… Mr. Hopkins was even worse than Mr. Weeden. His chief boast was his ability to manage slaves. The peculiar feature of his government was that of whipping slaves in advance of deserving it. He always managed to have one or more of his slaves to whip every Monday morning. He did this to alarm their fears, and strike terror into those who escaped. His plan was to whip for the smallest offenses, to prevent commission of larger ones. Mr. Hopkins could always find some excuse for whipping a slave. It would astonish one, unaccustomed to a slaveholding life, to see with what wonderful ease a slaveholder can find things, of which to make occasion to whip a slave. A mere word, look or motion, -- a mistake, accident or want of power, -- are all matters for which a slave may be whipped at any time. Does a slave look dissatisfied? It is said, he has the devil in him, and it must be whipped out. Does he speak loudly when spoken to by his master? Then he is getting high-minded, and should be taken down a button-hole lower. Does he forget to pull off his hat at the approach of a white person? Then he is wanting in reverence, and should be whipped for it. Does he ever venture to vindicate his conduct, when censured for it? Then he is guilty of impudence, -- one of the greatest crimes of which a slave can be guilty. Does he ever venture to suggest a different mode of doing things from that pointed out by his master? He is indeed presumptuous, and getting above himself; and nothing less than a flogging will do for him. Does he, while plowing, break a plough, -- or while hoeing, break a hoe? It is owing to his carelessness, and for it a slave must always be whipped. Mr. Hopkins could always find something of this sort to justify the use of the lash, and he seldom failed to embrace such opportunities. There was not a man in the whole country with whom the slaves who had the getting their own home, would not prefer to live, rather than with this Rev. Mr. Hopkins. And yet there was not a man an where round, who made higher professions of religion, or was more active in revivals, -- more attentive to the class, love-feast, prayer and preaching meetings, or more devotional in his family, -- that prayed earlier, later, louder, and longer, -- than this same reverend slave-driver, Rigby Hopkins. …

Speech at the Anti-Slavery Association (1848)

… I would like to hold up to you a picture, not drawn by an American pen or pencil, but by a foreigner. I want to show you how you look abroad in the delectable business of kidnapping and slavedriving.
Some time since – I think it was in the December number of “Punch” – I saw an excellent pictorial depiction of America. What do you think it was? It was entitled, “Brother Jonathan.” It was a long, lean, gaunt, shriveled-looking creature, stretched out on two chairs, and his legs resting on the prostrate bust of Washington: projecting from behind was a cat o’ nine tails knotted at the ends; around his person he wore a belt, in which were stuck those truly American implements, a bowie knife, dirk, and revolving pistol: behind him was a whipping-post, with a naked woman tied to it, and a strong-armed American citizen in the act of scourging her livid flesh with a cowskin.

At his feet was another group; -- a sale going on of human cattle, and around the auctioneer’s table were gathered the respectability – the religion represented in the person of the clergy – of America, buying them for export to the goodly city of New Orleans. Little further on, there was a scene of branding – a small group of slaves tied hand and foot, while their patriotic and philanthropic masters were burning their name into their quivering flesh. Further on, there was a drove of slaves, driven before the lash to a ship moored out in the stream, bound for New Orleans. Above these and several other scenes illustrative of the character of our institutions, waved the star-spangled banner.

Still further back in the distance was the picture of the achievements of our gallant army in Mexico, shooting, stabbing, hanging, destroying property, and massacreing the innocent with the innocent, not with the guilty, and over all this was a picture of the devil himself, looking down with satanic satisfaction on passing events. … Here I conceive to be a true picture of America, and I hesitate not to say that but this description falls far short of the real facts ....

The Various Phases of Anti-Slavery (1855)

All men desire Liberty. They desire to possess this inalienable birthright themselves, (even) if they are not concerned about others being the recipients of its countless blessings…. (T)hey seek to abolish any system of Oppression which has them for its victims, even though they trample their own principles in the dust, when, the Rights of others are invaded. This is neither just nor generous. No man should crave the possession of that which he assiduously endeavors to withhold from another.

Again, we maintain that no man has a Right to make any concession to Tyranny, which he would refuse to make if he were the victim.—He has no right to make any compromise of contract in reference to the “Institution” of slavery, as it is falsely called, which he would be unwilling to make, were he, himself the slave. He should place himself, as it were, in the position of the slave, and advocate those principles and measures, which, judging from his stand-point, he would deem just and advisable.
Abraham Lincoln

Letter to Boston Republicans (1859)

… The principles of Jefferson are the definitions and axioms of free society. And yet they are denied, and evaded, with no small show of success. One dashingly calls them “glittering generalities”; another bluntly calls them “self evident lies”; and still others insidiously argue that they apply only to “superior races.”

This is a world of compensations; and he would be no slave must consent to have no slave. Those who deny freedom to others, deserve it not for themselves; and under a just God, cannot long retain it. … All honor to Jefferson – who, in the concrete pressure of a struggle for national independence by a single people, had the coolness, forecast, and capacity to introduce into a merely revolutionary document, an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times ….

First Inaugural Address (1861)

Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern States that by accession of a Republican administration their property and their peace and their personal security are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed and been open to their inspection. It is found in all the published speeches of him who now addresses you…. I now reiterate those sentiments ….

A disruption of the Federal Union, heretofore only menaced, is now formidable attempted. I hold that, in contemplation of universal law, and of the Constitution, the Union of these States is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all governments. It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination. Continue to execute all the express provisions of our National Constitution, and the Union will endure forever – it being impossible to destroy it except by some action not provided for in the instrument itself….

Descending from these general principles, we find the proposition that in legal contemplation the Union is perpetual confirmed by the history of the Union itself. The Union is much older than the Constitution. It was formed, in fact, by the Articles of Association in 1774. It was matured and continued by the Declaration of Independence in 1776. It was further matured, and the faith of all the then thirteen States expressly plighted and engaged that it should be perpetual, by the Articles of Confederation in 1778. And, finally, in 1787, one of the declared objects for ordaining and establishing the Constitution was “to form a more perfect Union.”
But if the destruction of the Union by one or by a part only of the States be lawfully possible, the Union is less perfect than before the Constitution, having lost the vital element of perpetuity. It follows from these views that no State upon its own mere motion can lawfully get out of the Union: that resolves and ordinances to that effect are legally void; and that acts of violence, within any State or States, against the authority of the United States, are insurrectionary or revolutionary, according to circumstances.

I therefore consider that, in view of the Constitution and the laws, the Union is unbroken; and to the extent of my ability I shall take care, as the Constitution expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States. Doing this I deem to be only a simple duty on my part….

That there are persons in one section or another who seek to destroy the Union at all events, and are glad of any pretext to do it, I will neither affirm nor deny; but if there be such, I need to address no word to them. To those, however, who really love the Union, may I not speak? Before entering upon so great a matter as the destruction of our national fabric, with all its benefits, its memories, and its hopes, would it not be wise to ascertain precisely why we do it? Will you hazard so desperate a step while there is any possibility that any portion of the ills you fly from have no real existence? Will you, while the certain ills you fly to are greater than all the real ones you fly from – will you risk the commission of so fearful a mistake? …

No foresight can anticipate, nor any document of reasonable length contain, express provisions for all possible … constitutional controversies (including those over slavery) …. We divide upon (these) into majorities and minorities. If the minority will not acquiesce, the majority must, or the government must cease. There is no other alternative….

If a minority in such case will secede rather than acquiesce, they make a precedent which in turn will divide and ruin them; for a minority of their own will secede from them whenever a majority refuses to be controlled by such a minority. For instance, why may not any portion of a new confederacy a year or two hence arbitrarily secede again, precisely as portions of the present Union now claim to secede from it? All who cherish disunion sentiments are now being educated to the exact temper of doing this.

Is there such a perfect identity of interest among the States to compose a new Union, as to produce harmony only, and prevent renewed secession? Plainly, the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy. A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people. Whoever rejects it does, of necessity, fly to anarchy or to despotism. Unanimity is impossible; the rule of a minority, as a permanent arrangement, is wholly inadmissible; so that, rejecting the majority principle, anarchy or despotism in some form is all that is left…. 
Lincoln, First Inaugural Address, cont’d

Physically speaking, we cannot separate…. A husband and wife may be divorced, and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other; but the different parts of our country cannot do this. They cannot but remain face to face, and intercourse, either amicable or hostile, must continue between them. Is it possible, then, to make that intercourse more advantageous or more satisfactory after separation than before? … Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens than laws can among friends? Suppose you go to war, you cannot fight always; and when, after loss on both sides, and no gain on either, you cease fighting, the identical old questions … are again upon you.

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it …. I understand a proposed amendment to the Constitution … has passed Congress, to the effect that the Federal Government shall never interfere with the domestic institutions of the States, including that of persons held to service…. I have no objection to its being made express and irrevocable. …

The Emancipation Proclamation (1863)

… I do order … that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the Armed Service of the United States ….

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, on military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.
The Gettysburg Address (1863)

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, 
conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we 
are engaged in a great civil war; testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so 
dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to 
dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that 
that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate – we cannot consecrate – we cannot hallow – this 
ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our 
poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, 
but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to 
the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather 
for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us – that from these honored dead 
we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion – 
that we here highly resolve that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of Freedom – and 
that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Second Inaugural Address (1865)

… On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to 
an impending civil war…. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather 
than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war 
came….

Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained…. 
Each looked for an easier triumph … Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and 
each invokes His aid against the other…. 

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see 
the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds; to care 
for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan – to do all which 
may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.