

Outline of Lincoln Lecture - 1924

Perhaps the greatest thing that has come out of the War - and it is a very great thing indeed - is the honest search that men everywhere are giving themselves and their institutions. The appalling gulf between what mankind has been dreaming that it was doing and what it actually has done - and perhaps worse still, has not been able to do in the last ten to twenty years - for we must not forget that for many years before 1914, what we call the "Great War" was hanging like a black cloud over us and we were unable to dissipate it. Why do we dream so highly and realize so poorly? Where is the weak point in our creations? The frank facing of the exhibits of humanity have been wholesome in the humility that they have aroused in honest men. They have been helpful in the fact that it has made us willing to turn for help to those whom the world has regarded as wise - those who not only had faith in humanity's highest dreams but have had strength of brain and character to interpret into actual practice, make reality of some portion of those dreams. There is no one in the history of this land, for example, to those of us who feel the despair and the humiliation for mankind in the last ten years but yet preserve faith in the power of mankind to do for the

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world what it has not yet done, appeals with more confidence than Abraham Lincoln.

summary of page

There is a general faith in Abraham Lincoln as a public man and as a human being which time and the closest study strengthens rather than weakens. Nobody in history wears better than Lincoln does. It has been my privilege to spend practically all my time for the last two years on this man's life. Twenty years ago I had spent upwards of five years studying his life; I came back to a fresh examination of materials, considerably enlarged in the interval, with a wonder in my mind as to where I should come out with a reexamination. Would I find the man as honest in intellect and heart as I had believed him twenty years ago? Would I find his dealings and handling of other men as wise, as humorous, as free from malice? Would I find the great ideals that he had held and something integral in the man's spirit, something born out of the very fibre of him developed and, intensified by his experience? And would I believe Lincoln after this reexamination as worthy the study of men and women today who wanted above all things to give the best of themselves to improving this wretched world, helping it to sounder thinking, more righteous procedures, more charitable coöperation one with another?

All I need say is that I have gone out of that re-examination of the materials of his life, more convinced that I ever was before that

the history of democracy in this world offers no exponent so useful to men and women as Abraham Lincoln, nor in all the history of human beings have we one that offers a finer model for human relations.

One conviction that I have carried away from this fresh study, stronger than ever, is that any attempt to make a hero, a demigod of Lincoln is a profound mistake. The idolizing of him, the idealizing of him is not what the world needs. What the world needs to see in Lincoln is how much a man can make of heart and brain if he will set himself rigidly for life to that task. That is, how a human brain, even under what we call adverse circumstances, can be developed to the thing which is most important in life, and that is right thinking - how a character can be developed that, no matter what the situation, will have the rigor and the will, the desire to square up its conduct with that thinking.

The best of Lincoln - the real glory of the man and the real inheritance that he passed on to us is his manhood - he made himself the best of us, and he did it by natural, human means, so that those with faith and understanding of human nature and its power, who study him honestly without cynicism, searchingly, cannot but feel that the greatest inspiration in him is the inspiration to more vigorous manhood, more vigorous thinking, feeling, acting.

I take it that most of us would feel that today the most important thing there is in the world is to make a better type of men and women - a type of men and women that in the future will be able to keep themselves out of such catastrophies as the world has just gone through. It is the sense of those that think profoundly; those who have agonized most deeply over the present situation of the world hark back almost universally to a different system of education, something that will make more of men's minds and hearts.

But how educate? How make Abraham Lincolns? How develop in people that large tolerance, patience, humor, humility, sense of human values, sympathy for human beings, together with a thinking machine that no self-interest or ambition would throw out of gear? - that belief primarily in facing facts, mastering them, saturating yourself with them and getting out of them the truth of the thing? How are we to get such a man as that? That is the world's chief problem today. Can the life of Abraham Lincoln help us at all? - help us in this making of citizens, fit for public life - leaders fit for public undertakings? How did we get him? He was no accident. Those who went before passed down something to Lincoln for which they have had scant credit in the past.

There were six generations before Abraham Lincoln in these

United States. Puritans at the start - here to get a soil more favorable for their Puritanism, also for education and land, freer opportunity. These Lincolns that followed the first Puritan Lincoln in Massachusetts worked themselves free of whatever Puritanical intolerance the family started with. They worked themselves free from hatred of Quakers until the grandson of the first lived among Quakers - his children married Quakers. They worked themselves free from the Puritan hatred of Baptists and became Baptists. They kept the love of the soil, the faith in it, and went under all the privations of helping to open new sections of this country - New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois. Everywhere they went they planted something - something decent - wrought themselves into the civilization. They were free men. There was power going into the making of Abraham Lincoln generation by generation, notions of religious freedom, personal liberty, free opportunity. Thus when the boy Lincoln first came to face the story of the making of his country, its creed - the Declaration of Independence; its Constitution - the instrument devised to carry out these notions of opportunity, free speech, free action, he had in his blood something which helped him comprehend their meaning.

He started out with faith - the faith of his fathers, in the great undertaking to make a genuinely democratic country. A most important

point for us to realize is that this young Lincoln, mulling over the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the war of the Revolution - coming in close contact with men who had helped in these enterprises - never viewed them as realizations, completed things. He understood that this was an undertaking, an experiment in which he believed - and here, I think, he had the advantage of most of us. We are so much further away that that many of us come to manhood and to citizenship with the notion that what we have is a perfect scheme, that to criticize the scheme of democracy is profane. That is, that it is a complete realization. But, as we get older and we come up against the failures to realize the ideal there is great danger of cynicism, of revolt.

Lincoln was saved this experience because he grew up with the understanding that the business of the citizens of his time was to work out the promise in the scheme. His faith was not in what he saw about him of the workings of democracy, it was in what he believed could be made out of the scheme if men put themselves to it with understanding, with resolution, with a determination to secure for themselves the opportunity that hard as was his position, the way was in the nature of the thing. To him his great zest came from the fact that he - Abraham Lincoln - farmer's boy, had a chance to prove there was something in the Declaration of Independence. He was not asking that the Declaration of

Independence hand him an easy berth - he was not asking for an easy berth. his pride was that under that Declaration he could go to work to prove himself a man, and prove that its promise was not sterile to those who would do their part.

Moreover, Lincoln had given something of himself which too many of us do not realize today, which somehow does not get into the blood of our youth as it should, that if democracy is to be worked out, realized, made good, it requires a certain kind of character - that it never will be done by a shifting, a lying, a selfish, an hypocritical man; that it requires fidelity to the fact, that it requires entire integrity of intellect and heart, and that it requires a willingness to sacrifice one's own ambitions constantly rather than to sacrifice character. In the mind of Abraham Lincoln character was an essential of democratic realization.

Now, how did he get this? I think that there is no doubt that that is the thing that Abraham Lincoln got out of the Bible. Remember, the Bible was the handbook of every household. The church was the chief social, the chief protective, the chief regulating institution. You had to read your Bible, you had to hear it discussed. It was the text book of the community. Many men of course got little more than church doctrines out of it - narrow sectarian doctrine. The doctrinaire Christianity seems

I knew Bible as few care - study nothing -
Biblical characters & documents like the two Maccabees
patriarchs - passages in letters & speeches
I know it so well that he used it constantly in
conversation & sometimes in dispute.

"Silver & gold I have none but such as the
Lord give me little here."

Remember that that is the thing that Abraham Lincoln got out of the Bible. Remember
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And every one that was in distress

gathered themselves into his arms & he became
captain of them & there was with him about 400
out of it - narrow sectarian doctrine. The doctrinaire Christianity seems

never to have made much impression on this young man, but what he did get out of it was an honest and noble conception of the kind of society that the Bible proposes to make in the world, and that is a society based on the brotherhood of man, and I do not know that anyone has found any nobler conception.

That, in his judgment, was what Christianity was after - what Christ was after. And what he saw was an integral part, that if you are going to make a society based on the brotherhood of man that you have to have a certain kind of men to do it, that they must be tolerant, that they must be men of tolerance, direct dealing, conscious that you cannot serve God and mammon too, coöperative men, inspired by the great Bible rule of coöperation, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," - charitable men, inspired with the Bible's great dictum, "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you."

See 16-A.
Abraham Lincoln reached manhood fired with faith in what we call democracy. And democracy to him was intimately associated with the Christian notion of society, that is, men working together in brotherhood. The backbone of what he had developed was, however, that the thing could only be worked out by this sort of men of whom I talked - these men of

tolerance, direct dealing, coöperation, charity.

There was no question of his failing of personal responsibility as a citizen towards these conceptions - he had got to do his part to make them real. The field he had chosen was that of public life. He was a natural politician. ^{sure} There was where he wanted to do his work, and it is most significant the way he began.

Nothing demonstrates the courage, the daring of this youth better than that he, at 23, being what he was, with the experience that he had had, should boldly come out and offer himself for the assembly of his State. It would not have been surprising, fired as he was with the idealism of his period, that he should have talked his theories, expounded the Constitution, begun outside and depended upon oratory and enthusiasm. Not so. Never was an idealist more convinced that the service to your ideal depends upon the degree to which you can realize it at your own doorstep. That is, he sought his issue right where he was, not in the books, but at home.

What did New Salem, his town, to which he was offering himself, need more than anything else? Not eloquence or theories. It needed a way to get its produce to market. And there was a river full of drift-wood. Hence the issue of this young would-be public man was how practically to make the Sangamon river navigable? - something that would help carry out the promise of democracy right where he was. Practical politician!

He remained to the end this sort of a politician. You did you work with that which came to your hand. One of the greatest lessons for the day, particularly to the women who are coming into public life, that if you are to be a great citizen, or if you are to be a public servant, that the place where your work should begin and where it should continue is where you are. It is less in expounding doctrines than in making the realization of those doctrines, in however small a way, that you will do most for public life.

A. 5
This feeling that the Christian conception of the brotherhood of man was the very heart of the democratic scheme was one of the things that led Lincoln to believe that anyone who called himself Christian was bound by that profession to advance in every way the doctrine of brotherhood, that freedom of action, freedom of life. He could never understand how one who professed Christianity could believe in slavery. when he became the recognized leader in Illinois against the extension of slavery nothing disturbed him more than that out of 23 ministers in Springfield, his home town, 21 voted against him! How could they do that and believe in the Bible? How did they read the Bible?

He took his issues where he found them - at his door, and while working on them he was slowly working out a batch of principles and

methods of politics, which as a code and technique led him quite as often to defeat as they did to victory.

His principles forbade any invasion of the thing that he believed, any obscuring of what he proposed to try to do in case of an election. He was at pains to explain his point of view which perennially exasperated his colleagues - afraid of frankness. He was Quixotic in his sense of the right of a rival candidate, and while he very strenuously insisted and ~~and~~ took his own right,, never consciously did he invade that of another.

His technique had to develop from experience. He belonged to a boisterous period where at times you got^{as} far politically by some clever horseplay as you did by argument. Men loved those who made them laugh, and Lincoln learned from his experience in overworking lampooning, for instance, at which he was a past master. He carried it so far at one time that it resulted in his being challenged to a duel - a duel which was all but fought, friends interfering at a moment when the contestants faced each other, weapons in hand - weapons which Lincoln had been allowed to choose, he being the challenged party. His choice showed that never, in the most serious moment, his his sense of humor desert him. His opponent was a little man - could walk under his arm - and he chose broadswords of the longest and broadest description, with which to fight his diminutive opponent. But, as a result of the episode, he felt the severest condemnation of the community and he learned his lesson.

tion of the community, and he learned his lesson for that power of satire of his was held all the rest of his life in severest check, even under great provocation.

It is a very sound and growing nature that when it finds it has command of a weapon which will arouse public laughter and applause among its own, which will throw an enemy into confusion, will deliberately control it, seeing the larger evil that may come out of it.

He developed, too, a sense of political propriety, of what a man might and might not do in public campaigning, unusual for his time; and he was capable of turning this sense of propriety against a political opponent in so neat a way that it went down in the history of the State's politics. He had against him at one period in Illinois that famous pioneer preacher, Peter Cartwright. Peter had a habit of mixing campaigning and revivals. One night during a campaign Mr. Lincoln dropped in where he was holding a revival service, sitting down in the back of the church. Cartwright had reached the point where he was urging people forward to the mourners' bench, and spying Mr. Lincoln, he began a personal call on him.

"Come forward, confess your sins." Lincoln did not move.

Cartwright, exasperated, finally cried out, "If you are not coming to the Lord, where are you going, Mr. Lincoln?"

The tall form slowly unfolded. "Brother Cartwright," he said, "I am going to Congress."

Later, some of his friends, astonished at his timidity, said, "Well, you put him in a hole." "I didn't do it for that," Lincoln replied seriously, "I did it because I didn't propose that the religion of Jesus Christ should be made an issue in this campaign." *over*

No wonder that opponents came to fear one whose integrity of thinking, scrupulousness of conduct, was accompanied by a merciless and instantaneous dissection of a political trick or unfair procedure.

One of the most characteristic features of code and technique, developed almost at the start of Lincoln's public career, was the fact that he would never keep still about a question or a practice which he considered wrong. He insisted on saying, "This thing is wrong." Now, when it came to a method of handling the wrong, that might be a different matter. He might disagree about that, but preliminary to any disagreement must always, in his judgment, be the statement, "This is wrong. It is to be overcome." In his very first term in the legislature, when he was still under thirty - a moment when it looked easy to wreck his future, he insisted, when the assembly of the State rebuked abolition speeches and agitation in Illinois, on prefacing the resolution, to which he practically agreed, by the statement that nothing of that kind should be passed without being preceded

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by a frank statement that slavery was wrong in practice and theory though, in his judgment, abolition teachings and organization as a method were more harmful than helpful.

I find many people who have not realized that Lincoln had really grappled with the slavery question and a practical method of handling it before he was faced with slavery extension. Lincoln grew up with anti-slavery agitation. He got his first notions of the wrong of it from his father - the much abused Thomas Lincoln, - a strong anti-slavery man. You could not escape it in the country and in the days in which he lived, and if you were fired with the sentiments that inspired him you hated it and you evolved some way by which to handle it.

Nobody more devoted to lawful processes than Lincoln. If a wrong existed under our institutions, one of the glories of those institutions was that you had free speech, you had the ballot, you could always fight against it, and he so believed in the fundamental rightness of human beings, their teachableness, that in the long run they could be depended on to rouse themselves to do the right thing, cost what it might, that he believed that slavery should be handled in the way that the Constitution and the succeeding compromises had provided, -- shut it in where it is constitutionally, and it must die.

But there were those that had no such respect for law or Constitution, whose hatred of slavery had come to be hatred of the people who were tolerating slavery, who saw wrong remedied by fighting and not by evolution; and these people - a kind that we always have with us - formed that group which we know as Abolitionists.

You get such a group and you always intensify the group at the other end of the scale, - the obstinate, satisfied, selfish, greedy group. There were in the South such slave holders - not by any means the majority. There was a strong feeling against slavery in the South before the bitter-nesses of the 50's and 60's became so intense. Lincoln saw early that through the growth of these two extremes the gradually passing away of slavery by evolutionary methods, in which he profoundly believed, would be prevented. Early in the 50's he said that in the South there was the group that for the sake of extending and perpetuating slavery were even ridiculing what he called the 'White Man's Charter' of freedom, the declaration that 'all men are created free and equal' while in the North there was a group that, rather than that slavery should continue are willing to shatter into fragments the union of the States, tear to tatters its now venerated Constitution, and even burn the last copy of the Bible.

But, devoted as Lincoln was to constitutional and legal methods of handling slavery, convinced that in the long run it could be so handled,

when he saw the rules, as you may call them, of the game invaded, found that the compromises on which he depended for carrying out of the plan for ending slavery, about to be repealed, he rose in wrath and, regardless of his interest, political and professionally, threw himself into that great fight to stop the breaking down of the barriers against this thing which he had always considered so evil. If those barriers be gone, his whole scheme for putting an end to slavery was shattered. On the contrary, it means its spreading over the whole land, a thing to which he knew the North would go to war rather than endure.

Here is your man - pacific in every fibre of his being, faced at the start by a situation which he realized as any one can see who will read him closely, might mean war. Should he fight the wrong and take all the consequences that he saw wherein the fight? He never hesitated. That fight against the extension of slavery took six of Abraham Lincoln's best years, and the quality of intellect and of moral fibre which he gave to that fight is, in my judgment, one of the greatest examples of what a country needs from a citizen, that we have. For it is in those years that he did what so few of us do when a great question confronts us, saturated himself with its materials, thought it out, drove it down beyond the point of argument, onto the bed rock of moral right and wrong, as every question of

see type of handling
public question which we have

politics can be driven, for every question of politics in the last analysis is a question of right and wrong, and the man who fails to get it down to that bed rock can never be anything more than a superficial citizen and a superficial leader. The great exhibit that the man gives us in these years is that of a man wrestling night and day with a problem, and a problem whose solution might lead into war itself.

In this struggle you find a constant development both of his political code and technique. He grew more and more resolute and inflexible. That frankness which was of the very bottom of his expression became greater rather than less, that seriousness where the question of the full meaning of democracy, full freedom and opportunity, was concerned - the question of character as he conceived it, all of that, were more and more obvious to the immense groups that followed him, and to the country to which his words gradually seeped. *Impatient at various sophisms: "He can make a sophism out of a love better than all the hined legions of all the scholars" from May*
It made him President - that fight against the extension of slavery. And as President he was at once faced with that situation which he had realized for years was in the fight - in the determination of the South no longer to put up with Northern interpretation of its peculiar institution - to go it alone - make a separate country.

For years Lincoln had had one answer to threats of secession

which he had heard in and out of Congress - "We won't get out of the Union, and you shan't."

How prevent them? Nothing but force. Was it worth it?

There were plenty of good people in the North - people who had done their utmost for years to create this situation that, confronted with the logic of it, dis-union, said, "Let them go." But there was a deeper thing in Abraham Lincoln than even his hatred of slavery - it was his faith in Unionism, his absolute conviction that its preservation was the only hope of free government in the world, and that free government was the only hope of destroying wrongs like slavery, and other wrongs that threatened the full promise of the American scheme. Break down the union, say that people could not peacefully rule themselves, and you gave a new birth to autocratic government, you not only established slavery at your side for good and all but you guaranteed its extension into other parts of the world. All that had been the inspiration of his life was pulled down if secession succeeded, and he would not have it. If men were to have freedom in the future, then they must sacrifice, even the sacrifice of war. And he went to it.

And here we get a new Lincoln - one of great significance to men and women ambitious to be citizens or leaders of citizens - Lincoln, the handler of men.

With the election to the presidency, the subject which had occupied his almost exclusive attention for six years - the extension of slavery - was suddenly relegated to a second place. He had realized throughout the entire struggle that what he believed to be a small group of Southerners would, in case of the success of the movement against the extension of slavery, attempt secession. He had given one answer to that for several years: "We won't go out of the Union, and they shan't." His election resulted quickly in what had been threatened, and that was the secession of a respectable part of the Union.

The political breadth and flexibility of a man's mind is quickly demonstrated under such circumstances. We have had not a few public men who have devoted years with great effectiveness to mastering one problem, who, when the sweep of events relegated that problem to second place and brought to the front as a thing to be at that moment dealt with a problem of different character, were unable to re-adjust themselves. Their minds had become so set, their convictions so hardened, that they could not realize that that to which they had given so great a part of their lives must be set aside and their powers turned to dealing with something to which so far they had given scant attention. They will not shift their ground.

They are like a general who having prepared himself to fight the left flank of the enemy refuses to wage war on the right. Lincoln quickly perceived that his ground had shifted, that he must take a new position, that his mind must grapple with a new problem. As he had been finding historical, economic, political and moral reasons against the extension of slavery, he must build up the case against secession. It meant great labor, but he did not quail before this labor. His notion of our scheme was so large that he saw at once - which many of his colleagues refused to see - that Unionism included the keeping back of slavery. To his mind not only the evil of slavery but all other evils attacking man's free opportunity were endangered not only of being perpetuated but of increasing if the Union was destroyed. Free government everywhere would be set back for generations, perhaps centuries, if the present attack on it was allowed to succeed. Anything then, even war, which would prevent this disaster to human hopes must be faced.

What it cost Lincoln to resolve that it should be war if there could be no other way no one has, I think, adequately presented. If ever a man was a pacifist in soul it was this man. And yet the perpetuation of free institutions, for the sake of the future life of the world, was to him so much above the temporary suffering of

individuals or people that there was no hesitation in his mind. His resolution from the start that the Union must and shall be preserved alienated many of those who had been with him in the fight against the extension of slavery.

There was Greeley, who was willing to "let the erring sisters" as he called them, go. There was a great body of conservative Republicanism which, like so much conservatism, was too hardened in its ways of thinking to see ~~an new~~ problem and who hounded him with the idea that what this was all about was not secession and unionism but the extension of slavery and therefore believed that some kind of a compromise was still possible - compromise after forty ~~years~~ years' experience in compromising. That is, the ground Lincoln immediately took is, I think, proof enough of the extraordinary way in which his mind as well as his sense of our institutions had developed under the training which he had been giving it in his six years' wrestle with the attempt to spread slavery into free territory.

But a man may have great intellectual development and flexibility and unswerving resolution in his conclusions and yet put him in an executive position and he may be a disastrous misfit. One of the extraordinary things about Abraham Lincoln is that on the

call to be an executive, he who had so little taste for ruling and directing men and so little experience in it, almost at once showed himself a master of men. His handling of his cabinet, or congress, of leaders of public opinion and of the officers in the army offer one of the most impressive as well as entertaining studies in the finding, testing and handling of men that our history - and I judge that any history, furnishes.

And the story is one of torturing experience. There were so many failures, and these failures were due so generally to stupidity and mean human motives like jealousy, vanity and obstinacy. They led him to a generalization which, if cynical, is still profound: "Honest statesmanship," he said one day to his secretary John Hay, "is the employment of individual meanness for the public good." In an amazing way he was able to look over and beyond the meanness shown by some of this greatest colleagues, to conceal that meanness so far as possible from the public and to make use for the public good of those qualities which he knew the men to have.

There was Seward, his Secretary of State. Seward had great experience in public affairs, when contrasted with Lincoln. He had been earlier active in the fight against the extension of slavery. He

believed as did much of the best thought of the country that he and not Lincoln should have been nominated. He had put his pride aside and accepted a position in Lincoln's cabinet, but he had done this believing that from that position he could, and would, be the actual president of the United States. So he represented himself in private. That was the attitude which he took with the Southern Commissioners who came to Washington, misrepresenting to them seriously Mr. Lincoln's own purposes - not maliciously, I think, but because he could not conceive that this man who, he thought, was much smaller than himself could hold and sustain a purpose outside of him, William H. Seward. When he found that in spite of his assurances there was danger of war, he went to Mr. Lincoln with one of the most extraordinary suggestions that a statesman ever made. That was that attention be diverted from domestic troubles by plunging into a war with practically all of Europe; and, in the same document, he offered to run the war and the country.

Now, if ever a man had another on the hip it was at that moment. Lincoln had been conscious from the start that Seward was representing himself as the manager of affairs, that he was misrepresenting his (Lincoln's point of view. To have put out this proof

he had of the unstatesmanlike, not to say disloyal thinking of his Secretary of State would, with all sober minds, ended Seward for good and all. But he would not do that. He tucked the papers away. Nobody ever knew of their existence until long after his death. He told Seward that he would have to run the ship, that is, quietly but firmly put his Secretary of State back in his place. And he always kept him there. What he had done was to save Seward's face, also save his really great abilities for the country. He had, moreover, taken on himself unbeknown to anybody a task which he did not expect to have at the start and that was checking up on Seward constantly.

He had extraordinary difficulties as we know now with his generals. There was the amazing case of McClellan, who treated him with a rudeness and contempt which Lincoln's friends openly resented; but when they talked to the President about it, he said, "I know, he doesn't think much of me. He has acted badly in many cases, but we need his skill in training men." And he added his famous phrase, "I will hold McClellan's horse if he will give us a victory."

There was Greeley, who as editor of the New York Tribune

had done as much as any man in the country to bring about war, but who, when he saw that war was inevitable, quailed. He was a powerful man of the kind that always comes to the top in great crises - erratic, unreliable, without stability, guided by sentiment and impulse not by reason, and principle. Having gone to extremes in measures that promoted and brought on the war, he would not go to extremes in quelling it. There were no men or measures to which you could depend upon to adhere through thick and thin. He was ambitious, talented but not considerate, persistent or profound. (See Gideon Wells - p.104, Vol.11) Greeley early took the position that emancipation of the slaves would end the trouble. Lincoln was seeking every way to prevent violent emancipation. What he wanted was compensated emancipation, wanted the North to buy the slaves and colonize them. He was not willing to confiscate property if it could be avoided. One of his greatest sorrows was that men would not accept his method. As the months went by he saw that in spite of himself emancipation would be forced upon him, and he prepared for it. It was while the first draft of the famous document was lying in his desk that Greeley who had berated Lincoln day after day issued in the summer of 1862, when the fortunes of the North were very low, a broadside which he

called "The Prayer of Twenty Thousand" - an hysterical attack on Mr. Lincoln, intimating that he did not know what he was about and was dragging the country deeper and deeper into ruin without any intention of doing anything about slavery.

Lincoln's answer is one of the best examples that I know of his extraordinary mastery of effective English, - English which did the work. Nothing in his development is more interesting than the way he improved constantly during his public life in handling the English language. The country was not slow in seeing that by his use of words he could not only state an argument so that it was unanswerable, - "rake a sophism out of a hole better than all the scholars, in all the schools," as John Hay said, clinch a point with a humorous phrase or effective anecdote and, as in this case, fire words at men which actually demolished them. His answer in this case is one of his best examples. (quote)

It was not alone the great like Seward, McClellan, Greeley that he had to handle, it was the small, selfish, as individuals and groups; and he was effective in doing it. And sometimes it was one expressive sentence that did it, and that sentence creeping about the country helped not only him but the cause enormously.

There is the story of the group of great New York bankers,

who, scared by a rumor of an attack on New York, came down to Washington and told the president how many millions they controlled, how great and powerful they were and practically ordered him to send a gunboat to protect the harbor. The president listened, and then looking at them quizzically, said, "If I were as rich as you say you are and as skeefed as I see you are, I believe I would build a gun boat myself and protect the harbor."

If a man's faith in his fellowmen was ever tried - and no man who goes into public life even in a small way can help having that faith tried, it was Abraham Lincoln. But the extraordinary thing is that his faith in men seemes never to have wavered. Indeed the longer he remained with his terrific problems the more profound his faith in the mass. Individuals might show up badly at times, be as he said of one of his most valuable helpers, "miracles of meanness," but get around that meanness and there would be something fine and usable there, and his task was to ask of men what they had in them to give, not to ask for something that they could not give; never himself to be thrown off his balance, allow his grip to be weakened by their contempt or superiorities or underhand dealings. His faith in men grew. He knew very well that he would find men that could be relied upon for the work

that had to be done, and as events showed his faith was amply justified, even in the harrowing task, marked by so many failures, of finding a general that could take the army of the Potomac into Richmond.

Not only did his faith in men hold on - an absolute essential in leaders in democracy - but his faith in the soundness of his position that the primary thing was to save the Union, increased and grew. With every year of the war he saw it more clearly as the way out for men. That Unionism and more Unionism must prevail in the world. If we are to have an increasing well being, that increasing well being will depend upon increasing Unionism. Here he was enlarging simply upon what Washington had done in fighting for a union and a constitution. He was the forerunner of that unionism of the countries of the world for which Woodrow Wilson died. There is no doubt that it became almost a religion with him. Walt Whitman, who was in Washington during this time and who passed more than one wise judgment on him in his writings, said that it seemed to him that Unionism had become in Lincoln a kind of a new virtue, something that was to be classed with courage, hope and truthfulness.

The climax of his political development, the cap and crown lay, however, in that increasing mercifulness of his attitude, not only

towards those of the North who had disagreed with him but towards those that we called his enemies, the South that was fighting. From the start it had been obvious that there was little or no malice in his attitude towards the secessionists. "What I deal with is too vast for malicious dealing," he said when Greeley was badgering him. Victory brought him no exultation over his enemies - it was no pleasure for him to triumph over anyone he told the serenaders who had crowded under his window the night of his re-election in 1864. He never got satisfaction, he said, from knowing that somebody had been disappointed or pained by his success.

No sooner was he sure that Grant was going to carry the war to success, that the country would stand by him, cost what it might, in this task, than he began deliberately to foster in those immediately around him, in congress - which ran true to form in those days and where the last thing that showed itself was mercifulness to an enemy - in the country, among his generals, to foster a spirit of accommodation, of forgiveness - an attempt to bring everybody to face reconstruction in a spirit of kindly helpfulness. The last day of his life was typical of what he had been talking and doing for many weeks. At the cabinet meeting in the morning he spent a great deal of time insisting that

now the end had come, there should be no punishment - nobody need expect him, he said, to have any part in hanging or killing. Let the leaders get out of the country if they wanted to - shoo them off, there had been enough sacrifice of lives. Somebody brought him an order to sign for the execution of a soldier who had deserted. "I won't sign another," he said. "The boy will do more good above ground than under it."

Charles Dana, the assistant Secretary of War, came in to tell him that one of the Confederate Commissioners, Jacob Thompson, had been caught at Portland, Me., while making for England. What should they do with him. "Well, Dana," he said, "when you have an elephant by the hind leg and he is trying to run away, it is best to let him run." His unforgettable expression of this spirit of mercifulness came at the end of his last inaugural - you remember the paragraph.

The words have something vastly more than a historical and biographical meaning. Their greatness is in the universality of their application. They are of as much political value today as at the moment that Abraham Lincoln uttered them. It needs no argument to show that in every situation, at every step in the political life of a nation, local affairs and federal affairs, domestic and foreign, the highest attitude

of mind, the most difficult and the one if it could be attained would do more to settle and solve problems of all sorts than any other is that laid down in this great expression - "with malice towards none, with charity to all."