

Frederick Douglass, Chapters 14-16:
The “Converted” Master and the “Pious” Slave-breaker

“For whoever finds [wisdom] finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord; but he who sins against [wisdom] wrongs his own soul; all those who hate [wisdom] love death.” – Proverbs 8: 35-36

1. What does Douglass say was the main reason St. Michaels became an “unsaintly, as well as an unsightly place”?

Its citizens were shipbuilders

Its citizens were prone to drunkenness

Its citizens were poor

2. Douglass writes that after being moved to St. Michaels, he began to steal from his master, and soon justified stealing from any slaveholder as a means of “self-preservation,” even though he knew this was against “the law and the gospel I heard from the pulpit...” Read Proverbs 7:1-4, I Peter 2:18-20, and Philemon 10, 18. In 3-5 sentences, and using the assigned Scriptures, describe why you agree or disagree with Douglass’ conclusions.

3. What did Douglass believe would be the most obvious evidence that a slaveholder had truly been converted?

4. The seductress asserts in 7:14 that she is a religious person because she does religious things. How do we know from the passage that this is false? (Hint: what vow was she obviously *not* keeping?)

Thomas Auld claimed that he was a Christian following his camp meeting experience, and he did many religious things to prove the sincerity of his faith. Read Proverbs 8:13-14 and James 1:26-27. Give three illustrations from Thomas Auld's life that indicate his religion, like the seductress of Proverbs 7, was not genuine:

1)

2)

3)

5. Which minister on the Eastern Shore circuit was a genuine preacher of the Gospel, as evidenced by his care and concern for both slaveholders and slaves?

6. What kind of tool that Douglass had learned to use in Baltimore came in helpful during his escapade with Covey's oxen?

A saw

An ax

A drill

7. Douglass says that Mr. Covey's Christianity had no relevance to his "worldly affairs" or how he lived his daily life. Read Proverbs 8:12-17. In 3-5 sentences, discuss how you can apply this passage to your life so that you can avoid being merely a "devotional" Christian like Mr. Covey, and a true follower of Jesus.

8. Give the definitions of the following three words Douglass uses in his narrative (use a dictionary and pay attention to the context in which the word is used):

1) Indolent:

2) Sabbath-school:

3) Opprobrious:

9. Imagine that you are able to travel back in time to the night that Douglass spent at the Auld plantation before he was returned to Mr. Covey. Imagine that you have your Bible and that together you read from Proverbs 8:32-36. What things about wisdom from that passage might you use to encourage Douglass? Answer in 3-5 sentences.

10. What does Douglass say was the only medicine ever given to the slaves?