

Boston Jany. 22 – 1860

Hon. William H. Seward,
Sir,

Your note of the 11th was not rec^d until the 21st. It was read with some surprise, and with more regret, to say nothing of other sentiments.

The note is marked “private.” I decline the confidence. Both your notes came into my hands fairly without my having authorized any implication of privacy. And although I may not think it proper or any longer feel disposed, to use the one to Mr South in the particular manner I had desired to do, I shall nevertheless, since you are a public man, feel at perfect liberty to use both of them in any other manner, however public, as evidence of your unfaithfulness to freedom, and your own convictions of the true character of the constitution, which you have sworn to support.

And if in so doing, I shall chance to “embarrass” the plans of the Chases, and Summers, and Wilsons, and Hales, and the other jesuitical leaders of the Republican party, who profess that they can aid liberty, without injuring slavery; who imagine that they can even be champions of freedom at the north, and at the same time avowedly protect slavery in the south, “where it is”; and that they can thus ride into power on the two horses of Liberty and Slavery – if I should happen to “embarrass” these plans, I shall not feel that that consequence is one which I need to care to “avoid.” I had had some hope that you would put you foot on these double-faced demagogues, and either extinguish them, or compel them to conduct, for the time being, as if they were honest men. But it seems that you have decided rather to throw yourself into their arms, commit your fortunes to the keeping and do nothing on behalf of liberty, that may “embarrass” their operations.

In contrast to your conduct, I take the liberty of exhibiting to you that of Senator Brown of Mississippi. In the Senate Decr. 2 – 1856 (As reported in the Congressional Globe) after describing the book as “an argument in favor of the constitutional power of Congress, not only to interfere with, but to abolish slavery in the southern States of the Union,” he said “The Senator [Wilson] did not say – what I am willing to say myself – that the book is ingeniously written. No mere simpleton could ever have drawn such an argument. If his premises were admitted, I should say at once that it would take a Herculean task to overthrow his argument.”

Although Mr. Brown thus left it to be inferred that he thought there might be some error in the premises, he made no attempt to point to any.

Thus an open advocate of slaver from Mississippi, virtually makes more concessions to the anti-slavery character of the constitution, than a professed advocate of liberty, from New York, notwithstanding his private convictions of the truth, thinks it for his interest, “under existing circumstances,” to claim for it.

I shall very likely make the whole of this correspondence public; and if it shall serve any purpose towards defeating yourself and the Republicans, I shall be gratified; for I would much rather the government be in the hands of declared enemies of liberty, than in those of treacherous friends.

Lysander Spooner