



FREDERICK DOUGLASS

# THE NEGRO IN OUR HISTORY

BY

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*Editor of the Journal of Negro History, Author of the Education of the Negro Prior to 1861, a Century of Negro Migration, the History of the Negro Church, the Mind of the Negro as Reflected in Letters, Negro Orators and their Orations, and Free Negro Heads of Families in the United States in 1830.*



FIFTH EDITION  
(Further Revised and Enlarged)

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**To**  
**MY BROTHER**  
**ROBERT HENRY WOODSON**

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THIS book was written five years ago and would have been published at that time, had not the high cost of printing during the World War rendered its manufacture too expensive. A few pages have been added to bring the work nearer to the present date, but the leading facts as set forth herein appear as they were originally written.

The purpose in writing this book was to present to the average reader in succinct form the history of the United States as it has been influenced by the presence of the Negro in this country. The aim here is to supply also the need of schools long since desiring such a work in handy form with adequate references for those stimulated to more advanced study.

In this condensed form certain situations and questions could not be adequately discussed, and in endeavoring thus to tell the story the author may have left unsaid what others consider more important. Practically all phases of Negro life and history have been treated in their various ramifications, however, to demonstrate how the Negro has been influenced by contact with the Caucasian and to emphasize what the former has contributed to civilization.

The author is indebted to Mr. David A. Lane, Jr., who kindly assisted him in reading the entire proof.

CARTER G. WOODSON.

Washington, D. C.  
April, 1922.

## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

As the first edition of this book was written almost a decade ago and the second was more of a revision than an enlargement of the first, the author has found it advisable to expand the treatment of certain topics and to add three chapters. The new material is intended not so much to illuminate briefly mentioned facts as to develop certain topics which, because of the unsettled state of things, could not be adequately treated when the first edition was produced.

In this edition considerable attention has been given to causes and their results which have had their play since the beginning of this century. For example, segregation is one of the most important topics treated. What has been done for the advancement of the Negro in his sequestered sphere, moreover, and how he is working out his salvation along economic lines have been proportionately discussed. Another important topic treated is the effort of the Negro to help himself by agitative methods supported by organized effort.

Some minor changes should likewise be noted. The last two pages of the chapter on "Reconstruction" have been rewritten, the statistics of the chapter on "Achievements in Freedom" have been revised according to figures of the census of 1920, and a number of illustrations have been added. In fact, that portion of the book following page 280 is practically new material.

The cordial welcome which this sketch of the Negro in history has received has surpassed the expectations of the author. He realizes that this success has been due primarily to the urgent need for a work giving in succinct form the salient facts of this neglected aspect of our history. Knowing that this work is not without fault, however, he has carried out some valuable suggestions of friends who have so kindly received this volume.

Washington, D. C.  
June, 1924.

CARTER G. WOODSON.

## PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

This edition of *The Negro in Our History* is to supply an increasing demand for a single volume giving the leading facts of Negro achievement and the influence of the race on the history of the world. Most of the space herein is devoted to the Negro in this country. Some attention, however, has been given to the African background and to the European contact with that continent. Inasmuch as the public is generally uninformed as to the early history of Africa, and is not yet particularly interested in what the Negro has accomplished in America, a volume presenting such an account in detail might not be acceptable.

It has, therefore, been thought best to let this volume develop by various editions in the direction in which the public desires help. In the proportion as Americans and Europeans become removed from such nonsense as the Nordic myth and race superiority, they will increase their interest in the history of other peoples who have accomplished just as much good as they have. So long handicapped by this heresy, however, they still lack the sense of humor to see the joke in thinking that one race has been divinely selected to do all of the great things on this earth and to enjoy most of its blessings. For this reason a large work on Negro history is not yet in demand, but there has been much progress in this direction.

Having these thoughts in mind, the author has included in this edition four or five times as much about the Negro in Africa as appeared in the first three editions, and he has given in more detail certain important facts of the Negro

## Preface

history in cases where international influences and causes were at work. This volume, therefore, which was first intended for the average reader, still lies within his grasp; but at the same time, it supplies the need of those who, having the spirit of inquiry, desire to look far enough into the subject to appreciate the Negro as one of the advanced races of the world.

CARTER G. WOODSON.

WASHINGTON, D. C.,  
*January, 1927.*



## PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION

THE Fifth Edition of the *NEGRO IN OUR HISTORY* is the result of the increasing demand which this book has served throughout the country during the last six years. It has supplied the need for a work of general information with respect to the Negro. At the same time it has been used extensively as a textbook for advanced high school and college students. Wherever the achievements of the Negro are given serious attention in courses in social sciences some reference is made to or some use is made of this work.

In further revising the book several parts of it have been expanded and a new chapter has been added. The additional matter deals largely with the recognition recently received by the Negro in art. The reason for this change in the attitude of the public toward the æsthetic contribution of the Negro and the effort to evaluate it constitute the important points developed in this chapter. Additional illustrations, together with those already in the work, will facilitate the study of the Negro in fine art.

For much of this treatment of the Negro in fine art we are indebted to the articles and books published by the Barnes Foundation of Merion, Pennsylvania. These advanced thinkers have done much to direct attention to the study of African civilization and its influence in the modern world.

CARTER G. WOODSON.

*Washington, D. C.*  
September, 1923.

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## INTRODUCTION

By KELLY MILLER

DR. CARTER GODWIN WOODSON, the author, was born of ex-slave parents near New Canton, Buckingham County, Virginia, December 19, 1875. His father was James Henry Woodson, and his mother Anne Eliza (Riddle) Woodson. As he was one of a rather large family of nine children, his parents, who started life in poverty, could not provide him with the ordinary comforts of life and could not regularly send him to the five-months district school taught alternately by his two uncles, John M. and James B. Riddle. In this rural atmosphere, however, he managed largely by self-instruction to master the fundamentals of the common school subjects by the time he was seventeen.

At this age, in 1892, he went with his brother Robert Henry Woodson to West Virginia, to which his parents were induced to move the following year. They settled at Huntington, but the young Woodson had to accept employment in the coal fields in Fayette County. There he labored as a miner for six years, while spending a few months annually in school in Huntington, West Virginia.

In 1895 he entered the Douglass High School of that city. In this school the young man came under the instruction of William T. McKinney, who inspired him to aspire to higher things. He completed the course in less than two years. He next entered Berea College in Kentucky. This institution was famous at that time because of its coeducation of the two races. He studied there a part of two years. He then began teaching at Winona, Fayette County, West

Virginia, in 1898. From Winona he was called to the principalship of the Douglass High School, of Huntington, from which he had been graduated four years before. He then spent his summers studying at the University of Chicago. There he later obtained the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

He traveled and studied a year in Asia and Europe, spending one semester at La Sorbonne, the University of Paris, under the instruction of Professors Aulard, Diehl, Lemonnier, and Bouché-Leclerc. In France he not only did graduate work in history, but in having contact with French as it is spoken, he learned to speak the language as fluently as he had already learned abroad to speak Spanish.

Returning to the United States, he resumed his studies at the University of Chicago. From this institution he received the degree of Master of Arts in 1908. After studying a little further at Chicago, he went to Harvard to continue his graduate work in history and political science. He specialized under Professors Charles Gross, Ephraim Emerton, W. B. Munro, and Edward Channing. In 1909 he accepted a position as instructor in Romance Languages in the Washington High Schools that he might engage in research in the Library of Congress. In this way he wrote his doctoral dissertation, *The Disruption of Virginia*, which was accepted at Harvard in 1912, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Dr. Woodson served in the Washington Public School System ten years. During the last two years of this service he was an instructor in English and the History of Education at the Myrtilla Miner Normal School and principal of the Armstrong Manual Training High School. In 1919 he became Dean of the School of Liberal Arts of Howard University but resigned at the close of the year because he

could not agree with the policies of the administration. From 1920 to 1922 he served as Dean of the West Virginia Collegiate Institute, mainly to reorganize the college department.

The restrictions of the school room, however, did not furnish free scope to exploit his specialty implied in the degree "Doctor of Philosophy in History." In the meantime his life purpose was taking shape and direction in his mind. His dominant purpose was to turn his historical training and preparation to the best racial account. At the expiration of this last service, Dr. Woodson retired from teaching to devote all of his time to research in connection with the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History.

This Association was born in the brain of Carter G. Woodson. Its conception, inspiration, growth, and development are the outgrowth of his personal genius and energy. It was organized by him in Chicago on September 9, 1915, with only five persons. It was incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia on the third of the following October. The purpose of this undertaking is to preserve and publish the records of the Negro that the race may not become a negligible factor in the thought of the world. The Association has endeavored to publish such materials in scientific form that facts thus properly set forth may tell their own story.

An important purpose of the Association is the publication of *The Journal of Negro History*, a quarterly scientific review of more than 100 pages of current articles and documents giving facts generally unknown. This publication has been regularly issued since January, 1916, and has reached its eleventh volume. In bound form it constitutes a veritable encyclopedia of information concerning the life and history of the Negro in this country and abroad. It circulates among scholars throughout the civil-

ized world. It appeals especially to colleges and universities of both races as a desirable aid to social workers and students carrying on research.

During these years of painstaking research, Dr. Woodson has written a number of books dealing with neglected aspects of Negro history. The first of these, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, appeared in 1915. It evoked from the leading organs of thought in the United States most favorable comment to the effect that it showed both original treatment and independent research. His next work was *A Century of Negro Migration*, brought out in 1918 at the time of the culmination of the exodus of the Negroes to the North. Recently, Dr. Woodson has published through the Associated Publishers two very popular works, *The History of the Negro Church*, and *The Negro in Our History*. The former has reached its second edition and the latter its fourth, in a revised and enlarged form. Dr. Woodson has recently produced also three important source books, *Negro Orators and Their Orations*, *Free Negro Heads of Families in the United States in 1830* and *The Mind of the Negro as Reflected in Letters written During the Crisis, 1800-1860*. He is now engaged in writing a comprehensive history of the Negro in six volumes. He is endeavoring to make this the monumental work of his life.

The importance of Dr. Woodson's work is better appreciated when we reflect that the literature of the race problem abounds mainly in propaganda based upon opinion and argumentation. The importance of collecting and collating exact and accurate material has not yet received the recognition which it deserves. We are so anxious to solve the race problem, that we do not take time to study it. Infallible assumption and passionate dogma take the place of carefully ascertained fact and calm analysis. The largest measure of our admiration is due to the Negro



who can divest himself of momentary passion and prejudice, and with self-detachment, devote his powers to searching out and sifting the historical facts growing out of race relationship and present them to the world, just as they are, in their untampered integrity.

The social importance of history, or perhaps, I had better say, the importance of social history, has become but recently appreciated. As a school boy, I used to read in the textbooks that history was a record of the deeds and doings of important personages and people. Distinguished achievements and spectacular performances monopolized the entire field of recorded human action. The ordinary deeds and doings of ordinary people did not rise to the level of the historian's concern. But in more recent time we are beginning to recognize that any performance, individual or en masse, which influences the course of human progress or retrogression is deemed a contributory factor of history. If no single slave ever rose above the benumbing drudgery of hewing wood and drawing water, nevertheless, slavery and the slave could not be omitted from any trustworthy account of the civilization of the South, and indeed, of the nation. Dr. Woodson has somewhere made a sharp distinction between the history of the Negro and the Negro in history. Too often the artist makes the mountain peaks suffice for the whole landscape. The infinite smaller eminences and depressions are apt to be ignored by the painter bent on exploiting dominant features. But not so with the scientific historian. The battle may be lost for the want of the horseshoe nail as well as for lack of the imperious general. It is said that the loss of the Battle of Waterloo, which turned the tide of European history, might have been attributable to the careless cook whose tough beefsteak affected Napoleon's usual alertness and enabled the Duke of Wellington to take advantage of his momentary dullness. Henson, the black

attendant, accompanied Peary to the North Pole. The menial part played by this sable attendant was an important and essential part in polar discovery. Dr. Woodson is concerned in digging out every significant rôle which the Negro has played in the world's drama. This makes our history, not only full and complete, but true to the actualities of history happenings.

The Negro is often forced to feel that there is a conspiracy of silence to ignore his best deeds and to exploit his imperfections. If a Negro athlete takes the world's sprinting record, the feat is exploited, while his race is ignored. But if a Negro commits a crime its heinousness is enhanced by reason of the color of the criminal. The reputation of the race suffers seriously by the exploitation of its vices and the suppression of its virtues. The true historian holds the balance true between good and evil. To him the deeds of Judas are as full of historical meaning as those of John. His function is to present the facts.

The Negro's pride of race is humiliated when he contemplates the great drama of this continent and finds that he is accorded no honorable part in the performance. The tendency is always to glorify the white man and to debase the Negro. The effect upon the spirit of the Negro is deplorably oppressive. If he must forever dwell upon a picture in which all worthwhile deeds are ascribed to white men and none to his own race, whence can he derive spirit and inspiration? So strong has been the tendency towards race belittlement, that even Negroes affect to disdain their own contributions. Some are even ashamed to study about themselves and the doings of their race. Negro students have been known to feel ashamed of the songs which welled from the heart of their race as the trill from the throat of the bird. How much more ennobling they feel to read about "how Achilles injured the Greeks" than to recount the lesser exploits of their own blood! But

thanks to Dr. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, all of this is being changed. The story of one's own blood and breed is naturally of keener interest and zest than the story of an alien. Every Jewish boy's heart feels a little bigger when he reads of the part his race has played in the drama of mankind. Not a single fact creditable to Jewry is ever allowed to escape his attention. See how the women delight to extol the part played by their sex; how the Catholics exploit the achievements of their co-religionists; and so the Negro must learn to know his own story and to love it.

Dr. Woodson is furnishing the material which will be of incalculable value to students and scholars of race relations, not only in the immediate future but in the remoter years to come. His work possesses what might be termed a strategic timeliness. America is just acquiring the scientific method of handling historical material. Dr. Woodson is, I believe, the second member of his race to receive complete university training and equipment for scientific historical inquiry. The facts involved in the contact of the African with the Western World are scattered throughout many sources which are growing less and less available as the years go by. Like the Sibylline books, the value increases as the volumes decrease. Many private libraries contain invaluable material, which will be disseminated or destroyed unless it is utilized during the lifetime of the compilers. Much invaluable material is now confirmable by living memory, which, within a few years, will pass beyond reach of consultation. Now is the time of all times to gather up the documents and to collect and collate the racial material which they contain. It is fortunate that some one has had vision enough to do this thing.

Dr. Woodson has made every possible sacrifice for the cause to which he is devoted. In the beginning of the movement he beggared himself that the work might suc-

ceed. The work of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History soon approved itself to the historical scholars of the country. The historical departments of both Harvard and Chicago, where Dr. Woodson has studied, at once recognized the importance of what he was endeavoring to do. A few philanthropists began to find out what was being accomplished and furnished substantial assistance. Among those making personal donations to the cause we find such well-known Americans as Jacob H. Schiff, William G. Wilcox, Morefield Storey, James J. Storrow, Frank Trumbull, Cleveland H. Dodge, Morton D. Hull, and Julius Rosenwald. The work has been assisted, too, by the Carnegie Corporation and the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial.

With funds obtained through these sources the Association has been studying the Free Negro prior to the Civil War and the Negro in the Reconstruction of the Southern States. The project has gone far beyond the ability of one man to operate. Dr. Woodson has on his staff several carefully trained Negro students in present-day historical method through whom, under his direction, much of this research work has already been accomplished. In this effort, too, the investigation is not restricted to the Negro in the United States. The Association has an investigator working in the Archives of the Indies, in Seville, Spain, one making an investigation in the British Museum and the Public Record Office in London, and still another in Hayti studying folklore. The Association has thereby been enabled to accomplish worthwhile work which speaks for itself.

## APPENDIX

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Speaking of the effect of the Missouri Compromise, John Quincy Adams, then Secretary of State, said :

I said that this confounding of the ideas of servitude and labor was one of the bad effects of slavery; but he (Calhoun) thought it attended with many excellent consequences. It did not apply to all kinds of labor—not, for example, to farming. He, himself, had often held the plow; so had his father. Manufacturing and mechanical labor were not degrading. It was only manual labor—the proper work of slaves. No white person could descend to do that. And it was the best guarantee to equality among the whites. It produced an unvarying level among them. It not only did not excite, but did not ever admit of inequalities, by which one white man could domineer over another.

I told Calhoun I could not see things in the same light. It is, in truth, all perverted sentiment—mistaking labor for slavery, and dominion for freedom. The discussion of this Missouri question has betrayed the secret of their souls. In the abstract they admit that slavery is an evil, they disclaim all participation in the introduction of it, and cast it all upon the shoulders of our old Grandam Britain. But when probed to the quick upon it, they show at the bottom of their souls pride and vainglory in their condition of masterdom. They fancy themselves more generous and noble-hearted than the plain freemen who labor for subsistence. They look down upon the simplicity of a Yankee's manners, because he has not habits of overbearing like theirs and cannot treat negroes like dogs. It is among the evils of slavery that it taints the very sources of moral principles. It establishes false estimates of virtue and vice; for what can be more false and heartless than this doctrine which makes the first and holiest rights of humanity to depend upon the color of the skin. It perverts human reason, and reduces men endowed with logical powers to maintain that slavery is sanctioned by the Christian religion, that slaves are happy and contented in their condition, that between master and slave there are ties of mutual attachment and affection, that the virtues of the master are refined and exalted by the degradation of the slave; while at the same time they vent execrations upon the slave-trade, curse Britain for having given them slaves, burn at the stake negroes convicted of crimes for the terror of the example, and writhe in agonies of fear at the very mention of human rights as applicable to men of color. The impression produced upon my mind by the progress of this discussion is, that the bargain between freedom and slavery contained in the Consti-

tution of the United States is morally and politically vicious, inconsistent with the principles upon which alone our Revolution can be justified; cruel and oppressive, by riveting the chains of slavery, by pledging the faith of freedom to maintain and perpetuate the tyranny of the master; and grossly unequal and impolitic by admitting that slaves are at once enemies to be kept in subjection, property to be secured or restored to their owners, and persons not to be represented themselves, but for whom their masters are privileged with nearly a double share of representation. The consequence has been that this slave representation has governed the Union. Benjamin portioned above his brethren has ravened as a wolf. In the morning he has devoured the prey, and at night he has divided the spoil. It would be no difficult matter to prove, by reviewing the history of the Union under this Constitution, that almost everything which has contributed to the honor and welfare of the nation has been accomplished in despite of them or forced upon them, and that everything unpropitious and dishonorable, including the blunders and follies of their adversaries, may be traced to them. I have favored this Missouri Compromise, believing it to be all that could be effected under the present Constitution and from extreme unwillingness to put the Union at hazard. But perhaps it would have been a wiser as well as a bolder course to have persisted in the restriction upon Missouri, till it should have terminated in a convention of the States to amend and revise the Constitution. This would have produced a new Union of thirteen or fourteen States unpolled with slavery, with a great and glorious object to effect, namely, that of rallying to their standard the other States by the universal emancipation of their slaves. If the Union must be dissolved, slavery is precisely the question upon which it ought to break. For the present, however, this contest is laid asleep.—Stedman and Hutchinson, *American Literature* (N. Y., 1888), IV, 213-233, *passim*.

On these restrictions in Missouri John Sergeant, Pennsylvania member of Congress and appointed commissioner to the Panama Congress, said:

It is time to come to a conclusion; I fear I have already trespassed too long. In the effort I have made to submit to the committee my views of this question, it has been impossible to escape entirely the influence of the sentiment that pervades this House. Yet I have no such apprehensions as have been expressed. The question is indeed an important one; but its importance is derived altogether from its connection with the extension, indefinitely, of negro slavery, over a land which I trust Providence has destined for the labor and the support of freemen. I have no fear that this question, much as it has agitated the country, is to produce any fatal division, or even to generate a new organization of parties. It is not a question upon which we ought to indulge unreasonable apprehensions, or yield to the counsels of fear. It concerns ages to come and millions to be born. It is, as it were, a question of a new political creation, and it is for us, under Heaven, to say what shall be its condition. If we

impose the restriction, it will, I hope, be finally imposed. But, if hereafter it should be found right to remove it, and the State consent, we can remove it. Admit the State, without the restriction, the power is gone forever, and with it are forever gone all the efforts that have been made by the non-slaveholding States, to repress and limit the sphere of slavery, and enlarge and extend the blessings of freedom. With it, perhaps, is gone forever the power of preventing the traffic in slaves, that inhuman and detestable traffic, so long a disgrace to Christendom. In future, and no very distant times, convenience, and profit, and necessity, may be found as available pleas as they formerly were, and for the luxury of slaves, we shall again involve ourselves in the sin of the trade. We must not presume too much upon the strength of our resolutions. Let every man, who has been accustomed to the indulgence, ask himself if it is not a luxury—a tempting luxury, which solicits him strongly and at every moment. The prompt obedience, the ready attention, the submissive and humble, but eager effort to anticipate command—how flattering to our pride, how soothing to our indolence! To the members from the south, I appeal, to know whether they will suffer any temporary inconvenience, or any speculative advantage to expose us to the danger. To those of the north, no appeal can be necessary. To both, I can most sincerely say, that as I know my own views on this subject to be free from any unworthy motive, so will I believe that they likewise have no object but the common good of our common country; and that nothing would have given me more heartfelt satisfaction than that the present proposition should have originated in the same quarter to which we are said to be indebted for the ordinance of 1787. Then, indeed, would Virginia have appeared in even more than her wonted splendor, and spreading out the scroll of her services, would have beheld none of them with greater pleasure, than that cries which began, by pleading the cause of humanity in remonstrances against the slave trade, while she was yet a colony, and embracing her own act of abolition, and the ordinance of 1787, terminated in the restriction of Missouri. Consider, what a foundation our predecessors have laid! And behold, with the blessing of Providence, how the work has prospered! What is there, in ancient or in modern times, that can be compared with the growth and prosperity of the States formed out of the Northwest Territory? When Europeans reproach us with our negro slavery, when they contrast our republican boast and pretensions with the existence of this condition among us, we have our answer ready—it is to you we owe this evil—you planted it here, and it has taken such root in the soil we have not the power to eradicate it. Then, turning to the west, and directing their attention to Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, we can proudly tell them, these are the offspring of our policy and our laws, these are the free productions of the constitution of the United States. But, if, beyond this smiling region, they should descrie another dark spot upon the face of the new creation—another scene of negro slavery, established by ourselves, and spreading continually towards the further ocean, what shall we say then? No, sir, let us follow up the work our ancestors have begun. Let us give to the world a new pledge of our sincerity. Let the standard of freedom be planted in Missouri, by the hands of the constitution, and let its

banner wave over the heads of none but freemen—men retaining the image impressed upon them by their Creator, and dependent upon none but God and the laws. Then, as our republican States extend, republican principles will go hand in hand with republican practice—the love of liberty with the sense of justice. Then, sir, the dawn, beaming from the constitution, which now illuminates Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, will spread with increasing brightness to the further west; until in its brilliant luster, the dark spot, which now rests upon our country, shall be forever hid from sight. Industry, arts, commerce, knowledge, will flourish with plenty and contentment for ages to come, and the loud chorus of universal freedom, re-echo from the Pacific to the Atlantic, the great truths of the declaration of independence. Then, too, our brethren of the south, if they sincerely wish it, may scatter their emancipated slaves through this boundless region, and our country, at length, be happily freed forever from the foul stain and curse of slavery. And if (may it be far, very far distant!) intestine commotion—civil dissension—division, should happen—we shall not leave our posterity exposed to the combined horrors of a Civil and a servile war. If any man still hesitate, influenced by some temporary motive of convenience, or ease, or profit, I charge him to think what our fathers have suffered for us, and then to ask his heart, if he can be faithless to the obligation he owes to posterity!—Moore, *American Eloquence* (N. Y., 1864), II, 531-532.

Calhoun, the champion of the slaveholding interests and a fearless defender of the justice of slavery, thus commented on abolition in 1837:

As widely as this incendiary spirit has spread, it has not yet infected this body, or the great mass of the intelligent and business portion of the North; but unless it be speedily stopped, it will spread and work upwards till it brings the two great sections of the Union into deadly conflict. This is not a new impression with me. Several years since, in a discussion with one of the Senators from Massachusetts (Mr. Webster), before this fell spirit had showed itself, I then predicted that the doctrine of the proclamation and the Force Bill,—that this Government had a right, in the last resort, to determine the extent of its own powers, and enforce its decision at the point of the bayonet, which was so warmly maintained by that Senator, would at no distant day arouse the dormant spirit of abolitionism. I told him that the doctrine was tantamount to the assumption of unlimited power on the part of the Government, and that such would be the impression on the public mind in a large portion of the Union. The consequences would be inevitable. A large portion of the Northern States believed slavery to be a sin, and would consider it as an obligation of conscience to abolish it if they should feel themselves in any degree responsible for its continuance,—and that this doctrine would necessarily lead to the belief of such responsibility. . . .

They who imagine that the spirit now abroad in the North will die away of itself without a shock or convulsion, have formed a very inadequate conception of its real character; it will continue to



rise and spread, unless prompt and efficient measures to stay its progress be adopted. Already it has taken possession of the pulpit, of the schools, and, to a considerable extent, of the press; those great instruments by which the mind of the rising generation will be formed.

However sound the great body of the non-slaveholding States are at present, in the course of a few years they will be succeeded by those who will have been taught to hate the people and institutions of nearly one-half of this Union, with a hatred more deadly than one hostile nation ever entertained toward another. It is easy to see the end. By the necessary course of events, if left to themselves, we must become, finally, two people. It is impossible under the deadly hatred which must spring up between the two great sections, if the present causes are permitted to operate unchecked, that we should continue under the same political system. The conflicting elements would burst the Union asunder, powerful as are the links which hold it together. Abolition and the Union cannot co-exist. As the friend of the Union, I openly proclaim it,—and the sooner it is known the better. The former may now be controlled, but in a short time it will be beyond the power of man to arrest the course of events. We of the South will not, cannot, surrender our institutions. To maintain the existing relations between the two races, inhabiting that section of the Union, is indispensable to the peace and happiness of both. It cannot be subverted without drenching the country in blood, and extirpating one or the other of the races. Be it good or bad, it has grown up with our society and institutions, and is so interwoven with them, that to destroy it would be to destroy us as a people. But let me not be understood as admitting, even by implication, that the existing relations between the two races in the slaveholding States is an evil:—far otherwise; I hold it to be a good, as it has thus far proved itself to be to both, and will continue to prove so if not disturbed by the fell spirit of abolition. . . .

I feel myself called upon to speak freely upon the subject where the honor and interests of those I represent are involved. I hold then, that there never has yet existed a wealthy and civilized society in which one portion of the community did not, in point of fact, live on the labor of the other. Broad and general as is this assertion, it is fully borne out by history. . . . I fearlessly assert that the existing relations between the two races in the South, against which these blind fanatics are waging war, forms the most solid and durable foundation on which to rear free and stable political institutions. It is useless to disguise the fact. There is and always has been in an advanced stage of wealth and civilization, a conflict between labor and capital. The condition of society in the South exempts us from the disorders and dangers resulting from this conflict; and which explains why it is that the political condition of the slaveholding States has been so much more stable and quiet than that of the North. The advantages of the former, in this respect, will become more and more manifest if left undisturbed by interference from without, as the country advances in wealth and numbers. We have, in fact, but just entered that condition of society where the strength and durability of our political institutions are to be tested; and I venture nothing in predicting that the experience of the next

generation will fully test how vastly more favorable our condition of society is to that of other sections for free and stable institutions, provided we are not disturbed by the interference of others, or shall have sufficient intelligence and spirit to resist promptly and successfully such interference. It rests with ourselves to meet and repel them. I look not for aid to this Government or to the other States; not but there are kind feelings toward us on the part of the great body of the non-slaveholding States; but as kind as their feelings may be, we may rest assured that no political party in those States will risk their ascendance for our safety. If we do not defend ourselves none will defend us; if we yield we will be more and more pressed as we recede; and if we submit we will be trampled under foot. Be assured that emancipation itself would not satisfy these fanatics;—that gained, the next step would be to raise the negroes to a social and political equality with the whites; and that being effected, we would soon find the present condition of the two races reversed. . . . Calhoun, *Speeches* (N. Y., 1856), II, 628-633 *passim*.

The beginnings of the *Liberator* are well set forth in this extract:

To the Public.

In the month of August I issued proposals for publishing the *Liberator* in Washington city; but the enterprise, though hailed in different sections of the country, was palsied by public indifference. Since that time, the removal of the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* to the Seat of Government has rendered less imperious the establishment of a similar periodical in that quarter.

During my recent tour for the purpose of exciting the minds of the people by a series of discourses on the subject of slavery, every place that I visited gave fresh evidence of the fact, that a greater revolution in public sentiment was to be effected in the free States—and particularly in New England—than in the South. I found contempt more bitter, opposition more active, detraction more relentless, prejudice more stubborn, and apathy more frozen, than among slave-owners themselves. Of course, there were individual exceptions to the contrary. This state of things afflicted, but did not dishearten me. I determined, at every hazard, to lift up the standard of emancipation in the eyes of the nation, *within sight of Bunker Hill and in the birthplace of liberty*. That standard is now unfurled; and long may it float, unhurt by the spoliations of time or the missiles of a desperate foe—yea, till every secret abettor tremble—let their northern apologist tremble—let all the enemies of the persecuted blacks tremble. . . .

I shall not array myself as the political partisan of any man. In defending the great cause of human rights, I wish to derive the assistance of all religions and of all parties.

Assenting to the "self-evident truth" maintained in the American Declaration of Independence, "that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights—among

which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," I shall strenuously contend for the immediate enfranchisement of our slave population. In Park Street Church, on the Fourth of July, 1829, in an address on slavery, I unreflectingly assented to the popular but pernicious doctrine of *gradual abolition*. I seize this opportunity to make a full and unequivocal recantation, and thus publicly to ask pardon of my God, of my country, and of my brethren, the poor slaves, for having uttered a sentiment so full of timidity, injustice, and absurdity. A similar recantation, from my pen, was published in the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, at Baltimore, in September, 1820. My conscience is now satisfied.

I am aware that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. No! no! Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife, from the hands of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen,—but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—and I will be heard. The apathy of the people is enough to make every statue leap from its pedestal, and to hasten the resurrection of the dead.

It is pretended that I am retarding the cause of emancipation by the coarseness of my invective and the precipitancy of my measures. The charge is not true. On this question my influence,—humble as it is,—is felt at this moment to a considerable extent, and shall be felt in coming years—not perniciously, but beneficially—not as a curse, but as a blessing; and posterity will bear testimony that I was right. I desire to thank God, that he enables me to disregard "the fear of man which bringeth a snare," and to speak his truth in its simplicity and power. And here I close with this fresh dedication:

Oppression! I have seen thee face to face,  
 And met thy cruel eye and cloudy brow;  
 But thy soul-withering glance I fear not now—  
 For dread to prouder feelings doth give place  
 Of deep abhorrence! Scorning the disgrace  
 Of slavish knees that at thy footstool bow,  
 I also kneel—but with far other vow  
 Do hail thee and thy herd of hirelings base:—  
 I swear, while life-blood warms my throbbing veins,  
 Still to oppose and thwart, with heart and hand,  
 Thy brutalizing sway—till Afric's chains  
 Are burst, and Freedom rules the rescued land,—  
 Trampling Oppression and iron rod:  
 Such is the vow I take—so help me God!  
 —W. L. Garrison, *Works* (Boston, 1905), pp. 70-73.

The constitution of the American Antislavery Society  
 was:

Whereas, the Most High God "hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth," and hath commanded them to love their neighbors as themselves; and whereas, our National Existence is based on this principle, as recognized in the Declaration of Independence, "that all mankind are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"; and whereas, after the lapse of nearly sixty years, since the faith and honor of the American people were pledged to this avowal, before Almighty God and the World, nearly one-sixth part of the nation are held in bondage by their fellow-citizens; and whereas, Slavery is contrary to the principles of natural justice, of our republican form of government, and of the Christian religion, and is destructive of the prosperity of the country, while it is endangering the peace, union, and liberties of the States; and whereas, we believe it the duty and interest of the masters immediately to emancipate their slaves, and that no scheme of expatriation, either voluntary or by compulsion, can remove this great and increasing evil; and whereas, we believe that it is practicable, by appeals to the consciences, hearts, and interests of the people, to awaken a public sentiment throughout the nation that will be opposed to the continuance of Slavery in any part of the Republic, and by effecting the speedy abolition of Slavery, prevent a general convulsion; and whereas, we believe we owe it to the oppressed, to our fellow-citizens who hold slaves, to our whole country, to posterity, and to God, to do all that is lawfully in our power to bring about the extinction of Slavery, we do hereby agree, with a prayerful reliance on the Divine aid, to form ourselves into a society, to be governed by the following Constitution:

Article I.—This Society shall be called The American Antislavery Society.

Article II.—The objects of this Society are the entire abolition of slavery in the United States. While it admits that each State, in which Slavery exists, has, by the Constitution of the United States, the exclusive right to *legislate* in regard to its abolition in said State, it shall aim to convince all our fellow-citizens, by arguments addressed to their understandings and consciences, that Slaveholding is a heinous crime in the sight of God, and that the duty, safety, and best interests of all concerned, require its *immediate abandonment*, without expatriation. The Society will also endeavor, in a constitutional way, to influence Congress to put an end to the domestic Slave trade, and to abolish Slavery in all those portions of our common country which come under its control especially in the District of Columbia,—and likewise to prevent the extension of it to any State that may be hereafter admitted to the Union.

Article III.—This Society shall aim to elevate the character and condition of the people of color, by encouraging their intellectual, moral, and religious improvement, and by removing public prejudice, that thus they may, according to their intellectual moral worth, share an equality with the whites, of civil and religious privileges; but this Society will never in any way countenance the oppressed in vindicating their rights by resorting to physical force.

Article IV.—Any person who consents to the principles of this

Constitution, who contributes to the funds of this Society, and is not a Slaveholder, may be a member of this Society, and shall be entitled to vote at the meetings.

The text is in a pamphlet, entitled *Platform of the American Anti-slavery Society and Its Auxiliaries* (New York, 1855), pp. 3, 4. The fullest account of the convention is in *William Lloyd Garrison: Story of His Life Told by His Children*, I, pp. 392-415, where is also a copy of the Declaration. The Declaration is also in the pamphlet above cited. For Whittier's account, see *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. XXXIII, pp. 166-172. (February, 1874.)

This appeal of a Southern Matron for patience is a case in evidence of the thinking element in the South:

Shut your eyes no longer, my countrymen—the Union is threatened; and all the blessings it confers, and which our fathers suffered and died to attain, must perish with it. Scorn not the feeble voice of a woman, when she calls on you to awake to your danger, ere it be forever too late. We are told that the citizens of the North would arouse our slaves to exert their physical force against us—but we cannot, we will not believe the foul, shocking, unnatural tale. What! have the daughters of the South inflicted such injuries on their Northern brethren, as to render them objects of their deadly, exterminating hate? Have helpless age, smiling infancy, virgin purity no claims on the generous, the highminded and the brave? Would they introduce the serpents of fear and withering anxiety into the Edens of domestic bliss; bathe our peaceful hearths with blood, and force us to abhor those ties which now unite us as one people, and which we so lately taught our sons to regard as our pride? We cannot believe it. We cannot be so unjust to the enlightened and humane citizens of the Northern States, as to suppose for a moment that they approve of the course pursued by those reckless agitators who seek to inflict such cruel calamities on the South. The poor slave himself merits not at their hands the mischief and woe which his mistaken advocates would heap on his devoted head; for even they cannot imagine that an exertion of physical force on their part could result in aught but his destruction. No—the Northern people are too well acquainted with historical facts, to condemn us for evils which we deprecated as warmly as themselves, but which were ruthlessly imposed on us by the power of Great Britain.

So far from condemning, they must sympathize with us; for they well know that slavery was forced upon us, and that as early as 1760 the Southern colonies earnestly sought to avert it by passing acts imposing duties on slaves, and even prohibiting their importation. In spite of sectional prejudices (alas, too often fostered for the worst ends by the unprincipled and ambitious)—in spite of conflicting interests, the people of the North are our brethren. Together our fathers shared many a peril. Side by side, they fought and bled in defense of their common country. Their united wisdom was exerted to form our glorious Constitution, and these republican institutions, which so justly are our boast, and the safeguard of our liberties.

Would the sons overthrow the noble fabric their fathers assisted to rear, even now, when towering aloft in its majesty and beauty, it attracts the admiration of the world?—We cannot believe they are prepared for so suicidal an act. The States are all more or less dependent on each other. Let one portion be weakened and depressed, the whole must ultimately suffer. Oh! that a spirit of compromise, forbearance, and brotherly love could be infused into our councils, and animate the bosoms of our public men. Then the voice of contention would be hushed into silence. The insidious treachery of the incendiary would meet the contempt it merits, and factious demagogues would shrink abashed beneath the deep, stern voice of a nation's censure. Then the daughters of America could look joyfully on their sons and indulge the proud hope that they and their children would live and die the free and happy citizens of the great, flourishing and United States of America.

Deluded emancipators of the North, we now appeal to you! We deprecate slavery as much as you. We as ardently desire the liberty of the whole human race; but what can we do? The slow hand of time must overcome these difficulties now insurmountable. An evil, the growth of ages, cannot be remedied in a day. Our virtuous and enlightened men will doubtless effect much by cautious exertion, if their efforts are not checked by your rash attempts to dictate on a subject on which it is impossible that you can form a correct judgment. Forbear your inflammatory addresses. They but rivet the fetters of the slaves, and render them ten thousand times more galling. You sacrifice his happiness, as well as that of his owner, for, by rendering him an object of suspicion and alarm you deprive him of the regard, confidence, and, I may add, with the utmost truth, the affection of his master. You render a being now light-hearted and joyous, moody, wretched—yes, hopelessly wretched. You wreak on the innocent and helpless, who, had they the will, possess not the power to bid the slave be free from all his imagined wrongs. You agonize gentle bosoms, which glow with Christian charity towards the whole human race, of whatever color they may be. Fearful forebodings mingle with all a deep, imperishable love, as the matron bends over the infant that smiles in her face, and with more shuddering horror, she trembles as she gazes on the daughters, whose youthful beauty, goodness and grace shed the sunshine of joy and hope over the winter of life. I appeal to you as Christians, as patriots, as men, generous, highminded men, to forbear. By all you hold sacred—by your own feelings or the wives of your bosom and the children of your love, pause and reflect on the mischief and woe you seek to inflict on both the white and colored population of the Southern States. . . .

“A Southern Nation,” *The Colonizationist* (Boston, 1834), 75-77.

The following speech of John Quincy Adams shows his later attitude on slavery and the like:

The inconsistency of the institution of domestic slavery with the principles of the Declaration of Independence was seen and lamented by all the Southern patriots of the Revolution; by no one with

deeper and more unalterable conviction than by the author of the Declaration himself. No insincerity or hypocrisy can fairly be laid to their charge. Never from *their* lips was heard one syllable of attempt to justify the institution of slavery. They universally considered it as a reproach fastened upon them by the unnatural step-mother country; and they saw that, before the principles of the Declaration of Independence, slavery, in common with every other mode of oppression, was destined sooner or later to be banished from the earth. Such was the undoubting conviction of Jefferson to his dying day. In the memoir of his life, written at the age of seventy-seven, he gave to his countrymen the solemn and emphatic warning that the day was not distant when they *must* hear and adopt the general emancipation of their slaves. "Nothing is more certainly written," said he, "in the book of fate, than that these people are to be free. My countrymen! It is written in a better volume than the book of fate; it is written in the laws of Nature and of Nature's God."

We are told, indeed, by the learned doctors of the nullification school, that color operates as a forfeiture of the rights of human nature; that a dark skin turns a man into a chattel; that crispy hair transforms a human being into a four-footed beast. The master-priest informs you that slavery is consecrated and sanctified by the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; that Ham was the father of Canaan, and all his posterity were doomed, by his own father, to be hewers of wood and drawers of water to the descendants of Shem and Japhet; that the native Americans of African descent are the children of Ham, with the curse of Noah still fastened upon them; and the native Americans of European descent are children of Japhet, pure Anglo-Saxon blood, born to command, and to live by the sweat of another's brow. The master-philosopher teaches you that slavery is no curse, but a blessing! that Providence—Providence!—has so ordered it that this country should be inhabited by two races of men,—one born to wield the scourge, and the other to bear the record of its stripes upon his back; one to earn, through a toil-some life, the other's bread, and to feed him on a bed of roses; that slavery is the guardian and promoter of wisdom and virtue; that the slave, by laboring for another's enjoyment, learns disinterestedness and humility; that the master, nurtured, clothed, and sheltered, by another's toils, learns to be generous and grateful to the slave, and sometimes to feel for him as a father for his child; that, released from the necessity of supplying his own wants, he acquires opportunity of leisure to improve his mind, to purify his heart, to cultivate his taste; that he has time on his hands to plunge into the depths of philosophy, and to soar to the clear empyrean or seraphic morality. The master-statesman—ay, the statesman in the land of the Declaration of Independence, in the halls of national legislation, with the muse of history recording his words as they drop from his lips, with the colossal figure of American Liberty leaning on a column entwined with the emblem of eternity over his head, with the forms of Washington and Lafayette speaking to him from the canvas—turns to the image of the father of his country, and, forgetting that the last act of his life was to emancipate his slaves,

to bolster up the cause of slavery, says, "That man was a slaveholder."

My countrymen! these are the tenets of the modern nullification school. Can you wonder that they shrink from the light of free discussion—that they skulk from the grasp of freedom and of truth? Is there among you one who hears me, solicitous above all things for the preservation of the Union so truly dear to us—of that Union proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence—of that Union never to be divided by any act whatever—and who dreads that the discussion of the merits of slavery will endanger the continuance of the Union? Let him discard his terrors, and be assured that they are no other than the phantom fears of nullification; that, while doctrines like these are taught in her schools of philosophy, preached in her pulpits, and avowed in her legislative councils, the free, unrestrained discussion of the rights and wrongs of slavery, far from endangering the Union of these States, is the only condition upon which that Union can be preserved and perpetuated. What! are you to be told, with one breath, that the transcendent glory of this day consists in the proclamation that all lawful government is founded on the inalienable rights of man, and, with the next breath, that you must not whisper this truth to the winds, lest they should taint the atmosphere with freedom, and kindle the flame of insurrection? Are you to bless the earth beneath your feet because she spurns the footsteps of a slave, and then to choke the utterance of your voice lest the sound of liberty should be reëchoed from the palmetto groves mingled with the discordant notes of disunion? No! no! Freedom of speech is the only safety-valve which, under the high pressure of slavery, can preserve your political boiler from a fearful and fatal explosion. Let it be admitted that slavery is an institution of internal police, exclusively subject to the separate jurisdiction of the States where it is cherished as a blessing, or tolerated as an evil as yet irremediable. But let that slavery which intrenches itself within the walls of her own impregnable fortress not sally forth to conquest over the domain of freedom. Intrude not beyond the hallowed bounds of oppression; but, if you have by solemn compact doomed your ears to hear the distant clanking of the chain, let not the fetters of the slave be forged afresh upon your own soil; far less permit them to be riveted upon your own feet. Quench not the spirit of freedom. Let it go forth, not in panoply of fleshly wisdom, but with the promise of peace, and the voice of persuasion, clad in the whole armor of truth, conquering and to conquer.

Josiah Quincy, *Memoir of the Life of John Quincy Adams* (Boston, 1858), 272-275.

In the following speech Joshua R. Giddings attacked the policy of yielding ground to slavery:

It is well known, Mr. Chairman, that, since the formation of this confederacy, there has been a supposed conflict between the southern and the northern States. I do not say that the conflict is *real*; I only say that, in the minds of the people, both North and South, and in this hall, such a conflict exists. This has given rise to a differ-



ence of policy in our national councils. I refer to the tariff in particular, as being a favorite measure of the North, while free trade is advocated more generally by the South. I refer also to our harbor improvements, and the improvement of our river navigation, as another measure in which the Northwest and West have felt great interest, and to which the South have been constantly opposed. But so equally balanced has been the political power, between these opposing interests, that for five years past our lake commerce has been entirely abandoned; and such were the defects of the tariff, that for many years our revenues were unequal to the support of government.

By the fixed order of nature's law, our population at the North has increased so much faster than it has in the slave States, that under the late census the North and West hold the balance of political power; and at the present session we have passed through this body a bill for the protection of our lake and river commerce, which awaits the action of the Senate to become a law. But let us admit Texas, and we shall place the balance of power in the hands of Texas. They, with the southern States, will control the policy and the destiny of this nation; our tariff will then be held at the will of the Texan advocates of free trade.

Are our friends of the North prepared to deliver over this policy to the people of Texas? Are the liberty-loving democrats of Pennsylvania ready to give up the tariff? To strike off all protection from the articles of iron and coal and other productions of that State, in order to purchase a slave-market for their neighbors, who, in the words of Thomas Jefferson Randolph, "breed men for the market like oxen for the shambles?"

I do not argue to the policy of protecting our American manufactures. I only say, that at this time, New England and the free States generally are in favor of it, while the slave States are equally opposed to it. And I ask are the mechanics and manufacturers of the North prepared to abandon their employments, in order that slave-markets may be established in Texas, and a brisk traffic in bodies, the flesh and blood of our southern population may be maintained? Are the farmers of the West, of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, prepared to give up the sale of their beef, pork, and flour, in order to increase the profits of those who raise children for sale, and deal in the bodies of women? Are the free States prepared to suspend their harbor and river improvements for the purpose of establishing this slave-trade with Texas, and to perpetuate slavery therein?

But, if Texas be admitted to the Union, it is to be a slaveholding State, out of which several States are hereafter to be admitted, with the advantages over our free States of holding a representation on this floor, and a vote in the election of president and vice-president. and in the administration of the federal government, in proportion to the number of slaves they shall hold in bondage. In other words, their influence on all these subjects is to be proportioned to their contempt of liberty. The Texan, who holds five slaves, is to wield an influence over our national interests equal to four of our northern freemen. If each holds fifty slaves, his influence will be equal to that of *thirty-one* of the independent electors of the

free States. I ask the learned gentleman from Indiana (Mr. Owen) if he really estimates the political worth of his constituents so low as to require thirty-one of them to form an aggregate of political influence equal to that of the piratical owner of fifty "human chattels" in Texas? Or does he estimate his own political worth at one-fourth part of that which he attaches to the holder of five slaves in Texas? I wish gentlemen here would speak out, and let us know the real estimate which they put upon the moral and political worth of northern men? Would to God I were able to speak to every man of every party, north of Mason and Dixon's Line. I would demand of them as *men*, as *freemen*, to come forward, and let the country understand whether any one of them is willing thus to degrade himself; or whether any one of them is willing to be thus degraded by his representatives in this hall. This proposition, come from whom it may, from persons high in office, or from those *wishing* to be high in office, is insulting to northern feeling and northern honor. Sir, why not propose at once that our people shall surrender themselves as slaves to the Texan planters? Why not advise the people of our free States at once to leave their homes, to go to Texas, and become the voluntary "hewers of wood and drawers of water" to those fugitive criminals, who, within the last fifteen years, were driven from the United States to avoid punishment for their crimes? . . .

Joshua R. Giddings, *Speeches in Congress* (Boston, 1853), 104-106.

As the following extract from his speech shows, Sumner believed in the equality of all men before the law. He said:

The way is now prepared to consider the nature of Equality, as secured by the Constitution of Massachusetts. The Declaration of Independence, which followed the French Encyclopedia and the political writings of Rousseau, announces among self-evident truths, "*that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*" The Constitution of Massachusetts repeats the same truth in a different form, saying, in its first article: "*All men are born free and equal, and have certain natural essential, and unalienable rights, among which may be reckoned the right of enjoying and defending their lives and liberties.*" Another article explains what is meant by Equality, saying: "No man, nor corporation or association of men, have any other title to obtain advantages, or particular and exclusive privileges, distinct from those of the community, than what arises from the consideration of services rendered to the public; and this title being in nature neither hereditary, nor transmissible to children, or descendants, or relations by blood, the idea of a man being born a magistrate, law-giver, or judge is absurd and unnatural." This language, in its natural signification, condemns every form of inequality in civil and political institutions.

These declarations, though in point of time before the ample declarations of France, may be construed in the light of the latter. Evidently they seek to declare the same principle. They are decla-

rations of *Rights*; and the language employed, though general in character, is obviously limited to those matters within the design of a declaration of *Rights*. And permit me to say, it is a childish sophism to adduce any physical or mental inequality in argument against Equality of *Rights*.

Obviously, men are not born equal in physical strength or in mental capacity, in beauty of form or health of body. Diversity or inequality in these respects is the law of creation. From this difference springs divine harmony. But this inequality is in no particular inconsistent with complete civil and political equality.

The equality declared by our fathers in 1776, and made the fundamental law of Massachusetts in 1780, was *Equality before the Law*. Its object was to efface all political or civil distinctions, and to abolish all institutions founded upon *birth*. "All men are *created* equal," says the Declaration of Independence. "All men are *born* free and equal," says the Massachusetts Bill of Rights. These are not vain words. Within the sphere of their influence, no person can be *created*, no person can be *born* with civil or political privileges not enjoyed equally by all his fellow-citizens; nor can any institution be established, recognizing distinction of birth. Here is the Great Charter of every human being drawing vital breath upon this soil, whatever may be his condition, and whoever may be his parents. He may be poor, weak, humble, or black;—he may be of Caucasian, Jewish, Indian, Ethiopian race,—he may be of French, German, English, or Irish extraction; but before the Constitution of Massachusetts all these distinctions disappear. He is not poor, weak, humble, or black; nor is he Caucasian, Jew, Indian, or Ethiopian; nor is he French, German, English, or Irish; he is a *MAN*, the equal of all his fellow-men. He is one of the children of the State, which, like an impartial parent, regards all its offsprings with an equal care. To some it may justly allot higher duties, according to higher capacities; but it welcomes all to its equal hospitable board. The State, imitating the divine justice, is no respecter of persons.

Here nobility cannot exist, because it is a privilege from birth. But the same anathema which smites and banishes nobility must also smite and banish every form of discrimination founded on birth,—

*"Quamvis illo niger, quamvis tu candidus esses."*

Charles Sumner, *Works* (Boston, 1875), II, 340-342.

Voicing a strong protest against the theory that the rightfulness of slavery must not be publicly discussed or questioned, Joshua R. Giddings said:

Sir, certain Senators in the other end of the capitol have for months been endeavoring to convince the people of the necessity of passing the "omnibus bill," as it is called. No arguments could be raised in favor of that measure, for it was not founded on reason. One consideration alone was pressed upon the public mind. The cry was raised that "*the Union was in danger!*" The newspapers here

responded, "*the Union is in danger!*" The country press repeated the alarm. The cry was caught up and echoed by every timid, faltering poltroon of the North. Petitions to "*save the Union*" were circulated. Public meetings were held in our commercial cities where Texas scrip was mostly influential, and resolutions were adopted "*to save the Union.*" The supplications were not that we "*may legislate in righteousness,*" deal out justice and mercy to those who are oppressed and degraded by our laws. These were regarded as objects of trifling importance, when compared with the pending danger that *Texas would dissolve the Union.* Indeed, they are never mentioned by our chaplain.

Sir, I am nauseated, sickened at this moral and political effeminacy; this downright cowardice. It is unworthy of American statesmen. Our constituents sent us here to maintain and defend their rights; not to surrender them; not to make ourselves and our people tributary to Texas. In electing us, they had no expectation that we would turn upon them and violently thrust our hands into their pockets and take therefrom ten millions of dollars, and hand it over to the slave-holders of Texas, for territory which belongs to us, and to which Texas never had any title whatever.

Sir, gentlemen here may say what they please; the people have no fears of a dissolution of the Union. They understand this kind of gasconade. The cry of "dissolution" has been the dernier ressort of southern men for fifty years, whenever they desired to frighten doughfaces into a compliance with their measures. It may alarm gentlemen here; but I do not think you can find in northern Ohio an equal number of nervous old women or of love-sick girls, who could be moved by it.

Again, it is said that we must stop this agitation in relation to slavery! The people see us here passing laws to enslave our fellow-men; to sell women in open market; to create a traffic in the bodies of children. They know this to be opposed to the self-evident truth that "all men are created equal," "that governments are constituted to sustain that equality of rights"; and they converse on the subject, examine the reasons on which such traffic is based, and vote for men who will oppose such barbarous practices. This is called *agitation*; and gentlemen here talk of suppressing it by passing such laws as that on your table. This is the manner in which we are to stop the progress of truth; to seal the lips of philanthropists; and to silence the voice of humanity. Yes, Sir, it is gravely proposed that we should set bounds to the human intellect, and to limit political investigations by statute laws.

Sir, the great founder of our holy religion, when he proclaimed the Heaven-born truths of his Gospel, was denounced as an "*agitator.*" He was arrested, condemned, and executed for asserting truths which the Scribes and Pharisees were too stupid to comprehend. It was done to stop *agitation*; but truth, emanating from "the Holy One," has extended, spread, and progressed, and will "go on conquering and to conquer," in spite of all the political Scribes and Pharisees in Congress, and the quaking and trembling of doughfaces here and elsewhere.

This progress in morals and in political intelligence is in strict accordance with the law of our being, and cannot be prevented. The

idea of setting bounds to the human intellect, of circumscribing it by statute law, is preposterous. Why not limit the arts and sciences by conservative legislation, as well as moral and political progress? Why not follow the example of those who attempted to stop the agitation of Galileo, when he proclaimed the truth of our solar system, and the laws by which the planets are retained in their orbits? He caused great agitation, and was excommunicated for his *infidelity*, in thus daring to proclaim truths which the *conservatives* of that age were too ignorant to comprehend. It required two hundred and fifty years for the stupid clergy of that day to understand the truths for which he had been expelled from their Christian fellowship. How long it will require certain theological professors of the present day to comprehend the "self-evident truths" of man's equality, is not yet determined. Or how long it will require our political doctors to comprehend the very obvious fact that an educated and reflecting people *will think and act for themselves*, is yet to be ascertained.

But, if we are to have conservative legislation, let us tear down the telegraphic wires, break up our galvanic batteries, and imprison Morse, and stop all agitation upon the subject of your "magnetic" railroads of thought." Lay up your steamboats, place fetters upon your locomotives, convert your railroads into cultivated fields, and erase the name of Fulton from our history. Go down to Vonder Institute, drive Page from his laboratory, break in pieces his galvanic engines, and unchain the imprisoned lightning which is there pent up; then pass an act of Congress prohibiting all further agitation on these subjects, and thus carry out your conservative principles, of which some men are continually boasting. . . .

Joshua R. Giddings, *Speeches in Congress* (Boston, 1853), 409-411.

Giving great offense to Jefferson Davis and other Southern friends, William H. Seward spoke thus for *The Higher Law than the Constitution*:

There is another aspect of the principle of compromise which deserves consideration. It assumes that slavery, if not the only institution in a slave State, is at least a ruling institution, and that this characteristic is recognized by the Constitution. But *slavery* is only *one* of many institutions there. Freedom is equally an institution there. Slavery is only a temporary, accidental, partial, and incongruous one. Freedom, on the contrary, is a perpetual, organic, universal one, in harmony with the Constitution of the United States. The slaveholder himself stands under the protection of the latter, in common with all the free citizens of that state. But it is, moreover, an indispensable institution. You may separate slavery from South Carolina, and the state will still remain; but if you subvert freedom there, the state will cease to exist. But the principle of this compromise gives complete ascendancy in the slave states, and in the Constitution of the United States, to the subordinate, accidental, and incongruous institution,

over its paramount antagonist. To reduce this claim of slavery to an absurdity, it is only necessary to add that there are only two states in which slaves are a majority, and not one in which the slaveholders are not a very disproportionate minority.

But there is yet another aspect in which this principle must be examined. It regards the domain only as a possession, to be enjoyed either in common or by partition by the citizens of the old states. It is true, indeed, that the national domain is ours. It is true it was acquired by the valor and with the wealth of the whole nation. But we hold, nevertheless, no arbitrary power over it. We hold no arbitrary authority over anything, whether acquired lawfully or seized by usurpation. The Constitution regulates our stewardship; the Constitution devotes the domain to union, to justice, to defense, to welfare, and to liberty.

But there is a higher law than the Constitution, which regulates our authority over the domain, and devotes it to the same noble purposes. The territory is a part, no inconsiderable part, of the common heritage of mankind bestowed upon them by the Creator of the universe. We are his stewards, and must so discharge our trust as to secure in the highest attainable degree their happiness. How momentous that trust is we may learn from the instructions of the founder of modern philosophy:

"No man," says Bacon, "can by care-taking, as the Scripture saith, add a cubit to his stature in this little model of a man's body; but, in the great frame of kingdoms and commonwealths, it is in the power of princes or estates to add amplitude and greatness to their kingdoms. For, by introducing such ordinances, constitutions, and customs, as are wise, they may sow greatness to their posterity and successors. But these things are commonly not observed, but left to take their chance."

This is a state, and we are deliberating for it, just as our fathers deliberated in establishing the institutions we enjoy. Whatever superiority there is in our condition and hopes over those of any other "kingdom" or "estate" is due to the fortunate circumstance that our ancestors did not leave things to "take their chance," but that they "added amplitude and greatness" to our commonwealth "by introducing such ordinances, constitutions, and customs, as were wise." We in our turn have succeeded to the same responsibilities, and we cannot approach the duty before us wisely or justly, except we raise ourselves to the great consideration of how we can most certainly "sow greatness to our posterity and successors."

And now the simple, bold, and even awful, question which presents itself to us is this: Shall we, who are founding institutions, social and political, for countless millions; shall we, who know by experience the wise and the just, and are free to choose them, and to reject the erroneous and unjust; shall we establish human bondage, or permit it by our sufferance to be established? Sir, our forefathers would not have hesitated an hour. They found slavery existing here, and they left it only because they could not remove it. There is not only no free State which would now establish it, but there is no slave State, which, if it had had the free alternative as we now have, would have founded slavery. In-

deed, our revolutionary predecessors had precisely the same question before them in establishing an organic law under which the states of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin, have since come into the Union, and they solemnly repudiated and excluded slavery from those states forever. I confess that the most alarming evidence of our degeneracy which has yet been given is found in the fact that we even debate such a question. . . .

The senator proposes to expel me. I am ready to meet that trial, too; and if I shall be expelled, I shall not be the first man subjected to punishment for maintaining that there is a power higher than human law, and that power delights in justice; that rulers, whether despots or elected rulers of a free people, are bound to administer justice for the benefit of society.

William H. Seward, *Works* (N. Y., 1853), I, pp. 74-129.

The following speech from Lincoln exposed the fallacy of the so-called reasonableness of slavery :

Equality in society alike beats inequality, whether the latter be of the British aristocratic sort or of the domestic slavery sort. We know Southern men declare that their slaves are better off than hired laborers among us. How little they know whereof they speak! There is no permanent class of hired laborers amongst us. Twenty-five years ago I was a hired laborer. The hired laborer of yesterday labors on his own account to-day, and will hire others to labor for him to-morrow. Advancement—improvement in condition—is the order of things in a society of equals. As labor is the common burden of our race, so the effort of some to shift their share of the burden onto the shoulders of others is the great durable curse of the race. Originally a curse for transgression upon the whole race, when, as by slavery, it is concentrated on a part only, it becomes the double-refined curse of God upon his creatures.

Free labor has the inspiration of hope; pure slavery has no hope. The power of hope upon human exertion and happiness is wonderful. The slave-master himself has a conception of it, and hence the system of tasks among slaves. The slave whom you cannot drive with the lash to break seventy-five pounds of hemp in a day, if you will ask him to break a hundred, and promise him pay for all he does over, he will break you a hundred and fifty. You have substituted hope for the rod. And yet perhaps it does not occur to you that to the extent of your gain in the case, you have given up the slave system and adopted the free system of labor.

If A can prove, however, conclusively, that he may of right enslave B, why may not B snatch the same argument and prove equally that he may enslave A? You say A is white and B is black. It is color, then; the lighter having the right to enslave the darker? Take care. By this rule you are to be slave to the first man you meet with a fairer skin than your own. You do not mean color exactly? You mean the whites are intellectually the superiors of the blacks, and therefore have the right to enslave them? Take care again. By this rule you are to be slave to the first man you meet with an intellect superior to your own. But, you say,

it is a question of interest, and if you make it your interest you have the right to enslave another. Very well. And if he can make it his interest he has the right to enslave you.

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 railroad. . . .

Thus we see that the plain, unmistakable spirit of that age toward slavery was hostility to the principles and toleration only by necessity.

But now it is to be transformed into a "sacred right." Nebraska brings it forth, places it on the highroad to extension and perpetuity, and with a pat on its back says to it, "Go, and God speed you." Henceforth it is to be the chief jewel of the nation—the very figurehead of the ship of state. Little by little, but steadily as man's march to the grave, we have been giving up the old for the new faith. Nearly eighty years ago we began by declaring that all men are created equal; but now from that beginning we have run down to the other declaration, that for some men to enslave others is a "sacred right of self-government." These principles cannot stand together. They are as opposite as God and Mammon; and whoever holds to the one must despise the other. When Pettit, in connection with his support of the Nebraska bill, called the Declaration of Independence "a self-evident lie," he only did what consistency and candor require all other Nebraska men to do. Of the forty-odd Nebraska senators who sat present and heard him, no one rebuked him. Nor am I apprised that any Nebraska newspaper, or any Nebraska orator, in the whole nation has ever rebuked him. If this had been said among Marion's men, Southerners though they were, what would have become of the man who said it? If this had been said to the men who captured André, the man who said it would probably have been hung sooner than André was. If it had been said in old Independence Hall seventy-eight years ago, the very doorkeeper would have throttled the man and thrust him into the street. Let no one be deceived. The spirit of seventy-six and the spirit of Nebraska are utter antagonisms; and the former is being rapidly displaced by the latter.



Fellow-countrymen, Americans, South as well as North, shall we make no effort to arrest this? Already the liberal party throughout the world express the apprehension "that the one retrograde institution in America is undermining the principles of progress, and fatally violating the noblest political system the world ever saw." This is not the taunt of enemies, but the warning of friends. Is it quite safe to disregard it—to despise it? Is there no danger to liberty itself in discarding the earliest practice and first precept of our ancient faith? In our greedy chase to make profit of the negro, let us beware lest we "cancel and tear in pieces" even the white man's charter of freedom.

Our republican robe is soiled and trailed in the dust. Let us repurify it. Let us turn and wash it white in the spirit, if not in the blood, of the Revolution. Let us turn slavery from its claims of "moral right" back upon its existing legal rights and its arguments of "necessity." Let us return it to the position our fathers gave it, and there let it rest in peace. Let us readopt the Declaration of Independence, and with it the practices and policy which harmonize with it. Let North and South—let all Americans—let all lovers of liberty everywhere join in the great and good work. If we do this, we shall not only have saved the Union, but we shall have so saved it that the succeeding millions of free, happy people, the world over, shall rise up and call us blessed to the latest generations.

Abraham Lincoln, *Early Speeches* (N. Y., 1907), 216-264.

Some of the thoughts of *The Irrepressible Conflict of Freedom and Slavery* were:

This African slave system is one which, in its origin and in its growth, has been altogether foreign from the habits of the races which colonized these states and established civilization here. It was introduced on this continent as an engine of conquest, and for the establishment of monarchical power, by the Portuguese and the Spaniards, and was rapidly extended by them all over South America, Central America, Louisiana, and Mexico. Its legitimate fruits are seen in the poverty, imbecility, and anarchy which now pervade all Portuguese and Spanish America. The free-labor system is of German extraction, and it was established in our country by emigrants from Sweden, Holland, Germany, Great Britain, and Ireland. We justly ascribe to its influences the strength, wealth, greatness, intelligence, and freedom, which the whole American people now enjoy. One of the chief elements of the value of human life is freedom in the pursuit of happiness. The slave system is not only intolerant, unjust, and inhuman, toward the laborer, whom, only because he is a laborer, it loads down with chains and converts into merchandise, but is scarcely less severe upon the freeman, to whom, only because he is a laborer from necessity, it denies facilities for employment, and whom it expels from the community because it cannot enslave and convert into merchandise also. It is necessarily improvident and ruinous, because, as a general truth, communities prosper and flourish, or droop and decline, in just the degree that they

practice or neglect to practice the primary duties of justice and humanity. The free-labor system conforms to the divine law of equality, which is written in the hearts and consciences of men, and therefore is always and everywhere beneficent.

The slave system is one of constant danger, distrust, suspicion, and watchfulness. It debases those whose toil alone can produce wealth and resources for defense, to the lowest degree of which human nature is capable, to guard against mutiny and insurrection, and thus wastes energies which otherwise might be employed in national development and aggrandizement.

The free-labor system educates all alike, and by opening all the fields of industrial employment and all the departments of authority, to the unchecked and equal rivalry of all classes of men, at once secures universal contentment, and brings into the highest possible activity all the physical, moral, and social energies of the whole state. In states where the slave system prevails, the masters, directly or indirectly, secure all the political power, and constitute a ruling aristocracy. In states where the free-labor system prevails, universal suffrage necessarily obtains, and the state inevitably becomes, sooner or later, a republic or democracy. . . .

Hitherto the two systems have existed in different states, but side by side within the American Union. This has happened because the Union is a confederation of states. But in another aspect the United States constitute only one nation. Increase of population, which is filling the states out to their very borders, together with a new and extended network of railroads and other avenues, and an internal commerce which daily becomes more intimate, is rapidly bringing the states into a higher and more perfect social unity or consolidation. Thus, these antagonistic systems are continually coming into closer contact, and collision results.

Shall I tell you what this collision means? They who think that it is accidental, unnecessary, the work of interested or fanatical agitators, and therefore ephemeral, mistake the case altogether. It is an *irrepressible conflict* between opposing and enduring forces, and it means that the United States must and will, sooner or later, become either entirely a slave-holding nation or entirely a free-labor nation. Either the cotton or rice fields of South Carolina and the sugar plantations of Louisiana will ultimately be tilled by free labor, and Charleston and New Orleans become marts of legitimate merchandise alone, or else the rye-fields and wheat-fields of Massachusetts and New York must again be surrendered by their farmers to slave culture and to the production of slaves, and Boston and New York become once more markets for trade in the bodies and souls of men. It is the failure to apprehend this great truth that induces so many unsuccessful attempts at final compromises between the slave and free states, and it is the existence of this great fact that renders all such pretended compromises, when made, vain and ephemeral. . . .

At last, the Republican party has appeared. It avows, now, as the Republican party of 1800 did, in one word, its faith and its works, "Equal and exact justice to all men." Even when it first entered the field, only half organized, it struck a blow which only just failed to secure complete and triumphant victory. In this,

its second campaign, it has already won advantages which render that triumph now both easy and certain.

The secret of its assured success lies within that very characteristic which, in the mouth of scoffers, constitutes its great and lasting imbecility and reproach. It lies in the fact that it is a party of one idea; but that is a noble one—an idea that fills and expands all generous souls; the idea of equality—the equality of all men before human tribunals and human laws, as they all are equal before the Divine tribunal and Divine laws.

I know, and you know, that a revolution has begun. I know, and all the world knows, that revolutions never go backward. Twenty Senators and a hundred Representatives proclaim boldly in Congress to-day sentiments and opinions and principles of freedom which hardly so many men, even in this free state, dared to utter in their own homes twenty years ago. While the Government of the United States under the conduct of the Democratic party has been all that time surrendering one plain and castle after another to slavery, the people of the United States have been no less steadily and perseveringly gathering together the forces with which to recover back again all the fields and all the castles which have been lost, and to confound and overthrow, by one decisive blow, the betrayers of the Constitution and freedom forever.

William H. Seward, *The Irrepressible Conflict: A Speech Delivered at Rochester, Oct. 25, 1858* (no title page, New York, 1858), 1-7 *passim*.

This review of the struggle by Senator Benjamin F. Wade, an Ohio antislavery senator who frequently assailed slavery, shows how the sentiment in the South had drifted toward secession:

There is no principle held to-day by this great Republican party that has not had the sanction of your Government in every department for more than seventy years. You have changed your opinions. We stand where we used to stand. That is the only difference. . . . Sir, we stand where Washington stood, where Jefferson stood, where Madison stood, where Monroe stood. We stand where Adams and Jackson and even Polk stood. That revered statesman, Henry Clay, of blessed memory with his dying breath asserted the doctrine that we hold to-day. . . . As to compromises, I had supposed that we were all agreed that the day of compromises was at an end. The most solemn compromises we have ever made have been violated without a *whereas*. Since I have had a seat in this body, one of considerable antiquity, that had stood for more than thirty years, was swept away from your statute books. . . . We nominated our candidates for President and Vice-President, and you did the same for yourselves. The issue was made up and we went to the people upon it. . . . And we beat you upon the plainest and most palpable issue that ever was presented to the American people, and one that they understood the best. There is no mistaking it; and now when we come to the capitol, I tell you that our President and our Vice-

President must be inaugurated and administer the government as all their predecessors have done. Sir, it would be humiliating and dishonorable to us if we were to listen to a compromise (only) by which he who has the verdict of the people in his pocket should make his way to the Presidential chair. When it comes to that you have no government. . . . If a State secedes, although we will not make war upon her, we cannot recognize her right to be out of the Union, and she is not out until she gains the consent of the Union itself; and the chief magistrate of the nation, be he who he may, will find under the Constitution of the United States that it is his sworn duty to execute the law in every part and parcel of this Government; that he cannot be released from that obligation. . . . Therefore, it will be incumbent on the chief magistrate to proceed to collect the revenue of ships entering their ports precisely in the same way and to the same extent that he does now in every other State of the Union. . . . What must she do? If she is contented to live in this unequivocal state, all would be well perhaps, but she could not live there. No people in the world could live in that condition. What will they do? They must take the initiative and declare war upon the United States; and the moment that they levy war, force must be met by force; and they must, therefore, hew out their independence by violence and war. There is no other way under the Constitution, that I know of whereby a chief magistrate of any politics could be released from this duty: If this State, though seceding, should declare war against the United States, I do not suppose there is a lawyer in this body but what would say that the act of levying war is treason against the United States. That is where it results. We might just as well look the matter right in the face. . . .

I say, sir, I stand by the Union of these States. Washington and his compatriots fought for that good, old flag. It shall never be hauled down, but shall be the glory of the Government to which I belong, as long as my life shall continue. . . . It was my protector in infancy, and the pride and glory of my riper years; and although it may be assailed by traitors on every side, by the grace of God, under its shadow I will die.

Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln: A History* (New York, 1890), Ch. II, pp. 412-414.

These last words of John Brown show exactly how radical the antislavery movement had become:

I have, may it please the Court, a few words to say.

In the first place, I deny everything but what I have all along admitted—the design on my part to free the slaves. I intended certainly to have made a clear thing of that matter, as I did last winter, when I went into Missouri, and there took slaves without the snapping of a gun on either side, moved them through the country, and finally left them in Canada. I designed to have done the same thing again, on a larger scale. That was all I intended. I never did intend murder, or treason, or the destruction of property, or to excite or incite slaves to rebellion, or to make insurrection.

I have another objection: and that is, it is unjust that I should suffer such a penalty. Had I interfered in the manner which I admit, and which I admit has been fairly proved,—for (I admire the truthfulness and candor of the greater portion of the witnesses who have testified in this case)—had I so interfered in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great, or in behalf of any of their friends, either father, mother, sister, brother, or wife, or children, or any of that class, and suffered and sacrificed what I have in this interference, it would have been all right, and every man in this Court would have deemed it an act worthy of reward rather than punishment.

This Court acknowledges, as I suppose, the validity of the Law of God. I see a book kissed here which I suppose to be the Bible, or at least, the New Testament. That teaches me that all things whatsoever I would that men should do unto me I should do even so to them. It teaches me further, to “remember them that are in bonds as bound with them.” I endeavored to act up to that instruction. I say, I am yet too young to understand that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to have interfered as I have done, in behalf of His despised poor, was not wrong, but right. Now, if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children, and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments—I submit; so let it be done.

Let me say one word further:

I feel entirely satisfied with the treatment I have received on my trial. Considering the circumstances, it has been more generous than I expected. But I feel no consciousness of guilt. I have stated from the first what was my intention and what was not. I never had any design against the life of any person, nor any disposition to commit treason, or excite slaves to rebel, or make any general insurrection. I never encouraged any man to do so, but always discouraged any idea of that kind.

Let me say, also, a word in regard to the statements made by some of those connected with me. I hear it has been stated by some of them that I have induced them to join me. But the contrary is true. I do not say this to injure them, but as regretting their weakness. There is not one of them but joined me of his own accord, and the greater part at their own expense. A number of them I never saw, and never had a word or conversation with, till the day they came to me, and that was for the purpose I have stated.

Now I have done.

James Redpath, *The Public Life of Capt. John Brown* (Boston, 1860), pp. 340-342.

The Act to Establish a Bureau for the Relief of Freedmen and Refugees was:

*Be it enacted . . .* That there is hereby established in the War Department, to continue during the present war of rebellion, and for one year thereafter, a bureau of refugees, freedmen, and aban-

doned lands, to which shall be committed, as hereinafter provided, the supervision and management of all abandoned lands, and the control of all subjects relating to refugees and freedmen from rebel states, or from any district of country within the territory embraced in the operations of the army, under such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the head of the bureau and approved by the President. The said bureau shall be under the management and control of a commissioner to be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, . . . And the commissioner and all persons appointed under this act, shall, before entering upon their duties, take oath of office prescribed in . . . (the act of July 2, 1862). . . .

Sec. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That the Secretary of War may direct such issues of provisions, clothing, and fuel, as he may deem needful for the immediate and temporary shelter and supply of destitute and suffering refugees and freedmen and their wives and children, under such rules and regulations as he may direct.

Sec. 3. *And be it further enacted*, That the President may, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoint an assistant commissioner for each of the states declared to be in insurrection, not exceeding ten in number, who shall, under the direction of the commissioner, aid in the execution of the provisions of this act. . . . And any military officer may be detailed and assigned to duty under this act without increase of pay or allowances. The commission shall, before the commencement of each regular session of Congress, make full report of his proceedings with exhibits of the state of his accounts to the President, who shall communicate the same to Congress, and shall also make special reports whenever required to do so by the President or either house of congress; and the assistant commissioners shall make quarterly reports of their proceedings to the commissioner, and also such other special reports as from time to time may be required.

Sec. 4. *And be it further enacted*, That the commissioner, under the direction of the President, shall have authority to set apart, for the use of loyal refugees and freedmen, such tracts of land within the insurrectionary states as shall have been abandoned, or to which the United States shall have acquired title by confiscation or sale, or otherwise, and to every male citizen, whether refugee or freedman, as aforesaid, there shall be assigned not more than forty acres of such land, and the person to whom it was so assigned shall be protected in the use and enjoyment of the land for the term of three years at an annual rent not exceeding six per centum upon the value of such land, as it was appraised by the state authorities in the year eighteen hundred and sixty, for the purpose of taxation, and in case no such appraisal can be found, then the rental shall be based upon the estimated value of the land in said year, to be ascertained in such manner as the commissioner may by regulation prescribe. At the end of said term, or at any time during said term, the occupants of any parcels so assigned may purchase the land and receive such title thereto as the United States can convey, upon paying therefor the value of the land, as ascertained and fixed for the purpose of determining the annual rent aforesaid.

Sec. 5. *And be it further enacted*, That all acts and parts of acts inconsistent with the provisions of this act, are hereby repealed.

Approved, March 3, 1865.

*Text in U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIII, 507-509. For the proceedings see the *House and Senate Journals*, 38th Congress, 1st and 2d Sess., and the *Cong. Globe*. On the work of the bureau see *Senate Exec. Doc. 23*, 38th Cong., 2d Sess.; *House Exec. Docs. 11, 70*, and *120*, 39th Cong., 1st Sess.; *House Exec. Doc. 7*, 39th Cong., 2d Sess.; *House Report 30*, 40th Cong., 2d Sess.; *House Exec. Doc. 329*, *ibid.*; *House Exec. Doc. 142*, 41st Cong., 2d Sess.; *House Misc. Doc. 87*, 42d Cong., 3d Sess.; *House Exec. Doc. 100*, 43d Cong., 1st Sess.; *House Exec. Doc. 144*, 44th Cong., 1st Sess. On the condition of Freedmen see *Senate Exec. Doc. 53*, and *Senate Report 25*, 38th Cong., 1st Sess.; *House Exec. Doc. 118*, 39th Cong., 1st Sess. Southern State legislation respecting freedmen is summarized in McPherson, *Reconstruction*, 29-44. See also Cox, *Three Decades*, chap. 25.

It may be interesting to note Abraham Lincoln's prophetic protest against lynch law uttered in 1830. He said:

In the great journal of things happening under the sun, we, the American people, find our account running under date of the nineteenth century of the Christian era. We find ourselves in the peaceful possession of the fairest portion of the earth as regards extent of territory, fertility of soil, and salubrity of climate. We find ourselves under the government of a system of political institutions conducting more essentially to the ends of civil and religious liberty than any of which the history of former times tells us. We, when mounting the stage of existence, found ourselves the legal inheritors of these fundamental blessings. We toiled not in the acquirement or establishment of them; they are a legacy bequeathed us by a once hardy, brave, and patriotic, but now lamented and departed, race of ancestors. . . .

At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach us it must spring up amongst us; it cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot we must ourselves be its author. We must live through all time or die by suicide.

I hope I am over wary; but if I am not, there is even now something of ill omen amongst us. I mean the increasing disregard for law which pervades the country—the growing disposition to substitute the wild and furious passions in lieu of the sober judgment of courts, and the worse than savage mobs for the executive ministers of justice. This disposition is awfully fearful in any community; and that it now exists in ours, though grating to our feelings to admit, it would be a violation of truth and an insult to our intelligence to deny. . . .

Turn then to that horror-striking scene at St. Louis. A single victim only was sacrificed there. This story is very short, and is perhaps the most highly tragic of anything of its length that has ever been witnessed in real life. A mulatto man by the name of McIntosh was seized in the street, dragged to the suburbs of the city, chained to a tree, and actually burned to death; and all within

a single hour from the time he had been a freeman attending to his own business and at peace with the world.

Such are the effects of mob law, and such are the scenes becoming more and more frequent in this land so lately famed for love of law and order, and the stories of which have even now grown too familiar to attract anything more than an idle remark.

But you are perhaps ready to ask, "What has this to do with the perpetuation of our political institutions?" I answer, "It has much to do with it." Its direct consequences are, comparatively speaking, but a small evil, and much of its danger consists in the proneness of our minds to regard its direct as its only consequences. . . . But the example in either case was fearful. When men take it in their heads to-day to hang gamblers or burn murderers, they should recollect that in the confusion usually attending such transactions they will be as likely to hang or burn some one who is neither a gambler nor a murderer as one who is, and that, acting upon the example they set, the mob of to-morrow may, and probably will, hang or burn some of them by the very same mistake. And not only so; the innocent, those who have ever set their faces against violations of law in every shape, alike with the guilty fall victims to the ravages of mob law; and thus it goes on, step by step, till all the walls erected for the defense of the persons and property of individuals are trodden down and disregarded. But all this, even, is not the full extent of the evil. By such examples, by instances of the perpetrators of such acts going unpunished, the lawless in spirit are encouraged to become lawless in practice; and having been used to no restraint but dread of punishment, they thus become absolutely unrestrained. . . . Thus, then, by the operation of this mobocrat spirit which all must admit is now abroad in the land, the strongest bulwark of any government, and particularly of those constituted like ours, may effectually be broken down and destroyed—I mean the attachment of the people. Whenever this effect shall be produced among us; whenever the vicious portion of (*our*) population shall be permitted to gather in bands of hundreds and thousands, and burn churches, ravage and rob provision stores, throw printing presses into rivers, shoot editors, and hang and burn obnoxious persons at pleasure and with impunity, depend upon it, this government cannot last. By such things the feelings of the best citizens will become more or less alienated from it, and under such circumstances, men of sufficient talent and ambition will not be wanting to seize the opportunity, strike the blow, and overturn that fair fabric which for the last half century has been the fondest hope of the lovers of freedom throughout the world. . . .

The question recurs, "How shall we fortify against it?" The answer is simple. Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well-wisher to his posterity swear by the blood of the Revolution never to violate in the least particular the laws of the country, and never to tolerate their violation by others. As the patriots of seventy-six did to the support of the Declaration of Independence, so to the support of the Constitution and laws let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor—let every man remember that to violate the law is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear the charter of his own and his children's liberty.



Let reverence for the laws be breathed by every American mother to the lisping babe that prattles on her lap; let it be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges; let it be written in primers, spelling-books, and in almanacs; let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice. And, in short, let it become the political religion of the nation; and let the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the grave and the gay of all sexes and tongues and colors and conditions, sacrifice unceasingly upon its altars. While ever a state of feeling such as this shall universally or even very generally prevail throughout the nation, vain will be every effort, and fruitless every attempt, to subvert our national freedom. . . .

A. Lincoln, *Early Speeches* (N. Y., 1907), 14-21 *passim*.

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