

John Quincy Adams Letter Transcription  
Edmund Quincy, Esq. Boston

Quincy 28 July 1838

Dear Sir

I have received your kind invitation in behalf of the Committee of Arrangements of the Massachusetts State Anti-Slavery Society to attend their celebration of the Anniversary of the day upon which slavery was abolished in the Colonial Possessions of Great Britain.

It would give me pleasure to comply with this invitation, but my health is not very firm; my voice has been affected by the intense heat of the season and a multiplicity of application from societies political and literary to attend and address their meetings have imposed upon me the necessity of pleading the privilege of my years and declining them all.

I rejoice that the defense of the cause of human freedom is falling into younger and more vigorous hands – that in these score years from the day of the Declaration of Independence, its self-evident truths should be yet struggling for existence against the degeneracy of an age pampered with prosperity and languishing into servitude, is a melancholy truth, from which I should in vain attempt to shut my eyes – But the summons has gone forth. The youthful champions of the rights of human nature, have buckled and are buckling on their armour (sic), and the scourging overseer and the lynching savager, and the servile sophist, and the faithless scribe, and the priestly parasite will vanish before them like Satan, touched by the Spear of Ithuriel – I live in the Faith and Hope of the progressive advancement of Christian Liberty, and expect to abide by the same in death. You have a glorious though arduous career before you, and it is among the consolations of my last days, that I am able to cheer you in the pursuit and exhort you to be steadfast and immovable in it. So shall you not fail whatever may betide to reap a rich reward in the blessing of him that is ready to perish upon your soul.

I am, Dear Sir, faithfully your friend and servant

J. Q. Adams.