

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, }  
August 22. }

To Hon Horace Greeley :

*Dear Sir:*—I have just received yours of the 19th inst., addressed to myself through the New York Tribune. If there be in it any statements or assumptions of fact which I may know to be erroneous, I do not now and here controvert them. If there be any inferences which I may believe to be falsely drawn, I do not now and here argue against them.—If there be perceptible in it an impatient tone, I waive it in deference to an old friend whose heart I have always supposed to be right.

As to the policy I seem to be pursuing, as you say, I have not meant to leave it to any one in doubt. I would save the Union. I would save it in the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the National authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be the Union as it was. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could save at the same time slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object is to save the Union—and not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps save this Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause; and I shall do more whenever I believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors. I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views.

I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty, and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men, every where, could be free.

Yours,

A. LINCOLN.