

respect the 'Compromises of the Constitution,' but will attempt the entire abolition of slavery. This would be a signal for civil war."⁵

Slavery's advocates and its antagonists radicalized. Both sides expounded more and more extreme positions with mounting fervor and conviction; their tolerance for each other evaporated.

Proslavery Arguments

Defenders of slavery lined up one argument after another:

1. They attacked the character and abilities of blacks, who, they said, needed white men's oversight. "The African is incapable of self-care and sinks into lunacy under the burden of freedom," said John C. Calhoun. "It is a mercy to him to give him the guardianship and protection from mental death."⁶
2. Slaves in the United States were not only better off than free people in Africa but also better off than workingmen in England and the northern states. As slaves, they enjoyed the blessings of Christianity and the support and protection of their masters.
3. The South needed slave labor; indeed, American business generally depended on it, directly or indirectly. "Religion and humanity have nothing to do with this question [slavery]," a South Carolina representative to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 proclaimed bluntly. "Interest alone is the governing principle with nations."⁷ In 1859, Texan Charles DeMorse was equally direct: "We want more slaves—we *need* them. We care nothing for . . . slavery as an abstraction—but we desire the practicality; the increase of our productions; the increase of the comforts and wealth of the population; and if slavery, or slave labor, or Negro Apprentice labor ministers to this, why this is what we want."⁸
4. The Bible, history, and the natural order of the universe all supported slavery. Virginia professor Thomas Drew announced, "It is as much in the order of nature that men should enslave each other as that other animals should prey upon each other."⁹
5. Neither the nation nor the individual states were entitled to interfere with slave owners' property. "The right of property exists before society," said William O. Goode in 1834. "The Legislature cannot deprive a citizen of his property in his slave. It cannot abolish slavery in a State. It could not delegate to Congress a power greater than its own."¹⁰
6. Slavery freed white men to cultivate their minds and concentrate on public affairs.
7. Black slavery freed white women from the servitude to which society must otherwise relegate them to get its work done and at the same time protected their virtue by providing an outlet for white men's passions in black women.
8. The welfare of society is more important than the welfare of any one person or race, so blacks ought to accept their own enslavement for the good of society. Unitarian minister Orville Dewey told slaves, "*Your right to be free is not absolute, unqualified, irrespective of all consequences.* If my espousal of your claim is likely to involve your race and mine together in disasters infinitely greater than your personal servitude, then you ought not to be free. In such a case personal rights ought to be sacrificed to the general good. You yourself ought to see this, and be willing to suffer for a while—one for many."¹¹

9. Slavery may lead to abuses, but that is no reason to abandon the institution, any more than divorces are a reason to abandon the institution of marriage.
10. Southerners had not originated slavery. It had been forced upon them by England and northern traders, but they had since made of it an institution beneficial to all.

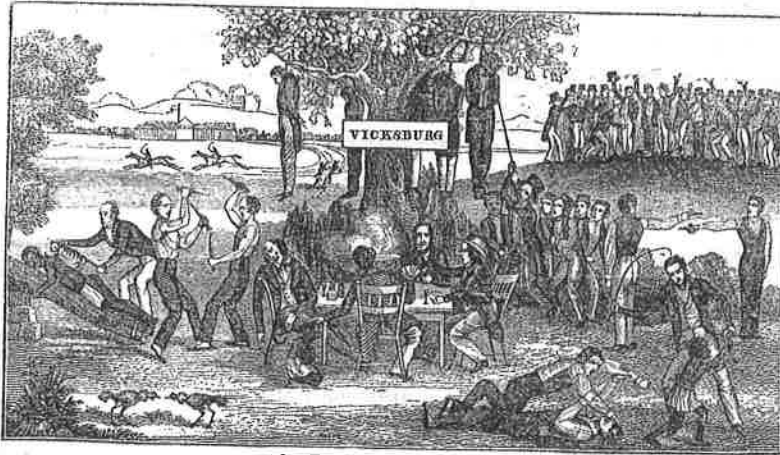
Abolitionist Arguments

Abolitionists propounded arguments as diverse for their stand.

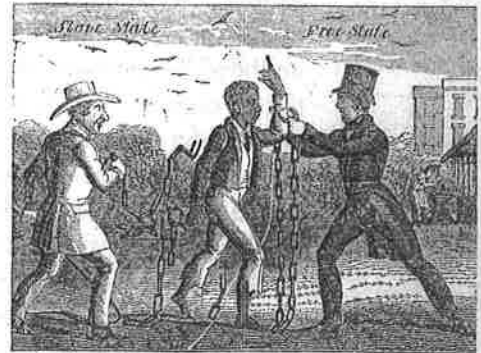
1. If we value freedom for ourselves, we should also want it for others. "Would we enjoy liberty?" asked Reverend Nathaniel Miles of Massachusetts. "Then we must grant it to others. For shame, let us either cease to enslave our fellow-men, or else let us cease to complain of those that would enslave us."¹²
2. Slavery endangers the Union. "The existence of Slavery may be viewed as one forcible cause of a final separation of the United States," warned the *Connecticut Courant* in 1796.¹³
3. Slavery does not profit the slave owner. Those who work for wages labor more productively than slaves, and their employers do not have to support them in their nonworking years of childhood and old age.
4. Slavery damages the communities in which it exists. "Slavery is ruinous to the whites; it retards improvement; roots out our industrious population; banishes the yeomanry of the country; deprives the spinner, the weaver, the smith, the shoemaker, the carpenter of employment and support," Thomas Marshall argued before the Virginia House of Delegates in 1832. "The EVIL admits of no remedy. It is increasing, and will continue to increase, *until the whole country* will be inundated by one black wave, covering its whole extent, with a few white faces, here and there, floating on its surface. The master has no capital but what is invested in human flesh; the father, instead of being richer for his sons, is at a loss how to provide for them. There is no diversity of occupations, no incentive to enterprise. Labor of every species is disreputable, because performed mostly by slaves. Our towns are stationary, our villages almost everywhere declining; and the general aspect of the country marks the curse of a wasteful, idle, reckless population, who have no interest in the soil, and care not how much it is impoverished. Public improvements are neglected, and the entire continent does not present a region for which nature has done so much and art so little."¹⁴
5. Slavery causes masters to sin. "[I]t is too well known," said Judge Samuel Sewall in 1700, "what Temptations Masters are under, to connive at the Fornication of their Slaves; lest they should be obliged to find them Wives, or pay their Fines. . . . It is likewise most lamentable to think, how in taking Negroes out of *Africa*, and selling of them here, That which GOD has joined together, Men do boldly rend asunder: Men from their Country, Husbands from their Wives, Parents from their Children. How horrible is the Uncleaness, Mortality, if not Murder, that the Ships are guilty of that bring great Crowds of these miserable Men and Women."¹⁵

While abolitionists and proponents of slavery worked ever more ardently to persuade people to their way of thinking, the great majority of the population, of course, either took more moderate positions or remained indifferent to the whole

Illustrations of the American Anti-Slavery Almanac for 1840.



"Our Peculiar Domestic Institutions."



Northern Hospitality—New-York nine months law. [The Slave stops out of the Slave State, and his chains fall. A Free State, with another chain, stands ready to re-enslave him.]



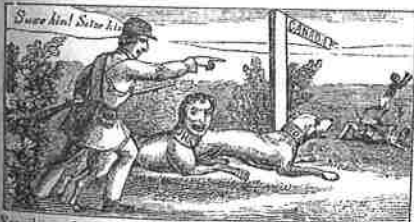
Burning of McIntosh at St. Louis, in April, 1836.



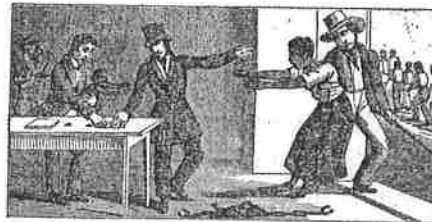
Showing how slavery improves the condition of the female sex.



The Negro Pew, or "Free" Seats for black Christians. Mayor of New-York refusing a Carman's license to a colored Man.



Surrealty of the Northern States in arresting and returning fugitive Slaves.



Selling a Mother from her Child.



Hunting Slaves with dogs and guns. A Slave drowned by the dogs.



"Poor things, they can't take care of themselves."



Mothers with young Children at work in the field.



A Woman chained to a Girl, and a Man in irons at work in the field.



Branding Slaves.



Cutting up a Slave in Kentucky.



Paid.

Unpaid.

This publication from 1840 depicts scenes of American slavery. (Library of Congress)

Eyewitness Testimony

The Morality of Slavery: The Capabilities of Blacks

The unhappy man, who has long been treated as a brute animal, too frequently sinks beneath the common standard of the human species. The galling chains that bind his body do also fetter his intellectual faculties, and impair the social affections of his heart. Accustomed to move like a mere machine; by the will of a master, reflection is suspended; he has not the power of choice, and reason and conscience have but little power over his conduct for he is chiefly governed by the passion of fear.

Benjamin Franklin, calling for abolition, quoted in Kates, "Abolition, Deportation, Integration," 40-41.

[Because of slavery] We colored people of these United States are the most degraded, and abject set of beings that ever lived since the world began. . . . It is indeed surprising that a man of such great learning, combined with such excellent natural parts [as Thomas Jefferson], should speak . . . [of the natural inferiority] of a set of men in chains. I do not know what to compare it to, unless, like putting one wild deer in an iron cage, where it will be secured, and hold another by the side of the same, then let it go, and expect the one in the cage to run as fast as the one at liberty. . . .

The whites have always been an unjust, jealous, unmerciful, avaricious and blood thirsty set of beings, always seeking after power and authority. . . . The whites want slaves, and want us for their slaves, but some of them will curse the day they ever saw us. As true as the sun ever shone in its meridian splendor, [people of] my Colour will root some of them out of the very face of the earth. They shall have enough of making slaves of, and butchering, and murdering us in the manner which they have. . . . The whites shall have enough of the blacks, yet, as true as God sits on his throne in heaven.

Free black David Walker, Walker's Appeal (1829), in Dumond, Antislavery, 115.

The negro, constituted as he is, has such an aversion to labour, and so great a propensity for indulgence and vice, that no prospect of advantage can stimulate him. . . . Without force he will sink into lethargy, and revert to his primitive savage character, and the only feasible and effectual plan to promote his civilization is to persist in those measures which compel him to labour, inculcate

morality, and tend to extirpate those vices which are inherent in the descendants of the African race.

The South Vindicated (1836), 120.

The negro requires government in every thing, the most minute . . . even in his meat and drink, his clothing, and hours of repose. Unless under the government of one man to prescribe rules of conduct to guide him, he will eat too much meat and not enough of bread and vegetables; he will not dress to suit the season, or kind of labor he is engaged in, nor retire to rest in due time to get sufficient sleep. . . . Nor will the women undress the children and put them regularly to bed. . . . They let their children suffer and die, or unmercifully abuse them, unless the white man or woman prescribe rules in the nursery for them to go by. . . .

The prognathous race require government also in their religious exercises, or they degenerate into fanatical saturnalia. . . .

S. A. Cartwright, in Elliott, Cotton Is King (1860), 727-28.

I am . . . treated as one in rebellion against the Government. Let it be so: it is one of the results of the teachings of your doctrines. Oh! the blood which has and will be spilt in consequence of the false sympathy for the negro and the Indian. I think it is a great misfortune to mankind that there is a large party, who prize the negro blood more highly than that of their own intelligent country men. Had it not been for that accursed negro question peace and prosperity would now reign, where blood flows in torrents and lives are taken by thousands. But such are the results of false and fanatical teachings. You are too tender hearted to see a deer killed for the necessities of man, which was intended by God for his use, but you can see hundreds of thousands of men go into a sister state and slay thousands of your countrymen and believe they are doing God's service because they happen to be the owners of property in slaves which you for the sake of lucre sold them.

Slaveowner William Pelham, imprisoned for refusing to take an oath of loyalty to the Union, to his abolitionist but heretofore beloved niece Marianna Pelham Mott, August 11, 1861, Women in Social Movements Web site. Available online at URL: <http://womhist.binghamton.edu>.

The Morality of Slavery: Defenses of the Institution of Slavery

Our Imitation of him [the biblical Abraham] in this his Moral Action [slaveholding], is as warrantable as that

of [adopting] his Faith. . . . Any lawful Captives of Other Heathen nations may be made Bond men. . . . [But] 'Tis unlawful for Christians to Buy and Sell one another for slaves. . . . [God has ordained] some to be High and Honourable, some to be Low and Despicable; some to be Monarchs, Kings, Princes and Governours, Masters and Commanders, others to be Subjects, and to be Commanded; Servants of sundry sorts and degrees, bound to obey; yea, some to be born Slaves, and so to remain during their lives.

Massachusetts justice John Saffin, 1701, in Tise, Proslavery, 17.

In Spight of all Endeavours to disguise this Point, it is clear as Light itself, that Negroes are as essentially necessary to the Cultivation of Georgia, as Axes, Hoes, or any other Utensil of Agriculture.

Thomas Stephens, 1743, in Tise, Proslavery, 17.

[I should consider myself] highly favored [if I could] purchase a good number of them [slaves], in order to make their lives comfortable, and lay a foundation for breeding up their posterity in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Anglican evangelist George Whitefield, ca. 1750, in Tise, Proslavery, 21.

[T]he nature of society . . . requires various degrees of authority and subordination; and while the universal rule of right, the happiness of the whole, allows greater degrees of Liberty to some, the same immutable law suffers it to be enjoyed only in less degrees by others. . . . [Africans are entitled to no more liberty than] concomitant circumstances being considered tends to happiness on the whole. . . . [A] vast inequality [exists between] different individuals of the human species, in point of qualification for the proper direction of conduct. . . . [S]ome are actually found so far to excell others both in respect to wisdom and benevolence, both in the knowledge of the principles of propriety, and a disposition to practice such principles, that the general end, happiness, would be better promoted by the exercise of authority in the former, though necessarily involving subordination of the latter, than by the enjoyment of equal Liberty in each. . . . [The Africans'] removal to America is to be esteemed a favor. . . . [Bringing them] from the state of brutality, wretchedness, and misery . . . to this land of light, humanity, and christian knowledge, is to them so great a blessing.

Harvard senior Theodore Parsons, 1773, in Tise, Proslavery, 30-32.

One of the most pleasing incidents of slavery is its amelioration of the condition of the female sex. Among all savage people women are degraded into slaves, the abject drudges of their brutal lords. . . . The slave relieves the woman. Released from a condition worse than that of bondage, leisure is afforded; and with woman, in her rudest state, leisure must result in improvement. Her faculties are developed; her gentle and softening influence is seen and felt; she assumes the high station for which nature designed her; and happy in the hallowed affections of her own bosom, unwearily exerts those powers so well adapted to the task of humanizing and blessing others.

The South Vindicated (1836), 104.

[O]ne of the first and most essential requisites in the formation of republican character is intelligence. . . . [T]he slave-holder has, in that particular, the inestimable advantage of leisure. Relieved from the labour required for actual support, he is enabled to direct his attention to public affairs; to investigate political subjects, and exercise his privileges understandingly. This result has been fully attained at the south. . . . [N]owhere are the rights of man so fully canvassed and understood by the mass of citizens.

The South Vindicated (1836), 110.

Mr. May, we are not such great fools as not to know that slavery is a great evil and a great wrong. But it was consented to by the founders of the Republic. It was provided for in the Constitution of our Union. A great portion of the property of the Southerners is invested under its sanction; and the business of the North as well as of the South, has become adjusted to it.

There are millions upon millions of dollars due from the Southerners to the merchants and mechanics of this city [New York] alone, the payment of which would be jeopardized by a rupture between the North and the South. We cannot afford, sir, to let you and your associates succeed in your endeavor to overthrow slavery. It is not a matter of principle with us. It is a matter of business necessity.

Partner in a mercantile house to Reverend Samuel J. May, 1835, in Aptheke, One Continual Cry, 19-20.

The poorest and humblest freeman of the South feels as sensibly, perhaps more sensibly than the wealthiest planter, the barrier which nature, as well as law, has erected between the white and black races. . . .

James H. Hammond, DeBow's Review, June 1850, quoted in Lewis, Coal, Iron, and Slaves, 225.

The comparative evils of Slave Society and of Free Society, of slavery to human Masters, and of slavery to Capital are the issues which the South now presents, and which the North avoids. And she avoids them because the Abolitionists, the only assailants of Southern Slavery, have . . . asserted the entire failure of their own social system, proposed its subversion, and suggested an approximating millennium, or some system of Free Love, Communism, or Socialism, as a substitute. . . . [T]he profits which capital exacts from labor makes free laborers slaves, without the rights, privileges, or advantages of domestic slaves, and capitalists their masters, with all the advantages, and none of the burdens and obligations of the ordinary owners of slaves. . . .

Fitzhugh, Cannibals All (1857), 7.

[To argue against slavery] as a domestic institution simply because it is abused [is to be] like the socialists and free-lovers who argue against the marriage relation, because married people are always quarrelling, and running off to Indiana to be divorced. They have not the good sense to discriminate between the legitimate uses of an institution and the illegitimate abuses to which it can be subjected.

David Hundley, Social Relations in our Southern States, 1860, quoted in Tadman, Speculators and Slaves, 182.

[The] foundations [of the Confederacy] are laid, its corner-stone rests, upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and normal condition.

This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth. . . .

Many governments have been founded upon the principle of the subordination and serfdom of certain classes of the same race; such were and are in violation of the laws of nature. Our system commits no such violation of nature's laws. With us, all of the white race, however high or low, rich or poor, are equal in the eye of the law. Not so with the negro. Subordination is his place.

Alexander H. Stephens, vice president of the Confederacy, March 21, 1861, in Durden, Gray and the Black, 7-8.

The Morality of Slavery: Sentiment against Slavery

It seemeth to me that to sell them away as slaves is to hinder the enlargement of His kingdom. To sell souls

for money seemeth to me a dangerous merchandise. If they deserve to die it is far better to be put to death under godly persons who will take religious care that means may be used that they may die penitently. To sell them away from all means of grace when Christ hath provided means of grace for them is the way for us to be active in destroying their souls, when we are highly obliged to seek their conversion and salvation.

Puritan minister John Eliot, letter of June 13, 1675, to the Boston General Council, in Higginbotham, In the Matter of Color, 65.

We hear that the most part of such negers are brought hither against their will and consent, and that many of them are stolen. Now, though they are black, we cannot conceive there is more liberty to have them slaves, as it is to have other white ones. There is a saying that we should do to all men like as we will be done ourselves; making no difference of what generation, descent, or colour they are. And those who steal or rob men, and those who buy or purchase them, are they not all alike.

Mennonites of Germantown, Pennsylvania, 1688, in Higginbotham, In the Matter of Color, 267.

[Slave masters] can afford to keep them with white hands [without guilt], except at some Times they chance to be besparked with the blood of those poor Slaves, when they fall to beating them with their *twisted Hides and Horse-whips*, . . . to go with *fine powdered Perriwigs*, and great bunched *Coats*; and likewise keep their Wives idle (*Jezebel-like*) to paint *their Faces*, and *Puff*, and *powder their Hair*; and to bring up their Sons and Daughters in *Idleness* and *Wantonness*, and in all manner of *Pride* and *Prodigality*, in *decking* and *adorning* their Carkasses. . . . All, and much more, the miserable Effects produced by the Slavery of the Negroes.

Quaker John Hepburn of New Jersey, 1714, in Locke, Anti-Slavery, 22.

[Preachers are] a sort of Dévils, that Preach more to Hell than they do to Heaven, and so they will do forever, as long as they are suffered to reign in the worst, and Mother of all Sins, Slave-Keeping. . . . What do you think of these Things, you brave Gospel Ministers? that keep poor Slaves to Work for you to maintain you and yours in Pride, Pride and much Idleness or Laziness, and Fulness of Bread, the Sins of *Sodom*. . . .

Quaker Benjamin Lay, 1737, in Locke, Anti-Slavery, 26.

Slavery is against the gospel, as well as fundamental law of England. We refused, as trustees [of the colony of Georgia], to make a law permitting such a horrid crime.

Gen. James Oglethorpe, ca. 1738, in Locke, Anti-Slavery, 12.

It is shocking to human Nature that any Race of Mankind, and their Posterity should be sentenced to perpetual Slavery; nor in Justice can we think otherwise than that they are thrown amongst us to be our Scourge one Day or other for our Sins; and as Freedom to them must be as dear as to us, what a Scene of Horror must it bring about.

The Scotch of New Inverness, Georgia, to Gen. James Oglethorpe, January 3, 1739, in Locke, Anti-Slavery, 12.

I think that we Americans, at least in the Southern Colonies, cannot contend with a good grace for liberty, until we have enfranchised our slaves.

John Laurens, in a 1776 letter, in Bell, Major Butler's Legacy, 10.

As much as I value a union of all the states, I would not admit the Southern States into the Union unless they agree to the discontinuance of this disgraceful trade, because it would bring weakness, and not strength, to the Union.

George Mason at the Virginia ratifying convention, ca. 1788, in Dumond, Anti-Slavery, 28.

Future inhabitants of America will inevitably be Mulattoes. . . . [T]his evil is coming upon us in a way much more disgraceful, and unnatural, than intermarriages. Fathers will have their own children for slaves, and leave them as an inheritance to their children. Men will possess their brothers and sisters as their property, leave them to their heirs, or sell them to strangers. Youth will have their grey-headed uncles and aunts for slaves, call them their property, and transfer them to others. Men will humble their own sisters, or even their aunts, to gratify their lust. An hard-hearted master will not know whether he has a blood relation, a brother or a sister, an uncle or an aunt, or a stranger from Africa, under his scourging hand.

Rev. David Rice, 1792 speech in the Kentucky convention, in Dumond, Anti-Slavery, 62.

I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject [slavery] I do not wish to think, speak, or write, with moderation. 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 a 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 retreat a single inch—and I will be heard!

William Lloyd Garrison, Liberator, January 1831, quoted in Reynolds, African Slavery, 89.

I have thus, I think, clearly proved to you seven propositions, viz.: First, that slavery is contrary to the declaration of our independence. Second, that it is contrary to the first charter of human rights given to Adam, and renewed to Noah. Third, that the fact of slavery having been the subject of prophecy, furnishes no excuse whatever to slave-dealers. Fourth, that no such system existed under the patriarchal dispensation. Fifth, that *slavery never* existed under the Jewish dispensation; but so far otherwise, that every servant was placed under the *protection of law*, and care taken not only to prevent all *involuntary* servitude, but all *voluntary perpetual* bondage. Sixth, that slavery in America reduces a man to a thing, a "chattel personal," *robs him of all his rights as a human being*, fetters both his mind and body, and protects the *master* in the most unnatural and unreasonable power, whilst it *throws him out* of the protection of law. Seventh, that slavery is contrary to the example and precepts of our holy and merciful Redeemer, and of his apostles.

But perhaps you will be ready to query, why appeal to *women* on this subject? We do not make the laws which perpetuate slavery. No legislative power is vested in us; we can do nothing to overthrow the system, even if we wished to do so. To this I reply, I know you do not make the laws, but I also know that *you are the wives and mothers, the sisters and daughters of those who do*; and if you really suppose you can do nothing to overthrow slavery; you are greatly mistaken.

Angelina Grimké, "Appeal to the Christian Women of the South," September 1836, in Rossi, The Feminist Papers, 296ff.

While we know that God lives, and governs, and always will, that he is just and has declared that righteousness shall prevail, we believe, despite all corruption and caste, we shall yet be elevated with the American people here. . . . We believe . . . that it is our duty and privilege to claim an equal place among the *American people*, to identify ourselves with American interests, and to exert all the

power and influence we have, to break down the disabilities under which we labor, and look to become a happy people in this extended country.

Charles Ray, editor of the Colored American, April 1840, in Harding, River, 132.

Our [Pilgrim Fathers were] men who had no communion with tyranny and oppression. . . . In consideration of the toils of our [black] fathers we claim the right of American citizenship. Our ancestors fought and bled for it. . . . With every fibre of our hearts entwined around our country, and with an indefeasible determination to obtain the possession of the natural and inalienable rights of American citizens, we demand redress for the wrongs we have suffered, and ask for the restoration of our birth-right privileges.

Black abolitionist Henry Highland Garnet, 1840, in Harding, River, 134–35.

What, to the American slave, is your Fourth of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty an unholy license; your national greatness swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants brass-fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are to Him mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety and hypocrisy—a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States at this very hour.

Frederick Douglass, "The Meaning of the Fourth of July for the Negro," Rochester, New York, 1852, quoted in Genovese, From Rebellion to Revolution, 132.

I am an Abolitionist—and something more. I am in favor, not only of *abolishing* the Curse, but of making *reparation* for the Crime. . . . I more than agree with Disunion Abolitionists. They are in favor of a free Northern Republic. So am I. But as to boundary lines we differ. While they would fix the Southern boundary of their free Republic at the dividing line between Ohio and Kentucky, Virginia and the Keystone State, I would wash it with the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico. "But what shall we do with the slaves?" Make free men of them. "And with the

slaveholding class?" Abolish them. "And with the Legrees of the plantations?" Them, annihilate! Drive them into the sea, as Christ once drove the swine; or chase them into the dismal swamps and black morasses of the South. "Anywhere—anywhere—out of the world!"

James Redpath, 1859, writing in Roving Editor, 8.

[T]he causes which have impeded the progress and prosperity of the South, which have dwindled our commerce and other similar pursuits, into the most contemptible insignificance; sunk a large majority of our people in galling poverty and ignorance, rendered a small minority conceited and tyrannical, and driven the rest away from their homes; entailed upon us a humiliating dependence on the Free States; disgraced us in the recesses of our own souls, and brought us under reproach in the eyes of all civilized and enlightened nations—may all be traced to one common source, and there find solution in the most hateful and horrible word, that was ever incorporated into the vocabulary of human economy—*Slavery*.

Helper, Impending Crisis (1860), 12.

The free labouring [North Carolina] farmer remarked [in 1854], that, although there were few slaves in this part of the country, he had often said to his wife that he would rather be living where there were none. He thought slavery wrong in itself, and deplorable in its effects upon the white people. . . .

He himself never owned a slave, and never would own one for his own benefit if it were given to him, "first, because it was wrong; and secondly, because he didn't think they ever did a man much good."

Olmsted, Cotton Kingdom, 403–4.

Alternatives to Abolition: The Free Soil Controversy

I am extremely sorry to hear the Senator from Mississippi say that he requires, first the extension of the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific, and also that he is not satisfied with that, but requires . . . a positive provision for the admission of slavery south of that line. And now, sir, coming from a slave State, as I do, I owe it to myself, I owe it to truth, I owe it to the subject, to say that no earthly power could induce me to vote for a specific measure for the introduction of slavery where it had not before existed. . . . If the citizens of those territories choose to establish slavery, and if they come here with constitutions establishing slavery, I am for admitting them with such provisions in their constitutions; but then it will be their

own work, and not ours, and their posterity will have to reproach them, and not us. . . .

Henry Clay, 1829 speech, in Helper, Impending Crisis, 99.

But certain it is that the principle of interference [by the federal government] . . . should be limited to the creation of proper governments for new countries, acquired or settled, and to the necessary provision for their eventual admission into the Union; leaving, in the meantime, the people inhabiting them, to regulate their internal concerns in their own way. They are just as capable of doing so as the people of the states; and they can do so, at any rate as soon as their political independence is recognized by admission into the Union. During this temporary condition, it is hardly expedient to call into exercise a doubtful and invidious authority, which questions the intelligence of a respectable portion of our citizens, and whose limitation, whatever it may be, will be rapidly approaching its termination—an authority which would give to congress despotic power, uncontrolled by the constitution, over most important sections of our common country. For, if the relation of master and servant may be regulated or annihilated by its legislation, so may the regulation of husband and wife, of parent and child, and of any other condition which our institutions and the habits of our society recognize.

An assertion of "squatter sovereignty," by General Lewis Cass, December 24, 1847, in Blake, Slavery and the Slave Trade, 559.

The political influence which [the Kansas-Nebraska] Territories will give to the South, if secured, will be of the first importance to perfect its arrangements for future slavery extension—whether by divisions of the larger States and Territories, now secured to the institution, its extension into territory hitherto considered free, or the acquisition of new territory to be devoted to the system, so as to preserve the balance of power in Congress. When this is done, Kansas and Nebraska, like Kentucky and Missouri, will be of little consequence to slaveholders, compared with the cheap and constant supply of provisions they can yield. . . . White free labor, doubly productive over slave labor in grain-growing, must be multiplied within their limits, that the cost of provisions may be reduced and the extension of slavery and the growth of cotton suffer no interruption. The present efforts to plant them with slavery, are indispensable to produce sufficient excitement to fill them speedily with a free population; and if this whole movement has been a Southern scheme to cheapen provi-

sions, and increase the ratio of the production of sugar and cotton, as it most unquestionably will do, it surpasses the statesman-like strategy which forced the people into an acquiescence in the annexation of Texas.

And should the anti-slavery voters succeed in gaining the political ascendancy in these Territories, and bring them as free States triumphantly into the Union; what can they do, but turn in, as all the rest of the Western States have done, and help to feed slaves, or those who manufacture or who sell the products of the labor of slaves.

David Christy Elliott, in Cotton Is King (1860), 123-24.

Alternatives to Abolition: The Free Produce Movement

I cannot help contemplating a sugar maple-tree with a species of affection and even veneration, for I have persuaded myself to behold in it the happy means of rendering the commerce and slavery of our african [sic] brethren in the sugar islands as unnecessary, as it has always been inhuman and unjust.

Dr. Benjamin Rush to Thomas Jefferson, in Locke, Anti-Slavery, 189.

If every bale of cotton and every piece of calico were stained with the sweat and blood which has flowed so freely in raising the raw material, who would be found ready to receive, and manufacture, and vend, and wear the fabric into which slave grown cotton has been wrought?

Angelina Grimké, letter to Lewis Tappan, August 1841, in Dumond, Antislavery, 350.

[Slave-labor products] are so mixed up with the commerce, manufactures and agriculture of the world—so modified or augmented in value by the industry of other nations,—so indissolubly connected with the credit and currency of the country—that, to attempt to seek the subversion of slavery by refusing to use them, or to attach moral guilt to the consumer of them is, in our opinion, preposterous and unjust.

William Lloyd Garrison, 1847, in Kraditor, American Abolitionism, 218-19.

The Means to Emancipation: Gradual Emancipation

[W]e rejoice that it is in our power, to extend a portion of that freedom to others, which hath been extended to us. . . . We esteem it a peculiar blessing granted to us, that we are enabled this day to add one more step



William Lloyd Garrison was a passionate antislavery advocate. (Holley, *A Life for Liberty*)

to universal civilization, by removing, as much as possible, the sorrows of those, who have lived in undeserved bondage. . . .

III. *Be it enacted, and it is hereby enacted*, That all persons as well Negroes and Mulattoes as others, who shall be born within this state from and after the passing of this act, shall not be deemed and considered as servants for life, or slaves; and that all servitude for life, or slavery of children, in consequence of the slavery of their mothers, in the case of all children born within this state from and after the passing of this act as aforesaid, shall be, and hereby is, utterly taken away, extinguished, and forever abolished.

IV. *Provided always, and be it further enacted*, That every Negro and Mulatto child, born within this state after the passing of this act as aforesaid (who would, in case this act had not been made, have been born a servant for years, or life, or a slave) shall be deemed to be, and shall be, by virtue of this act, the servant of such person, or his or her assigns, who would in such case have been entitled to the service

of such child, until such child shall attain unto the age of twenty-eight years, in the manner, and on the conditions, whereon servants bound by indenture for four years are or may be retained and holden . . .

Pennsylvania statute of 1780, in Finkelman, Law of Freedom, 42-43.

The Means to Emancipation: Political and Judicial Action

It is ordered by this court, and the authority thereof; that there shall never be any bond slavery, villainage or captivity amongst us, unless it be lawful captives taken in just wars, as willingly sell themselves or are sold to us, and such shall have the liberties and christian usage which the law of God established in Israel concerning such persons doth morally require; provided this exempts none from servitude, who shall be judged thereto by authority.

Massachusetts Body of Liberties, 1641, in Williams, History of the Negro Race, 177.

And forasmuch as great inconveniences may happen to this country by the setting of negroes and mulattoes free, by their either entertaining negro slaves from their masters service, or receiving stolen goods, or being grown old bringing a charge upon the country; for prevention thereof, *Be it enacted . . . , and it is hereby enacted*, That no negro or mulatto be after the end of this present session of assembly set free by any person or persons whatsoever, unless such person or persons, their heires, executors or administrators pay for the transportation of such negro or negroes out of the country within six moneths after such setting them free. . . .

Virginia law, 1691, in Finkelman, Law of Freedom, 108.

AN ACT for rendering the Colony of Georgia more Defensible by Prohibiting the Importation and use of Black slaves or Negroes into the same. WHEREAS Experience hath Shewn that the manner of Settling Colonys and Plantations with Black Slaves or negroes hath Obstructed the Increase of English and Christian Inhabitants therein who alone can in case of 'a War be relyed on for the Defence and Security of the same, and hath Exposed the Colonys so settled to the Insurrections Tumults and Rebellions of such Slaves & Negroes and in case of a Rupture with an Foreign State who should encourage and Support such Rebellions might occasion the utter Ruin and loss of such Colonys. . . .

English law of 1735, quoted in Olexer, Enslavement of the American Indians, 193.

[A petition] of Felix Holbrook, and others, Negroes, praying that they may be liberated from a state of Bondage, and made Freemen of this Community; and that this Court would give and grant to them some part of the unimproved Lands belonging to the Province, for a settlement, or relieve them in such other Way as shall seem good and wise upon the Whole.

Petition to the Massachusetts legislature, 1773, in Williams, History of the Negro Race, 233.

We will neither import nor purchase any slave imported after the first day of December next, after which time we will wholly discontinue the slave trade and will neither be concerned in it nor will we hire our vessels nor sell our commodities or manufactures to those who are concerned in it.

First Continental Congress, 1774, in Harding, River, 45.

Therefore, no male person, born in this country, or brought from over sea, ought to be holden by law, to serve any person, as servant, slave or apprentice, after he arrives to the age of twenty-one years, nor female, in like manner, after she arrives at the age of eighteen years, unless they are bound by their own consent, after they arrive to such age, or bound by law, for the payment of debts, damages, fines, costs, or the like.

Vermont Bill of Rights, 1777, in Locke, Anti-Slavery, 80.

I was involved in several causes in which negroes sued for their freedom, before the Revolution. The arguments in favour of their liberty were much the same as have been urged since . . . arising from the rights of mankind. . . . Argument might have some weight in the abolition of slavery in Massachusetts, but the real cause was the multiplication of labouring white people, who would no longer suffer the rich to employ these sable rivals so much to their injury.

John Adams, March 21, 1795, in Higginbotham, In the Matter of Color, 97.

The professed object of this [Liberty] Party is to secure the rights of colored men in THIS country; [but] they have given no opportunity to the poor colored man to speak for him, by placing him in the legislature where he ought to be heard with themselves. . . . In view of this state of things, what better is this third abolition party for us than either of the other parties?

Black abolitionist Thomas Van Rensselaer, 1840, in Harding, River, 135-36.

The Means to Emancipation: Threats and Military Action

Sir, the people of the west[ern part of Virginia], I undertake to say, feel a deep, a lively, a generous sympathy for their eastern brethren. They know that the evils which now afflict them are not attributable to any fault of theirs that slavery was introduced against their will; that we are indebted for it to the commercial cupidity of that heartless [British] empire. . . . Yet we will not that you shall make our fair domain the receptacle of your mass of political filth and corruption. No, sir, before we can submit to such terms, violent convulsions must agitate this state.

Slaveholder Charles James Faulkner, speech in the House of Delegates of Virginia, 1832, in Redpath, Roving Editor, 99-100.

You are not certain of heaven, because you suffer yourselves to remain in a state of slavery, where you cannot obey the commandments of the Sovereign of the universe. . . . It is your solemn and imperative duty to use every means, both moral, intellectual, and physical, that promises success [to end slavery]. . . . Promise the slaveowners renewed diligence in the cultivation of the soil, if they will render to you an equivalent for your services. . . . Point the slaveholders to the increase of happiness and prosperity in the British West Indies since the Act of Emancipation. . . . Inform them that all you desire is FREEDOM. . . . However much you and all of us may desire it, there is not much hope of redemption without the shedding of blood. . . . Brethren, arise, arise! Strike for your lives and liberties. Now is the day and the hour. Let every slave throughout the land do this, and the days of slavery are numbered. You cannot be more oppressed than you have been. . . . **RA'ITHER DIE FREEMEN THAN LIVE TO BE SLAVES. REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE FOUR MILLION!** . . . Let your motto be resistance! *Resistance!* **RESISTANCE!** No oppressed people have ever secured their liberty without resistance.

Black abolitionist Henry Garnet, Address to the Slaves of the United States, 1843, quoted in Harding, River, 141.

Resolved, that in the language of inspired wisdom, there shall be no peace to the wicked, and that this guilty nation shall have no peace, and that we will do all we can to agitate. *Agitate!* **AGITATE!!!** till our rights are restored and our brethren are redeemed from their cruel chains.

Resolution sponsored by Frederick Douglass at the National Convention of Colored People, 1847, in Harding, River, 146.

Abolitionism

The object of this [American Anti-Slavery] Society is 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, exclusive right to *legislate* in regard to its abolition in this State, it shall aim to convince all our fellow-citizens, by arguments addressed to their understandings and consciences, that slave-holding 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. . . . 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 and 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.

Constitution of the American Anti-Slavery Society, 1833, in Kraditor, American Abolitionism, 5.

As to the governments of this world, . . . we shall endeavor to prove, that, in their essential elements, and as at present administered, they are all Anti-Christ; that they can never, by human wisdom, be brought into conformity to the will of God; that they cannot be maintained, except by naval and military power; that all their penal enactments being a dead letter without an army to carry them into effect, are virtually written in human blood; and that the followers of Jesus should instinctively shun their stations of honor, power and emolument—at the same time “submitting to every ordinance of man, for the Lord’s sake,” and offering no *physical* resistance, to any of their mandates, however unjust or tyrannical.

William Lloyd Garrison, Liberator, December 15, 1837, quoted in Kraditor, American Abolitionism, 86–87.

[V]erily some of our northern gentlemen abolitionists are as jealous of any interference [by women] in rights they have long considered as belonging to them exclusively, as the southern slaveholder is, in the right of holding his



Abby Kelley Foster braved calumny and riot to speak in public for abolition. (*Holley, A Life for Liberty*)

slaves—both are to be broke up, & *human* rights alone recognized.

Quaker James Mott, on objections raised to Abby Kelley’s participation in the New England Anti-Slavery Convention, 1838, in Kraditor, American Abolitionism, 46.

At an anti-slavery meeting of the citizens of Sardinia and vicinity, held on November 21, 1838, a committee of respectable citizens presented a report, accompanied with affidavits in support of its declarations, stating that for more than a year past there had been an unusual degree of hatred manifested by the slave-hunters and slaveholders towards the abolitionists of Brown County [Ohio], and that rewards varying from \$500 to \$2,500 had been repeatedly offered by different persons for the abduction or assassination of the Rev. John B. Mahan; and rewards had also been offered for Amos Pettijohn, William A. Frazier and Dr. Isaac M. Beck, of Sardinia, the Rev. John Rankin and Dr. Alexander Campbell, of Ripley, William McCoy, of Russellville, and citizens of Adams County.

Newspaper report, in Siebert, Underground Railway, 53.

With [abolitionists], the rights of property are nothing; the deficiency of the powers of the General [federal] Government is nothing; the acknowledged and incontestible powers of the States are nothing; civil war, a dissolution of the Union, and the overthrow of a government in which are concentrated the fondest hopes of the civilized world, are nothing. . . . Utterly destitute of constitutional or other rightful power, living in totally distinct communities as alien to the communities in which the subject on which they would operate resides, so far as concerns political power over that subject, as if they lived in Africa or Asia, they nevertheless promulgate to the world their purpose to be to manumit forthwith, . . . and without moral preparation, three millions of negro slaves, under jurisdictions altogether separated from those under which they live. . . . Does any considerate man believe it to be possible to effect such an object without convulsion, revolution, and bloodshed?

Henry Clay, 1839 Senate debate, in Fox, American Colonization Society, 147.

[The abolitionist Dr. Hudson and I] traveled all through the eastern and western part of Connecticut, and a part of Massachusetts. We had some opposition to contend with; it made it much better for the Doctor in having me with him. Brickbats and rotten eggs were very common in those days; an anti-slavery lecturer was often showered by them. . . .

When we were in Saybrook [Connecticut] there was but one Abolitionist in the place. . . . As we could not be accommodated at his house, we stopped at a tavern; the inmates were very bitter toward us, and more especially to the Doctor. . . . [A]n old sea captain . . . asked the Doctor, "what do you know about slavery? All you know about it I suppose, is what this fellow (meaning me) has told you, and if I knew who his master was, and where he was, I would write to him to come on and take him." This frightened me very much. . . .

[At another town we had what we thought a successful meeting in the house of an abolitionist, having been denied the use of the school at the last minute.] The next morning the Doctor went to the barn to feed his horse, and found that some one had entered the barn and shaved

his horse's mane and tail close to the skin; and, besides, had cut our buffalo robe all in pieces; besides shaving the horse, the villians [sic] had cut his ears off.

Fugitive slave James Lindsay Smith, describing experiences of 1842, in his Autobiography, 62–63, 64. Available online. at URL: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/smilly/smilly.html#jsmith56>.

Abolitionists—about 5% of the voting population. Sober people, willing to see slavery abolished, but not by overthrowing the Constitution—70%. Highly respectable people who sympathize with the South—5%. The remainder—20%, who care less for principles than for spoils. Yet the abolitionists hold the balance of power from the nearly equal division of Democrats and Whigs. Hence the danger to the South should any party unite with the abolitionists.

John Calhoun's analysis of the political strength of the North, about 1849, in Buckmaster, Let My People Go, 172.

I John Brown am now quite *certain* that the crimes of this *guilty, land* will never be purged away; but with Blood. I had as I now think: vainly flattered myself that without *very much* bloodshed; it might be done.

Abolitionist John Brown, note handed to his guard on his way to be hanged, December 2, 1859, quoted in McPherson, "Days of Wrath," 14.

These dreadful times of mobs are thought to be the last struggle of the slave-power in the North. . . . I think it was worth living a great many years to be present at the [antislavery] meeting in Tremont Temple [in Boston] last Thursday morning [in January, 1861]. . . .

Mrs. Lydia Maria Child, as full of enthusiasm as she could express by flashing eye, glowing cheek, and waving handkerchief, as she sat by the organ on the highest seat of the platform, making everybody glad by her presence; Mrs. Maria Chapman, sitting with the calm dignity of a queen, her sister and daughter beside her; T. W. Higginson, ready with brilliant eloquence of tongue or with the revolver's bullet—so it was said—to do battle for free speech that day. . . .

Holley, A Life for Liberty, 177–78.