DOUGLASS AT OTTAWA, IL

Mr. Lincoln, following the example and lead of all the little Abolition orators, who go around and lecture in the basements of schools and churches, reads from the Declaration of Independence that all men were created equal, and then asks, How can you deprive a negro of that equality which God and the Declaration of Independence award to him? He and they maintain that negro equality is guaranteed by the laws of God, and that it is asserted in the Declaration of Independence. If they think so, of course they have a right to say so, and so vote. I do not question Mr. Lincoln’s conscientious belief that the negro was made his equal, and hence is his brother; [laughter] but for my own part, I do not regard the negro as my equal, and positively deny that he is my brother, or any kith to me whatever. ["Never, "Hit him again," and cheers.]

...Now I do not believe that the Almighty ever intended the negro to be the equal of the white man. ["Never, never."] If he did, he has been a long time demonstrating the fact. [Cheers.] For thousands of years the negro has been a race upon the earth, and during all that time, in all latitudes and climates, wherever he has wandered or been taken, he has been inferior to the race which he has there met. He belongs to an inferior race and must always occupy an inferior position. ["Good," "that’s so," etc.] I do not hold that because the negro is our inferior that therefore he ought to be a slave. By no means can such a conclusion be drawn from what I have said. On the contrary, I hold that humanity and Christianity both require that the negro shall have and enjoy every right, every privilege, and every immunity consistent with the safety of the society in which he lives. ["That’s so."] On that point, I presume, there can be no diversity of opinion. You and I are bound to extend to our inferior and dependent beings every right, every privilege, every facility and immunity consistent with the public good.

The question then arises, What rights and privileges are consistent with the public good? This is a question which each State and each Territory must decide for itself. Illinois has decided it for herself. We have provided that the negro shall not be a slave, and we have also provided that he shall not be a citizen, but protect him in his civil rights, in his life, his person and his property, only depriving him of all political rights whatsoever, and refusing to put him on an equality with the white man. ["Good."] That policy of Illinois is satisfactory to the Democratic party and to me; and if it were to the Republicans, there would then be no question upon the subject. But the Republicans say that he ought to be made a citizen, and when he becomes a citizen he becomes your equal, with all your rights and privileges.

["He never shall."] They assert the Dred Scott decision to be monstrous because it denies that the negro is or can be a citizen under the Constitution. Now, I hold that Illinois had a right to abolish and prohibit slavery as she did, and I hold that Kentucky has the same right to continue and protect slavery...and that each and every State of this Union is a sovereign power, with the right to do as it pleases upon this question of slavery, and upon all its domestic institutions.

Lincoln at Ottawa...I will say here, while upon this subject, that I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so. I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and the black races. There is a physical difference between the two which, in my judgment, will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality; and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position. I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that, notwithstanding all this, there is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence,—the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. [Loud cheers.] I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white man. I agree with Judge Douglas he is not my equal in many respects,—certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment. But in the right to eat the bread, without the leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, he is my equal, and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man. [Great applause.]

...I leave it to you to say whether, in the history of our Government, this institution of slavery has not always failed to be a bond of union, and, on the contrary, been an apple of discord and an element of division in the house. [Cries of ...and applause.] I ask you to consider whether, so long as the moral constitution of men’s minds shall continue to be the same, after this generation and assemblage shall sink into the grave, and another race shall arise, with the same moral and intellectual development we have,—whether, if that institution is standing in the same irritating position in which it now is, it will not continue an element of division? [Cries of "Yes, yes."] If so, then I have a right to say that, in regard to this question, the Union is a house divided against itself; and when the Judge reminds me that I have often said to him that the institution of slav-
ery has existed for eighty years in some States, and yet it does not exist in some others, I agree to the fact, and I account for it by looking at the position in which our fathers originally placed it,-restricting it from the new Territories where it had not gone, and legislating to cut off its source by the abrogation of the slave-trade, thus pitting the seal of legislation against its spread.

The public mind did rest in the belief that it was in the course of ultimate extinction. [Cries of "Yes, yes."] But lately, I think-and in this I charge nothing on the Judge's motives-lately, I think, that he, and those acting with him, have placed that institution on a new basis, which looks to the perpetuity and nationalization of slavery. [Loud cheers.] And while it is placed upon this new basis, I say, and I have said that I believe we shall not have peace upon the question until the opponents of slavery arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or, on the other hand, that its advocates will push it forward until it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South. Now, I believe if we could arrest the spread, and place it where Washington and Jefferson and Madison placed it, it would be in the course of ultimate extinction, and the public mind would, as for eighty years past, believe that it was in the course of ultimate extinction. The crisis would be past, and the institution might be let alone for a hundred years, if it should live so long, in the States where it exists; yet it would be going out of existence in the way best for both the black and the white races. [Great cheering.]...

Lincoln at Galesburg

...But there is still a difference, I think, between Judge Douglas and the Republicans in this.... Judge Douglas declares that if any community want slavery, they have a right to have it. He can say that logically, if he says that there is no wrong in slavery; but if you admit that there is a wrong in it, he cannot logically say that anybody has a right to do wrong. He insists that, upon the score of equality, the owners of slaves and owners of property—of horses and every other sort of property—should be alike, and hold them alike in a new Territory. That is perfectly logical if the two species of property are alike and are equally founded in right. But if you admit that one of them is wrong, you cannot institute any equality between right and wrong. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while any equality between right and wrong exists, it is placed upon this occasion: I do not perceive that because the white man is to have the superior position on the negro should be denied everything. I do not understand that because I do not want a negro woman for a slave I must necessarily want her for a wife. [Cheers and laughter.] My understanding is that I can just let her alone. I am now in my fiftieth year, and I certainly never have had a black woman for either a slave or a wife....

Lincoln at Charleston

...While I was at the hotel to-day, an elderly gentleman called upon me to know whether I was really in favor of black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.

I say upon this occasion: I do not perceive that because the white man is to have the superior position the negro should be denied everything. I do not understand that because I do not want a negro woman for a slave I must necessarily want her for a wife. [Cheers and laughter.] My understanding is that I can just let her alone. I am now in my fiftieth year, and I certainly never have had a black woman for either a slave or a wife....
In order to return to the Union, the former Confederate states were required to acknowledge the termination of slavery. After outlawing slavery in their constitution, the South Carolina legislature set about establishing the meaning of freedom for their new black citizens. The first act, passed December 19, 1865, confirmed black citizenship within certain unspecified boundaries. Two days later the legislature passed an act to regulate "the Domestic Relations" of the freedmen. Such restrictive legislation convinced Congress of the need for the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.

Questions to Consider

- How does the South Carolina legislature justify these limitations of the rights of some citizens?
- Why is it necessary to recognize legally the marriage of black men and women?
- How and why does the state define "persons of color"?

An Act Preliminary to the Legislation Induced by the Emancipation of Slaves

Whereas, The Convention of this State, by the Constitution lately ratified, did recognize the emancipation of slaves,...therefore,...

M. All free negroes, mulattoes and mestizoes, all freedmen and freedwomen, and all descendants through either sex of any of these persons, shall be known as persons of color, except that every such descendant, who may have of Caucasian blood seven-eighths or more, shall be deemed a white person.

IV. The statutes and regulations concerning slaves are now inapplicable to persons of color; and although such persons are not entitled to social or political equal-

man or woman, and the person so selected, shall be performed.

IV. Every colored child, heretofore born, is declared to be the legitimate child of his mother, and also of his colored father, if he is acknowledged by such a father.

V. Persons of color, desirous hereafter to become husband and wife, should have the contract of marriage duly solemnized....

VIII. One who is a pauper, or a charge to the public, shall not be competent to contract marriage. Marriage between a white person and a person of color shall be illegal and void....

XV. A child, over the age of two years, born of a colored parent, may be bound by the father...as an apprentice, to any respectable white or colored person, who is competent to make a contract; a male until he shall attain the age of twenty-one years, and a female until she shall attain the age of eighteen years.

XVI. Illegitimate children, within the ages above specified, may be bound by the mother.

XXII. Married persons shall be quiet and orderly in their quarters, at their work, and the premises; shall extinguish their lights and fires; and retire to rest at seasonable hours.....

XLV. On farms or in out-door service, the hours of labor, except on Sunday, shall be from sun-rise to sunset, with a reasonable interval for breakfast and dinner. Servants shall rise at the dawn in the morning, feed, water and care for the animals on the farm, do the usual and needful work about the premises, prepare their meals for the day, if required by the master, and begin the farm work or other work by sun-rise. The servant shall be careful of all the animals and property of his master, and especially of the animals and implements used by him, shall protect the same from injury by other persons, and shall be answerable for all property lost, destroyed or injured by his negligence, dishonesty, or bad faith.

XLVI. All lost time, not caused by the act of the master, and all losses occasioned by neglect of the duties hereinafter prescribed may be deducted from the wages of the servant.... Servants shall be quiet and orderly in their quarters, at their work, and on the premises; shall extinguish their lights and fires; and retire to rest at seasonable hours.....

XLVII. The master may give to a servant a task at work about the business of the farm, which shall be reasonable. If the servant complain of the task, the District Judge, or a Magistrate, shall have power to reduce or increase it. Failure to do a task shall be deemed evidence of indolence, but a single failure shall not be conclusive....

XLIX. Servants shall not be absent from the premises without the permission of the master....

L. When the servant shall depart from the service of the master without good cause, he shall forfeit wages due to him....

L. The master may discharge his servant for wilful disobedience of the lawful order of himself or his agent; habitual negligence or indolence in business; drunkenness, gross moral or legal misconduct; want of respect and civility to himself, his family, guests or agents....

LXXI. No servant shall pursue or practice the art, trade or business of an artisan, mechanic or shopkeeper, or any other business beside that of the master, or that of a servant under a contract for service on his own account and for his own benefit, or in partnership with a white person, or as agent or servant of any person, until he shall have obtained a license therefor from the Judge of the District Court; which license shall be good for one year only....
A Freedman to His Old Master (1865)

J O U R D O N A N D E R S O N

An abolitionist of thirty-years' standing, Lydia Maria Child was determined to educate former slaves to the advantages of their freedom. In 1865 she published The Freedmen's Book for use in freedmen's schools. One of the collection is this letter from Jourdon Anderson to his former owner. Anderson offers a rare insight into the mind and feelings of the newly freed people of the South.

Questions to Consider

- Is Anderson justified in his request for back wages?
- Why does he emphasize that his wife is called "Mrs. Anderson"?
- What does Anderson mean when he says that he would rather die than have his daughters "brought to shame"?

Letter from a Freedman to His Old Master

[Written just as he dictated it.]

Dayton, Ohio, August 7, 1865.

To my old Master, Colonel P. H. Anderson,
Big Spring, Tennessee.

SIR: I got your letter, and was glad to find that you had not forgotten Jourdan, and that you wanted me to come back and live with you again, promising to do better for me than anybody else can. I have often felt uneasy about you. I thought the Yankees would have hung you long before this, for harboring Rebs they found at your house. I suppose they never heard about your going to Colonel Martin's to kill the Union soldier that was left by his company in their stable. Although you shot at me twice before I left you, I did not want to hear of your being hurt, and am glad you are still living. It would do me good to go back to the dear old home again, and see Miss Mary and Miss Martha and Allen, Esther, Green, and Lee. Give my love to them all, and tell them I hope we will meet in the better world, if not in this. I would have gone back to see you all when I was working in the Nashville Hospital, but one of the neighbors told me that Henry intended to shoot me if he ever got a chance.

I want to know particularly what the good chance is you propose to give me. I am doing tolerably well here. I get twenty-five dollars a month, with victuals and clothing; have a comfortable home for Mandy,—the folks call her Mrs. Anderson,—and the children—Milly, Jane, and Grundy—go to school and are learning well. The teacher says Grundy has ahead for a preacher. They go to Sunday school, and me attend church regularly. We are kindly treated. Sometimes we overhear others saying, "Them colored people were slaves" down in Tennessee. The children feel hurt when they hear such remarks; but I tell them it was no disgrace in Tennessee to belong to Colonel Anderson. Many darkeys would have been proud, as I used to be, to call you master. Now if you will write and say what wages you will give me, I will be better able to decide whether it would be to my advantage to move back again.

As to my freedom, which you say I can have, there is nothing to be gained on that score, as I got my free pa-

pers in 1864 from the Provost-Marshal-General of the Department of Nashville. Mandy says she would be afraid to go back without some proof that you were disposed to treat us justly and kindly; and we have concluded to test your sincerity by asking you to send us our wages for the time we served you. This will make us forget and forgive old scores, and rely on your justice and friendship in the future.

I served you faithfully for thirty-two years, and Mandy twenty years. At twenty-five dollars a month for me, and two dollars a week for Mandy, our earnings would amount to eleven thousand six hundred and eighty dollars. Add to this the interest for the time our wages have been kept back, and deduct what you paid for our clothing, and three doctor's visits to me, and pulling a tooth for Mandy, and the balance will show what we are in justice entitled to. Please send the money by Adams's Express, in care of V. Winters, Esq., Dayton, Ohio. If you fail to pay us for faithful labors in the past, we can have little faith in your promises in the future. We trust the good Maker has opened your eyes to the wrongs which you and your fathers have done to me and my fathers, in making us toil for you for generations without recompense. Here I draw my wages every Saturday night; but in Tennessee there was never any pay-day for the negroes any more than for the horses and cows. Surely for those who defraud the laborer of his hire, there will be a day of reckoning.

In answering this letter, please state if there would be any safety for my Milly and Jane, who are now growing up, and both good-looking girls. You know how it was with poor Matilda and Catherine. I would rather stay here and starve—and die, if it come to that—than have my girls brought to shame by the violence and wickedness of their young masters. You will also please state if there has been any schools opened for the colored children in your neighborhood. The great desire of my life now is to give my children an education and to form virtuous habits.

Say howdy to George Carter, and thank him for taking the pistol from you when you were shooting at me. From your old servant,

JOURDON ANDERSON