

Document 3.3.3

Excerpts from Article I in David Walker's *Appeal, In Four Articles; to the Coloured Citizens of the World, 1830*

From Article I

OUR WRETCHEDNESS IN CONSEQUENCE OF SLAVERY

My beloved brethren:—The Indians of North and South America—the Greeks—the Irish, subjected under the king of Great Britain—the Jews, that ancient people of the Lord—the inhabitants of the islands of the sea—in fine, all the inhabitants of the earth, (except, however, the sons of Africa) and called *men*, and of course are and ought to be free. But we (coloured people) and our children are *brutes!* ! and of course are and *ought to be* Slaves to the American people and their children forever! ! to dig their mines and work their farms; and thus go on enriching them, from one generation to another with our *blood* and our tears! ! !

. . .

Can a man of colour buy a piece of land and keep it peaceably? Will not some white man try to get it from him, even if it is in a *mud hole*? I need not comment any farther on a subject which all, both black and white, will readily admit. But I must, really, observe that in this very city [Boston], when a man of colour dies, if he owned any real estate it most generally falls into the hands of some white person. The wife and children of the deceased may weep and lament if they please, but the estate will be kept snug enough by its white possessor . . .

Has Mr. Jefferson [Thomas Jefferson] declared to the world, that we are inferior to the whites, both in the endowments of our bodies and of minds? [See Book 2] It is indeed surprising, that a man with such great learning, combined with such excellent natural parts, should speak so 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 . . .

God [has made] us black—which colour, Mr. Jefferson calls unfortunate! ! ! ! ! As though we are not as thankful to our God, for having made us as it pleased himself, as they (the whites,) are for having made them white. They think because they hold us in their infernal chains of slavery, that we wish to be white, or of their color—but they are dreadfully deceived—we wish to be just as it pleased our Creator to have made us, and no avaricious and unmerciful wretches, have any business to make slaves of, or hold us in slavery . . .

[Teachers may wish to divide the document here and assign to two groups]

The man who would not fight under our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, in the glorious and heavenly cause of freedom and of God—to be delivered from the most wretched, abject

and servile slavery, that ever a people was afflicted with since the foundation of the world, to the present day —ought to be kept with all of his children or family, in slavery, or in chains, to be butchered by his *cruel enemies*

I saw a paragraph, a few years since, in a South Carolina paper, which, speaking of the barbarity of the Turks, said: “The Turks are the most barbarous people in the world—they treat the Greeks more like *brutes* than human beings.” And in the same paper was an advertisement, which said: ”Eight well built Virginia and Maryland *Negro fellows* and four *wenches* will positively be *sold* this day to the highest bidder!” . . . I declare, it is really so amusing to hear the Southerners and Westerners of this country talk about *barbarity*, that it is positively enough to make a man *smile*. . . .

The sufferings of the Helots among the Spartans, were somewhat severe, it is true, but to say that theirs were as severe as ours among the Americans, I do most strenuously deny - - for instance, can any man show me an article on a page of ancient history which specifies that, the Spartans chained, and hand-cuffed the Helots, and dragged them from their wives and children, children from their parents, mothers from their suckling babes, wives from their husbands, driving them from one end of the country to the other? Notice the Spartans were heathens, who lived long before our Divine Master made his appearance in the flesh. Can Christian Americans deny those barbarous cruelties? Have you not, Americans, having subjected us under you, added to these miseries, by insulting us in telling us to our face, because we are helpless, that we are not of the human family? I ask you, O! Americans, I ask you, in the name of the Lord, can you deny these charges?