If ever the events of the present war shall be told by a philosophic historian, he will not fail to consider as an interesting fact the slow change of public opinion and of the action of the government in relation to slavery. For some time after the war began, our troops returned runaway negroes to their masters. The war, we said, was not against the south or slavery, but against a rebellious faction in the south, whose people were invited to return to the protection of their government. Finding that this forbearance produced no effect, the next step was to receive runaways and employ them as laborers in our camps and entrenchments, a measure violently denounced by the southern people, and their northern allies and sympathizers.

The contest, as it went on, waxed in strength and passion, and the south displayed an unexpected ability, power and determination. It became evident that to conquer the rebellion would task to their utmost the resources and energy of the north, and that if we wished to succeed, we must not only use our own strength, but southern weakness. The negroes in the south are a source of weakness, if an enemy chooses to make them so. They are peculiarly so in the present war, which grew out of slavery. They believe that the result of the war will be freedom for them. They welcome our soldiers as friends. They are ready and willing to aid them in the difficult task of conquering the south, and it has become apparent that we must conquer the south. Why not, therefore, use them? Why not invite them to join us?

-Sidney George Fisher