

## Abolition Excerpts

### Document A:

“I believe when two races come together which have different origins, colors, and physical and intellectual characteristics, that slavery is instead of an evil, a good – a positive good . . . There is and has always been, in an advanced state of wealth and civilization, a conflict between labor and capital. Slavery exempts Southern society from the disorders and dangers resulting from this conflict. This explains why the political condition of the slaveholding states has been so much more stable and quiet than that of the North.”

----- John C. Calhoun, southern senator, February 6, 1837

### Document B:

“The laboring classes enjoy more material comfort, are better fed, clothed and housed as slaves than as freemen. The statistics of crime demonstrate that the moral superiority of the slave over the free laborer is still greater . . . There never can be among slaves a class so degraded as is found about the wharves and suburbs of cities. The master requires and enforces ordinary morality and industry. How slavery could degrade men lower than universal liberty has done, it is hard to conceive . . . The free laborer rarely has a house and home of his own; he is insecure of employment . . .”

----- George Fitzhugh, author, *Sociology for the South or the Failure of Free Society* (1854)

### Document C:

“The slaves in the United States are treated with barbarous inhumanity; that they are overworked, underfed, wretchedly clad and lodged, and have insufficient sleep; . . . that they are frequently flogged with terrible severity; . . . their flesh branded with red hot irons; that they are maimed, mutilated and burned to death over slow fires. . . . We will establish all these facts by the testimony of scores and hundreds of eye witnesses. . . . We shall show, not merely that such deeds are committed, but that they are frequent . . . not in one of the slave states, but in all of them.”

----- Theodore D. Weld, *Slavery As It Is* (1839)

### Document D:

“Slavery is sin before God. Individually, or as political communities, men have no more right to enact slavery, than they have to enact murder or blasphemy, or incest or adultery.”

----- James G. Birney in 1835, Liberty Party presidential candidate

Document E:

“We will do all . . . to overthrow the most execrable system of slavery that has ever been witnessed upon earth; to deliver our land from its deadliest curse; to wipe out the violent stain which rests upon our national escutcheon; and to secure to the colored population of the United States all the rights and privileges which belong to them as Americans – come what may to our persons, our interests, or our reputations, whether we live to witness the triumph of LIBERTY, JUSTICE, AND HUMANITY, or perish ultimately as martyrs in this great, benevolent and holy cause.”

----- Declaration of the American Anti-Slavery Society (1834)

Document F:

“How does it become a man to behave toward this American government to-day? I answer, that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it. I cannot for an instant recognize that political organization as my government which is the slave’s government also . . . . if the law is of such a nature that it requires you to be an agent of injustice to another, then, I say, break the law . . . .”

----- Henry David Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience” (1849)

Document G:

“I am determined at every hazard to lift up the standard of emancipation in the eyes of the nation . . . till every chain be broken and every bondman set free! Let southern oppressors tremble; let their secret abettors tremble; let their northern apologists tremble; let all the enemies of the persecuted blacks tremble. . . . I will be as harsh as truth and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I don’t wish to think, or speak, or write with moderation. No! No! Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm . . . 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.”

----- William Lloyd Garrison, *The Liberator*, January 1, 1831

Document H:

“I tell you Americans! That unless you speedily alter your course, you and your country are gone!!!!!! For God Almighty will tear up the very face of the earth!!! . . . . But I am afraid that they have done us so much injury, and are so firm in their belief that our Creator made us to be an inheritance to them forever, that their hearts will be hardened so that their destruction may be sure. But O Americans! I warn you . . . to repent and reform, or you are ruined!!!

----- David Walker’s *Appeal in Four Articles with a Preamble to the Coloured Citizens of the World* (1829)