

The Case for Slavery

Introduction: As the campaign against slavery heated up, more and more Southerners began to defend the institution. Following are two arguments made by Southerners. Thomas Dew was a college professor from Virginia, and George McDuffie was the governor of South Carolina.

Thomas Dew

Now let us look a moment to the slave, and consider his position. Some have described him as hating rather than loving his master. We assert again that this is not borne out by the facts. We are well convinced that there is nothing but the relations of husband and wife, parent and child, or brother and sister which produces a closer tie than the relation of master and servant. We do not hesitate to affirm that, throughout the whole slave-holding country, the slaves of a good master are his warmest, most constant, and most devoted friends. Everyone acquainted with southern slaves knows that the slave rejoices in the prosperity of his master. A merrier being does not exist on the face of the globe than the Negro slave of the United States. Why then, since the slave is happy, should we attempt to disturb his contentment by planting in his mind a vain and indefinite desire for liberty.

George McDuffie

No human institution, in my opinion, is more clearly consistent with the will of God than slavery. And no one of His laws is written in more legible characters than that which consigns the African race to this condition. Whether we consult the sacred Scriptures or the lights of nature and reason, we shall find these truths as abundantly apparent as if written with a sunbeam in the heavens. Under both the Jewish and Christian branches of our religion, slavery existed with the wholehearted sanction of its prophets, its apostles, and finally its great Author. The ancient Hebrew fathers themselves, those chosen men of God, were slaveholders. That the African Negro is destined by God to occupy this condition of servile dependence is not less clear. They have all the qualities that fit them for slaves and not one of those that would fit them to be freemen. Until the "African can change his skin," it will be in vain to attempt to make freemen of those whom God has doomed to be slaves.