steamboat, and rail...

Notes: The beginning and end of the speech is not available.