

LUIZ DOS SANTOS VILHENA (1744–1814)
“THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF SLAVERY” (late 18th century)

The Negro women and a majority of the mulatto women as well, for whom honor is a delusion, a word signifying nothing, are commonly the first to corrupt their master's sons, giving them their first lessons in sexual license, in which from childhood on they are engulfed; and from this presently arises a veritable troop of little mulattoes whose influence on family life is most pernicious. But it often happens that those who are called the old masters, to distinguish them from their sons, are the very ones who set a bad example for their families through their conduct with their female slaves, giving pain to their wives and perhaps causing their death. Frequently their black favourites contrive to put the legitimate children out of the way, to avoid any difficulties in the event of the master's death.

There are other men who never marry, simply because they cannot get out of the clutches of the harpies in whose power they have been since childhood. There are ecclesiastics, and not a few, who from old and evil habit, forgetting their character and station, live a disorderly life with mulatto and negro women, by whom they have sons who inherit their property; in this and other ways many of the most valuable properties of Brazil pass into the hands of haughty, arrogant vagabond mulattoes, to the great detriment of the State. This is a matter well deserving of His Majesty's attention, for if these sugar mills and great plantations are not prevented from falling into the hands of these mulattoes, who ordinarily are profligate [immoral] and set little store by these splendid properties, having come by them so easily, in due time they will all fall into their hands and be ruined, as has happened to the greater part of those that came into the possession of such owners.

You must know that the passion for having Negroes and mulattoes in the house is so strong here that only death removes them from the household in which they were born; there are many families that have sixty, seventy, and more superfluous persons within their doors. I speak of the city, for in the country this would not be remarkable. All this black brood, whether mulattoes or Negroes, are treated with the greatest indulgence, and that is why they are all vagabonds, insolent, bold, and ungrateful . . .

The Negroes are harmful in still another way to the State of Brazil. For since all the servile labours and mechanical arts are in their charge, few are the mulattoes, and fewer still the white men, who will deign to perform such tasks . . .

The whites born in this land must either be soldiers, merchants, notaries, clerks, court officials, judges, or treasury officials or else hold some other public occupation that is barred to Negroes, such as surgeon, apothecary, pilot, shipmaster or sea-captain, warehouse clerk, and so forth. A few others are employed as sculptors, goldsmiths, and the like.

Is it not obvious that the inactivity of the whites is the reasons for the laziness of the blacks? Why should a man not dig the ground in Brazil who in Portugal lived solely by his hoe? Why should one not labor here who in Portugal knew nothing more than to put one hand to the plough handle and another to the goad?

Why should a man go about here with his body upright who came here bent with labor?

Why should he who knows only obedience want only to command? Why should he who was always a plebeian strut about with the air of a noble?

How plentifully would these blessed hands produce, dear friend, if they were cultivated by other hands than those of savage Negroes, who do no more than scratch their surface!

What great profits they would yield if cultivated by sensible and intelligent men, and of sound views of political economy changed the prevailing system!

No land could boast of greater opulence and plenty than Bahía if it were ruled wisely, and if henceforth admittance were denied to slaves, the causes of its backwardness and poverty.

Taken from Luiz dos Santos Vilhena, "The Social Consequences of Slavery," in *Latin American Civilization: History & Society, 1492 to the Present*, ed. Benjamin Keen (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 209–211.

JONATHAN EDWARDS (1703–1758)

A FAITHFUL NARRATIVE OF THE SURPRISING WORK OF GOD (1737)

Introductory Statement

The town of Northampton . . . in general, and as far as I can judge, they are as rational and understanding a people as most I have been acquainted with: Many of them have been noted for religion, and particularly, have been remarkable for their distinct knowledge in things that relate to heart religion, and Christian experience . . .

There was scarcely a single person in the town, either old or young, that was left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world. Those that were wont to be the vainest and loosest, and those that had been the most disposed to think and speak slightly of vital and experimental religion, were now generally subject to great awakenings. And the work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner, and increased more and more; souls did, as it were, come by flocks to Jesus Christ.

The Objection that Ministers Address Themselves to the Affections, Rather than the Understanding

One thing that has been complained of, is ministers' addressing themselves rather to the affections of their hearers, than to their understandings, and striving to raise their passions to the utmost height, rather by a very affectionate manner of speaking, and a great appearance of earnestness, in voice and gesture, than by clear reasoning, and informing their judgement; by which means it is objected that the affections are moved without a proportionable enlightening of the understanding.

To which I would say, I am far from thinking that it is not very profitable for ministers, in their preaching, to endeavour clearly and distinctly to explain the doctrines of religion, and unravel the difficulties that attend them, and to confirm them with strength of reason and argumentation, and also to observe some easy and clear method and order in the their discourses, for the help of the understanding and memory; and it is very probable that these things have been of late too much neglected by many ministers; yet I believe the objection that is made, of affections raised without enlightening the understanding, is in a great measure built on a mistake, and confused notions that some have about the nature and cause of the affections, and the manner in which they depend on the understanding. All affections are raised either by light *in the understanding*, or by some error and delusion *in the understanding*; for all affections do certainly arise from some apprehension in the understanding, and that apprehension must either be agreeable to truth, or else be some mistake or delusion; if it be an apprehension or notion that it is agreeable to truth, then it is *light in the understanding*. Therefore the thing to be inquired into is, whether the apprehensions or notions of divine and eternal things, that are raised in people's minds by these affectionate preachers, whence their affections are excited, be apprehensions that are agreeable to truth, or whether they are mistakes.

Though, as I have said before, clearness of distinction and illustration, and strength of reason, and a good method, in the doctrinal handling of the truths of religion, is many ways needful and profitable, and not to be neglected, yet an increase in speculative knowledge in

divinity, is not what is so much needed by our people, as something else. Men may abound in this sort of light, and have no heat. How much has there been of this sort of knowledge, in the Christian world, in this age! Was there ever an age wherein strength and penetration of reason, extent of learning, exactness of distinction, correctness of style, and clearness of expression, did so abound? And yet was there ever an age wherein there has been so little sense of the evil of sin, so little love to God, heavenly mindedness, and holiness of life, among the professors of the true religion?

Taken from Jonathan Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton, Massachusetts, A. D. 1735* (New York: Dunning & Spalding, 1832), 32, 38–39, 231–234.