## **91.** A Defense of the Confederacy (1861)

***Source: Drayton Family Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.***

A South Carolina plantation owner and ardent supporter of secession, Thomas F. Drayton explained the reasons for his commitment to the Confederate cause in a letter to his brother Percival, an officer in the U.S. Navy, written from Charleston shortly after the firing on Fort Sumter. The letter insists that other issues than slavery are at stake in the war, yet most of his accusations against the northern states seem to revolve around their hostility to slavery. Thomas F. Drayton went on to serve as a brigadier general in the Confederate army.

My dear Percy

And so Sumter is at last ours, and this too without the loss of a *single* life upon either side.... Before this dispute is over however, I look for abundance of death & blood....

You say I don't yet understand the position you have taken. I do fully, but certainly differ from you when you say that to side with us, would be "battling for slavery against freedom." On the contrary, by siding with us, you likewise defend yourselves at the North against a far greater danger than we are threatened with, which is the enslavement of the *whites*; for the tendency with you is towards consolidation & the abrogation of State rights.... All these evils & horrors will be laid to your doors, because you have encouraged... in the form of abolition lecturers, fanatical preachers, unscrupulous editors, selfish politicians;... and by voting for men... with the *avowed object* of abolishing slavery throughout the Southern States... who made a merit of John Brown's murderous invasion; set at defiance all fugitive slave laws,... and whose clergy denounced us indiscriminately as barbarians....

*We* are fighting for home & liberty. Can the North say as much? Good night. And don't say again, that in siding for us, you would be defending slavery and fighting for what is abhorrent to your feel-

ings & convictions. On the contrary, in fighting on our side, you will be battling for law & order & against abstract fanatical ideas which will certainly bring about vastly greater evils upon our race, than could possibly result from the perpetuation of slavery among us.

## Questions

1. Why does Drayton deny that the Confederacy is fighting to defend slavery?

2. How does Drayton appear to define liberty?