

He contended that the law was wrong—that the negro had a natural right to testify. He was born and reared among negroes, and he was the friend of the negro, and was not to be deterred from asserting his rights by the cry that the lash was held *in terrorem* over them by the men of Washington.

As to the policy of allowing the negro to testify, why should he not? The thing is preposterous. In the city of Baltimore, nearly every wholesale house has a negro porter or drayman to deliver packages, and because his testimony was inadmissible it caused great inconvenience. He was for the article as originally reported; was surprised at his friend from Somerset (Mr. Jones) wishing to remit this matter to the Legislature. It belonged to the Bill of Rights, and he should vote for its retention there. You admit the Chinese and the Hindoo to testify; why should the negro be excluded? Had he not as much intelligence as they? You allowed every one to testify who believed in the existence of God and of a future state of rewards and punishments but the negro. Speaking for the city of Baltimore, which he had the honor in part to represent, he would say that he was satisfied, after the freest interchange of views, that the majority of the best men there were in favor of this principle.

Mr. Stoddert read an argument giving his views.

Mr. Brewer, of Baltimore city, said his objections to this thing were that the Bill of Rights was not the place for it, and it indicated the idea in our people of submission for the sake of expediency. The negro was declared competent to testify now by the civil rights bill, and he could afford to wait for legislation. He was opposed to this spirit of compromising. All history proved that though compromise might ensure temporary triumph, it always resulted in ignominious defeat.

When he looked around him now and saw the men of this Convention, he asked himself if they could be the descendants of the glorious old Maryland Line. It repented him that he had advocated the calling of this Constitutional Convention; it repented him that men should come here who would, for the sake of expediency, so act as to disgrace the State of Maryland.