

Copy of Lincoln autograph letter.

Springfield, Oct. 13, 1858.

Hon. J. N. Brown,

My dear Sir,

I do not perceive how I can express myself more plainly that I have done in the foregoing extracts. In four of them I have expressly disclaimed all intention to bring about social and political equality between the white and black races, and in all the rest I have done the same thing by clear implication. I have made it equally plain that I think the negro is included in the word "men" used in the Declaration of Independence. I believe the declaration that "all men are created equal" is the great fundamental principle upon which our free institution rests; that negro slavery is violative of that principle; but that, by our form of government, that principle has not been made one of legal obligation; that by our form of government, states which have slavery are to retain it, or surrender it at their own pleasure; and that all others- individuals, free states and all government- are constitutionally bound to leave them alone (framed?) I believe our government was thus formed because of the springing from the actual presence of slavery, when that such necessity does not exist in the territories not present. In his Mendenhall speech Mr. Clay says abstract principle, there is no doubt of the truth (all men created equal) and it is desirable, in the formation of society, and in organized societies, to have a great fundamental principle." Again, in the same speech he says, "If a state of nature existed, and we were to form the foundations of society, no man would be more strongly inclined to incorporate the institution of slavery among

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