

*Mr. President* — I regret that an individual possessing the ability of that gentleman, should in the nineteenth century undertake to justify that infamous system of slavery, which is practised upon my brethren at the South. He has referred to the constitution, to prove that abolitionists are not entitled to the privileges of American citizens. Sir, that constitution will bear them out. There is not a solitary word about slavery in that constitution. The word slave is not in it. The constitution merely recognizes indirectly its existence, in some of its provisions. There was a compromise made, that the slave states should be entitled to a representation for three fifths of their slave population; and that slaves who escape should be delivered up to their masters. But so cautious were the framers of that instrument, to avoid recognizing slavery as a part of our systems; and so conscious were they of its repugnance to the very spirit of our institutions, that their provisions were made without introducing into that sacred instrument the word slave or slavery. And it is evident that this compromise, so far from amounting to a perpetual guarantee of slavery, was, on all hands, considered as but a *temporary* arrangement. This may be learned from the speech of Mr. Madison, in the Virginia convention, for the adoption of the federal constitution. Sir, the spirit of abolition was born in Virginia. If I am not mistaken, a resolution was introduced against this slave representation. Mr. Madison says, ‘The Southern states will not enter into this union, unless they are permitted a *temporary* continuance of this system.’

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The gentleman has also gone back to ancient times. He has referred us to the case of Joseph. Joseph was

a Hebrew. He was *stolen*. What does he say? 'Indeed, I was *stolen away* out of the land of the Hebrews.' Is there not robbery? Joseph was the first slave that we read of, and he, speaking by divine inspiration, calls it robbery. Slavery is founded in fraud.

Again, the gentleman alluded to historical facts. Sir, we can trace the *modern origin of chattel slavery*. The first slave ship fitted out to the coast of Africa, was in the reign of Charles V.; and King William was the first that granted a patent to a company of merchants to go to the coast of Africa, and entrap the natives, and sell them into bondage. When this country was first discovered by Columbus, that man was a slaveholder – a slave dealer. He undertook to enslave the aborigines of this country. He sent 300 of them over to Spain, to be sold as slaves. But, there was a spark of humanity then remaining in Spain, which was shocked at the thought of such a deed. Queen Elizabeth sent back these men.

Sir, it is treachery to the sacred cause of liberty for one man to enslave another. That spirit which enslaves my colored brother at the South, would enslave every man in this house. It is not because we are *black*, that our race is enslaved. It is that domineering spirit that would enslave every man if it had the power. The spirit of abolition is, to *do righteousness* – not do as you would expect the slave to do, if he were in your place; but to do all mankind what you would have them do to you.

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