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Содержание

Abraham Lincoln's Cardinal Traits; A Study in Ethics, with an Epilogue Addressed to Theologians

PREFACE

Abraham Lincoln was a man among men. He was earnest and keen. He was honest and kind. He was humble and inwardly refined. He was a freeman in very deed. His conscience was king.

These few words contain the total sum of the following book. In unfolding what they severally mean, and what their living unison implies, the aim has been to bring to view the clear and simple beauty of a noble personality; to show how such a human life contains the final test of any proper claim in all the bounds of Ethical research; and to stir in thoughtful minds the query whether such a character as Lincoln's life displays, instinct as it is with Godliness, may not yield forms of statement ample and exact enough for all the essential formulas of pure Religion.

Assuredly his aspirations were ideal. Quite as certainly his ways with men were practical. The call and need today of just his qualities are past debate.

If only in our national senate chamber the ever-shifting group of senators could hear the voice of Lincoln at every roll-call and in each debate! If only in all our universities our studious youth could glean each day from Lincoln, as he speaks of politics and of logic, of ethics and of history! If only in every editorial room, where current events are registered and reviewed, Lincoln's wit and wisdom might illumine and advise! If only at every council, conference, or convention, where leaders of our churches debate religious themes, the reverence of Lincoln might preside! If only in the council chambers where directors meet to plan and govern our modern enterprises in industry and finance, Lincoln's broad humaneness might be felt! If only every artist at his exalted and elusive task could every day obtain new views of Lincoln's full nobility! If only toilers in the shop and field could feel each day the friendly brotherhood in Lincoln's rough, hard hand!

Then toil, while losing naught of eagerness, would become content. Art, while losing naught of beauty, would become unfailingly ennobling. Commerce, while losing naught of enterprise, would grow benign. Religion, while retaining a becoming dignity, would not fail to be sincere. The public press would grow more savory and sane. Our schools would be nurseries of manliness. And our conscience would be embodied in our law.

But Lincoln's face is vanished. Lincoln's voice is hushed. What remains is that Lincoln's sentiments be republished every day in lives that reverence and reproduce his excellence. To indicate this path, to embolden and embody this aspiration is the service this volume undertakes.

Throughout this study, thought is fastened centrally upon Lincoln's last inaugural address. There Lincoln stands complete. And that completeness is vividly conscious in Lincoln's own understanding. Eleven days after its delivery, and one month before his death, he wrote to Thurlow Weed, saying that he expected that speech "to wear as well as – perhaps better than – anything I have produced." Of almost incredible brevity, containing as it left his hands, but five short paragraphs, the compass and burden of thought within that address are every way notable. It is in fact Lincoln's digest of the course and trend of our national life; while on the side of character it is replete with telling intimations of Lincoln's own moral effort, purpose, and point of view. Here are in visible action all the elements of essential manhood, all the virtues of a balanced character. Here are insight, judgment, resolution. Here is momentum. Here is something that endures. Here are ends worth any cost. Here is wariest

use of means. And here are wrongs, engendering anguish, and mortal strife. And here are ultimate alternatives. And all is grasped and even merged in Lincoln as he speaks. Here is wealth of ready matter and direct allusion quite enough for any volume to lay open and assess.

Such a moral inventory and evaluation this study undertakes. Its method is to subject this short address to the strictest ethical analysis, to identify the elements that are integral and cardinal in the moral being of God, and man, and government. Then, to articulate and unify these elements into a vital ethical synthesis, to demonstrate and manifest the living unison of character. Then, to designate and undertake to clarify the major problems which such an analysis and such a synthesis of such a speech and such a man open to a student's mind.

In this procedure it is the aim to show how from first to last in Lincoln's life his mental clarity and his moral honesty are held in model parity; how in his daily walk law and liberty go hand in hand; how his cardinal moral qualities are to be defined; and how these elemental virtues may avail in their own authority and right to guide the eyes of men towards beauty, to guard the souls of men against despair, to find the stable base of government, to overcome all guilt by grace, to prove the perfect manliness of patience, to ground the thought of men upon reality, to pierce the gloom of woe, to find the core of piety, to perfect persuasive speech, and to win a vision of the soul. Hereby and thus it may at last stand plain that in the soul of Lincoln there is a moral universe; and that within the verities and mysteries of this universe he alone is truly wise and fully free who knows and proves the worth of faith.

That so broad a study should be based upon so brief a speech, or indeed upon Lincoln's single personality, may seem to some a fatal fault. Such a thought, when facing such a method and such a theme, is surely natural. As to its validity there need be no debate. The field is free. Let any number of other speeches, or of other people be assembled and placed beside the material handled in this book, for its re-examination. In such a process, the further it is pursued, if only Lincoln and the words of this inaugural are also held in thorough and continual review, it may come the more fully clear that in a theme like ethics mere multitude is not the measure of immensity; that the structure of this book is organic, not mechanical; that the single chapter on Lincoln's Moral Unison comprehends all that the volume anywhere contains or intimates; that all the problems handled in Part IV are only sample studies, and handled only suggestively; that the volume might be expanded indefinitely or much reduced, and its significance remain in either case unchanged; that correspondingly Lincoln's last inaugural and Lincoln's public life, each and both, outline in very deed a moral universe; that to rightly understand this single character and this one address is to understand humanity, and identify the ethical finalities; that to scan the soul of Lincoln in his religious attitudes is to gaze upon God's image, and face the reality and the rationale of the true religious life; and that, in consequence, any reader who hesitates to venture such vast conclusions upon so scant material may finally be induced to submit to a substantial remeasurement his present estimates of brevity and breadth.

PART I. INTRODUCTION

Lincoln's Mental Energy

In ethics, if anywhere, a master needs to be mentally sane and strong. Truth cannot be trifled with here. Error here, whether in judgment or as to fact, is fatal. Insight to exactly discern, and balance to considerately compare must be the mental instincts of a moralist.

How was this with Lincoln? What was his outfit and what his discipline mentally? Was he unfailingly shrewd? Was he sufficiently sage? Was he by instinct and by habit truly an explorer and a philosopher? Did he have in store, and did he have in hand, the needful wealth of pertinent facts? Had he the logical strength and breadth to set them all in order and to see them all as one?

Such inquiries are severe – too severe to be pressed or faced by anyone in haste. But in this study of Lincoln such inquiries are not to be escaped. To fairly answer them is worth to any man the toil of many days. For just as surely as such research is resolutely pushed through all its course, the eye will come to see where wisdom dwells, and to learn what mental judgment and mental insight truly mean. And it will grow clear as day that Lincoln mentally, as well as physically, was no weakling; that in intellect, as in stature, he stands among the first.

In many places this stands clear. There is no better way to trace it out than to start from his last inaugural. To fully explore one single paragraph of this address, the paragraph with which it opens, will make one's examination of Lincoln's mental competence all but complete. Its opening sentence alludes to his first inaugural. That one allusion will repay pursuit.

There Lincoln assumed the presidency. In that act and under that oath he stepped to the executive headship of the Republic. By that step he faced seven states in secession. It was a civil crisis, never one more grave, or dark, or ominous. It threatened to subvert our national history and to undermine our national hope. It was crowding on towards bloody war a debate that dealt with the very basis of manhood in men. To see the meaning of that crisis and to govern its issue required an eye and a mind of Godlike vision and poise.

Here is an excellent place to examine the outfit and the action of Lincoln's intellect. His first inaugural is a masterpiece of intellectual equipoise and energy. Any mind that will fasten firmly upon the substance and the sequence of its thought may feel distinctly the struggle, and the strength, and the steadiness of Lincoln's mind. His arguments and his admonitions are impressive models of sanity and power. Which is the more notable, his insight or his outlook, it is hard to tell. The marvel is that the soberness and the force of his appeal rest quite as firmly upon the prophetic as upon the historic base. So clear is his grasp of the past, so sure is his sense of the present, and so deliberate is the poise of his judicial thought that his vision into the future has been found by time to be unerringly true.

Let any student put this to test. That address is an appeal. From beginning to end it pleads. Set all its parts asunder. Then bind them all together as Lincoln has done. And so find out what are its elements; whence they are gathered; what is fact; what is principle; what is prophecy; on what plan they are assembled; by what art they are displayed; to what they owe their force; if in any spot of its argument there is a break; and if the onset of the whole is irresistible. Distinct replies to these distinct inquiries will tell one all he needs to know about Lincoln's mental strength. Without wandering any further one can find that Lincoln's methods and conquests attest a student's patience, and a scholar's power; that his wisdom was ripe, entirely adequate to devise safe counsel for a Nation in civil strife.

A striking feature of the address is its philosophic finish. Though solidly set in concrete facts, and fitted ideally to the day of its delivery, it is replete with counsel good for every time, so phrased as to become the very proverbs of civil politics. Total paragraphs are little more than clustered apothegms of consummate statesmanship. To get the style and cast of Lincoln's mind let any student

comprehend the girth, and ponder the weight of each following sentence, all gathered from this one address: —

The intention of the lawgiver is the law.

I hold that in contemplation of universal law, and of the Constitution, the Union of these States is perpetual.

Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments.

It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination.

Continue to execute all the express provisions of our national Constitution, and the Union will endure forever.

Can a contract be peaceably unmade by less than all the parties who made it?

That in legal contemplation the Union is perpetual is confirmed by the history of the Union itself.

No State upon its own mere motion can lawfully get out of the Union.

Think, if you can, of a single instance in which a plainly written provision has ever been denied.

All the vital rights of minorities and of individuals are so plainly assured to them by affirmations and negations, guarantees and provisions in the Constitution, that controversies never arise concerning them.

If the minority will not acquiesce, the majority must, or the government must cease.

If a minority in such case will secede rather than acquiesce, they make a precedent which in turn will divide and ruin them.

Plainly the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy.

A majority, held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people.

Unanimity is impossible.

One section of our country believes slavery is right and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is wrong and ought not to be extended. This is the only substantial dispute.

Physically speaking we cannot separate.

Can aliens make treaties easier than friends can make laws?

Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens than laws among friends?

Suppose you go to war, you cannot fight always.

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inherit it.

The chief magistrate derives all his authority from the people.

Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people?

If the Almighty Ruler of nations, with his eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people.

This people have wisely given their public servants but little power for mischief.

Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time.

Here are six and twenty sentences, culled from this one address, that are nothing less than the maxims of a political sage, as lasting as they are apt. As a glove fits a hand, so did these counsels fit that day. As the needle guides all ships that sail, so their wisdom directs all politics still. They embody sure witness of an eye that is keen to see – none more narrowly; and of a mind that is trained to think – none more thoroughly. Their author was a man who knew. He knew the past. He knew things current. He knew what their coming issues were sure to be. He knew the grounds of government. He knew the omens of anarchy. He knew the awful possibilities in fraternal hate. And he knew the need and the awful cost of patient forbearance. Here is a man well past childhood intellectually. He has the eye and the mind of a man long schooled by discipline. And he has a tongue expert in speech, well freighted with tremendous sense, but lucid too, and graceful, and void of all offense. This one address

displays a man, though pathetically unfamiliar with childhood schools, of consummate intellectual balance and force.

But, for its cherished end this inaugural proved pathetically incompetent. And when it became his duty to pronounce a second inaugural oath, the Nation had been four years in terrible war. That war levied a terrible tax upon the president's intellectual strength. The mental perplexities of those endless days and nights cannot be told. Much less can they be understood. It may be doubted whether any other man could have brought a mind to uphold and command those years with any approach to Lincoln's mental honesty. It was, under God, within the steadfast, tenacious grasp of Lincoln's exhaustless and invincible mental loyalty that our national destiny lay secure. To all the phases of all the problems of all those years, and to his own judgment and endeavor concerning them all, this same first paragraph of his second inaugural also alludes. This allusion, too, if any one would compass the full measure of Lincoln's mental strength, demands review, and will reward pursuit. The records are well preserved. And they bear abounding witness to Lincoln's almost superhuman sanity and insight and energy and mental equilibrium. If any one will follow through this honest and perfectly honorable hint, he will come to feel that the mind of Lincoln was the Nation's crucible in which all the Nation's problems were resolved.

Lincoln's Moral Earnestness

In the central paragraph of his last inaugural Lincoln enshrined compelling demonstration of his moral soundness. That single paragraph is nothing less than a solid section of a finished moral philosophy. It reckons right and wrong incapable of any reconciliation, God as Almighty Judge, and all his judgments just. But that opinion was no word in haste. Deliberate as he always was, when voicing any estimate as President, never was he more deliberate than when penning that moral explanation of the war. In four stern years he had been revolving surveying and pondering that sternest of all debates: – Should the war go on or should it cease? Every argument on either side, that heart or thought of man could feel or see, had been driven by every sense into the faithful heed of his honest soul. He bent his ear obediently to every plea, binding his patient mind to register fairly every weighty word, designing with absolute honesty that, when at last he spoke the executive decree, his decision should bind the Nation for the single perfect reason that it was right. And when finally and persistently he upheld the war and ordered its relentless prosecution to the end, no one may truthfully charge that opinion and command to ignorance or malice, to prejudice or haste. Moral grounds alone were the basis and motive of that conclusion and behest. The war was caused by slavery. With Southern success slavery would spread and become perpetual. If slavery was not wrong, nothing was wrong. That this great wrong should be restrained and in the end removed, the war must be put through.

But that was not all his thought and argument in this last inaugural. The war, for the time, parted the Nation sectionally. But the sin and guilt of slavery, in Lincoln's feeling, rested upon the Nation as a whole; and upon the Nation as a whole he adjudged the burden of its woe. Here the moral grandeur of Lincoln comes fully into view. His affirmation of that awful iniquity, inwrought in two centuries and a half of slavery, is no pharisaic indictment of the South. It is a repentant confession of his own and all the Nation's equal part in its infinite wrong. Among the guilty authors and abettors of that wrong he identifies himself. He deems the war God's righteous judgment upon the national inhumanity, and meekly bows his head, among the humblest and most afflicted of those who suffer and sorrow beneath that scourge.

That kindly fellowship with all the Nation in the sorrows of the war, with its lowly confession of all the guilt, and its patient endurance of all the atoning cost, proclaims and demonstrates that Lincoln's respect for righteousness was supreme. It betokens a living sense of law, a hearty assent to duty, a careful reckoning of guilt, an uncomplaining readiness to own and rectify all wrong, a manly purpose to inaugurate a new rule of equity, a reverent acknowledgment of God, an ideal esteem for manhood everywhere, freedom from the dominion of greed, friendliness for the erring, pity for the hurt and poor. Above all it shows the faith of a moral seer in its manifest confidence that human evil, and all its awful sorrow, are under the joint divine and human control and can be absolutely and joyfully overthrown and done away.

Here is a type of manhood that, under the discipline of God, grew sterling to the core, and by a signal favoring Providence provided an ample basis for a national moral ideal. Here is an ideal where conscience and righteousness stand in close affiance, where liberty springs from equity, and where pity never fails. Here is a person and a name worthy and able demonstrably to inspire and lead to national triumph a new political league. And here is an official whose spontaneous honesty has left upon all his state papers an indelible moral stamp, creating thereby out of his official documents a national literature of finished beauty and excellence and power.

PART II. ANALYSIS

His Reverence for Law – Conscience

Deeply set within the heart of Lincoln in this last inaugural was his binding sense of right. This obligation was civic. The speech can be described as a statement of what a loyal citizen under confederate law is bound to do, when his civic loyalty is put to a final test. It is an illustration of obedience facing rebellion. It is an exposition of a confederate's duty, when confederates secede. It is a civilian's announcement of the law that is singly and surely sovereign, when the sole alternative in the Nation's life is dissolution or blood. It is a revelation of the law that still prevails among and above a Republic of freemen, when all law is faced by the challenge and defiance of war.

Here is a supreme exhibit of a solid co-efficient in Lincoln's character. It shows in a commanding way how moral duty held dominion in his life. He had no predilection for war. That he must face its menace, or forswear his fealty to his freeman's covenant, was a pathetic fate. And when in that alternative he upheld his oath and endured the war, it is past all denial that he was bowing under an inexorable constraint. He was plainly ordering his speech and conduct in submission to an all-commanding, all-reviewing moral regimen. His will was listening to a moral behest. His judgment was pondering a moral choice. His eye was forecasting a moral award. He was shaping sovereign issues with a sovereign responsibility.

This experience and this expression of Lincoln's life unearths foundations in his character which demand precise examination. What was the nature of the law which held and swayed the soul of Lincoln with such an overmastering control? Whence came its authority? Wherein rested its validity? Is there record of its origin and authorship? Where is it recorded? By whose hand was it transcribed? Precisely what are its so imperative terms?

In attempting an answer, one's first impulse is to say that in this address Lincoln was speaking as citizen and official, as subject and chief executive of an openly organized civil government, with written Constitution and laws; and that what he was saying in this inaugural address contained and involved no more and no less than those regulations expressed; that he simply adopted and echoed what they defined and described; that the sole and only authority he assumed to cite or urge was this well-known published law of the land; and that in those open records one may find in fullness and precision the full definition of the nature and validity, the authority and authorship and origin, the very terms and abiding form of all the moral mandates he here obeyed.

In such a statement there is abounding truth. Lincoln explicitly shows explicit allegiance in all his political life to the dominion of our national law. He revered our Constitution. And that the Constitution should likewise be revered by all was all he gave his life to realize. Grounded as that Constitution was upon our American Bill of Rights, acknowledging as it did that all men were created equal, owning as it openly did the sovereignty of the popular will, and allowing no other lord, he found within its reverent and reverend affirmations the dignity, authority, and power all-sufficient and supremely valid for him as a fellow-citizen among his fellowmen.

But in such a statement something is left unsaid. As one listens through this address to Lincoln's voice, he instantly and continuously feels that he is hearing there no mere echo of quoted words. There is in the vibrant tone a note that is original. His voice is his own. His words are of his own selection. His phrases were fashioned by himself. His paragraphs embody the shape and bear the stamp of his peculiar and painstaking invention and argument. In his utterance are the inflection and accent, the very passion of unforced and independent conviction. He speaks as one who finds within himself, in some true sense, the authority for what he says.

But not merely are his words valid for himself, as he shapes his ordered speech. They are irrepressible. His convictions throb with urgency. The constraint to which he bows is enthroned and exercised within. The law he obeys is just as truly a law he ordains. But on either view it is a mandate which he humbly and grandly obeys. It is an imperative to which he yields his life.

Just here emerges another phase of his amenability to law. It operates as an impulse to plead. It drives him to the rostrum, and makes of him one of the foremost masters of public address our civic life and history have produced. As Lincoln voices this address he is speaking not merely to himself, nor for himself, nor to ease and unburden his mind, nor yet to open and indicate his view. As he spoke those words his eye was fixed upon a mighty multitude of his fellowmen. As he unfolded his thought before their attentive, waiting minds, it was as though a banner were being unfurled to symbolize and signify to a Nation's multitudes the sovereign duty of all true patriots. In that transaction he became undeniably prophet and lawgiver to the Nation. The obligations that supremely bind his life he urges and attests as binding with equal and evident urgency upon the millions upon millions of the members in the same free and solemn political league. When his speech is done, he would have all who hear conjoined indefeasibly with him in loyalty to his law. Every sentence of the address bears evidence of this design. He is aiming to bring the Nation's conscience and will to embody and obey the identical mandates that govern him.

But his appeal is vestured in ideal deference. He deals with law. But he does not command. Throughout his solemn exposition there is no note or hint of dictatorship of any sort. Not a breath in any accent suggests any undertaking to coerce. He simply strives, as a man with his friend, to persuade.

And yet as he sets forth his speech, within the comely apparel of its courteous words gleams the regal form of duty, imperial offspring of inflexible law. Those words were no empty phrasings of indifferent platitudes, disposed and pronounced to dignify a passing pageant in the formal rounds of our civic life. They trembled with anxiety. He spoke of nothing less than the Nation's life and death, the Nation's duty, and the Nation's doom. The honor of the Republic was being sternly tried, to see if it was sound or rotten in its very heart. Lincoln was dealing with things that all men owned to be above all price. He was striving, as for life, to achieve agreement as to duties that should transcend all possible denial. He was trying to fasten upon every American conscience constraints that no American conscience could possibly escape.

Here is a cognizance of law and deference before its claims that is curiously composite, if not complex, or even innerly contraposed. He acknowledges the written Constitution to bind all citizens with supreme authority; and gives his solemn oath to honor, uphold, and execute its plain behests. He as plainly betrays the presence within his individual breast of a moral sovereign to which he bows with just as loyal reverence. And before every man with whom he pleads he orders his behavior, even while he pleads, as before a throne whose moral majesty he has no right or power to nullify. And yet within the terms embodying such a deference he expounds the genesis and justifies the conduct of a long-drawn civil conflict, in which his own official decrees can be carried out only by the aid of the death and desolation entailed by war. And when, despite death-dealing guns and deferential pleas alike, vast multitudes of men, even all the captains and armies of the South, despise his arguments and defy his arms, he continues to urge his convictions and appeals, and to reinforce his words with war.

Can such a complex attitude be shown and seen to rest in moral harmony? Were his conscience, and the Constitution, and his deference before other men, and his summons of the land to arms equally and alike compelling morally, all indeed morally akin? Beneath the unsparing gaze of his conscience-searching eye, under all the awful testing of his loyalty to oath, in all his patient and persistent pleadings for other men's agreement, and through all the torture and distress of war, what explanation and account can be given of any obligation adequate to bind and justify his course? Instinct himself with deference, and averse to any form of tyranny, how could he so rigidly refuse to yield? Prone toward conciliation in every fiber of his life, how did he inwardly, how could he openly vindicate his unbending determination to uphold his faith, and carry through the war?

This forces a final and vital inquiry touching the nature of the law that was so regnant and compelling in Lincoln's personal life; and that he was struggling here in this address with such consuming desire, and by the unabetted efficiency of oral appeal, to implant in other breasts. From Lincoln's balanced words it stands apparent that the problems bound up in this inquiry beleaguered him on every side. His throbbing syllables, and the tactics by which his sentences are arranged, attest impressively that while he was facing problems too profound for human thought to solve, he was also facing laws that he could not escape, and dared not disobey. It was not for his kind heart to sanction and encompass such a war, and stand so solidly against the solid South, while yet behaving with so unfeigned respect for every other man, except beneath compulsion of a law supremely gentle and invincibly severe. He was plainly viewing some behest too plain to be denied, too sacred to be disobeyed, too insistent to be withheld, and yet too reverend and benign to suffer any champion to be rude – a behest around whose throne hung sanctions, true to fact, waiting to adjudge, certain to descend.

In the effort now to trace in the soul of Lincoln the birth and growth and manly stature of this deep sense of law, some things stand plain. In this, his consciousness of sovereign duty and supreme allegiance, Lincoln stands entire. In this address will and thought and sentiments combine. He is not swept against his will. What he decides he eagerly desires. And with his will and wish his best intelligence co-operates. If any man essay to overthrow his argument, he has the total Lincoln to overturn. Determined, impassioned, and convinced, he confronts all men, whether they be adversaries or friends. In his contention and defense his being is completely unified. He is employing upon his master task his total strength. Distressful, dark and difficult as is his environment and time, he suffers and ponders and resolves, with forces undivided, none reserved. With such convictions, such desires, and such determination, the assurance in his onset was in itself triumphant.

Upon what foundations now for such unyielding confidence and appeal did Lincoln take his stand? For Lincoln's own deliberate reply, let all men read again, and then again, and still again, this second inaugural address. Those words are appareled with a beautiful charity. But from deep within their kindliness resounds the clear, firm voice of heaven-ordered, all-prevailing law – a law that comprehends beneath its strong and high dominion the long career of American slavery, defining its sin, awarding its doom, and dealing justly with the contending imprecations and the pleading intercessions that strangely voice the deep confusion of embattling hosts. American slavery, its sin and doom – in his exposition of that dark theme, Lincoln gave his exposition of all-compelling law.

All men were created equal. The right of all men to liberty is likewise a primitive endowment. Upon this one broad base, and upon no other, did Lincoln ever set up any claim to voice for himself, or for his fellowman, a civic obligation. To that creative decree can be traced all the civic appeals that Lincoln ever made. In fixing there the ground of every plea, he had indomitable assurance of faith that he was defining and declaring for every man an irreducible and ineffaceable moral law. All men were created equal. All men were divinely entitled to be free. That fiat of God Americans had tried and dared to invalidate. Its authority it was now the Almighty's purpose, by the obedient hand of Lincoln, to reinaugurate. Its simple terms, that had forever been indelible, were now to be made universally legible, and everywhere visible, by the obedient consent of all his fellowmen.

In all of this the chiefest thing to note is that this same all-commanding moral law is born within. Written precepts and published constitutions are but transcriptions. They are not original. They are only copies. Not at the tip of a moving pen, but in our forefathers' reverent and independent hearts, did our noble Constitution come to birth. And in the time of Lincoln it was in Lincoln's heart that this venerable law was born again. In the heart of Washington, in the heart of Lincoln, in the heart of every man, as fashioned and over-shadowed evermore by God, all moral regimen has its stately origin.

To this grave oracle, deep within Lincoln's Godlike soul, did Lincoln fashion utterance. To this same reverend oracle, deep-lodged within the Godlike soul of every listener, Lincoln made appeal.

Here is all the urgency of all his argument. Here is the secret of all his confidence. Herein alone shines all his moral majesty.

Something such was Lincoln's exposition to himself, and to his time, of the majesty and mandatory force of civic law. Its authority rests in God. Its validity rests as well in man. It has been written down most nobly in our Constitution and Bill of Rights. Its terms spell freedom and equality for all. In the light of our common human sentiments, kindling within us from heavenly fires, its printed copies may be easily revised. And while its concrete regulations are far too manifold for any general document to possibly contain, its dictates are all as concrete and corresponsive to our human civic life as is the heaven-born and reverent human friendliness with which the life of Lincoln was continually graced.

Deferring then to future pages all specific analysis and appraisal of the pregnant interior wealth of Lincoln's sense of moral obligation, two momentous affirmations touching Lincoln's reverence for law lie already right at hand. The law he reverenced held high and wide dominion. It shaped and swayed and judged at once and alike both his own and his Nation's destiny.

And its terms were plain. It was no timid, dusky lamp, held in trembling hand, throwing uncertain rays, and flickering towards extinction. The law that shines in this inaugural is a glowing, radiant orb, bringing day when first it dawned, and shedding still full light of day over all the earth.

His Jealousy for Liberty – Free-Will

This second inaugural address had its birth in the breast of a man freeborn, and resolute to remain forever free. To find within this speech this living seed, to trace and sketch its bursting growth, and to gather up its fruit, is well worth any toil or cost. To begin with, this speech is undeniably Lincoln's own. That in any sense it was born of any other man's dictation, Lincoln would never admit, and no other man would ever affirm. As its words gain voice, every listener feels that Lincoln was their only author, and that even in their utterance, though in the living presence of an un-numbered multitude, this speaker was standing in a majestic solitude. That exposition of the war, of the Union, and of slavery was of and by and for himself. What he was uttering was original. The convictions he affirmed were his personal faith. The decision his words so delicately veiled was his personal resolve. The issue towards which they aimed was the outlook of his lone heart's hope. The appeal he voiced was warmed and winged by his own desire. The argument he so deftly inwrought was his invention and device. The words he singled out were his selection. The total aspect and onset and effect of the address, as it looked and worked on the day of its delivery, and as it looks and works today, were of his unforced and free election and intent. All the volume, burden and design of those pregnant, urgent, far-seeing paragraphs are the first hand product of a freeborn man, adapted and addressed to men freeborn.

Here is for any student of ethics an imposing spectacle. For here is a commanding demonstration that mortal man is in very deed a responsible author of moral deeds. That this inaugural scene gives this stupendous truth an indeniable vindication, no man may lightly undertake to disapprove. But within that undeniable verity are involved all the mighty revolutions of a moral universe.

This import of this speech can never be made too plain. To this end let any reader note the fact that in that stern day, and in this plain speech, Lincoln faced, and that under a pitiless compulsion, an exigent alternative. When he penned, and when he spoke its freighted words, he stood in the very brunt of war. His thoughts were tracing battle lines. His eye was fixed on bayonets. Before him stood far-ranging ranks of men in mutual defiance, men at variance upon fundamental things, men in conflict over claims irreconcilable by God or man. By no device of argument or of compromise could those contending claims become identical, or even mutually tolerant. Men's paths had parted. Armies had taken sides. Difference had deepened into intolerance; intolerance had heightened into hate; and hate had flared up into war. Secession had proclaimed that the Union must dissolve, that confederates were foes, that one Nation must be two. And men based their reasons for rending the land and for rallying ranks in arms, upon opposing views of God's decree, and of the nature of men. One side claimed that God ordained that black men should be slaves. This claim the other side denied; and avowed instead that God in his creation and endowment of the human race ordained that all men should be equal and free. So appalling and so passing plain in our political life was the alternative which this inaugural had to confront.

Equally plain upon the face of this inaugural is the fact that, in the presence of that dread and stern alternative, Lincoln made a choice. He picked his flag. He chose the banner of the free. The standard of the slaveholder he spurned. Responsibly, deliberately, he selected where to stand, fully and consciously purposing that in such selection he was enlisting and employing all the voluntary powers of his life. Here was conscious choice. He did select. He did reject. He could have taken another, an oppugnant stand, as many a familiar confederate did. Two paths were surely possible. And they did undeniably diverge. That divergence he soberly surveyed, and traced down through all its devious ways to their final consequence. In act and motive, in judgment and intent, he was self-poised, self-determined, self-moved. When, in this second inaugural scene, removed from his former inaugural oath by four imperious years of sobering and awakening thought, but facing still a frowning

South, he swore a second time to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution – that was a freeman's choice. And it was Lincoln's own. Between his soul and heaven, as he registered that resolve, no third authority intervened. As he stood and published and defined that reiterated pledge, his soul was sovereignly, supremely free.

And within that sovereign freedom its even-balanced deliberation should not be overlooked. Those days that filed between those two inaugurals had been replete with studied meditation. The mighty problems precipitated by the war he had taken and turned and poised and sought to estimate and solve in every possible way. He pondered every ounce of their awful gravity. He paced the total course of their development. He knew our history, with all its ideals and all its errors by heart. He inspected with peculiar carefulness the drift and trend of our national career. It is doubtful if any one ever studied so incessantly the current of our affairs, or peered so anxiously and with such far-sighted calculation into the hidden and distant issues of the stupendous enterprise in which he was predestined to act so commanding a part. So when his free decision was ushered forth and projected among the contending determinations of his day, to play its part, it was the ripe conclusion of a thoughtful mind, like the well-poised verdict of a judge.

And his free choice was resolute. His will was without wavering. The side he made his own was forced to face the musketry and forts, the arsenals and fleets, of a would-be nation of angry, determined men – men who would rather die than yield. The choice he made involved the shedding of human blood. This he sadly knew. In four endless years he had been compelled to defend his resolution with arms. And now as he volunteered his oath a second time, his free decision involved again the frightful corollary of war. This meant that within his voluntary oath was a conscious determination, too vigorous and resolute for any threat to daunt, for any form of terror to reverse. His choice was no feeble leaning to one side. Into its formation and into its fulfillment poured all the energy of his life. It was vastly, radically more than impulse, or propensity, or easy, unconsidered inclination. It was a freeman's choice, poised and edged and energized by a freeman's will. It had firmness like the firmness of the hills.

This choice of Lincoln was ponderous. His exercise of freedom, as shown in this inaugural, was dealing, not with things indifferent, not with trifles void of moral moment, nor with empty, immaterial suppositions. When Lincoln shaped and welcomed to himself this preference, he was handling nothing less than the affronts of human arrogance, the greed of human avarice, the cruelty of human slavery, and a confederate's disloyalty. That preference was his free election to enthrone within himself, and within all other men, the stability of a firm allegiance, the grace of human friendliness, the worthy valuation of human souls, and the surpassing beauty of a true humility. It was between such values that his election took its shape. His decision dealt with things primary, enduring, and universal. It was concerned with the elemental affections and convictions of men, while all the time supremely respecting the decrees and judgments of Almighty God. Upon such a level, and amid such values, did the will of Lincoln trace out its path. It was a Godlike energy, sovereign, soberminded, original, free.

But though this freedom of Lincoln, as it reigns through this inaugural, was individually his own, and wrought out into precise experience in personal singleness and independency, by no manner of means was he standing in this scene in moral isolation. He was beset about and wrought upon from many sides by mighty moral energies. For one thing, a vast Republic held him fast in the bonds of loyal citizenship. It was a Republic composed of freemen, to be sure. But those freemen were by no means a miscellany of mutually indifferent and disconnected units. They had formed a Union. That Union had a definite and inviolable integrity. That corporate integrity laid an unrenounceable obligation upon all its membership. It was the sacred respect for the sacred honor of that political bond that proved a man a patriot. To assert the freeman's right to cast aside those bonds proved a man a traitor, and gendered unto bondage. Here unfolds a veritable mesh of moral obligations – obligations of compelling potency. It was precisely in defence and demonstration of those enveloping claims that Lincoln advocated and prosecuted a defensive but relentless war.

The South resented all such claims. They were resolute that national bonds should be defied, that their authority should be annulled. And this they urged explicitly in the very name of freedom. This defiant protest Lincoln's opposite preference had to face. This involved his mind in the study of a problem that is never out of date – a study that will test any student's moral honesty to the quick. Lincoln's championship of moral liberty had to grapple, in the counter championship of Southern arms, a type and sort of freedom that he forever disowned for himself, and that he could never consent to in any other man. This drove him into the study of the nature of a human soul and the nature of social bonds. This inquiry uncovered two foundation rocks, laid deep by our forefathers beneath the fabric of our republic, supports to human honor and stability which no man nor any confederation of men can undermine and overthrow without turning upside down the fundamental supports of harmony and honor among civilians that are free. These two foundation rocks are the divine design that all men should be equal and free; and the certain corollary that governments among men derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. The equality of freemen when they stand apart, and their free consent, when they join in a political league – these are the immovable pillars of character and order among intelligent men. Upon such foundations this government has been placed. That sure basis the South assailed. In the name of freedom that assault must be repulsed. The national environment, the national integrity, the national honor, the existence of the Nation, conceived as it was in liberty, made all such liberty as the South preferred, not a freeman's right, but a sorry simulation, a moral wrong. Government of the people, by the people, was freedom to the core, the core of civic righteousness. In such a government popular and everlasting allegiance was elemental uprightness. Among freemen, the cornerstone of civics is a plighted troth to liberty.

Thus Lincoln argued. And with him to argue thus was to obey. As thus conceived, obedience to his civic pledge went hand in hand with liberty. Enlistment under a government and laws framed by fellow-freemen was to him no limitation of his personal rights. Instead it involved and assured for every bondman a full emancipation, and for every freeman full title forever to every unalienable right. Such a view was indeed ideal, as Lincoln soberly knew; but for that ideal every power of his kingly manhood was ready to struggle and suffer and serve. To bind his hand to such a league was his free choice. To live in loyalty to such a bond was a living pride and joy. Such an agreement was to the end of his days unresented and unconstrained.

But it cost him dearly. No indentured bonds-man ever wrought out sorer toil. None ever suffered through longer, heavier, sadder days. It wore away his life. The war was to his tender soul, as he termed it, "a dreadful scourge." But as he interpreted its trend, its certain winnings outvalued and outweighed its woe. It was freely and willingly, not by any irksome and alien coercion, that he opened his soul to all its sorrows, and poured out all his strength to direct and hasten its consummation. He saw unerringly that it had to do with government by free consent, with the tenure of a freeman's oath, with the validity of a freeman's right. And by a preference that in his freeman's breast was irrepressible, he selected with an open, far-ranging eye to take his place in that terrific conflict in the very brunt, that the Nation and all the world and coming ages might see and enjoy its happy issue in a Union built and compacted indissolubly upon the inviolable oaths and rights of men who are free.

This was Lincoln's law of liberty. It secures to men their freedom; but it binds those freemen in a league. Their civic life is not a solitude. It is a covenant.

But when freemen form a league, their solemn oath, as this inaugural shows, embodies awful sanctions. From such a league and covenant, seven confederate parts were affirming and defending their right to secede, and that by force of arms. This forced freedom to a final definition, and a final test. What follows when a Republic fails? What form of civic order lies beyond, when a league of freemen is violently dissolved? Where will freedom find sure footing, when the fundamental laws of freemen are defied? On this stern question Lincoln fixed his eye. And as his vision cleared and deepened, he grew to see that if freedom among men could ever survive, a freeman's mutual covenant must be inviolate. A freeman's compact must be kept, else on all the earth freedom could find no

resting place. If this should ever be denied, that denial must be sternly smitten to the ground. Thus for the very cause of freedom, and as a freeman, Lincoln was driven into war. He was put where he had no other choice. He was forced to fight.

But in that war the havoc and disaster were mutual. Both sides suffered terribly. The conflict dealt out torture that neither party could evade. It was mighty ponderings on these conditions that wrung from Lincoln's heart the heart of this inaugural, wherein he traces with a humble, deep-searching carefulness the cause of all the war to that prolonged infraction of the law of liberty in the lot of the American slave; and the guilt of that enormous sin to North and South alike; and the moral explanation of the sorrows of the war to the judgments of Almighty God.

Herein he learned that among freemen freedom is in no sense arbitrary and absolute. Laws lie in its very being. Their presence is spontaneous indeed, as is every impulse of their promulgation and rule. But they must be obeyed. If their self-framed mandates are disobeyed, then freemen are no longer free. If freemen dare to bind and rob their fellows and aggrandize their own advantages, then the yoke they bind on other men, by a sanction no mortal can escape, will be bound upon their own necks, until their false advantages are all surrendered, and the freedom that is claimed by anyone is given equally to every other man. To the fulfillment and preservation of that law Lincoln freely bowed his life. This is the core of this address. Thus Lincoln illustrates true liberty. In the crucible of war was his vision of the worth of freedom finally refined. It was through a costly sacrifice of peace. But it was alone and all for freedom, for freedom and for nothing else, that his peace and ours was sacrificed.

This exposition of Lincoln's pure ideal of independent, virile manhood has embraced, in passing, a phase of the vast environment in which he felt his manhood framed, that calls for separate remark – the relation of his human freedom to the rule of God. The war is traced in this address to a threefold origin: it was projected in the resolution of the South that slavery should be given leave to spread; it was accepted in the decision of the North that the present bounds of slavery should not be passed; the whole affair was overturned, and the war was over-ruled in the purpose of Almighty God, that North and South, as a single Nation, guilty in common for slavery as a national sin, should make full requital for all its cruelty. In this thought of Lincoln, the conflicting purposes of the North and the South, and his own determination too, were being made to bow beneath the mightier dominion of Almighty God. In the realm of human politics this is a rare and notable confession. And that it was published beneath the open sky, at noon, before a peopled Nation's open eye, as a thoughtful explanation of his inaugural oath as president of a mighty government upon the earth, must be conceded to mightily enhance its notability. It lacks but little of rising to the rank of prophecy. But equally notable with its publicity is its conscious, free submissiveness. Clear to discern, he is also prompt to own the over-mastering rule of God. His attitude in this inaugural is an attitude of explicit subordination to a higher power. But it is clear as day that this subordination is voluntary. There is no sign of reluctance or unwillingness, as though he were being forced, not even though all expectations of his own were being over-ruled in the inscrutable plans of God. This address reveals this man in a mood and tone of complete submission, ready for rebuke, surrendering all his ways to God. This posture of acquiescence, in God's revolution of his plans, and reconstruction of his hopes, is the factor to notice here, as we examine the actual operation of Lincoln's will. Above his private liberty, above his high official authority, above the great Republic in which his own decisions merge, reigns the hidden hand of God. To the power and majesty of that unseen sway he summons every dignity and every desire of his own to render unreserved obedience.

In seeing and saying this, however, one must never omit to observe and add that Lincoln's eye observed with solemn joy a precious moral meaning in the divine omnipotence. Heaven's unexpected guidance and consummation of the war were only adding clarity and emphasis to the principle of liberty. It only drove the demonstration home, and that with irresistible cogency, that human bondage must be avenged. And so in fact Lincoln's solemn reverence for the divine control was a

girdle confirming the strength of the fine jealousy that guarded for himself and for all mankind the sacredness and the majesty of the human will. Within the deeper deeps of his own free preference he coincided and co-operated with the will of God. His obedience to God, his allegiance to his civic covenant, and his individual, cherished preference coalesce ideally; while each, without any diversion or loss, preserves its own integrity.

Thus with life-exhausting, sacrificial toil, with genuine originality, ever exemplifying in his chastened life all the burden of his thought, by a decisive choice between divergent paths, with the careful deliberateness of a full-grown man, with unconquerable determination, gravely sensible of every ponderous consequence, in unbroken and intimate companionship with all his fellow-men, with vision sharp to detect and uncover every simulation and counterfeit of his wish, through solemn fellowship with redemptive sorrows, bowing without repugnance to every sanction that free equality enjoins, and in humble reverence for the all-commanding, all-subduing will of God, Lincoln here unfolds the central and infolded implications in his all-consuming jealousy to be free.

His Kindliness – Love

A genuine and generous goodwill to other men breathes warmly through this second inaugural, as the glowing breath of life pervades the bodily frame of a living child. This manifests itself, as seen in his impassioned zeal for freedom, in a vivid consciousness of companionship. He felt his life and destiny interlaced inseparably with all Americans, nay with all the world of human kind. With this widely expanded and ever expanding Republic, he felt himself in these inaugural scenes peculiarly identified. In that great pageant he was deeply sensible of holding the central place. His inaugural oath, though his single, individual act, announced his conscious purpose to be the Nation's head. In that station his person became supremely representative. It was for him to incorporate nobly, mightily, judicially, the national dignity, authority, and design.

Many phases of this profound coincidence of the life of Lincoln with the Nation's life come into sight whenever his life's career is carefully reviewed. But among all the illustrations of his self-submergence deep within the overflowing fullness of our national history, there is one that demonstrates his tender kindliness beyond all possibility of refutation. This is his profound participation with the Nation in her fate because of slavery. Around this awful issue circles all the thought of this, as of the first address. That this puissant co-efficient of our national history was somehow the cause of the existing war he said that all men felt. He registered his own opinion that all the sorrows of the war were in requital for that sin. Into those sorrows no man entered more profoundly than did Lincoln himself. They sobered all his joy. They solemnized him utterly. It is true few heard his groans. In his patience he was mainly silent. None ever heard him make complaint. All impulse to resentment was subdued. But the nation's sorrows were on his heart. Through all those days he was our confessor, self-sacrificed, sorrow-laden, faithful absolutely, but uncomplaining. Upon his head an angry, unanimous South, and many thousands in the North dealt vengeful, malicious blows, denying him all joy, crying out against him ruthlessly. All this he bore, as though he heard them not, and continued day and night to seek the Nation's peace. With marvelous freedom from malice himself, with fullness of charity for all, he taught a Nation how a Nation's sorrows should be patiently borne. And yet through all the days, in all this land, no man was more purely innocent of the Nation's sin of slavery than this same man. Here is friendship. Here is neighborly compassion written large. This is generosity, untinctured with any selfish reservation. Amid all the sorrows and fortunes of our history no sight is half as pathetic as this deep, free, silent companionship of Lincoln with his Nation's griefs in the deepest period of her affliction. And yet he almost seemed to cherish his fate. He bore it all so quietly, and with such a steady heart and eye, that in his seeming calm we are unconscious of his pain. He gives no hint of faltering and drawing back. He even strove repeatedly to lure the Nation to his side, to enter into sacrificial fellowship with the hapless South. But to nothing of this would the people hear.

This commanding fact, the moral mutualness of the innocent Lincoln's sorrows with the sorrows of a guilty land, is a primary factor in this historic scene. From such a moral complication momentous questions emerge. How can such confusion of moral issues be ever justified? Why do guilty and innocent suffer and sorrow alike? In such a glaring moral inequality how could Lincoln himself ever bring his candid mind to honestly acquiesce? Why should a later generation suffer vengeance for their father's sins? Why the black man's fate? How can moral judgments diverge so hopelessly upon such basic moral themes? If God's judgment is just, why are his judgments upon such inhumanity so long delayed? How about those kindred sufferings of those earlier days that for total generations were unavenged? Questions such as these must have risen in Lincoln's mind as he drained his bitter cup. Such questions are not to be evaded or suppressed. It should rather be said that Lincoln's undeniable gentleness in enduring, as the Nation's head, and for his country's sake, a Nation's curse for a national sin forces just such questions into sharpest definition, and focuses them insistently and unavoidably

before every thoughtful eye. They are shaped and fastened here solely to render aid in indicating, as they undeniably do, the supreme refinement of Lincoln's friendliness. He held by kindly fellowship with his fellowmen, even when that fellowship involved his innocent life in the moral shame and pain of their reprobation and woe. Here is an interchange of guilt and innocence, in Lincoln's undeniable experience, undeniably resolved and harmonized. Here is human kindliness, triumphant, transcending all debate.

Around this exalted illustration of the strength and purity of Lincoln's benevolence cluster many statements eager to be heard. His kindness showed in many ways, but they were all but varying, accordant forms of pure neighborliness. His mastery of all malice, his unfailing charity, the kindliness of his cherished hope, his companionship with others' sorrow, his longings for peace at home and among all men, his pity for the bereft, his tenderness before our human wounds, his reluctance to go to war, his championship of the oppressed, his willingness to bear another's blame, his silence before abuse, his mighty predilections towards universal friendliness, are all concordant and coincident types and forms of his prevailing, spontaneous companionship with men. Each phase deserves elaborate description. But it is in closer keeping with the treatment here to name some general qualities of his kindliness, qualities that are common to all its forms.

His friendliness was immediate. When human needs appealed for comfort and aid, it was not his way to send a deputy. He appeared himself. Here is something nothing less than marvelous. An intimate friend of all, he stood in conscious touch with all the Nation's citizenship. At first thought this may seem to be in consequence and by means of his eminence and office as the people's president. As chief executive of the people's will, and as foremost representative citizen, he stood for every man in that man's place; and his universal friendliness found open avenues to every individual citizen's consciousness. Here is truth. But this truth only partially meets this case. The operations of his benevolence were somehow independent of space and time. His tours while president were short and few. Back and forth between the White House, the war office, and the soldier's home he wore a historic path. It is almost overwhelmingly sad to realize how almost all his movements while president were within the sorrow-shadowed walls and the hidden solitudes of his official home. As said before, he seemed to exist apart from men, in a pathetic isolation. Nevertheless, it is plain to all that Lincoln's uncalculating generosity reached, like the shining of the sun, to the limits of the land. It is most surprising when one thinks. But when one thinks, it is most clear that there was in Lincoln's kindliness a Nation-wide capacity for intimacy. In the open genial presence of his good-will all men feel they have an immediate and equal share. And this holds true whether one is near enough to feel the warmth of his living breath, or whether half a continent intervenes.

This fact forces into view and consciousness the pure excellence of his love. It was in its nature deeply real. He did in verity live close to every man. He wore no distant air. He practised no reserve. He felt and proved himself to be the kin of all. His pictured face and published speech were a perfect symbol, a convincing pledge to every honest man of close and equal partnership. His ways are often said to have been homely. But their very homeliness was all human and all humane. And in his presence, or in the presence of any truthful impress or echo of his life, no honest nature but feels itself instantly at ease and quite at home. This habitude in him of overcoming distance, and absence, and all other obstacles to his far-ranging love, and winning entrance everywhere into the affections of all kindly men, is a notable stamp upon the total texture of his friendliness. He stood with men in personal partnership, immediate, intimate, real.

And in all his intimate and immediate fellowship with men his personal contribution was entire. In his co-partnership he had no treasure too precious to invest. He gave his all. Imposing, almost impossible as is the meaning of these words, all mankind do recognize, and that with wondering reverence, that when Lincoln rose to take the presidential oath, he held nothing back. In his service of the Union he invested his life, his honor, his hope, even all he had. It was little else he had to give. His lineage was of the lowliest. His education was of the meagerest, and wholly a by-achievement.

In social graces he was quite unversed and unadorned. He was no flatterer. The fawner's dialect he never knew. He would not boast. To beg he was ashamed. He was too honest for any knavery. Pure integrity was his only asset. As he took his stand at the presidential post, he stood without a single decoration, unsupported, all alone. It was literal truth that when he took his official oath the only bond he had to furnish was his naked honor. But that possession was no counterfeit. Its value did not fluctuate. It was solid gold. In his honest rating, the plighted faith in the words of his official pledge was beyond all price. As he discerned and understood the crisis of his day, the Nation's very being was at mortal stake. And when in that momentous hour she summoned him to take the presidency, she laid sovereign requisition upon his total being. And when he obeyed the call, he invested all. No reserve of his possession was kept in hiding for his refuge and reimbursement, in case the Nation failed. He ventured all he had, even all his honor. And this complete consignment by Lincoln to the Nation's use of all his moral wealth, of all his pure and priceless personal worth, was an act of unalloyed benignity. It was for the Nation's welfare that he devoted himself. It was that the Union might be preserved, and that all men might be free, that he plighted his integrity.

This investment of Lincoln's friendliness for the well-being of all the land, even of all the men therein, was not alone immediate, winning direct attachment to every man; nor merely all-absorbing on Lincoln's part, impressing into kindly service every value and every capacity of his total life; it also enshrined a deathless hope. Lincoln's patriotic devotedness was no venture of a day or of a decade. Lincoln's good-will looked far ahead. He had a passion for immortality. His total effort and aim in all his generous endeavors and hopes, as he served in his public life, can be defined as a sovereign aspiration that our government should be so guided and chastened in all its life that the Union should never be dissolved. To his kindly heart no possible event seemed more appalling than that this hope should fail. So far as his words reveal, this central, sovereign passion of his glowing heart was all but exclusively patriotic. He apparently forgot himself in his wistful anxious hope that the Nation's peace might long endure. His faith in the Union's indestructibility may be said to spring out of his undying continual love for his fellowman. Indeed just here seems to be the birthplace of all his prophetic ponderings over the final issues of our civic life. The very stature of the government which his ideal conceived and which he thankfully saw that our Republic designed, was deemed by him to be copied from nothing other than the divinely fashioned moral nature which he found alike in himself and in all his fellowmen. Deep within his friendly heart he cherished the vision of a Republic of freemen leagued together indissolubly as mutual friends. It was to realize and certify that hope that he dedicated his life. And when he pledged and sealed that offering, it was with no design that the seal should ever be broken, or the pledge be ever recalled. Here is another primary quality of Lincoln's friendliness. It was inwrought with personal durability. Grounded as was his civic hope in the freedom and conscience of Godlike men, it was impossible for him to consent that such a hope should ever encounter defeat or decay. Deep and sure within its essential nature were the urgent promptings and the soaring promise of immortality.

These observations upon the immediate directness, the integral whole-heartedness, and the deathless eagerness of Lincoln's friendliness, if thoughtfully compared together, reveal that these distinctive phases of his outpouring good-will are in nature identically the same, and spring from an identical source. This essential coincidence, this mutual convergence deserves attention. It intimates wherein the very essence and being of his neighborly kindness consists. And in Lincoln's life this indication of the precise whereabouts and substance of the essential and innermost quality and being of human kindliness is certain and clear, as in hardly any other man. His benignance in his dealings with men is of well-nigh unparalleled openness and freedom from all admixture and alloy. Lincoln's kindness embodies and conveys Lincoln's self. In every favor from him he is in the gift. In the center of all the friendliness that is characteristic of Lincoln, Lincoln himself stands erect and entire, offering and commending in every case his full-sized, undivided self. This is the core and this the circumference, this is the sum and this the substance of his good-will. It is rich with all his personal

wealth, solid with all his personal worth. In him an act of friendship was an inauguration of personal copartnership. In his good-will was all the energy of his life. In his benefactions he gave himself. Just so with his compassions. With the sorrows of humanity it was his way to enter into personal fellowship. This was the form and being of all his generosity. His mastery over all malice when facing a foe, his abounding charity when judging a wrong, his hearty gladness in the presence of human joy, his cordial ways in greeting friends, his fatherly affection for his boy, his love for his native land, his pity in presence of the bereft, his sadness at sight of wounds, his readiness to share evenly with all his Nation all that guilty Nation's painful discipline – all this variety and plenitude of ample, open-hearted tenderness towards other men was alike and always the complete and conscious contribution of himself. In brief, in full, and finally, Lincoln's friendliness, through all its beautiful versatility, was a free and facile, a full and total, personal self-devotion. This is the common content giving all its value to all the forms of his human kindliness.

His Pureness – Life

In the exposition just foregoing, the thought has been drawn into allusions to Lincoln's premonitions or aspirations towards immortality, for the Union, if not for himself. This was in the course of an effort to find the spring-head of his kindliness. And it culminated in the suggestion that deep within Lincoln's being there was enshrined an assurance, however unconfessed or even half unconscious, of personal immortality. And that from within this shrine of living hope, common to him with every man, he drew his inspiration and his very pattern of a national Union and a national peace that would endure forever.

Here is something that calls for examination, for in this we touch a radical quality of Lincoln's moral being. This eager craving after permanence was in him an appetite that could never be fed or satisfied by any things that perish. In itself and in its nutriment there is an irrepealable call for something indefeasable, something utterly superior to all fear of death, something never amenable to any form of dissolution or decay, something spiritually pure, and essentially kindred to the essential being of a deathless soul.

The matter may be approached to start with by saying some things negatively. Lincoln was centrally in no sense a materialist. He was indeed firmly sensitive to the physical majesties of this continent, though in his day they were hardly half disclosed. He calculated with carefulness our material capacities for expansion in power and wealth. He foresaw our certain outward growth into a puissant Nation, the coveted and ample resort and refuge and home of hordes of men from other lands. In his own well-seasoned and resourceful physique he felt and knew the worth of physical virility. He could thoughtfully compute the glittering values, the goodly financial revenues, the days and months and total seasons of physical idleness and delights that accrue to human owners from the unrequited toil of human slaves. And in the current civil war he completely understood that no less a concern than the perpetuity of the American Union was pending upon contests largely consisting of encounters of physical prowess, of tests of muscular endurance and strength.

But not in calculations such as these did his thoughtful studies of human welfare take ultimate resort, or find final rest. His conception of the ideal state, of the ideal citizen, of the ideal life, was not constructed or inspired from carnal elements. He noted with life-long sadness the sordid baseness inseparably attending the fact of owning or being a slave. He deeply saw that those battles in the Wilderness were no mere conflicts of beasts. And never could he imagine or allow that his personal weight, and force, and worth were ratable by gymnastic tests. It was not upon things like these that Lincoln's attention and hope were fixed, when his hopes and plans for our prosperity took form. To the whole world of his material environment he was marvelously indifferent. On every perusal of his life one grieves at the story of his poverty, and the sad infrequency and meagerness in his daily life of the pleasures and recreations which are for the comfort and happiness of men in material things. But in this he seems as though unconscious of any disappointment. For himself as for the Nation, and for the Nation as for himself, his satisfaction and confidence were not born and fed of things that perish in their use. Luxury in food or attire, however toothsome or attractive to other natures, stirred but the feeblest hankerings, if any at all, in him. Towards sensualism of any sort, whether gluttony, drunkenness or lust, his sound and temperate manliness did not incline. And in his estimate of personal character his eye and respect did not rest in outer attitudes, on printed, age-long codes of manner. He was no slave of stately ceremonies, or artificial etiquette. Nor in religion did he bind his tongue to creeds however hoary, nor to rituals however august. He swore not by the oaths of any sect, however ancient and renowned. Neither in this mountain nor in that did he worship God.

But on the other hand, and now to speak affirmatively, Lincoln lived no penury-stricken life. The resources within his personality were well-nigh incalculable. Few men in all our national catalogue have been endowed by God with so sterling and abundant interior wealth. And of all

American patriotic benefactors few indeed have left in their single individual name and right such priceless legacies to their native land. What is life? What is human life? Wherein, completely and precisely wherein, is man distinguishable from the beast? For answer, study Lincoln and see. In the full development of such a study many massive verities will unfold. But the feature in Lincoln's manhood, which this chapter is set apart to designate and clarify, is the simple purity, the elemental spirituality of all his elemental traits. His dominant sentiments, his primary convictions, his main and all-mastering decisions were never born to die. They were instinct with life, with life indeed, a life never failing, ever more abundant and free.

This interior vitality, this unalloyed and undecaying purity may be described one way as a real idealism. But in ascribing idealism to Lincoln, it needs to be said at once that Lincoln's idealism, real and glorious as it must surely be confessed to be, was transparently and unvaryingly practical. In one way it may be defined as hope. A waiting hope was a standard characteristic of Lincoln's attitude. His sorrowful eye held fast to things as yet unrealizable. It is impressive to see how often and how fondly he mentioned the future, the "vast future," as he termed it, of our American career. The secret of the beauty and of the power of some of his loftiest and most spontaneous rhetoric is due to just this solemn eagerness towards the coming days. As one comes to study more intently into the outlay of his heroic strength, his struggle and toil are seen to be leashed about his consuming wish that the Nation in its undivided might could be unified about the speedy fulfillment of his prophetic aims. He never forgot the mighty lesson, nor lost the living inspiration of his own advancement from humblest station of ignorance and toiling poverty to the presidency. That transformation he loved to humbly hold before the attention of his fellow Americans, as a pattern of what might anywhere occur again. He loved to linger upon the possibilities of upward movement in the ranks of all laboring men. Large place and honorable position were given to this arousing theme in his first annual message to Congress. This general topic – the far-set, soaring possibilities of human betterment – held constant and commanding eminence in the ranging measure of his eagle-searching thought. For the Nation, and for its every inhabitant, he was a true idealist.

But Lincoln's idealism, again be it said, was no wild indulgence of a vagrant and untrained imagination. It was utterly sober-minded. It took its form and found its force in the center of his sanest thoughtfulness. The terms in which its description has just been illustratively traced show it to be perfectly rational, and even matter-of-fact. Lincoln's idealism was nothing else but a heedful interpretation of the proper destiny of man. It was a reflection in terms of carefulest thought, albeit also in the guise of ardent hope, of the essential lineaments in the nature of man. And no human portrait by any artist was ever truer to fact, while yet tinged with fancy, pure and free. In all his picturing of things yet to be, but not yet in hand, his eye was fastened with an anatomist's intentness upon the actual human nature imperishably present in every man. Nothing that Lincoln's idealism ever proposed ever diverged from the bounds of the original fiat creating all men equal and free. That undeniable initial verity, itself the keystone of our national Constitution and Bill of Rights, supplied to Lincoln's hope its total and only inspiration. In those ancient and elemental realities, realities that deeply underlie and long outlast all the cults and customs and centuries which human thought is so prone to differentiate and divide, Lincoln detected solid foundations and ample warrant for age-long, undissolving expectations. In every human face there are outlines that are forever indelible. These unfailing lineaments Lincoln had the eye to see. And what is vastly more, he had the courage and the honesty to adopt them as the pattern of the platform, and to voice them as the notes of the battle-peal of his statesmanship. And this he did right wittingly, knowing assuredly that therein his vision had caught the gleam of things eternal; that therein he had made discovery that man, even the humblest of his race, could claim to be, as he phrased it to a company of blacks, "kindred to the great God who made him." This amounts to saying that Lincoln's statesmanship may be completely and precisely defined as the studied and deliberate exploitation, upon the field of politics, of those forces, central and common in all mankind, that are Godlike, immortal, spiritual.

Here we reach a definition that outlines with close precision a trait of Lincoln's full-formed character that held a primary place in winning for Lincoln his immortal renown. He attached himself to things themselves immortal. His ideal hope had no admixture of clay, nor even of gold. He made no composition or compromise with anything that dies. His supreme desire was of a nature never to decay. It was pure with the deathless purity of the human soul. To this pure principle, eternal loyalty to the immortal dignity of man, he signed and sealed his soul's allegiance with bonds that even death could never relax. Such statements describe a primary co-efficient in Lincoln's ethical life. Abjuring the unnumbered allurements of the material world, allurements whose fascinations unfailingly fade, and reposing his confidence wholly in treasures that time and use only brighten and refine, Lincoln reveals in the realm of ethics the singular excellence of an ideal that can kindle in an immortal man an immortal hope. Purging every sort of baseness out of the central life, and enthroning an all-refining pureness in the sovereign desires and visions and designs, he has inaugurated in the field of civics an idealism that will honor every man, fit actual life, and endure forever. Personal pureness, this pervades the life of Lincoln as crystalline beauty pervades a block of marble.

This refining trait in Lincoln, this inner hunger for his living soul's true nutriment, this thirst for the pure, perennial springs, finds signal illustration in the closing sentence of this last inaugural, where he pleads with all his fellow-citizens to so conduct all civic interests as to secure among ourselves and with all Nations a "lasting peace." That craving after permanence in civic harmony betokens an impulse towards immortality; and rests down, as the entire inaugural explains, upon that only basis of enduring civic quietude, an honest and universal recognition and respect for those indelible and universal lineaments of personal dignity which the Creator of men has traced upon every human soul – lineaments from which the obscuring dross of centuries was being purged in the Providential fires of an awful war. Just this was the meaning of the war, as Lincoln understood its work. That earth-born sordidness which marked all slaves as common chattels, was being burnt out of our national life, as our basest national sin. Thenceforth, forevermore, it was Lincoln's living hope that all mankind might peacefully agree to supremely cherish and mutually respect those human values that human unfriendliness, and centuries of contempt, however deeply they may obscure, can never obliterate. Upon such enduring foundations, and upon such foundations alone, Lincoln clearly saw, could human peace endure.

And upon this same foundation rests his first inaugural as well. In all those months of special study, ensuing between his election in November of 1860 and his inauguration in March in 1861, and for an ample seven years before, Lincoln was feeling after civic perpetuity. And when he stood before the Nation to publish his first inaugural address, his supreme concern was fixed upon the threatened and impending ruin of the Republic. He there faced a menacing South, irreconcilable, and resolute for dissolution or blood. That outcrying situation brought final issues near. Must the Union perish? Could the Union endure? Civic dissolution or civic perpetuity – this was the immediate, the unrelieved, the ominous alternative. In the fiery heat of civic hate, flaming into civil war, Lincoln had to seek for civic principles that hate could not subvert, nor the fires of war consume; principles too strong to admit defeat, too pure to be dissolved.

Never did a statesman bend over a graver task, nor with a more honest and patient heart, nor with a mind more divinely fashioned and furnished to comprehend and penetrate the actual case in hand. As in a chemist's alembic, he fused and tried our Constitution and all our history. Into that first inaugural he incorporated the issues of his thought. And this was its simple, sole result: – Slavery is "the only substantial dispute." With the people is "ultimate justice." With God is "ultimate truth." We are not "enemies." We are "friends." In this supreme dispute let us confer and legislate as friends, and then as friends live together in an amity that shall be perpetual. This is the uncompounded essence of his first inaugural, as of all his political philosophy. In universal freedom, by mutual persuasion, and in even friendliness, let our Union forever endure. Here again is a statesman's publication and heroic

defense of a pure, immortal hope, voiced in an appeal and upheld by arguments as spiritual and pure as the inmost being and utmost destiny of the living souls of men.

No study of the transcendent momentum in Lincoln's life of spiritual realities can fairly overlook his speech in Peoria, October 16, 1854. It is, as he said at the time, "substantially" a repetition of an address at Springfield, twelve days before. It "made Lincoln a power in national politics." It was the commanding beginning of his commanding career. That year, 1854, began the convulsion which made him president, involved the war, and ended in his violent death. As matters stood on New Year of 1854, slavery was, by act of Congress in the Missouri Compromise of 1820, thenceforth forbidden to spread anywhere in United States territory north of the southern boundary of Missouri. In the early half of 1854 Senator Douglas drove through Congress a bill, creating the territory of Nebraska, which declared the Compromise prohibition of 1820 "inoperative and void." Thenceforth slavery might spread anywhere. This is the "repeal" of the Missouri Compromise.

That "repeal" brought Lincoln to his feet. And from the day of that Peoria speech Lincoln was, to seeing eyes, a man of destiny. For, not for that day, nor for that century, nor for this continent alone did Lincoln frame and join that speech. Let any logical mind attempt a logical synthesis of that address, marking well what affirmations are supreme. Not out of conditions that vary with the latitudes, nor out of opinions that change as knowledge improves, and not from sentiments that bloom and fade as do the passing flowers, was that address constructed. It handles things eternal. Its central propositions outwear the centuries. Its conclusions are compounded from stuff that is indestructible. And the piers upon which they rest are as steadfast as the everlasting hills. Freedom, union, perpetuity were its only positive themes. Let us "save the Union" was its central call; and "so" save it as to "make and keep it forever worth the saving" – so save it "that the succeeding generations of free, happy people, the world over, shall rise up and call us blessed to the latest generations." The perpetual Union of freemen – this was his one pure hope. Of this freedom slavery was a "total violation." Such a Union the principle of secession made forever impossible. And in the continual presence of tyranny, and under ever impending threats of disruption, perpetuity in peace was an impossibility. Liberty, equality, loyalty – only upon these enduring verities could self-government ever be built, or ever abide. Here is stability. Here is harmony. Here are truths "self-evident." Against cruelty, disloyalty, and pride these eternal principles are in "eternal antagonism." And when the two collide, "shocks and throes and convulsions must continually follow." Against human slavery, and all that human slavery entails, humanity instinctively and universally revolts. It is condemned by human righteousness and human sympathy alike. "Repeal the Missouri Compromise, repeal all compromises, repeal the Declaration of Independence, repeal all past history, you still cannot repeal human nature."

Thus Lincoln bound together the arguments of this appeal. The irrepealability of the human sympathies in the nature of all men, the undeniable humanity of the black, self-government built upon the creative fiat of freedom and equality for all – upon these enduring propositions a Nation could be built whose resources either to eliminate all evils, pacify all convulsions, and resolve all debates, or to achieve a lasting progress, dignity and peace, would be inexhaustible. Thus, at the very start, his eye pierced through the political turmoil of his time, fixing in the central place before the Nation's gaze those "great and durable" elements which "no statesman can safely disregard."

Plainly notable in all this is that powerful and habitual proclivity in Lincoln to find out and publish abroad those civic propositions and principles that are inwrought with perpetuity. He was straining and toiling towards a triumph that time could never reverse. Foundations that were sure to shift, or disintegrate, or sink away, he was resolute to overturn, and clear away. He chose and strove to toil and speak for the immortal part in man, for ages yet to come, and for the immediate justice of Almighty God. And so he fashioned forth a programme that, like the programme of the Hebrew prophets, circumvented death.

His Constancy – Truth

This second inaugural contains a fine example of free and reasoned reliability. It is in fact, in its total stature, a stately exhibit of deliberate steadfastness. Let this short document be read, meanwhile remembering that other inaugural document, and not forgetting all the unspeakable strain and struggles of those four intervening years. The man who spoke in 1861, and the man who speaks now again in 1865, stands forth in the heart of those bewildering confusions of our political life, a living embodiment of civic constancy. In his person national firmness stands enshrined. In those ripe convictions, in those cool and poised determinations, in those ardent, prophetic desires – steadfast, consistent, and sure – are traceable the rock-like foundations of our confederate Republic. In those inaugurals stands a monument not liable soon to crumble away. But within that monument insuring its durability, rests as within and upon a steadfast throne, Lincoln's everlasting fidelity.

To win clear vision of this fine trait, let one read again this second inaugural, and locate truly the center of gravity of its second paragraph. There Lincoln is tracing in broad, plain strokes the origin and on-coming of the war. In the center of his steady thought the interest centrally at stake was the Union. On the one hand he recalls his own address at his first inauguration, "devoted," as he says, "altogether to saving the Union without war." On the other hand, he recalls "insurgent agents" seeking to destroy it without war. War was deprecated and dreaded by both parties. But one would make war rather than let the Nation survive. And the other would accept war rather than let the Nation perish. "And the war came." As a register of Lincoln's capacity for free, intelligent stability, no passing glance can in any sense exhaust or apprehend the depth and sweep and energy of those last four words. When loyalty to the Union was the issue and interest at stake, Lincoln would "accept war." "And the war came."

When Lincoln voiced those four words, his eye was looking back through four dreadful, bloody years – years, whether in prospect or in reminiscence, fit to make any human heart recoil. But as he surveys those scenes of hate and carnage and desolation, retracing and reckoning again the sum of their awful sorrow and cost, and rehearses again his resolution to "accept the war," it is without a shadow or a hint of wavering or remorse. In fact he is recalling that fateful day of four years before with an eye to review and vindicate that fateful resolve. At the end of those eventful and sorrow-laden years, he is as steady as at their start. Not by the breadth of a hair have his footing and purpose, his judgment and endeavor been made to swerve. Then as now, now as then, his loyalty is absolute. And in that sturdy loyalty of that lone man a seeing eye discerns nothing less than the unbending majesty of a Nation's self-respect. It is the Nation's sacred honor that he has in sacred charge. In him the integrity of the Nation at large finds a champion and a living voice. In his firm-set decision the Nation's destiny takes shape. In those short pregnant words the proud consistency of our total national career, and his superb reliability, become, instantly and for all time, freely, nobly, and completely identified. This is not to say that in the teeming history of those eventful years Lincoln's mind and will and sentiments had stood in stolid immobility. He freely concedes that the years have brought him lessons he had never foreseen. And his central attitude in this second scene is a reverent inquiry into the ways of Him whose purposes transcend all human wisdom, and require full centuries to complete. But strong and clear within his reverent and lowly acceptance of divine rebukes, stands unbent and unchanged his steadfast, invincible pledge to reveal, on his own and on his Nation's behalf, the sovereign grandeur of civic reliability.

In his first message to Congress this integral trait of his personal and official life finds majestic and most definite explication. It is the passage explaining to Congress, in precise and minute recital, just how the war began. It deals with those ominous events in Charleston harbor, centering about heroic Major Anderson, a federal officer, and within Fort Sumter, a federal fort. That assault upon a national garrison by Confederate guns was no haphazard event. At just that moment, and in just that

spot the national crisis became acute. Upon that spot, and upon those events Lincoln's eye was fixed with a physician's anxiety. There he knew he could feel the pulse of the resentment and resolution of the South. Day and night he held his finger upon its feverish beat. And as the fever rose, he marked with exactest attentiveness its registration of one condition of the Southern heart: – Was that heart so hot with civic hate that, when every lesser issue was set aside, and the only issue under review was the right of the Republic to stand by its officers and its flag, then those Southern leaders would fire upon those officials in a federal fort, and pull down that flag upon federal soil? If in a federal fort the major in command, and his uniformed men, while making no aggression nor voicing any threat, but acting only as peaceful exponents of the Nation's authority, and being in exigent need of food, were to be visited by a national transport bearing nought but bread, upon such a ship, upon such a mission, would seceding soldiers open fire? If they would, and if that onslaught passed without rebuke, then that Nation's federal integrity was dissolved. Such was the unmixed issue, and so sharply edged was its final and decisive definition under Lincoln's hand. And on his part there was here no accident. With foresight, and by careful design Lincoln "took pains" to make the problem plain. With impressive and ideal carefulness he guided the action of his own heart to its final resolution, and predetermined the final verdict of the world.

In the last supreme alternative, when government agents stand in need of food, and citizens who repudiate all loyalty fire upon government transports freighted only with bread, what shall a government do? This was the naked question that Lincoln faced, when he decided to accept and prosecute the war. Upon this one plain question, and upon his one convinced determination he massed and compacted his first Congressional address. Right well he understood its point, its gravity, and its range. And surpassing well was he fitted to be the man to frame and demonstrate the true reply. In all the land no finer, firmer exemplar of elemental constancy could ever have been found to guide and cheer the Nation's course in this extremest test of elemental self-respect. Let those words be written and read again. It was a test of national self-respect, elemental and supreme. It was a question that concerned, as Lincoln saw and said, "the whole family of man." "Government of the people, by the same people" – can or cannot such a government "maintain its own integrity against its own domestic foes?" Can it "maintain its own integrity?" Can it master "its own domestic foes?" Can men who assume their self-control be trusted to maintain their self-respect? Here is a problem that is in verity elemental and supreme. What, in very deed and in solid fact, what is civic reliability? Where, among all the governments by men, where can steadfastness, civic steadfastness be found? Nowhere, Lincoln had the eyes to see; nowhere, but in the civic constancy of men at once governing and governed. Only thus and only there, only so and only here, in this heaven-favored land, did Lincoln see, can any government of men by men find fundamental base and final form that shall be consistent, stable, and real. This is government indeed. Here is elemental, civic verity. A community held in common self-control upon the basis of common self-respect – such a union alone has constancy. This is the sublime and radical civic truth that Lincoln forged out upon his steadfast heart, as he bent with mighty ponderings over those scenes in Charleston harbor, and reviewed and expounded their pregnant implications in his initial message to Congress in 1861.

In many ways this constancy of Lincoln rewards attentive thought. For one thing, it was radiant with intelligence. Indeed in him the two became identified. As thus conceived, it shows as pure and clear consistency. His fully tried reliability was the well-poised balance of a mind long-schooled in the art of steadiest deliberation. When Lincoln held immutably fast, it was due to his invincible faith that the conviction to which he clung involved abiding truth. This quality tempered all his firmness. Just here one finds the genesis and motive of all his skilled invention of reasoned, pleading speech. Lincoln's prevailing power of urgent argument roots in the deep persistency of his convinced belief. It was because of an impassioned confidence, an assurance that was vibrant with a note of triumph, that his grasp of any ruling purpose was so unwaveringly firm. This was his mood and attitude in all the major contentions of his life. To the central tenets that those contentions involved he held with

all the firmness of the rooted hills. Touching those primary principles in his character and politics his mind and faith seem to have attained an absolute confirmation. And from those settled positions he could never be moved. Constancy in him was nothing more nor less than the energetic affirmation of intellectual rectitude.

His steadfastness, thus, was a mental poise. It can be defined as ripened judgment, a conclusion of thought, safeguarded on every side by a discernment not easily confused, by a penetration not easy to escape. This involved a wonderful flexibility. While steadfast unto the grade of immutability, where honor was involved, no student of his ways could call him obstinate. While firm and strong enough to hold the Nation to her predestined course upon an even keel, he held her helm with a gentle, pliant grasp. Being in every mental trait inherently honest and deliberate, he could at once be resolute and free.

This blend within his being of thoughtfulness and determination, of openness and immutability, this candid, conscientious, mental poise, this Godlike apprehension of the larger equilibrium, qualified him peculiarly to interpret the major movements of his time, to trace in the deep, prevailing sentiments of the human soul the chart of our national destiny.

Here is in Lincoln something wonderful. Among the millions of his fellowmen he counts but one. But in the range and grasp of his thought, in the eager passion of his heart, in the controlling power of his commanding will, he comprehends them all. Stable and heedful at once, he could challenge unanswerably every man's esteem. His symbol is the firm, benignant oak, the sheltering, abiding hills. Thus he stood to help and hold, to serve and rule among his fellowmen. Thus he wrought coherence into our great career. Thus he linked together those mighty political events with a logic which succeeding times have proved powerless to refute, but strong and glad to confirm. He had marvelous capacity to divine. With him to reason was to illuminate. Things bewilderingly obscure, within his thought and speech grew plain. He was our prime interpreter. He explained the Nation to itself. But in every such elucidation the Nation was made to co-operate. His instinctive, habitual attitude toward other men was that of a conferee. He was sensitively open to complaints and appeals. Delegations and private supplicants always found him courteous. This courtesy was never formal. To a degree altogether noteworthy the words of other men found entrance into the counselings of his mind. He was not merely accessible. He was impressible, sensitive, quick to appreciate and honor the sentiments of another man. With the earnest plea of balanced, honest argument, hailing from whatever source, he was facile to correspond. His judgments and decisions were amenable to estimates wholly novel to him. Indeed, to an almost astonishing degree his major movements were commensurate with the progress and pace of the national events that environed his life. In some of his mightiest accomplishments he seemed to do little more than register the conclusions of the national mind.

All this is to say that Lincoln's constancy was poise, not obstinacy; a well-reflected equilibrium, not a stiff rigidity. All his steadiness was studied. Never can it be said of Lincoln that his verdicts were snap judgments. On the contrary, with him deliberation and delay were so habitual and so excessively indulged, while pondering some massive, political perplexity, that the patience of some of our greatest statesmen repeatedly broke down, and he was charged repeatedly with criminal, and all but wanton indifference, inertia, and neglect. But never was sorer libel. Through it all he was only too intent. Through it all his eye refused to sleep, while his steady and steadying mind pursued the vexing task, until its permanent solution stood clear. And then, with his eye steadily single to the guiding hand of God, to the Nation's immortal weal, and to his own unsurrendered integrity, he would publish and fulfill his studied and sturdy resolve. Upon the basis of these internal mental conquests did all his firmness rest. Hence his life-long evenness and freedom from fluctuation.

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