May 8, 1935

Dear Chancellor Chase:

The quotation from Lincoln which Mr. Bestor used last night at the Chautauqua dinner was as I guessed - I was not too sure - from his December 1862 message to Congress. Lincoln was pleading for Compensated Emancipation. I am enclosing a copy of the paragraphs with which he ended his argument. I have underlined the sentences as nearly as I remember them which Mr. Bestor selected. They are as good in 1935 as in 1862, don't you think?

It was very pleasant to see you and Mrs. Chase last night.

Very sincerely yours

Chancellor Harry Woodburn Chase
100 Washington Square
New York City

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We can succeed only by concert. It is not "Can any of us imagine better?" but, "Can we all do better." Object whatsoever is possible, still the question occurs, "Can we do better?" The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country.

Fellow-citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. We say we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this. We how how to save the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it. We - even we here - hold the power and bear the responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free - honorable alike in what we give and what we preserve. We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last, best hope of earth. Other means may succeed; this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just - a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud, and God must forever bless.

Abraham Lincoln

December 1, 1862

)Abraham Lincoln Complete Works, Comprising his speeches, Letters, State Papers and Miscellaneous Writings. Edited by John G. Nicolay and John Hay. Vol. II. Pages 276-277

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