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**ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S CARDINAL  
TRAITS**

**A STUDY IN ETHICS**

**WITH AN EPILOGUE ADDRESSED TO THEOLOGIANS**

***BY***

**C. S. BEARDSLEE**

**BOSTON: RICHARD G. BADGER**

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**TORONTO**

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***The Gorham Press, Boston, U. S. A.***

*To my sister Alice—  
A living blend  
Of love and loyalty,  
Of modesty and immortal  
hope.*

## PREFACE

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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!

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Then toil, while losing naught of eagerness, would become content. Art, while losing naught of beauty, would become unflinchingly 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.

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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.

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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.

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## PART I. INTRODUCTION

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### 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 unflinchingly 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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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

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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. [19]

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. [20]

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.

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## 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 [21]

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.

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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.

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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.

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But his appeal is vested 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

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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 unabated 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.

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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.

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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 kindness 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.

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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 revered held high and wide dominion. It shaped and swayed and judged at once and alike both his own and his Nation's destiny.

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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.

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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 undeniable 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.

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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

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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 depths 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

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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 kindness 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, untinged 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.

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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 kindness, triumphant, transcending all

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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 kindness 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 kindness, qualities that are common to all its forms.

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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 kindness 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.

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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.

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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

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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 kindness 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 kindness.

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### **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 kindness. 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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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."

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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.

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### **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."

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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 cooperate. 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.

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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 unsundered 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.

But this challenges still further study. Given this notable blending in his mental habits of independent stalwartness and amenability to others' views, what is the inmost secret and explanation of his undeniable consistency? It lay in his human sincerity. His affinity with his neighbor was a reality. The Nation's deepest concerns were as deeply his own. Hence his ultimate convictions, though ripening in a single decade, proved to be in deep and enduring agreement with the ultimate convictions of the Nation at large, though requiring a full century to mature. The sentiments that were essentially his own were seen, when openly published upon his lips, to be the sentiments essential and common to his fellowmen. His personal aspiration was a national goal. His personal character was a national type. Truly representative, he was at the same time as truly unique. Always facing towards other men, he always stood erect.

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This was Lincoln's constancy. It was not the stubbornness of an arbitrary will, although his will had regal energy. It was not a frigid intellectualism, although in mental penetration he could not be surpassed. It was not a tide of swelling enthusiasm, although the supreme emotion of his heart was the passion of an ideal patriotism. His commanding constancy, potent to compose a Nation's turbulence, was but the outer stature of his typical interior integrity. It was the open assertion and attestation of his personal self-respect.

Thus Lincoln's convictions and verdicts were unfailingly his own. And thus those verdicts and convictions had continental breadth. Dealing with a Nation's destiny, he came to be clothed with a Nation's majesty. In his own great heart, as in a Nation's crucible, he assembled and resolved the Nation's complexities; and in his own pure desire, as in a Nation's purified hopes, he defined and described our national goal. Of all things narrow and peculiar, of all things partisan and sectional, he purged his eye, until with malice toward none, with charity for all, with reverence towards God, he could see the total vastness of the things with which he had to deal.

Here is a loyalty worthy of the name—the plighted troth of one in whom the Nation's noblest hopes stand forth already realized, assured, secure. This defines and describes the force at play in this last inaugural. In the volume of those words Lincoln's message and Lincoln's manhood were identical. Its utterance was the voice of his self-respect. Herein Lincoln the patriot and Lincoln the man are one. Here was Lincoln's standard. His search for verity was a study of himself—of himself as true kindred of God and of his fellowmen. This is the core of Lincoln's honesty. This is the key to Lincoln's constancy. This is the secret of Lincoln's authority. This was the goal of Lincoln's quest for verity. This was for Lincoln the one reality. As child of the one great God, as closest kin of every man, he is our model champion and exemplar of the one abiding truth—personal self-respect. That this should be held unperverted and preserved intact was in the thought of Lincoln the primal equity, the very substance of a man's integrity.

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### HIS HUMILITY—WORTH

The name of Lincoln is linked inseparably with the lot of the slave. That the fortune of the lowly might be improved was the supreme enterprise of his life. As conceived by him, that enterprise

concerned all men. Not for black men alone, and not alone for men in literal and evident bonds, was this, his major interest, engaged. Quite as keenly, nay even more, was his heart concerned for his closer kinsmen of Saxon blood, who never felt the slave driver's lash. But even here his prevailing inclination was a kindly solicitude for people of meager comfort, culture and liberty. Towards men whose fortune was adverse, and from whom more favored ones were prone to turn their face, his heart was prone to be compassionate. His very instincts seemed inclined to make the poor his intimates. And when he stood among the lowly, he never showed a sign that he had entered the shadow of any shame. Richly dowered with nobility himself, himself superior to every fortune, incapable of subjugation by any fate, a master owned among the mightiest, the dominant function of his life was ministration. This was his ambition. And it was sovereign. His towering aspiration was that the needy be relieved, that poor men might have means, that bondmen might be free.

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This was a soaring, imperial wish. But it sent him where men were most down-trodden and overborne. It forced his name and reputation to become identified with the gross and low condition of the rudest, most untutored mortals of our land, the humble Afro-American slave. This lowly fellowship he never attempted to disguise nor consented to disclaim. He rather seemed to welcome whatever burden or reproach it might seem to involve. Before and against the white man who held the whip, beside and befriending the black who felt its lash, he chose to take, and persisted to keep, his stand. Many a time was this co-partnership flung in Lincoln's face with stinging words as a mongrel, shameful thing—with most vigorous persistence by Douglas in their famous debates. But it was not in Lincoln to desert and disown the poor, nor yet to apologize, nor to retort, nor even to reply. As champion and companion of the despised and embondaged victims of the white man's greed and contempt, Lincoln stands by the negro, as full of resoluteness, and as free from shame, as though defending his own home.

Here is genuine humility, not an attitude assumed, but a virtue inwrought. That this rare and Christian grace was planted deep in Lincoln's heart, and pervaded the total fullness of his life, may be argued from the very texture of his last inaugural. Upon just this point that document deserves minute attention. From the vantage ground of April 4, 1865, and from the point of view of slavery, that address is a profound and most commanding interpretation of the philosophy and phenomena of our American life. The war, God's Providence, and slavery—they are its sovereign themes. God's Providence shaping into national discipline the tragedy of the war; slavery "somehow" its deepest, fateful "cause:" there are thoughts for thoughtful men, who may wish to understand the meaning of our national life. The point to notice here is to observe how in Lincoln's mind in 1865, the course, and curse, and fate of slavery connect. It is nothing less than a profound elucidation of outstanding American events. It intimates impressively how Lincoln's mind had brooded and pondered over the lot of the African slave. He had reckoned all the value of their unrequited toil. The marks of their bruises and wounds were seared upon his soul. And of all the meaning of that sore humiliation, in terms of our national destiny and of the Divine dominion, he became the supreme and sympathetic expositor. In his unfolding of that meaning was infolded the master motive of his life. Under the hand of God he was having bitter but submissive share in setting forever right the cruel, age-long wrongs of the African slave. That such sentiments should take such shape at such a time is signal demonstration that they were the central sentiments of his heart. He was highly designated to a humble task; and he knew no higher honor than to keep close friendship with the poor, until his high commission stood complete. And to this close affiliation of lowliest lives with the loftiest aims and issues of his great career, he devotes well-nigh the whole of his inaugural address as our Nation's president to expound, therein betraying no slightest sign that he sees in that alliance the slightest incongruity. In that defense and championship of the rights that were elemental to men, though the most despised, he saw his highest dignity as president. And to that lowly aim he shaped and pledged his policy, his party, his fortune, and his fame.

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In truth this affinity of Lincoln with his neighbor in need was the very fruitage of the fortune of his life. He was fitted and predestined for it by his birth. His station was of the lowliest. His setting-up was pathetically scant. All his discipline was cruelly stern. In ease and plenty he had no share. Of sweets and luxury he had no taste. Born of parents pitifully poor, nurtured in painful penury, poorly sheltered, scantily clad, accustomed to neglect, intimate with want, trained to disappointment, toiling in untamed scenes against hard odds with rudest tools, the kindred and daily familiar of unassuming men, denied the commonest aids to personal refinement, he was to the atmosphere and temperament of genuine, undisguised humility native born, and fully bred. From such a hopeless start, in such a hostile environment, he made his way alone. It can be said with almost literal truth that he never had any help. His only friend was his modest, resolute heart. His winnings were all by wrestling—and the struggle never relaxed. When every antagonist had been met and overthrown, and his gaunt stature stood in the Nation's arena alone and undefeated, then upon that unbent but unpretending form his Nation and his Nation's God laid a burden, such as no man in all our history had ever borne. When beneath that great final task he meekly bowed, its superhuman responsibility and weight were all-sufficient to crush forever all vain-glorious pride, if in his tried heart any pride had ever entered, and having entered had still remained. Before the majesty of his commission, and amid the inscrutable perplexities of each unparalleled day, he must always be fain, even though never forced, to walk humbly among his people, and before his God. From birth to death, by fortune and by Providence, as though by overmastering fate, he was fashioned for humility.

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From all these grounds he was predisposed to modesty. Over against the vastness of his task, facing daily all its formidable difficulties, and sensible evermore of his infinite insufficiency, the

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posture of his spirit and the tone of his daily speech unfailingly betokened a moderate estimate of his personal significance. The overspreading majesty of the work to which he set his hand, always towering vividly before his thought, kept vividly active the consciousness that he was quite incompetent to accomplish aught, except the God of Nations tendered daily help.

As thus inclined and thus disposed in body and in mind, he became a man of prayer. That he should often fall upon his knees was but the consequence of his daily discovery that his burdens and his strength were widely incommensurate.

Many times those supplications seemed as though unheard. The heavens gave no sign. Then malice raged against him. But then his unsundered faith in God, his reverence for his task, and his sobering estimate of himself would show as meekness. It was not his way to retaliate or rail. In darkness, before delay, and beneath abuse, he bore and suffered long without complaint. In this pathetic quietness his humility becomes heroic.

This bent towards lowliness, tempered through and through, as it was, with his clear intelligence, saved him from vaunting and all vanity. There was habitually in his posture a grave solidity. This often seemed like carefulness and caution. But it was born of modesty. If there was ever a time when ever a man might be suffered to boast, the date of this second inaugural was the time, and the author of that inaugural was the man. The hour of that address marked the opening of Lincoln's second presidential term. It was the crowning vindication of his presidential policy. After four years of war the national poll at the last electoral vote had shown the North stronger in men than when the war began. The status of the South was desperate. But five weeks lay between him and the surrender of Lee. Lincoln was not lacking in foresight, nor in careful calculation. His skill therein was preeminent. Wary, discerning, resolute, his assurance of ultimate victory no doubt firm and clear, no breath of boasting was given vent. Instead, with almost painful reserve, he modestly said, "With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured." Lincoln was one of those rarest of men, invincible in resolution, at the same time invincible in reserve.

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This inner mood of modesty showed in all his outer furnishing. It was not his way to publish his distinction. For him to signalize his primacy by any decoration would be an incongruity. In any group of men where precedence was emphasized he was ill at ease. Any attempt by him to designate his official elevation by some gilded ornament or plume would have been grotesque. His eyes were not lofty nor his heart haughty. His feet were for the furrow. His hands were for the axe. His lips were for friendly salutation of all the people on the street. Any outer token, intended to mark him for separation or any superiority, would have excited nothing but sorrow in him. Fabrics however costly and rare, jewels however brilliant and pure, designed and disposed for distinction and display, awakening envy and unrest quite as much as admiration and delight, were not for him. Plain man among the lowliest, true nobleman among the noblest, he wore all his honors in uttermost innocence of all parade.

Nor were the features of Lincoln ever intended to be employed as instruments of scorn. Into the hellish ministry of curling contempt those gracious lips could never be impressed. His heart was far too kindly; and that were safeguard enough. But his unalloyed humility was far too potent to ever encourage or permit in him any indulgence of disdain. Truly lowly himself, it was not in him to coldly despise any of his fellowmen. Just here his humility displayed its sterling honesty. And just here his honor and his glory blend. Here is his sure title to nobility—a title that neither time nor eternity can ever tarnish or bedim. By every right is this nobility his. By his earthly fortune, as by a hard, relentless fate, his lot was cast among the poor; and by that same appointment the lot of all earth's poor has gained perennial dignity. But he graced those ranks also as a volunteer. By his own consent, with sovereign free selection, he elected to sustain and overcome all the impediments of the station of his birth, and so to demonstrate the full capacity of the humblest human life for high endeavor and desire. Thus he was alike and at once filled with a deep compassion, and free from high contempt. Here lies the firm foundation of his proud renown. This is the true birthmark of his nobility. He was above the baseness and the meanness of scorning any brother man.

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And so he avoided arrogance. It was not the way of Lincoln to forever reiterate, if even to allow, his own importance. He was acutely sensitive, to the meaning and worth of an honorable renown. Especially was his cool, gray eye awake to the future issues of the pregnant deeds of his teeming times. But therein his eager concern was a patriot's anxiety—an anxiety in which he mingled his fortune and fame with the destiny of his native land. Therein the jealousy of his desire for the national welfare burned away, as in sacrificial fires and upon a sacred altar, all ambitions for himself. At any cost to others, or through any other man's neglect, it was not in the heart of Lincoln to demand and heap together honors or advantages for himself. Well might he be justified, if ever such a course were fair, in claiming for himself exceptional rewards. Chief executive of a great Republic, commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the North, assured of the major momentum of military success, in immediate reach of vast and ever increasing resources, whether for war or peace, chosen the second time to be the Nation's head, charged the second time to consummate the Nation's perpetual unity—surely he had ample guaranty for imputing to his own sole hand, in a supreme degree, mighty prowess, imposing achievements, a vast and spreading authority and power. At such a time and amid such surroundings, a generous measure of self-aggrandizement would have seemed quite warranted and well sustained. But never was a mighty commander freer from that uncomely fault. The mention of victory makes him strangely unmindful of himself. The thought of his vast authority makes him the lowliest in the land. Lincoln was not arrogant. He made no effort after aggregated honors, however

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deserved, much less after honors unearned. In particular he showed no inclination to appropriate another's fame. For one thing, he knew too well the awful cost of magistracy. The right to be commander-in-chief of a Nation's resources and arms, so coveted a right in aspiring men, became transmuted in the cup which Lincoln drank into a terrible, an almost impossible responsibility. Nor was it of his nature to subtract from other men for his own increase. At the price of a brother's freedom, or happiness, or life, the gaining of ease, or wealth, or joy of any sort for himself would be far too dear. In the soul of Lincoln extortion could find no soil. His mien among men was that of indulgent ministry, not of exacting mastery. With the lower level and the lesser meed he could be well content. Morbid jealousy for his own acclaim, hungry greed for another's reward, satisfaction in plaudits that were undeserved, or comfort from robbery or extortion of any sort were sentiments for which the refined and genuine modesty of Lincoln had no appetite or taste. The honors that surrounded and invested him were up-springing, spontaneous and free; in no least measure accumulated, artificial or enforced.

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The native purity of Lincoln's lowliness shows best in his reverence for God. He lived in a daily consciousness of Providence. As a statesman he was thoroughly a man of God, full of a patriot's adoring and acquiescent thankfulness, as he watched and studied the wonderful unfolding of God's just and kindly government of this most favored land. This mood of humble reverence was deeply wrought. It was of the texture of his character. It was not a vesture or a posture, a gesture or a phrase, assumed here and discarded there, and often counterfeit. It was essential, like his integrity, pervading and indeed controlling all his responsible life. And it was wholly undisguised. In his most formal public documents—papers in which statesmen as a rule make scant allusion to Deity—Lincoln's allusions to God are their most imposing feature. Beyond all contradiction, Lincoln enacted his public responsibilities in the fear of God. This was the beginning of his wisdom. Just this is the secret of the sanity of this last inaugural. And it is the secret of its immortal beauty. And it is the girdle of its strength. In framing its central argument, and thereby steadying the Nation's heart in the convulsions of war, he was expounding the hidden ways of God. There grew a mighty paragraph. It reads smoothly now. But when it passed through Lincoln's lips, it was the issue of a hard-pent agony. When he voiced those words he stood before an altar, and made confession, like a very priest, for both North and South. All the land had behaved with unbecoming confidence. All alike were under discipline. God was in dominion. Even in their prayers both North and South had been contending against the Lord. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither had been answered fully. The Almighty had his own purposes. The expectations of all had gone astray. The contending struggles of either side, despite their contending prayers, were being turned by the judgments of God against them both into a terrible national chastisement. So Lincoln discerned, and so he humbly, vicariously confessed. But beneath this high dominion his heart too had been bowed down, and overwhelmed, and chastened sore. Repeatedly his counsels had been overturned, and his expectations had been reversed; and that too, as he devoutly believed, by the over-ruling purposes of God. Hence, as in this inaugural scene he faced the future, though he was head of a puissant people, he behaved like a little child. In a chastened sense of the mystery and authority of the overruling designs of Almighty God, he forebore to boast. And then he said in rhythmic words of almost prophetic majesty, and in the attire of all but sacrificial humility: "Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

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This is indeed in prophetic strain. But he forbears to prophesy. He longed with sacrificial eagerness for national prosperity, in lasting freedom and unison and happiness. As he renewed his official pledge to preserve, protect, and defend the world's greatest charter of equality and freedom for all mankind, his heart and hope held high and firm. But his total being was subdued. God had crossed his path. The long-drawn war was God's rebuke. The Nation had gone sadly astray. The Almighty had taken her waywardness in hand. His purposes were in control. And He was supreme. And His ways were unrevealed. Lincoln stood to his task unflinchingly, ready either for sorrow or relief, ready either for death or life, as the Most High might appoint.

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Here is statesmanship indeed. But it is altogether unique. A mighty Nation's executive head, discerning, devoted, and devout, holding in his steady hand the charge of a Nation's destiny, pledging in the Nation's name to lay upon the altar, if need be for the Nation's honor, the Nation's life, and there before the altar waiting humbly upon God. Many a theme of profoundest purport opens instantly into view. Just now our eye is fixed upon its illustration of humility.

On the one hand, and in the first place, its exhibition of the dignity of pure manhood is sublime. In this inaugural scene, beneath the awful stress of a Nation in war, upon the basis of the pledged covenant of the free, invincible faith that a free Republic can sustain and fulfill all its solemn responsibility, and with unquenchable hope in the vast and unseen future of his land, Lincoln took his stand, and held his ground, and put on record before God and all the world his reverent and resolute oath. Here is manhood, noble, majestic, decisive, free—a manhood that embraces the worth, voices the hope, and confronts with open breast the destiny of the race.

But in this same scene these mighty energies pause. Lincoln consciously faces God. For himself and for the Nation he makes humble acknowledgment that the Lord is Almighty and Most High. And to God's full sovereignty he yields spontaneous consent. With lowliest submission and confession he concedes and declares that all his rebukes and all his rule are in righteousness.

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Here is a place where any man may properly pause. Here the orbit of our proudest being strikes its verge. Here God and manhood meet. Here human power faints. Here human resolution halts. Here human foresight dims. Here human wisdom becomes a void. Here all our pride becomes perforce humility; and all our counselings merge in faith. Here human grandeur touches its outer rim.

But here, too, human eyes awaken. Here human aspirations rise. Here human wisdom becomes newly informed. Here human forecasts brighten into hope. Here human strength revives. Here human purpose tightens. Here in reverence human wisdom begins. Here in human lowliness appears a Godlike dignity. Here our human stature shows its noblest. Lincoln is at the utmost bound of his knowledge, and his liberty; and yet he is displaying just here a discernment and a decision of the most exalted type—a discernment, however, whose insight is a vision of faith, and a decision whose resolve is an exercise of trust. In this scene statesmanship is transmuted into religion, undefiled and pure. Man in his loftiest hope and uttermost need, and God in his transcendent royalty of equity and goodwill meet face to face, and stand in open, free and friendly covenant. Here is at once a portrait of true humility, and the acme of high nobility. Here in childlike trust and childlike faith the wisdom and the freedom of man attain their goal. Here statesmanship and reverence, wisdom and trust, freedom and acquiescence, dignity and lowliness harmonize and interblend. And in the unison either one remains uncompounded and pure. [79]

Here many questions press to be resolved. This signal scene in Lincoln's career—what has it to say about the inner nature of man? What about the nature of God? What about the nature of our human insight into the essential qualities of things? What about the relation of will to thought? What about the sovereignty of character? When human character touches the limit of human life, is it facing night or day? These are ultimate inquiries. And they are immediate. For answer to these inquiries, let Lincoln and Hegel meet. And let the Nations listen to their replies; and so discern what problems clear, where dignity and lowliness convene. For here is a shining scene, where any man may see that in a lowly heart wisdom and nobility may sit together as on a throne. Modesty like Lincoln's is a courtly grace. Reverence such as his befits a prince. Such humility, reflecting with heavenly beauty the immediate presence of God, may clothe a mighty man, and hold the center of a mighty scene, without unseemliness, and it wants not intelligence. This at least this scene makes clear.

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## PART III. SYNTHESIS [80]

### LINCOLN'S MORAL UNISON

The marvelous beauty of the Athenian Parthenon is displayed in four façades. Upon these four sides runs a frieze in a continuous band, crowning all the columns, and binding all the structure into a single shrine. Comprehended within the stately course of that all-encircling frieze is classic demonstration how an impressive manifoldness of sculptural form may present a perfect and impressive unison.

Something such is Lincoln's character, as it stands in this second inaugural. In this address four personal qualities stand forth, as distinct and clear to the eye and thought as are the faces of the Parthenon; while, like the Parthenon, the author of that address is indivisibly and undeniably one. Both are alike composite, and both alike are one. Both embrace diversity, but all in perfect harmony. Both have perfect unity, but without monotony. Like the temple of Athene, greeting from its single altar every horizon of the Grecian sky, Lincoln, voicing his solemn oath as the Nation's president, gives utterance to every moral element in our American life. Here is something worth minute inspection. Here, upreared upon our Western, modern American soil, is a noble work of art, as noble as any in the ancient East—finished, balanced, and enduring—the ripened moral character of a people's patriot.

First to notice narrowly is that Lincoln's moral texture is fourfold. Four virtues stamp this speech. Four strands compose its web. Four hues commingle in its light. Four parts convey its harmony. This four-foldness is discernible distinctly. [81]

Plain to see through all the features of this address, as well-defined as the features of his friendly face, is his kindliness. Of all things, war was most deplorable. Of all things, peace was most to be desired. All malice was to be disowned. All charity was to be indulged. All wounds were to be bound up. All sorrows were to be consoled. There spoke the pleading voice of love. All men were bidden to love their neighbors as they loved themselves. Here the quality of moral kindliness is unmistakably and indelibly distinct.

Quite as plain is his ideal and illustration of integrity. As manifest to all the world is his inflexible uprightness, as is the outer stature of his erect physique. For the equity in the bondman's protest

against two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil he had an open ear and a profound respect. In the confidence that the judgments of Almighty God were altogether just he was not ashamed to make public announcement of his abiding faith. Eager that peace among ourselves and with all Nations might always last, he was also eager that it should be just. Firmly based, for his Nation and for himself, upon such foundations of self-respect, resting on God, and resolute for the right, he had no other thought but to strive with unremitting constancy, until his work was done. Here is moral loyalty, plainly visible, and as plainly inviolate.

Quite as clear is his humility. The war, as Lincoln viewed it, was a humbling visitation upon the Nation of the Nation's sins, a mighty rebuke upon all human scorn and pride. In all that sin and scorn and pride—the crime and guilt of slavery—Lincoln had no slightest, conscious, personal share. But the shame and woe of that rebuke, as it fell from the hand of God upon the Nation as a whole, he bore with quiet, meek humility. And to whatever further judgment the Almighty might allot he humbly bowed his head, confessing openly that, in his own heart and thought, God's ways had been proudly misunderstood. Here is reverent humility, and here is humble reverence, undeniable and undisguised.

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And just as clear is his supreme esteem for values that are permanent and pure. Above all changing accidents Lincoln honored the Godlike human soul. In harmony herewith his thoughts and arguments were prone to handle centuries. And in rating worth his standard was a man's humanity. Thus he shaped the records and the prospects of our history into a philosophy. Thus he interpreted the war. It was God's vindication of the immortal value of the humblest man. Carnal pleasures and worldly gains, wrung from human lives at the cost of the degradation and debasement of the human soul, and in defiance of God's eternal and indefeasible laws, Lincoln saw to be of all things the most foolhardy and crude. So spiritual and pure was his conception of God and man, and his active understanding of the meaning of historic efforts and events. Ideals, endeavors, and enjoyments, even though normal and worthy, if they dealt with values that were decaying and gross, were cheaply rated by him; while the Nation's perpetuity, each man's spiritual quality, and God's eternal purity held eminence unflinchingly in his affection and esteem. Here is spirituality, pure within, and by the inwardly pure plain to see.

As in the shapely quadrilateral of the Parthenon, this fourfoldness in the character of Lincoln is cardinal. Each quality is an element, each conforming with an elemental factor in the nature of every man. This involves that in its essential substance each trait, so far considered, is incapable of analysis. And each refuses to be resolved into something else. Each one is a simple and a constant co-efficient in Lincoln's moral being. Each one exists within his life in a complete integrity, indivisible, self-contained.

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His humility, thus, is integral and unmixed. When Lincoln bows, as he does in this inaugural, before his God, and therein offers his life in a bending ministry to all his fellowmen, that reverence and that ministry are, as ministry and as reverence, pure lowliness. The phases of that lowliness may pass through continual transformation. And those changing forms may have changing designations. It may be submission before God's sovereignty, reverence before his majesty, awe before his mystery, obedience before his authority, trust beneath his Providence, confession under his rebukes; but common, essential, and unchanged within them all is simple, pure humility.

So with the fashion of his humble ways among his fellowmen. It also wears a varying guise. It may be modest reticence, abhorrence of parade, companionship with need, submission to abuse, co-partnership with a brother's shame, preferring another's gain, honoring other's worth, seeking ways to serve. But common, essential and unchanged within all these as well, is simple, pure humility. It is a solid moral trait, substantial and irreducible. As illustrated in Lincoln's life, it is entirely dignified and beautiful, essential and inseparable. As shown in his behavior, it corresponds with a relationship, as inherent and inwrought in his very being as his very breath. As a trait of Lincoln's character, his humility has a root, as firm and durable as is the transcendence of God, and as are the opportunity and obligation of every man among his brothermen to bear, forbear, and serve.

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It is just the same with his fidelity. It too, is an uncompounded and imperative moral trait. It is a living, facile grace, easily capable of many kinds of affirmation. It may identify itself with truth, in reasoned or implicit faith; with promise, pledge, or oath, in loyalty; with proof by testing fires, as fidelity, steadfastness, or reliability; with unvarying, free adhesion to eternal principles, as consistency; with clear conviction of sure reality, as verity; with ethical straightforwardness, as rectitude, sincerity, or honesty; with even, balanced justice, as equity; with the innermost and final norm of truth in any personal life, as self-assertion, or self-respect. But common within them all, unaltered and unalterable amid all those varied and varying forms, is simple, unmixed constancy. In any analysis of Lincoln's moral life this moral trait will forever demand distinct and distinctive recognition and name. It is based and centered in his estimate and estimation of himself, the eye of his very honor, the core of his nobility, the very sense within his living soul of the life of his integrity. It is the inward attitude of his moral worth, as invincible, insistent, and elemental as any purest action of his self-consciousness.

The same holds true of Lincoln's kindness. In the balanced harmony of his character the note of human friendliness is a persistent and indispensable strain. Without that melody his moral consonance would be painfully and irretrievably impaired. Like every other fundamental trait, this too may be voiced with every sort of easy, fluent variation. It may spring spontaneously from deep within the heart, as benign and all-embracing benevolence. It may overflow with benefits, in

active, bounteous generosity. It may bind together an ideal home in parental, filial, fraternal affection. It may kindle at the altars of one's native land, and influence the heart of the patriotic devotee. It may break through all the accidents of birth and race into universal brotherhood. It may befriend the hurt, and needy, and bereft, as sympathy. It may so prevail as to bear up beneath the cruel sin of alien hearts in the sorrow of vicarious love, to the end that guilty men may be redeemed and reconciled. In myriad ways this human kindness may speak its gentle words of mercy, grace, and peace. But every word is keyed to kindly fellowship. Through all those variations this note is prevalent. And it is keyed to a relationship as universal and as unavoidable as are the bonds of human brotherhood. This wanting in any moral character in fact or in idea, that moral character is unbalanced and incomplete. Its mighty influence and its constant evidence in Lincoln's active life supply an elemental requisite to that life's harmony. It is his full-voiced answer to the world-wide plea for human friendliness.

And just such affirmations must be made concerning Lincoln's pureness. Like each of the other three, this quality, too, holds a place and eminence distinctly and uniquely its own. No other trait can do its part or take its place. Its function and its office permit no substitute. Nor can its ministry be divided. Its claim is regal. And in any rating and apportionment among the other three this trait must be granted equal primacy. Its presence and its purport in Lincoln's total life are clear and fair and absolutely radical. Its aspect varies like the aspect of the sky. But deep within those variations gleams the pure and shining blue. It may win triumph over greed of appetite in temperance; or over fleshly passion in continence. It may fix supreme desire, not on decaying things, but on undying life; not on things that change and disappoint, but on values that abide and hold their own. It may search far beyond things visible for things unseen; and look within all symbols, discerning what they mean. It may detect within down-trodden, untutored men souls kindred to their Maker. It may transcend all idol forms, and make all worship spiritual. It may see how ends outvalue means; and how bottles should not outvalue wine. In the midst of our universal lot of accident, disease and death it may hold fast, for all the pure in heart, to the hope of a happy immortality. But enduring and undying, common and unchanged within them all is simple, spiritual purity. The soul asserts supremacy. Things that fluctuate and finally dissolve, however befitting and beautiful while they thrive, are admired and valued far beneath the immortal and unchanging worth of God and Godlike souls of men. This clear vision and high evaluation of spiritual things in the thought and life of Lincoln can never be omitted nor excluded in any final analysis of his moral life. It ranks among the elements of his character, as each or any one of its facades holds rank about the Parthenon.

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Thus in the composition of Lincoln's moral being there are four solid, permanent, radical integers—his kindness, his loyalty, his pureness, and his humility. And these four elements of his character face the four cardinal points in the compass of his life—his brother man, his conscious self, his flesh-bound soul, and his sovereign Lord. So inherent in his very structure, so inwrought in his conscious character, so deeply based, so cardinal, and so enduring and irreducible is this fourfoldness in Lincoln's inward life.

And now, as with the Parthenon, this finished circuit of these four constituents makes the outline of Lincoln's character not only clear and cardinal, but inclusive and complete. Combining in their significance and sweep all fleshly and material things; all things superior and supreme; all the realm and range of human brotherhood; and all the truth and worth within his own identity—every factor and relation of his conscious life has been embraced. His neighbor and himself as conscious peers, each in loyalty and love demanding and awarding equal mutual heed; his spirit and his flesh, the two and only two constituents of his personal life; his finite nature, facing, with the daily need and due of humble reverence, his infinite Creator, the Lord of grace and truth—these exhaust the primal co-efficients of his life; these enjoin and specify his primal obligations; these inspire and consummate every moral excellence. When these four virtues are discovered and admired, when each and all are elected and achieved; when any man stands true and firm in self-respecting constancy; benign and kind in self-devoting love; spiritually refined and pure amid a world of corroding change; bending before the Most High God with the adoration and awe that are forever so beautiful and meet, his moral stature stands fully finished, balanced, and mature. So plain to see, so integral, and so comprehensive are these four qualities of Lincoln's character.

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And now a mighty statement is waiting to be made. These four constituents of Lincoln's virtue are not four fractions of his character, each possessing and commanding in solitude and exclusively some separate segment of his morality. Not alone is each one integral, but Lincoln is integrally in each. His kindness is not the action of a section of his character; it enlists and occupies his being as a whole and indivisibly. In Lincoln's faithfulness Lincoln's stature stands complete. Pureness is by no means an occasional or intermittent exercise of his judgment or choice. Nor in the geography of his life is Lincoln's lowliness local or sectional. The total Lincoln is kindly, faithful, pure, and lowly equally, fully and continually. When in this address he calls the Nation to firmness in the right as God reveals the right, his manhood stands full-sized in its exercise and pledge of patriotic loyalty to duty and oath. When again with pitying heart he makes reference to the slave driver's lash, to those centuries of unpaid toil, to the terrible cruelty of the war with its sorrowful entail of widows and orphans and wounds and graves, and, disowning all malice, voices his great-souled plea for universal charity and everlasting peace, the full flood of his full strength is pouring through his speech. When he reminds his fellowmen how far the worth of man transcends all other wealth, he is professing and commending a faith to which all his hopes stand pledged. And when in humble fellowship with humble men he abjures all hollow boasts and pride, and, bending beneath God's just rebukes, voices for all the land our national guilt, from that humiliation and lowliness no portion of his being is exempt. Each cardinal virtue engrosses and

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engages all his soul.

And now ensues with a sequence that is irresistible, an affirmation that in all this study of Lincoln's character must stand supreme. Integral as is each several one of these four virtues in Lincoln's life, and integral as is Lincoln's life in each single several trait, these two integrities can be clearly seen to deeply interblend and truly coincide. There is among the four qualities within his life no dissonance. Here emerges Lincoln's moral unison. As in the Parthenon all the elements harmonize and the edifice is one, so in Lincoln moral manifoldness unifies. There is throughout coincidence. The heart that bows towards God, in that very act of meekest acquiescence swells with pity for all who mourn and bleed, with indignant jealousy for equity, and with a supreme esteem for immortal souls. These four virtues do not exist and operate asunder. They do not come into view in this inaugural in sequence, each one in turn displacing and eclipsing the one that went and shone before. They coexist, each one continuing undiminished and unobscured, each one fully active and plain to see, their confluent tides pouring through the same identical phrase, the total strength of Lincoln surging alike in each. Through the whole address thrills Lincoln's whole conviction, all his passion, and the total vigor of his will respecting truth and falsity, hate and charity, greed and purity, pride and humility. Here is moral unison.

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To find the secret to this moral synthesis demands and deserves the sharpest scrutiny. That this may be understood it requires to be seen that these four virtues, so clearly distinguishable and so perfectly combined, are as clearly and perfectly akin. Lincoln's equity and charity, as voiced in this address, are not alien energies. They vitally correspond. They bear mutual resemblance. Each springs from deep within himself, from his elemental manhood, a manhood that finds in his brother's life and liberty as deep rejoicing as in his own. And herein he is also kindred with God, as God's purposes and ways are defined in this address. God, too, is deeply just and kind. Here roots Lincoln's meekness under God's rebuke, and Lincoln's firmness in his understanding of what is right. Between his heart's chief wish and God's high will the moral correspondence becomes identity. So deep is the coincidence and agreement of Lincoln's reverence and equity and charity within himself and with his God. The same inwrought agreement shines in the profound affinity of Lincoln's kindness and faithfulness and lowliness with his pure idealism. In him they are all as fully unified as is his manliness. So deeply intimate is the vital synthesis of Lincoln's moral unison.

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This position is pivotal. If either of these four virtues, here defined and designated as elementally distinct and cardinal, can be ever merged into any one, or any two, or all the other three; or if any one can be dissolved, or analyzed into something else still more elemental and pure, that possibility should be made passing sure and clear at just this point. For from the affirmations, thus far laid down, as to the cardinal validity and vital harmony of these four moral traits, and of the four foundations in which these virtues rest, follow other affirmations in the chapters that now ensue, which no artificial postulate can ever uphold.

But here, in passing, two standard affirmations are required. It is not to be asserted or assumed that Lincoln's personal life attained perfection, and transcended sin. In the chapter on humility, and in chapters yet to come his own deep sense of deep unworthiness stands evident. But in his clear and firm ideal and desire, aglow throughout with Godlike grief for all delinquency, appear the qualities above defined.

And then these qualities, which his unique career displays, are, as moral qualities, in no respect unique or beyond the measure of any man. They beseem quite normally the plainest of us all. This truth deserves full heed and unreserved respect. Lincoln was beautifully like a little child. He was indeed a hero and performed heroic deeds. But with all his heroism, as regards his moral qualities, the humblest mortal may be his peer. Here is the hidden secret of the universal and ungrudging admiration which his heroic character commands. He is the world's model and guarantee of a world democracy.

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## PART IV. STUDIES

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### HIS SYMMETRY—THE PROBLEM OF BEAUTY

In Lincoln's character is a beautiful illustration of moral balance. He stands before the eye unchangeably, like the Capitol dome at Washington, a signal exhibition of firmness, harmony, and repose. As he fills his place as president, he seems to face the whole horizon at once. A study of his life leaves the impression that he is resting upon a solid, ample base; that his weight is well distributed; that his energies are united evenly; that all his parts agree together; that throughout his structure he is at ease; while yet there swell and rise within his breast proud, far-seeing hopes that only a Nation's grandest magnitude could give complete embodiment. This massive poise, and breadth, and balanced evenness are the seemly vesture of his character. They well become his inner attitude. They are the open intimation of the shapeliness and majesty of the

unseen soul within. And quite as worthy of study and admiration as our national dome, is this well-poised nobility of Lincoln's personality.

With this intent one may well review this last inaugural, for it enshrines superior beauty. Not unfittingly did it find first utterance beneath the presence of that imposing masterpiece at our national Capitol. As in that circling colonnade, so in the measured cadences of this address, there is exalted harmony. Its phrases, rhythmic and pleasurable, rank almost as music. Read however many times, its sentences never tire. Minds the most refined are glad to point to this address as to a noble monument, assured that its perusal will awaken in any American high national pride, and in the minds of all men a pure delight.

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This commanding, gracious dignity is not alone a matter of even rhythms and pleasing cadences. It is to its author's moral poise and full harmony that this speech owes its symmetry. Indeed this is all its substance. Of rhetorical decoration it is absolutely bare. Its only title to its universal admiration is the patent fact that its author has traced and set therein, as with an engraver's nicest art, the princely fashion of his high-born soul. Its finished ethical symmetry is all the art that gives this speech its everlasting charm.

What now is the inmost nature of the attractiveness that holds possession of this last inaugural? In this inquiry is extended a winsome invitation to any beauty-loving mind. As such a mind fixes its inspection intently upon the vital structure of this address, he sees within its shapely borders four princely virtues, standing together in a courtly league. Each virtue stands mature in unrestrained virility, no one of them overbearing the other three, nor being overborne. With easy, manly grace each virtue does its part, while all harmoniously combine, to support with Godlike sagacity and strength the problems of a Nation's destiny in days and tasks that mock the sagest counsel and baffle the proudest might of man.

Like stately columns beneath a stately dome, these virtues deserve regard. Each one is integral in Lincoln's personal majesty, and in the finely finished power of this address. The exhibition of personal self-respect, the very eye of moral verity, as displayed in Lincoln's own reliability, and idealized within his steadfast plan for national consistency, is fashioned forth within the well-set features of this address with all the well-poised grandeur of the Olympian Zeus. The tones of kindest friendliness towards detractors and defenders alike, repelling all malignity, unflinchingly benign, cannot in any cadence be misunderstood. They fall like healing music, reminding listeners of home, and hearthstone, and a father's heart. The lowly attitude of penitent submissiveness towards God, with its wonderful mingling of solemn awe, adoring worship, and conscious fellowship, undeniably without hypocrisy, as without restraint, institutes in this address nothing less than the model and inspiration of a reverent, religious liturgy, fit to lead and voice a Nation's humble penitence and praise. The kindled and enkindling zeal for the transcendent worth of men above all other wealth, the burning hearth from whose free flame springs up every passion glowing through this speech, is like the fervent ardor of a prophet's heart, watching with a patient, eager wistfulness towards the dawning of a day that shall never pass away.

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These are signal qualities in this address, each one erect and free, its signal beauty and virility undiminished and complete. But to be noticed here is, not their individual comeliness, but the beauty of their companionship. They consort together perfectly. And in that unison is a peculiar, an individual attractiveness. Here is a symmetry that pleads for appreciation. It is the beauty of this unison throughout this speech that constitutes its eloquence. See how Lincoln's very confession of error puts him in line with God. Feel how his righteousness affiliates with tenderness. Mark how his heed for earthly things provides a body for his idealism. Within the unyielding rigor of his resolute will see how bending and genial is his attitude. Here is marvelous symphony—sin and error and war, light and truth and peace, so comprised and combined, so resolved and reconciled in this speaker and in this address, as to show a Nation how in the discord of arms heaven's own harmonies may be heard. To this fine blending of tones that are distinct, to this pure consonance of notes that are diverse, it were well for all our ears to become accustomed. This would mean a true and real refinement. To this refinement Lincoln did achieve. With this deep consonance his ear became familiar. Hence the deep-toned fulness and carrying power in the moral resonance of this address. It faces a manifold emergency with sentiments likewise manifold, but so composed together as to lead all discordant voices into lasting peace.

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This moral equilibrium carried within it generous breadth. This is a striking aspect of this inaugural. It comprehends and resolves together, with an ease that seems an instinct, the total orbit of our national life. Within its little compass is the easy movement of the full momentum of our past. It holds in easy grasp the full circumference of concurrent events. It evinces, though with amazing brevity, that the ponderous issues of the coming day are a familiar topic in his brooding thought. And all of this consists together within his thought with even, equal recognition. Events are made to balance. Causes and effects are so held face to face as to declare by demonstration their true comparison. Great issues and mighty forces are given their needed amplitude in his observation and review. The weight of centuries is in his ponderings. This was the style and attitude of his mental deliberations. He was predisposed to cast and arrange his thoughts in national dimensions. Union, liberty, manhood, Providence, were the themes to which his soul was drawn, as though by gravity.

Thus Lincoln's influence attained solidity. The place of this inaugural, and of its author's honor, in our American life, and in the larger world of worthy civics is well-secured. The qualities embodied in this address, each one so elemental, and all so eternally allied, are more enduring,

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as they stand poised within those balanced paragraphs, than any qualities resident in marble or bronze. The proposition that the hostile interests of a mighty Nation be reconciled into eternal friendliness and constancy under the awful discipline of God through sacrificial baptisms of blood, contains within its balanced and majestic terms an interior cohesion and stability that nothing can ever disintegrate or move. It is without a bias anywhere. Through all its massiveness the weight is even absolutely. And its moral proportions are in perfect truth. It is a monument of finished majesty, solidity, and grace. It is a masterpiece of moral symmetry.

This massive grandeur in Lincoln's moral character finds an exalted illustration in the closing half of his message to Congress in December of 1862. It forms in itself a document that may well be held before the eye as a companion piece to his last inaugural. He is making an elaborate argument for "compensated emancipation." He is laboring to make clear that the issues pending in the center of the war are no concern of mere geography, but rather a problem hanging upon the free decisions of living citizens; and that in the interest of universal liberty a full agreement by Congress and the chief executive to tax the Nation peaceably, to remunerate all loss entailed by freeing every slave, would surely win the requisite electoral support, stay the war at once, establish lasting peace, and give demonstration of a civic character and courage fit to brighten and enhearten all the world. He closes his appeal with these following words:—

"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 in dishonor, to the latest generation. We say we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this. We know 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."

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There is in that message a document that has the scope and the grandeur of the Alps. It offers an imposing illustration how politics, so prone to become and to remain ignoble, may come to have surpassing beauty; how statesmanship, vested in a worthy character, may wear transcendent dignity. This appeal, as shaped by Lincoln, is a monument fashioned by a master hand. Note its basis in equity, all the Nation in common accepting their money cost of a common complicity in wrong. Note its inscription to human goodwill, curtailing the period, and staying the bloodshed of the war. Note its enduring substance and composition, built up of human hearts, cemented in the action of freedom in the human soul, a towering protest against all gains and consequences where human liberty is denied. Note the humble reverence in the soaring appeal to the benediction of God, with which the whole address concludes. Note the conscience-stirring reference to inevitable and over-ruling law, in the ominous intimation that the light of history would luminously adjudge each several man. And note, with all the imperial urgency of the appeal, its vesture of infinite respect for the right of every congressman to make a free decision of and by and for himself alone.

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Here is something at once most imposing and most engaging. Here is handicraft of the highest grade. The man that conceived and drafted that political appeal was, in the realm of politics, no mean architect. He is, in these arguments, measuring the forces elemental in a great Republic, as Michael Angelo measured gravitation. He is dealing with decades, and with centuries, with freedom and with slaves, with a transient Congress and the course of history, as builders deal with granite blocks. Embracing things dispersed and widely variant, as also things mutually inclined towards fellowship, he defines and demonstrates, as a master artisan, how they may all be grasped and overcome and harmonized in a commanding unison. With a skilled designer's easy grace he drafts a sketch of our transformed career, as plain and open to the observing eye as are the massive, graceful movements of deploying clouds across the sky. Here is majesty, lofty, balanced, and secure. And all its excellence is ethical. And it pleads to be made supreme in earthly politics. In such a message is ideal courtliness. Its bearer must be a comely prince. The man and author upon whose polished tongue those sentiments found birth must be of royal lineage.

Thus Lincoln has given to civics ideal comeliness and dignity. In his hand, and under his design, politics wears heavenly majesty. In his conception of a State, though devised and traced in times when cruelty and sordidness and unfairness and negligence of God were sadly prevalent through the Nation's life, there rose to view, in his pure patriotism, a civic standard in which, through holy fear of God, all men were rated at their immortal worth, and treated with the love and fairness that were the mutual due of freemen who were peers. Here is a portrait of a patriot upon which no artist can easily improve—a portrait which attests in Lincoln's soul a pure and a free idea of what true art must ever be.

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And it is not without profound significance for art that Lincoln's statesmanship has become one of the finest objects in our modern world for artists to idealize. The very features of his face, that were wont to be esteemed most plain, have come to show a symmetry that is beautiful. And his whole outward frame, that men so many times have called ungainly, has come to bear and body forth a dignity such as summons finest bronze and marble to their most exalted ministry. Whence came to that plain face and plainer frame such symmetry and dignity? Let artists contemplate and reply. For in Lincoln's manhood stature, where utmost rudeness has become transmuted to refinement, all men are taught that true beauty and true art are ethical. In moral harmony is

found ideal symmetry.

## HIS COMPOSURE—THE PROBLEM OF PESSIMISM

In the foregoing pages reference has been made repeatedly to Lincoln's poise. In the chapter just concluded this poise has been studied for its beauty. This attitude will repay still further scrutiny. For looked at again, and from another point of view, it reveals itself as a reservoir of energy. Seen thus, Lincoln's notable poise becomes a mighty store of potential, and indeed of active force. It may be described as a mingling of energy and repose, of resourcefulness and rest, showing and playing through all his influence among other men, and largely explaining its potency.

Of just this personal habitude, through all the years of Lincoln's participation in our national affairs, there was strenuous need and requisition. His public course ran through an era in our national career of unprecedented internal turbulence. The house was divided against itself. The cause of the dissension was a diametrical opposition and an irreconcilable contention of views touching a matter so radical as the basis of our Declaration of Independence, and the purport of our fundamental national document, the Constitution. To the men on either side of this contention it seemed as though their antagonists were bent upon uprooting and removing the very hills. This obstinate and inveterate disagreement revolved about the single, simple, fateful question of the right and wrong of holding men in bonds. For a full generation before Lincoln entered the lists the conflict had been bitterly intense, refusing to be composed or assuaged. Near the beginning of the last decade of Lincoln's life he put on his armor and chose his side. In 1858, while competing with Douglas for a seat in the U. S. Senate, Lincoln made a declaration that, for its bearing upon his own career and its influence in national affairs, has become historic; while for its testimony to the topic of this chapter it has the very first significance. The core of that declaration was a quotation from words of Christ, when refuting the charge that he was in league with Beelzebub:—"A house divided against itself cannot stand." This quotation was cited by Lincoln to edge his affirmation that the national agitation concerning slavery, then in full course, and continually augmenting, would not cease until a crisis should be reached and passed. This was his firm assurance. A national crisis was at hand. But to this assurance, that the government could not endure permanently half slave and half free, he attested another confidence equally assured:—"I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South."

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That was said with resolute and imposing deliberation in July of 1858. In that utterance Lincoln's attitude deserves analysis, and for many reasons; but in particular for its revelation of his composure. He knew full well what tremendous issues for himself and for the Nation were involved in what he said. He knew that his appeal for the senatorship at Washington was thereby gravely imperiled. He knew that it foreboded national convulsions and throes. He knew that for himself and for the government a mighty crisis was ahead. And he knew that in that crisis the alternatives were for all humanity supreme. The issues were nothing less than human freedom and equality, or human tyranny and bonds. In the stress and strain of an age-long strife like this, many a man has swerved to moral pessimism.

From the date of that speech Lincoln stood in the face of that vicissitude. Indeed for his few remaining years he was, in all that deepening commotion, an energetic and influential central force. And he never yielded to despair. In this same month he issued to Senator Douglas his doughty challenge to a series of debates. During those debates Lincoln forged his way into a preeminence that amounted almost to solitude, as champion of a people and a cause that, for weary generations, had been under all but hopeless oppression and reproach. Through all those debates Lincoln's single heart was nothing less than a national theater of a solicitude nothing less than national. Upon his lone shoulders lay the gravest burdens of his day. The ideals of a Nation lay upon his anvil; the national temper was being forged beneath his hand. Highest chivalry waged against him, bearing tempered steel, and jealous of an old and proud prestige.

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In the immediate outcome of those debates Lincoln met defeat. But farther on he only found himself involved more deeply still in the anguish of the crisis he had foretold. The national disagreement was verging towards the Nation's dissolution, heightening at length into secession and actual, long-drawn civil war. So tremendous was the crisis Lincoln foresaw. And this was precipitated directly by his election to the presidency. So vitally were his own fortune and fate bound up in the crisis he foretold. So pitiless and fundamental was the challenge to his hope. His total administration was spent in the tumult of arms. By no possibility in any Nation's conscious life could civil confusion be worse confounded than during the period of his presidential terms. Beginning with seven states in open secession, and brought to an end by assassination, the measure of his supreme official life was full to either brim with perils and sorrows and fears, such as any single human heart could hardly contain. But the undiminished, overwhelming volume of those fears and sorrows and cares was encompassed every day within his anxious, ample, patriot heart. When facing in August of 1864 the national election, upon which this last inaugural oath was based, he said:—"I cannot fly from my thoughts—my solicitude for this great country follows me wherever I go. I do not think it is personal vanity or ambition, though I am not free from these infirmities; but I cannot but feel that the weal or woe of this great Nation will be decided in

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November." So momentous and grave seemed to him the meaning and weight of the contention that drove the Nation into war. In this estimate, as said before, he stood almost in solitude. "Our best and greatest men," he said in New Haven in 1860, "have greatly underestimated the size of this question. They have constantly brought forward small cures for great sores—plasters too small to cover the wound." To Lincoln's credit it must forever be said that he had a true prevision of the agony through which the Nation must strive, as she reached and passed the crisis which he saw in 1858 to be her predestined and impending fate.

And so it came to pass that in 1861, when Fort Sumter was assailed, and the sharp imperious alternative of immediate dissolution or blood faced the Nation's eye, he was not surprised or unprepared; as likewise, when in 1865 at his second inaugural scene, after four full years of awful war, he is still found waiting in sacrificial patience to hail the culmination of his assured interpretation and hope. Here in 1865 as there in 1858, there in 1858 as here in 1865, he is cherishing the patriot-prophet's confidence that the crisis would be passed, that the Nation would not be dissolved, that the house would stand.

And to Lincoln's singular honor it must always be allowed that through all the terrible hours while that crisis was being passed, it was pre-eminently due to Lincoln's mighty moral optimism that our Union was preserved. Amid all the turbulence of armies and arms, his assurance of our national perpetuity was so deeply, firmly based, as to be itself invested and informed with perpetuity. So commanding was his posture of heroic, triumphant confidence, that it mightily availed to guide and steady the Nation through the crisis into an era of internal and international peace.

But not merely did Lincoln's composure prevail to secure that this Nation should not dissolve. It also wrought prevailingly to perpetuate our liberty. Throughout the crisis the issue held in stake was whether the Nation should be wholly slave or wholly free. Those were the alternatives between which Lincoln's care and fear, and the Nation's fortune and fate were hung. Throughout the crisis Lincoln's hope was that the Nation should be forever wholly free. His fear was that the Nation might be wholly slave. But above that fear, that hope steadfastly prevailed. One who studies Lincoln through those days comes to feel unerringly that deep beneath an anxiety that seemed at times almost to overwhelm his life, there lay a supreme assurance that, when the crisis should have passed, it should stand clear beyond debate, and sure beyond all doubt, that here in this favored land the chance of all the sons of men should be forever equal, fair, and free. Astutely heedful of the power of selfish, sordid greed; deeply conscious of the blind defiance of scorn and pride; painfully aware of the awful capacity of a human heart for cruelty and hate; and sharp to see how reason yields to prejudice, when chivalry becomes a counterfeit; he still found grounds to hold his anchored hope for universal liberty and brotherhood.

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This deep-based confidence deserves to be well understood. It is a primary phenomenon in Lincoln's life. How in the deepest welter of violence and strife could Lincoln's mood retain such level evenness? How in all that continental turbulence could he keep so unperturbed? How, through all that confusion was he never confused? In truth his days were mostly dark and sad. Sorrows did overwhelm him. How did his anchorage hold unchanged? When the very hills gave way, his foundations seemed to stay. The assurance to which his soul was attached seemed all but omnipotent. What was the secret, what the ground of such phenomenal steadiness?

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To answer these inquiries is but to rehearse again what has already been repeatedly made plain. This massive sturdiness of Lincoln's statesmanship, this unalterable political reliability lay inwrought in the hardy fiber of his moral character.

One factor here may be termed intellectual. Lincoln's study made him steady. His untiring thoughtfulness secured to Lincoln's soul a fine deposit of pure assurance. It was with him a jealous and guarded custom to make examinations exhaustive. He was always seeking certainty. Few men ever dealt more sparingly in conjecture. Always eager towards the future, and often making statements touching things to come, he was nevertheless a model of mental caution. It was this passion to make his footing fully secure that kindled in him such zest for history. It was this same passion that glowed in his eye, as he inspected in common men their common humanity. And likewise it was this that led him into the fear of God, and made him a student of the Bible, and a man of prayer. The full capacity of his mind was taxed unceasingly, in order to secure to his ripening judgments their majestic equipoise.

But with saying this not enough is said to describe the grounds of his composure. It was not merely that his mind, through thoughtful inquiry and comparison, grew far-sighted, and balanced, and clear. What gained for Lincoln his solid anchorage was his deep, strong hold upon all that was inmost and permanent in the heart and nature of men. Every inch a man himself, the one ambition of his mental research was to make every responsible thought and deed conduce to guide every brother man to the destiny which his nature decreed. This was the research that made his eye so clear. This was the study that made his hope so sure. Outcome of unsparing intellectual toil, this was the assurance that won for Lincoln his unique and most honorable diploma and degree. This was Lincoln's standing and this its warrant among all thoughtful men, alike the learned and the unlettered. This was the secret of that marvelous calmness, that was so potent to compose the fears of other men. He studied man, until he attained a magisterial power to understand and explain result and cause, issue and origin, amid historic, surrounding, and impending events. In the field where Lincoln stood and toiled he was an adept. He was a worthy master of the humanities. He took a liberal course in the liberal arts. And out of this broad course he constructed politics. He came to see unerringly, and to believe unwaveringly, and to contend

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unwearyingly that man, that all men should hold, in a universal equilibrium, their regard for God, their self-respect, their brother love, and a true, comparative esteem for things that perish and souls that survive. This reasoned, hopeful faith, adopted with all his heart as the comely pattern and well-set keystone of all his politics and statesmanship, is what secured to Lincoln through all those tumultuous days his far-commanding political equanimity. That all men were designed and entitled by their Creator to be free, and that in this liberty, as in the elemental right to life and self-earned happiness, all are likewise created equal, Lincoln did devoutly, profoundly, and invincibly believe. Confirmed by all his ranging observation and incessant, pondering thought, this faith was also rooted beyond repeal in his own deep reverence for God, in his own instinctive respect for himself, in irrepressible friendliness, and in his unabashed idealism.

Such a man could never be a pessimist. Such a faith in such a soul could not be plucked away. Nor could its protestations be variable. That each, as alike the handiwork of God, should alike be always fair, and that all should always and alike be free, was the base of his political philosophy, and the bond of his consistency. This was the teaching of the past. This was the harbinger of the day to come. And in this long-pondered wisdom and belief lay the explanation of his underlying peacefulness through the war, and of his singular ability to prevail above the fears of other men, when in other hearts every hope gave way. He deeply saw that underneath all battlefields, and within all antagonisms, these simple principles, so surely sovereign and so certainly immortal, encompassed a breadth and strength sufficient to circumvent and overcome all hate and doubt and fear, doing to no freeman any vital harm, shielding from essential evil every toil-bowed slave. This is the source and secret of Lincoln's unexampled composure amid scenes of unexampled anxiety and unrest.

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And this composure, being so inwrought with hope, was unfailingly active and alert. It was never mere endurance, stolid and inert. It enshrined a powerful momentum. It was alive with purpose, conscious, vigorous, resolute. One of its fairest features was a seeing eye—an eye transfixed upon a goal. Things as yet invisible, and still unrealized, his earnest, unwearying eye prevailed to see. Hence his optimism was astir with enterprise. Anticipation, quite as truly as peacefulness, marked the constant attitude of his life. His composure could be closely defined as confidence respecting things to come. Always environed by difficulties, and all but blinded by their strife, his faith struck through their turmoil, and his hope rose free and strong into a jubilant salutation of man's undoubted destiny, and into a victorious companionship with God's clear, certain will.

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And so there throbbed in this habitual posture of Lincoln's heart a mighty potency. His composure was prevailing. His deep and calm security dissipated other men's dismay. Repeatedly beneath the presence of his stately quietness the Nation felt its turbulence subside. This efficiency can be felt at work in this last inaugural address; and its action well deserves to be identified. In his exposition of its theme, and in his registration of his presidential pledge, he seems by one hand to have fast hold of things immutable, while with the other hand he is helping to steady things that tremble and change. Here is kingly mastery. Things mightily disturbed are being mightily put to rest, as though from an immutable throne. The open figure of that throne may well be scanned by all the Nation and by all the world. It is built and stands foursquare. Its measure conforms in every part with the measure of a man. It is shaped and set to stand and abide where men consort, to unify their minds, and tranquillize their strifes. With sobered and sobering insight into the human soul, with resolute and expectant will before our human goal, this address inscribes and upholds, as at once an outcome and an ideal of human events, a universal amity compacted of loyal, friendly men who walk in reverence before God, and cherish treasures that can never fail. Purity, humility, charity, loyalty—these are the constituents in the structure, and the explanation of the power of Lincoln's composure. Fully illumined, firmly convinced, evenly at rest upon principles that stand foursquare upon the balanced manhood of Godlike men, his civic hopefulness stood in the midst of his practical statesmanship, like an invincible, immovable throne.

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### **HIS AUTHORITY—THE PROBLEM OF GOVERNMENT**

The study in the preceding chapter of Lincoln's even-paced serenity, culminating in the symbol of a throne, conducts directly to an examination of his influence and mastery over other men. During those troubled days in Washington, despite all the malice, defiance, and active abuse which he daily bore, his power to persuade, conciliate, and govern other men was, in all the land, without a parallel. In fact, as well as in name, he was throughout those presidential days the Nation's chief magistrate. And since his death that dominion has increased, until it stands today above comparison. Here is an opportunity, not easily matched, to explore a theme whose importance in the field of ethics no other topic can surpass—the seat and nature of moral authority. And here in this second inaugural is a transparent illustration of the firm security in which that authority rests, and of the method by which it prevails.

As in his own inner reverence for law, so in his sway of other men, his posture towards the national Constitution demands attention first.

"The supreme law of the land"—thus the Constitution of the United States, in its sixth article, defines itself. In its fifth article, the same fundamental document provides that "Amendments," properly made, "shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of this Constitution." This primary authority for the rule of the land is further affirmed to have been ordained and established by "the people of the United States." Here are three noteworthy features of this "law of the land:"—it is supreme; it is amendable; it arises from the people.

This written standard of our national life, its amendability, and its primal origin in the people's will, were matters much in Lincoln's eye. Each separate one of these three features of our national civic life had reverent respect in Lincoln's mind, in all his conception and exercise of authority over other men. It was this "supreme law" that he swore in both inaugurations to "preserve, protect, and defend." An amendment to the Constitution, that was pending at the time of his first inaugural oath, he took unusual pains in that address to mention and approve. And it was to "the people," on both occasions of his inauguration as president, and at all other times of public and responsible address, that he paid supreme respect, in his most finished and earnest eloquence and appeal. Here was a threefold ultimate standard to which Lincoln always made final appeal—the original Constitution; its amenability to due revision; and the people's free and deliberate decree. This triangular base-line was for Lincoln's politics and jurisprudence and statesmanship the supreme and finished standard of last appeal. He deferred to it submissively, habitually, and with reverence.

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All this can be truly said. And yet all this does not say all the truth. Respectful as Lincoln was for all that he found thus fundamentally prescribed, and heedful as he was to indulge in no executive liberty inconsonant with those express decrees, he found his fortune as chief executive forcing him to move where all explicit regulations failed to specify the path. The Constitution does not include all details. It does not vouchsafe specific counsel for specific needs. Its guidance is as to principles. "No foresight can anticipate, nor any document of reasonable length contain, express provisions for all possible questions." This he declared in his first inaugural. Then he mentions three such unprescribed details:—the method of returning fugitive slaves; the power of Congress to prohibit; and the duty of Congress to protect slavery in the Territories. Touching those three civic interests, civic duties and civic standards were undirected and undefined. But even while he spoke, those three unsettled problems in the Nation's life were kindling the national pulse to an uncontrollable heat. Nothing less than civil war was certainly impending, over controversies touching which the sovereign standards of the civic life did not expressly speak.

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Upon these momentous, undecided questions Lincoln, in his high authority as president, had to bring his judgment, his action, and his influence into settled shape. Deep in the heart of these unsettled regions he set his camp, and toiled away his life. This heroic and patriotic act may be called a detail of constitutional interpretation. But it was for Lincoln a labor of Hercules. It opened a gigantic controversy. The land was convulsed with contending explications. Views, held essential to the vital honor of separate sections of the land, were in essential hostility. As the dissension deepened, two questions rose, outstanding above the rest:—the Constitutional integrity of the several States (might States secede?); and the Constitutional rights of slavery (should slavery spread?). Both these problems were mortally acute in 1861. Both were still in hand in 1865. Under the Constitution could the Union be legitimately dissolved? Under the Constitution should slavery be permanently approved? To both these questions Southern leaders answered, Yes. To both these questions Lincoln answered, No.

Of these two questions and asseverations, it is plain to see that the second is the more profound. So this second inaugural affirms: "Somehow" slavery was the cause of the secession and the war. This "all knew." Upon this pivot, all the chances and contentions of the great debate were compelled to turn. Here lay all the meaning of the war. All those awful battles were trembling, struggling arguments; thrilling, impassioned affirmations striving to finally and forever decide whether human slavery was justified to spread.

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Here was a supreme divergence of conviction, and a supreme debate. In all the realm of social morals, no divergence and no debate could be more radical. Into this supreme contention Lincoln was compelled to enter. To some conclusion that should be supreme he was, by his official station and responsibility, compelled to lead. To find his way through such a controversy, and to guide the land through all that strife to some sovereign reconciliation, involved this common citizen in the presidential chair in an assumption and exercise of authority nothing less than sovereign.

Face to face with this impending and decisive agony, Lincoln took his stand in his first inaugural, not flinching even from war, if war must come. A mighty wrestler in the awful throes of mortal civic strife, he held his determined stand in the act of his second inaugural oath, after war had raged for four full years. The great debate is unsettled still. Still Lincoln has to bear the awful burden of responsible advice. He is still the Nation's chief magistrate. An authority pregnant to predetermine continental issues for unnumbered years to come, however dread its weight, and however frail and faint his mortal strength, he may not demit. Within the darkness and amid the din, he must think and speak, he must judge and act, he must rise and lead, while a Nation and a future both too vast for human eye to scan and estimate, stand waiting on his word and deed.

It was a time for omens. But never did Lincoln's ways show fuller sanity. In such a day, and for such a responsibility this, his second inaugural address, is Lincoln's perfect vindication. Here the true civilian's true democracy stands vested with an authority both sovereign and beautiful. Here political expertness becomes consummate. Here the very throne of civil authority is unveiled. Here leadership and fellowship combine. Here a master, though none more modest in all the land, demonstrates his mastery in the mighty field of national politics. Here it may be fully seen how in a true democracy a true dominion operates.

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Here emerges, in the ripened, rugged, mellowed, moral character of Lincoln, and in the finished, immortal formulation of his uttermost contention and appeal, a marvelous illumination of an inquiry, that is always alike the last and the first, the first and the last in ethical research—the inquiry about ethical authority. Where did Lincoln finally rest his final appeal? He is assuming to

venture a preponderant claim. He is speaking as a Nation's president. And in a conflict of radical views that for four dread years has been a conflict of relentless arms, he argues still, and without a quaver, for the thorough prosecution of the war. Divergence of judgment on moral grounds could never be brought to a sharper edge. Contention over issues in the moral realm could never be harder pressed. On what authority could Lincoln push a moral argument unto blood? Is there moral warrant for such a deed? If ever there be, then where is its base, and whence its awful sanctity?

To shape reply to this is but to shape more sharply still the naked substance of the debate—the crying issue of the war. The core of that insistent strife concerned the essential nature of man. Was slavery legitimate? Might a white man enslave a black? Could a strong man enslave the weak? Dare some men forswear toil? May any men who toil be pillaged of the food their hands have earned? Are some men entitled to a luxury and ease they never earned, while to other men the luxury and ease they have fairly won may be denied? Are some men so inferior that they can have no right to life, and liberty, and happiness, however much they strive and long for such a simple, common boon? Are other men so super-excellent that life, and liberty, and happiness are theirs by right, though never earned or even struggled for at all?

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This was the central issue of that war; and this the central theme of this inaugural. Are common people to be forever kept beneath, and traded on, and eyed with scorn; while favored men are to be forever set on high, and filled with wealth, and fed with flattery? This was the quivering question that was brought on Lincoln's lips to its sharpest edge. Well he knew its momentousness and its antiquity.

In its very formulation, as Lincoln gave it shape, there loomed the formulation of its reply, perhaps still to be bitterly defied, perhaps to be still long deferred; but inevitable at last, and sure finally to find agreement everywhere. This final answer Lincoln's vision saw. In that clear vision he discerned the certain meaning of the battles of the war. In the great debate they were the solemn, measured arguments. Amid those awful arguments this inaugural took its place, the oracle of a moral prophet, explaining how the war arose, by whose high hand the war was being led, and in what high issue the war must attain its end. As the arguments of this address advance, one grows to feel that Lincoln's thought is forging a reply, in which emerges a moral law whose authority no man may ever dare rebuke.

But as that authority comes to view in Lincoln's speech, its form is shorn of every shred of arrogance. Never was mortal man more modest than in the tone and substance of this address. This modesty is indeed throughout devoid of wavering. His tones ring with confidence and decisiveness. But in that confidence, though girt for war, there are folded signs of deference and gentleness and solemn awe, as though confessing error and confronting rebuke. Even of slavery, that most palpable and abhorrent evil, as he forever avers; and of slaveholders, who wring their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, and then dare to pray for heaven's favor on their arms, he says in this address:—"let us not judge that we be not judged;" as though the germ of that dark error might then be swelling in his and all men's hearts. And as to the war itself, for which he bade the Nation stand with sword full-drawn, the central passage in this speech more than intimates, what in an earlier part he fully concedes, that he and all the people had availed but poorly to understand the Almighty's plans. In all of this Lincoln seems to say that he found himself, in common with all the land, but imperfectly in harmony with God, as to his judgment concerning the sin inwrought in holding slaves, and as to the primacy of the Union among the interests pending in the war. He seems in this address, so far from affirming his right to judge and govern arbitrarily, instead confessing that love of ease, greed for gain, the mood of scorn, and proneness to be cruel—those inhuman roots that rear up slavery—were apt to find hidden nutriment in his and all men's hearts, yielding everywhere the baleful harvest of inhumanity; confessing further that this deep-rooted tendency in human hearts to undo God's primal decree of freedom and equality was far more needful to eradicate than any proneness to secede within any confederacy of States; and confessing in consequence and finally that it was for all Americans to accept the war as God's rebuke of their common propensity to be unkind, and as God's correction of their false rating of their national concerns. This then seems to be Lincoln's posture in this address—no lofty arrogance of authority to decree and execute the right; but a humble confession of error and guilt; an acquiescent submission to God's correction and reproof. This modest hue must tincture this address through all its web.

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And yet the dominant note of this inaugural is clear decisiveness, an unwavering firmness in his own opinion, a classic illustration of persuasion and appeal, as though from the vantage ground of convictions perfectly assured. Where now, in full view of all that has been said, is the basis of Lincoln's argument and authority to be placed? In an argument where conviction seems to be transmuted into penitence, and where confession seems transfigured into confidence, how can the logic be resolved; and where at last can the authority repose?

The full reply to this inquiry can be found only when we find where Lincoln's conviction and confession coalesce. Touching this, one thing is clear. Both bear upon the same concern. Deep within them both slavery is the common theme. Assured that slavery is wrong, he confesses that its roots run everywhere. Honest to the core, he bows beneath the scourge of war, convinced that it is heaven's penalty upon all the land. Throughout he is pleading and suffering consistently that all men may be free. This is the sum of the address. In this it all coheres. Thus he divines and understands the ways of God. And so he stands, as poised in this address, in ideal fellowship, at once with men who have held slaves, with slaves in their distress, with the Creator in his primal decree, and with the Providential meaning of the war.

To all this problem, vexing so many generations, the clear and witting touch of Lincoln's sacrificial penitence is the master key. In this all contradictions, all hostilities, all sufferings, all transgressions, and all pure longings are harmonized. In assurance and repentance he has found how truth and grace, blending together in humble heed for God and for undying souls, hold complete dominion in the moral realm. These pure principles, congenial alike to God and men, he welcomes to himself, and commends to all his fellowmen in sacrificial partnership.

Here is Lincoln's prevailing faith. This is the secret of his strength. Herein vests his commanding and enduring power. This is Lincoln's self—his very manhood. This is the man in this address whom the world beheld, and still beholds—the man he was, the man he aimed and strove to be, the man he recommended all the Nation to combine to reproduce, the man in whom the fear of God, the love of men, the zeal for life, and true reliability, mingle evenly, at whatever cost. This is the man, and this the mighty influence over other men, enthroned imperishably in this address.

Here is the throne, the scepter, and the key to Lincoln's vast authority. It is patterned and informed from the cardinal constituents of a balanced moral character. It is inwrought within a life that heeds harmoniously, and with heroic earnestness, his own integrity, his God, his fellowman, and things immortal. Holding souls above goods, holding his fellow as himself, holding himself in true respect, and holding God above all, he stands and pleads, with a cogency that is unanswerable, for verities as self-evident to any man as any man's self-consciousness. All his claims in the heart of this address are self-apparent. They are original convictions. They prove and approve themselves. They make no call for substantiation. They confront every man within himself, the light in his eye, the life in his heart, the spring in his hope. They confront every man again within his neighbor. They confront both men again, when together they look up to God. And far within all forms that change, they confront all men forevermore in things that immortally abide.

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This is the truth to which Lincoln pledged his troth, and in which he besought all other men to plight their faith, in this address. The vivid, ever-living dignity in man, discoverable by every man within himself, to be greeted by every one in his brother-man, at once the image and the handiwork of God—this defined all his faith, fired all his zeal, woke all his eloquence, shaped all his argument, winged all his hope. That such a being should be a slave, that such a being should have a slave, was in his central conviction, of all wrong deeds, the least defensible. It was the primal moral falsity, cruelty, insult, and debasement. That such a sin should be atoned, at whatever cost, was the primal task of purity, reverence, tenderness, and truth. Holding such convictions, handling such concerns, for him to make the statement was to give it demonstration. Against such convictions, and in scorn of such concerns, no man could seriously contend without assailing and, in the end, undoing himself. This was the citadel and the weaponry of Lincoln's authority.

And Lincoln found within these views the pledge of permanence. He saw them bulwarked and corroborated by all the lessons and revelations of history. All devices of human society, contending against these rudimentary verities, had been proved pernicious and self-defeating a thousand times. Only such behavior of man with man as harmonized with the creative design, and sprang from endowments that were common to all, could ever hope to last. Here is the sovereign lesson from all the centuries past, and a sovereign challenge for all the centuries to come. As Lincoln viewed it, he was handling a matter beyond debate, when he talked of two centuries and a half of unrequited toil. If that was not wrong, then nothing was wrong. There is the whole of Lincoln's argument, and the whole of his authority. It stood true two hundred and fifty years ago. It will hold fast two hundred and fifty years hence. To deny this is to dethrone all law, turn every freeman's highest boast to shame, and finally banish moral order from human government and from human thought. That this could never be suffered or confessed was the substance of Lincoln's argument, and the sum of his authority. This and this alone was the sovereign lesson that the sacrificial sorrows of the war were searing so legibly, that all the world could read, upon the sinful Nation's breast. And in saying this, Lincoln's voice was pleading as the voice of God.

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### **HIS VERSATILITY—THE PROBLEM OF MERCY**

The study of Lincoln's authority, as it wields dominion in the last inaugural, has brought to prominence his humble readiness to share repentantly with all the Nation, in the bitter sorrows of the war, the divine rebuke for sin. That sin was the wrong of holding slaves. But in all the land, if any man was innocent of that iniquity, it was Lincoln. And yet the honest Lincoln was never more sincere, more nobly true and honest with himself, than in this deep-wrought co-partnership with guilt. Surely here is call for thought.

Lincoln's character was fertile. The principles that governed his development were living and prolific. In his ethics, as in his bodily tissues, he was alive. As the days and years went on, he grew. Like vines and trees, he added to his stature constantly. New twigs and tendrils were continually putting out, searching towards the sunshine and the springs, and embracing all the field. And in all this increase he was supremely pliable. While always firm and strong, he had a wonderful capacity to bend.

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The primary, towering impulse working in Lincoln's life was ethical. Amid the continual medley and confusion of things, he was continually reaching and searching to find and plainly designate the right and the wrong. This stands evident everywhere. Nowhere does this stand plainer than in the period, when, at his second inaugural, he faced a second presidential term. Still straining in the toil and turmoil, in the intense and blinding passion of the war, he halts upon the threshold

of a second quadrennium of supreme responsibility, to see if he can surely trace God's indication of what is right. The eternally right was what he sought. He was after no mere expediency, no ephemeral shift for ephemeral needs. The judgments of the Almighty Ruler of Nations, true and righteous altogether and evermore, were what he prayed to find and know. Then, if ever, Lincoln's earnestness was moral.

And for this search at just this time his eye was peculiarly sobered and grave. Portentous problems were emerging, as the finish of the war drew near. And these problems were new. What should the Nation, when it laid aside its arms, decide to do with the seceded States, and with those millions of untutored slaves? For that no precedent was at hand, no direction in the laws. The conclusion must be original. And it must be supreme. And its issues must hold wide sway for generations of imperial, expanding growth. There loomed an impending peril, and a test of statesmanship, demanding the wisdom, and integrity, and deep foresight of a moral prince—a peril and a moral test but poorly met by the men whom his untimely death thrust into Lincoln's place. For bringing to perfection his ripening judgment upon that task, and so for displaying another historic demonstration of Lincoln's moral adaptability, the few short requisite years were mysteriously to be denied. [120]

But upon other problems and in other days, there was ample revelation of Lincoln's agile moral strength. His entire career in national prominence provides outstanding demonstration of the continual full mobility and plastic freedom of his moral powers. The civil war, which he was conducting with such determination to its predestined end, as he stood the central figure in this second inaugural scene, was but the central vortex of a moral agitation in which all our national principles and precedents were challenged and defied; and in which statesmen of supremely facile, virile, moral sense were in exigent demand. Problems were propounded constantly upon which our Constitution shed no certain light, and the Constitution itself was in a way to be overturned.

Throughout this period of national discord and moral instability, Lincoln was a leading, creative mind. The circuit of that career was brief indeed, scarcely more than one decade. But in those dark, swift years shine and cluster many illustrations of the rich and ready fertility of his ethical postulates in the political realm. Man of the people though he was, and acutely sensitive of his responsibility to the people for every responsible act, he was in every judgment and resolve every inch a king, openminded, original, free. Again, and again, and again, he was the man for the hour.

One demonstration of this is shown in his surprising readiness. With whatever situation, he behaved as though familiar. Undisciplined in diplomacy, he proved himself almost instantly a finished diplomat. Totally untutored in all the acts and practices of war, but compelled by his office to take sovereign command of the Nation's arms, and that so suddenly that even the arms themselves could not be found, he became one of the foremost critics and counselors of perilous and intricate military campaigns. Unaccustomed to authority, but advanced at a leap to the Nation's head, beleaguered by deadly animosities among cliques and sections and States, encompassed by shameless cabinet intrigues, he developed, as in one day, into manager, adviser, administrator of political affairs, the most astute in all the land. [121]

A most impressive example of this adjustability is seen in his manifold capacity for moral patience. It reveals how he could keep his full integrity, while binding up his life and fortune inseparably with men whose moral standards swayed far from his. Lincoln's first inaugural gave luminous definition of his designs and hopes. The principles there propounded were the ripe and firm convictions of a thoughtful, honest life. They had been pronounced repeatedly before. To their defense and consummation his heart and honor were pledged irrevocably. Those propositions were the irreducible rudiments of his faith, the permanent constituents of his hope. Surrender those convictions and desires he never did, he never could. Within the ample compass and easy play of those glowing sentiments there was no room for secession, nor for war, nor for any bitterness, but only for loyalty, fellowship, peace. But as he turned from that inauguration and its declaration of his policy toward the execution of his trust, he had to face and handle secession, war, and malicious defamation. He had to see the Nation's holiest dignity desecrated, all his brotherly offices disdained, the souls of men still held as rightful objects of common trade, and the plainest decrees of God defied. This as shown in the spirit and uprising of the impatient, imperious South. [122]

And within the North, in the very armies assembled for the Union's defence, he had to find the very leaders and plotters of his campaigns absorbed and overcome by petty jealousies, too despicable and unpatriotic to be believed, and yet so real and vicious as to defeat their battles before they were fought. And back among the Union multitudes around his base, were men of might and standing, and men in multitudes, who maligned his motives, and entangled his plans, until antagonism the most malignant and resolved to all his views and undertakings seemed to environ him on every side.

To such conditions it was Lincoln's bitter obligation to conform. Many men were ready with many fond prescriptions for the case; but they all were marked by weak futility. They either brought the Nation no complete relief, or else surrendered the Nation's very life. Within the strain and pull from every side Lincoln felt the obligation of his oath.

The mood and method he employed (and let not the phrase be misunderstood) was moral relaxation. This did not mean that he altered aught of his pronounced belief, or varied by a single hair from his announced design. He remembered his inaugural oath. He retained his faith and hope, and held to his prime resolve unchanged. But he gave the opposition time. He suffered

malignants to malign, seceders to rebel, detractors to impugn; and bore their taunts and blows and wounds patiently, still abiding by his word. His very war was simply for defense. The honor of the Union he would not yield up. His brotherly friendliness he would not forego. His rating of freemen he would not discount. The mandates of God he would not disobey. But while on every hand these might be assailed and abjured, he repressed all violence and vehemence of heart, and endured, and indulged, and was still.

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Herein, however, his convictions and hopes wore a modified guise. Their rigor softened; their lustre mellowed; their angles broadened; their rudeness ripened; and his aspect passed through change; the while his honor brightened and became more clear. This adjustment of such a nature to such a fate is a massive illustration of moral versatility. It is like keeping the steed to the course, while yet laying the rein upon his neck.

Through experience such as this it must have been that Lincoln traversed his profoundest sorrow. Just here his critics and traducers had their firmest hold. To the world at large his tactics did seem slack, his method dilatory, his mood indifferent. Men wearied past endurance at his delay, and charged repeatedly that he had betrayed his trust. Such accusations must have been to his pure loyalty like gall. And yet he must perforce be mute. It was not he, it was the awful situation in which his noble life was manacled, that was so incorrigible. With God and man he pleaded day and night that bloodshed might be stayed, and peace possess the land. But an enemy was in the land, determined not to leave his guns until the Union was dissolved, and slavery vindicated as right. Rather than forsake the Union, and own that men were as the brutes, he would die a thousand times. And with a patience that no malice and no misfortune could wear away, he held his post and kept his word, through torments too severe for unheroic men to bear, producing thus upon his silent, sorrowful face a humble replica of the divine long-suffering of the meek and lowly Christ. And so he taught the world how in patience the righteousness that abhors all wrong may turn its face toward sin with humble meekness, through years that seem like centuries, and cause thereby that pure and Godlike truth and love shall only be more glorious.

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But even with this the description of this case stands incomplete. To understand it rightly further statements are required. After all his patience, the South was obdurate. Even while in this last inaugural Lincoln was pleading for universal charity, and seeking to banish malice everywhere, the leaders of the armies in the South were rallying their unrecruited ranks in a very desperation of hatred for his principles, and of scorn for his forbearance. While he was interpreting the desolations and sorrows of the war as God's all-powerful punishment of slavery, our common national sin, they resented with impassioned vehemence such an explanation, disclaimed all guilt, and denied that slavery was wrong.

Here emerged in Lincoln's thought Lincoln's supreme perplexity. He was dealing with right and wrong, both only the more intensely real, because so really concrete. Liberty and loyalty, loyalty to liberty, the dignity of man, and the good pleasure of God—these were the eternal principles, and the personal interests at stake. Antagonisms were deadly virulent; and they were unrelenting. Compulsion was not availing. Patience likewise failed. Here was a desperate call for moral mastership. The man to meet the crisis, to join the cleft, to reduce to moral harmony this discord of right and wrong, the man who could resolve and morally unify this moral disagreement must have a soul and an understanding whose insight and moral comprehension were complete.

Here Lincoln's moral grandeur gains its full dimension. And in this consummation it comes clear to see how in very deed right and wrong, evil and good, can be encompassed in a moral unison such that evil remains the all-aborrent thing, and good is proved to be alone desired. This marvelous explication is found within the words and tone of this last inaugural. It stands contained in perfect poise within the mutual balancings of his princely pledge to abjure all malice, show universal charity, and still pursue the awful guidance of Almighty God in the prosecution of the war. Herein moral rigor, forbearance, and gentleness do majestically coalesce.

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The breath and voice of this same moral mystery are felt and heard again within this same inaugural in that bold prophetic exposition of the Providential purport of the war. In the burning furnace of those last four years, Lincoln's eyes had been purged to see how the ways of God transcend the ways and thoughts of men. Both North and South, in battle and in prayer, had failed to comprehend the thoughts of God. All the movements of all their armies were being mightily over-ruled. The purposes of the Almighty were his own. Both North and South had gone astray. Neither side was wholly right. The land was under discipline. The Nation had committed sin. That sin was destined for requital. That requital was to be complete. The ways of God were true and righteous altogether. All this the Nation must acquiescently confess. For all the wrong of slavery requital must be made, submissively, ungrudgingly, repentantly. Beneath that judgment every heart must bow. The sin must be abjured. Its wrong must be abhorred. Goodwill to all alike must be restored. And through it all the Almighty must be adored.

Like a solemn litany within a great cathedral, these solemn sentiments of Lincoln resounded through the land, as, in want of any other priest, Lincoln himself led the Nation to the altar of the Lord. He truly led. And to an altar. In this inaugural, Lincoln, for all Americans, bows and veils his own brave heart in sacrificial sorrow and confession, to bear and suffer all that, as the Nation's due, and for the Nation's rescue, it is the will of holy heaven to inflict.

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In this profound, spontaneous assumption of full co-partnership with all the Nation in a Nation's undivided ill-desert; in this uncomplaining acquiescence, while God inflicted upon the land, as an awful scourge, all the shame and cost and sorrow that the woful wrong of slavery had entailed; in this deep discernment that deep in every heart ran and flourished all the baleful roots of greed

and pride, of injustice and cruelty, out from which all man's enbondagement of brother man springs up; in this estimation of human slavery as a primary sin, while receiving without repining its ultimate doom—Lincoln unveils in his single heart, an abhorrence and an endurance of our national sin, that makes him enduringly and indivisibly the friend and brother of us all, accomplishing, in a single moral experience, the pattern of the confession, and of the resolution of our common wrong. Unto this, Lincoln's moral versatility attained. Beyond this, moral versatility could never go.

The same moral dextrousness, this facile power and fluent readiness to fully comprehend and fitly meet the moral mastery of a problem, in itself all but absolutely obstinate and impossible, this wondrous deftness in compounding together guilt and grace in mutual compassion and repentance, is shown in Lincoln's patiently repeated, but always futile efforts to persuade the North and the South to come together, and so bring slavery and all dissension to an end, by giving and receiving fiscal reimbursement for the emancipation of the slaves. To this magnanimous and unexampled proposition, offered in the midst of war, and urged in words and tones of classic winsomeness, the North and South could never be brought unitedly to consent. Therein this moral hero stood like a king against the wrong, argued like a prophet for the right, and led towards mutual penitence and sacrifice like a priest. It is in human history one of the supremest illustrations of moral versatility. Never were Lincoln's character and aim more stable than in that plea. But never was mortal man more mobile. Beyond all his contemporaries he observed and regarded the signs of the times. He saw that the ancient order was certainly to change. He felt that an almighty, a just, and a benignant Providence had assumed control. He discerned that the new order was freighted with vast store of good. To make its entrance gentle, so that nothing should be rent or wrecked, was the sum of all his thought and toil. He took for pattern the coming of the dew. For his method he adopted his own well-mastered and transcendent art of brotherly persuasion. As to manner, he was vested in humility, desiring to eject and ban the pharisee from his own and all other hearts. For prevailing motive he designated the passing hour as a time of unexampled opportunity. "So much good," he said, "has not been done by one effort in all past time, as in the Providence of God it is now your high privilege to do." And for admonition he pointed to the vastness of the future, and a possible lament over a pitiful neglect. But it was all for naught. For such a moral transmutation and free triumph the embattled Nation was unprepared.

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But over against that unrelenting rigor, his moral readiness to meet his brother, friend or foe, in free and mutual sacrifice, glows beautifully. Deep in the heart of his design was struggling heroically, and in balanced moral unison, the Godlike spirit of eternal justice, mercy, and conciliation. In his strong breast all pride was crucified, malice was melted down to tenderness, hypocrisy and sordidness were purged away. His moral outlook was now unobstructed, open every way. Then his soul stood fleet and free for any path within the moral universe. With every man in this broad land he stood ready to journey or sojourn, meek to suffer, resolute to prevail. Sharing with the wrongdoer and the wronged alike their shame and suffering and sin, while urging with immortal eagerness towards fairness and happiness and peace, he resolved and overcame the problem of the slaveholder and the slave, and made this land forever the universal refuge of the free. In such a transmutation, first within himself, and then throughout the land, moral as it is in every fiber, and from circumference to core, is perfect moral concord. Thus, in moral discord, moral freedom finds the way to peace, while full responsibility remains unchangeably supreme. Here is the final, perfect triumph of moral ingenuity. Thus by means of mercy, freely offered and freely received, through mutual fellowship in moral suffering, wrong may be comprehended, and fully overcome, in the unchanged dominion of the right. So moral freedom and moral consistency combine. Men's lives become vicarious. Thus moral versatility culminates, and overcomes, and wins the sovereign moral crown.

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### **HIS PATIENCE—THE PROBLEM OF MEEKNESS**

In the chapter just preceding, Lincoln's patience came into allusion and review. That quality deserves a somewhat closer, separate examination. When Lincoln took his last inaugural oath, he based its meaning upon a statement in his inaugural address, that all the havoc of the war was, under God, a penalty and atonement for a wrong that had been inflicted and endured for centuries. In this interpretation he subtly interwove a pleading intimation that all the land, in reverent acquiescence with the righteous rule of God, should meekly bow together to bear the awful sacrifice. And, deep within this open exposition of his prophetic thought, there gleamed the hidden pledge, inherent in his undiluted honesty, that he himself would not decline, but would rather stand the first, to bear all the sorrow consequent upon such wrong.

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Here is an attitude, and here a proposition which men and Nations are forever prone to scorn; but which all Nations and all men will be compelled or constrained at last to heed. Therein are published and enacted verities, than which none known to men are more profound, or vast, or vested with a higher dignity. They demand attention here.

The statement made by Lincoln pivots on "offenses." Strong men, in pride and arrogance of strength, had wronged the weak. Weak men, in the lowliness and impotence of their poverty, had borne the wrong. In such conditions of painful moral strain the centuries had multiplied. Those long-drawn years of violence had heightened insolence into a defiance all but absolute. Those selfsame years of suffering had deepened ignominy into all but absolute despair. Through banishment of equity and charity, of purity and humility, while all the heavenly oracles seemed mute, fear and hope alike seemed paralyzed. The oppressor seemed to have forgotten his eternal

obligation to be kind and fair. The oppressed seemed to have surrendered finally his God-like dignity. The times seemed irreversible.

Here is a problem that, while ever mocking human wisdom, refuses to be mocked. It enfolds a wrong, undoubted moral wrong; else naught is right. It overwhelms. Within its awful deeps multitudes have been submerged. And it is unrelieved. It outwears the protests and appeals of total generations of unhelped, indignant hearts.

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This problem Lincoln undertook to understand. In his conclusion was proclaimed the vindication of the meek. Beneath that age-long wrong, beneath the silence and delay of God, and beneath the final recompense, he prevailed upon his heart, and pleaded with other hearts to stand in suffering, hopeful acquiescence. Among these sorrows, so wickedly inflicted, without relief, and without rebuke, let patience be perfected. Here let meekness grow mature. Let confidence in our equal and unconquered manhood, and let faith in God not fail to overcome all Godlessness and inhumanity. Let time be trusted absolutely to prove all wrong iniquitous. Let the worth inherent in undying souls be shown to be indeed immortal.

Here is Lincoln's resolution of this profound enigma, a resolution unfolding all its mystery, and involving all his character. Here Lincoln won his crown. This is all his meaning in abjuring malice, and invoking charity. Too kindly to indulge resentment, whatever the provocation, and too sensible of his own integrity to ever court despair, he appealed to God's eternal justice and compassion, and clung to a hope that no anguish or delay could overcome. This is Lincoln's patience. This is the inmost secret of his moral strength. This is his piercing and triumphant demonstration that in this troubled world, where sin so much abounds, it is the meek who shall finally prevail.

This moral patience deserves to be explored. It comprehends ingredients, quite as worthy to be kept distinct, as to be seen in unison. For one thing it identified him with slaves. Therein he bore a grave reproach. Its weight only he himself could rightly compute. Beneath the rude and among the hurt he took deliberate stand. Among the lowly, before the scorner, he held his place. He braved the master's taunts. He penetrated to its heart the cause that kept the black man mute. He measured out, but without indifference, as without complaint, the divine delay. He courted in his thought on slavery a perfect consciousness of its sin. He examined with nicest carefulness the sufferers' impulse towards revenge. He knew the awful misery in human shame. He shared with honest men their proudest aspirations. And all of this, he shared with blacks, not by compulsion, but as a volunteer.

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Herein, and in the second place, he held fast the fundamental claims that every slave retained an ineffaceable affinity with God; that this divine inheritance, however deep the negro's poverty, could never be annulled or forfeited; that friendliness with fellowmen, however hard or sad their lot, was no reproach; that in human sorrows it well becometh human hearts, as it becometh God, to remember to be pitiful; that all invasion or neglect of those inherent human rights and dignities was bound to be avenged; that in God's good time all patient souls would be crowned with song; and that thus his open championship of the cause of slaves was in perfect keeping with his own unaltered and unalterable self-respect.

A third ingredient in Lincoln's patience was its conspicuous and inseparable impeachment of oppression. Lincoln's patience under moral wrong made him no neutral morally. Without fear and without reserve, he held before oppressors, however hard or strong, the enormity of their wrong. Before the cruel their cruelty was displayed. Before the arrogant their arrogance was reflected back. Before the base and foul their sordidness was brought to light. Before disloyal men the perfidy of covenant disloyalty was nakedly unveiled. All the wrongs inwrought and undergone in slavery were recited with insistent accuracy and unreserve. Of all those centuries of unpaid toil each month and year were reckoned up. Of all those sins against pure womanhood and helpless infancy each tell-tale face was told numerically. The moral wrong in slavery was set before its advocates and beneficiaries unsparingly. Patience, whether God's or man's, and whether for one day or for a thousand years, can never be interpreted or understood to diminish sin's iniquity. Its prolonged persistence only aggravates its guilt.

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In the fourth place, there was in Lincoln's patience a waiting deference before God's silence and delay. His total confidence was in God. That God was negligent, or indifferent, he would not concede. His whole abhorrence of oppression was based on God's decree. Here rested also all his hope of recompense. Vengeance belongs to God. He will rebuke the mighty, and redeem the meek. In both, his righteousness will be complete. And when his judgments fall, all men must own adoringly his perfect equity.

Finally, in Lincoln's patience there is explicit recognition and confession of his own complicity with all the land, in the wrong to slaves, and of his own and all the land's delinquency before the Lord, in failure to discern and approbate the divine designs. It had been left with God's far greater patience and far higher moral jealousy to overcome and overwhelm and overrule the devious plans and ways of erring men. In lowly acquiescence it was for him and the land to acquaint themselves with God's designs, confess their wanderings, accept his will alike in redemption and rebuke, and unite henceforth to represent and praise on earth his perfect equity and grace.

Here are the elements in Lincoln's patience, and here their sum. Forming with the lowly and oppressed a free and intimate partnership; avowing jealously for all mankind a coequal dignity among themselves and an imperishable affinity with God; declaring unflinchingly to all who

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tyrannize the full enormity of their primal sin; restraining malice and all avenging deeds; confessing his own misjudgments and misdeeds among his fellowmen and before the Lord; he endures submissively the divine delays, and shares repentantly with all who sin the judgments of a perfect righteousness. Genuinely pitiful for suffering men, sharply jealous for human worth, direct as light to designate the shame in pride, docile as a child before the righteous and eternal rule of God, he illustrates and demonstrates how a perfect patience makes requisition in a noble man of all his noblest manliness.

But worthy as are all its qualities, its exercise entails stern discipline in suffering. It costs a man his life. That this was Lincoln's understanding, as he traversed the responsibility of that last inauguration day, is witnessed unmistakably by his letter to Thurlow Weed respecting his inaugural address. These are his words, well worthy to be reproduced a second time:—

"I believe it (the address) is not immediately popular. Men are not flattered by being shown that there has been a difference of purpose between the Almighty and them. To deny it, however, in this case, is to deny that there is a God governing the world. It is a truth which I thought needed to be told, and, as whatever of humiliation there is in it falls most directly on myself, I thought others might afford for me to tell it."

"Most directly on myself." There Lincoln bares his heart to God and man, in order that upon himself might fall the first, the deepest, and the most direct humiliation. At one with slaves, despised by pride, astray from God prepared for sacrifice—but attesting still that slaves were men, that robbery was wrong, that God was just—so he stands. [134]

But, be it said again and yet again, in such a posture looms nobility. In meekness such as this is nothing craven. It beseems true royalty. Bowing before his God to receive rebuke, bowing to make confession before his fellowmen, he stands as on a hilltop, announcing and declaring to all the world how arrogance proves men base, how lowliness may be beautiful, how reverend are God's mysteries, how just and pitiful his ways. Here is a kingliness that no crown can rightly symbolize. Here is a victory that is not won with swords. In the very attitude is final triumph. It bravely claims, and truly overcomes the world. In such a patience there is present instantly, and in full possession, the vigor of undying hope, and the title of a firstborn son to the heritage of the earth.

This capacity in Lincoln's patience for the close allegiance of self-devotion and self-respect, of sympathy and jealousy, is shown dramatically in his tournament with Douglas in 1858. Throughout those speeches, replies, and rejoinders Lincoln held fast his full fraternity with the slaves, while repressing with his fullest vigor every onslaught against his personal integrity.

The date of those debates marked over four full years, since Douglas had championed through Congress into finished legislation a bill that abrogated all federal limitation of slavery, and opened an unrestricted possibility of its further spread forever, wherever any local interest might so desire. That bill obtained the presidential signature in May of 1854. During the succeeding years Douglas had been shaping public sentiment by his almost royal influence in public speech towards a stereotyped acceptance of the principles and implications of that law. Under his aggressive leadership his party had been well solidified upon three political postulates, which he declared essential not alone to party fealty, but to any permanent national peace. These three postulates were the following:— [135]

Slavery is in no sense wrong.

Slavery is to be treated as a local interest only.

These principles have been sanctioned perfectly by history.

From these fundamental postulates flowed numerous corollaries:—

Black men are an inferior race. This inferiority has been stamped upon this race indelibly by God. The Declaration of Independence did not and does not include the blacks in its affirmations about equality.

This country contains vast sections precisely fitted to be occupied by slavery.

Local interests being essentially diverse, as for example between Alabama and Maine, decisions as to local affairs will also be diverse. This entails divergent treatment of black men, just as of herds and crops.

To the rights of stronger races to enslave the blacks, the fathers who framed our government, our national history since, and the age-long fate of Africa unitedly bear witness.

Counter to these three major postulates of Douglas, Lincoln set the following three:—

The enslavement of men is wrong.

The treatment of slavery is a federal concern.

Our history has contained, and still contains a compromise. Our fathers deemed slavery a wrong. But finding it present when they framed our government, and finding its removal impossible at the time, they arranged for its territorial limitation, for its gradual diminishment, and for its ultimate termination.

From these three fundamental postulates in Lincoln's arguments flowed also various corollaries: [136]

—  
The sinfulness of slavery roots in the elemental manhood of the slave. This manhood warrants his elemental claim to the employment and enjoyment of his life in liberty.

In our form of government, things local and things federal being held within their respective realms respectively supreme, things locally divergent lead to federal compromise.

Certain sections of the country in particular, and the Nation in general being committed, either from policy or from choice, to foster slavery; men who hate the thing as wrong must in patient meekness endure its presence, until in God's own time its presence and its sin and guilt shall be removed.

As will be seen at once, for the purposes of a popular debate, the postulates of Douglas were easier to defend. Of the two sets of premises, his seemed the more simple, more explicit, more direct, more telling with a crowd; while those of Lincoln, by reason of that moral and historical compromise, seemed more confused, more evasive, and not so apt to take the multitude. In the nature of the debate Lincoln had to shape his propositions and replies to face two ways:—towards the practical emergencies of our history and form of government, on the one hand; and on the other hand, towards an ideal nowhere yet attained, and seemingly unattainable. Whereas Douglas, quite unconcerned about any ideal motives in the past, as of any vision of an ideal day to come, but dealing solely with the political situation that day occurrent, could make every affirmation and every thrust against his adversary seem straight, and clear, and impossible to refute. This very practical and substantial disadvantage Lincoln had to bear. Questions that Douglas would answer decisively, and instantly, and with absolute distinctness, Lincoln would be compelled to labor with, in careful deference both to our Constitutional protection of slavery, and to its moral wrong. [137]

This situation in those debates deserves a close attention. The difference in the two positions was most profound. That this deep difference was laid fully bare was the supreme resultant of the debate. It was indeed a difference in principles. But stated yet more narrowly, it was a difference in nothing less than estimates of men, and attitudes towards wrong. It was not a difference in abstract theorems. It was vastly more. It was a difference in the personal qualities of the two protagonists. To test this affirmation let any one imagine Douglas producing from his heart the sentiments, and arranging in his thought the arguments of Lincoln's last inaugural. Douglas sadly erred in his opinion of his time. In Lincoln, in those debates, our government, our history, our ideal as a great Republic stood incorporate. Like our noble history, he patiently endured and bore what he instinctively and inveterately abhorred. This pathetic situation, this invincible anomaly in our national career, is pathetically re-enacted in the fate of Lincoln in these debates.

This at bottom, and this at last is what those flashing falchions and ringing shields declare. This explains the genesis and the actual course of those painful personalities. And it is to study this that these debates have been introduced. In the personal thrusts of those debates two qualities in Lincoln become pre-eminent. He would not forsake his humble championship of slaves. He would accept no thrust against his personal integrity. Let those debates be read, and re-perused until those cardinal elements in Lincoln's attitude come clear. And let it be observed that in no single personality was Lincoln's thrust initial. Douglas opened the debate. In his opening speech he made direct assertions and indirect intimations too gross to be termed subtle, and too staring to be called disguised; imputing and suggesting that Lincoln was in character a coward and a cheat, in his politics a revolutionary, and in his social proclivities contemptible. These same charges were made with unrelenting persistency and reiteration by Douglas throughout the series of the debates. [138]

To every imputation Lincoln made definite and reiterated reply, denouncing them roundly as unwarranted and inexcusable impeachment of his honor, his veracity, and his candor. And then, with measured and exact equivalence, he dealt out to Douglas's face a list of counter personalities of sharply parallel and actual transactions in Douglas's life, meriting precisely his own reproach. And he pressed the battle home so hard that Douglas, in an impassioned height of protest, demanded if Lincoln meant to carry his tactics up to "personal difficulty."

All this is painful confessedly to review. One wishes earnestly, just as with the later civil war, it might never have occurred. But it should be remembered that every retort of Lincoln was, as in the war itself, in personal defense. Lincoln was not the assailant. But once his honor was assailed, it was not the nature of that honor to stand so mute that his own character seemed rightly smirched, while justice rested with his adversary. And so, in self-defense, as in his speech at Quincy, he carefully details, he vigorously returned each thrust. And this, be it constantly recalled, not in any selfishness, not for wounded pride, not for unction to a hurt, not in any vengeful heat; but just as in the following war, in absolute unselfishness, void of malice, in the ministry of charity, that the honor of all men might be saved, and that the Union with its boon of universal freedom and equality might not perish from the earth. [139]

Such was Lincoln's patience, in those earlier debates, and in this last inaugural, the same. While bearing voluntarily in his single life all the opprobrium borne by slaves; through all that fellowship and sympathy, and on its sole behalf, he guarded his own honor with an infinite jealousy. But it was honor saved for suffering. His life was sacrificial. He learned to know full well, but willingly, what meekness costs. Not alone from a political antagonist and an embattled South, but from a multitude of active dissentients besides throughout the North, from Congress, and from the close circle of his cabinet he had to bear with blind misunderstandings, and

malignant misrepresentations of the deeds and qualities and motives of his perplexed and overburdened life.

But whatever his shortcomings or mistakes, whatever his follies or sins, two affirmations about his life will hold forever true. He bore his load. And he kept his path. Through all that stern campaign for liberty and union he turned neither to the right nor to the left. Sorrows and contentions surrounded him continually. But he descried a better time. To speed that day he welcomed sacrifice. He lived and died for nothing else. To show the priceless worth of freemen in a mighty multitude, in a civic league of lasting unison and peace was his supreme commission and consuming wish. To bring that vision near he aspired and submitted to be its pattern and its devotee.

### **HIS RISE FROM POVERTY—THE PROBLEM OF INDUSTRIALISM**

In his first public speech, seeking election to the State Legislature of Illinois in 1832, Lincoln said: "I was born, and have ever remained, in the most humble walks of life." He adds: "If the good people in their wisdom shall see fit to keep me in the background, I have been too familiar with disappointments to be very much chagrined." In the same speech he said: "I have no other (ambition) so great as that of being truly esteemed of my fellow-men, by rendering myself worthy of their esteem."

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Here are three phrases that epitomize Lincoln's ideals and Lincoln's career:—"the most humble walks of life;" "too familiar with disappointments;" and "rendering myself worthy of their esteem." There at the age of twenty-three we are apprised of Lincoln's poverty, of his ambition, and of his adversity. In the same address he says: "I have no wealthy or popular relatives or friends to recommend me." At that time he had been but two years in the State.

In pondering this brief and frank appeal one wonders at the blending of the youthful and the mature, the daring and the wary, the ardent and the chastened, the eager and the sedate, the wistful and the resigned. What had been the inner and the outer history and fortune of him, who at the age of twenty-three could talk of being "familiar with disappointments"—so familiar with experiences of reverse that he could bear the public refusal of his one greatest ambition, that public's "true esteem," without being "much chagrined." Plainly in Lincoln's early life there was a great heart, cherishing a high hope, but environed with poverty, familiar with reversals, unchampioned, unknown. Already he was being refined by manifold discipline. Already in that refining fire he had fixed his eye and set his face to win his neighbor's true esteem. Therein one comprehends his whole career. Out of oblivion and solitude and direst poverty he passed by sheer self-mastery to the highest national authority and renown. Of all the distance and of all the way between those "humblest walks" and that commanding eminence, and of all the pregnant meaning to him and to all Americans, and indeed to every son of Adam, of that achievement, Lincoln had a marvelous discerning sense. He knew full well its vast significance and he never let its vivid recollection lapse. It was always in his living consciousness.

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One impressive proof and token that the meaning of his advancement had permanent place in his remembrance, and that he deemed his fortune an ideal and a type of our American government and life has been preserved in the tone and substance of his address in Independence Hall, when on his way to his first great inauguration. Standing there at the age of forty-one, the Nation's president-elect, and "filled with deep emotion," he said: "I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence." And to give that statement explanation he said, "I have often inquired of myself what great principle or idea it was that kept this Confederacy so long together." And for answer to that inquiry he points to "that sentiment in the Declaration which gave liberty not alone to the people of this country, but hope to all the world for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights would be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance." "Liberty," "hope," "promise," "weights lifted," "an equal chance," "to all," "for all," "of all," "all," "in due time"—these are the terms that answered the question over which he "often pondered" and "often inquired." This was the "great principle," the "idea" which held the Confederacy together. This was the "basis" on which, if he could save the country, he would be "one of the happiest men in the world, if he could help to save it." This was the principle concerning which he exclaimed: "If this country cannot be saved without giving up that principle, I was about to say that I would rather be assassinated upon this spot than surrender it"—words whose purport is seen to be nothing less than tragic, when we recall the peril of death, which he was consciously facing in that very hour from a deep laid conspiracy against his life.

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Thus spoke Lincoln within ten days of his inauguration, in a speech which he says was "wholly unprepared." But the day before, in a speech at Trenton, he characterized that same "idea" as that "something more than common" which away back in childhood, the earliest days of his being able to read, he recollected thinking, "boy though I was," was the "treasure" for which "those men struggled." That "something" he then defines as "even more than national independence;" and as holding out "a great promise to all the people of the world to all time to come."

This lifting of weights from the shoulders of men, this equal chance for all; this was the liberty for which the fathers fought, this was the hope which their Declaration enshrined, this it was whose preservation Lincoln longed to secure above any other happiness, this it was for which he was all but ready to die.

There Lincoln spoke his heart. There he voiced his highest hopes. There he traced his patriotism

to its roots. And there too he touched the quick nerve of his own disappointments, of his own often futile endeavors and desires. And there as well his living sympathy with other men, encumbered with disadvantage and defeat, found mighty utterance. Lifting weights from the shoulders of all men—that in "due time" this should be achieved he judged and felt to be the single sovereign meaning of our national destiny.

Of just this national destiny Lincoln's personal life was a strangely full epitome. His shoulders knew full well the pressure of those "weights." His soul knew all the awful volume of sorrow as of joy, that poured about the denial or the enjoyment of an "equal chance." From the humblest walks to the foremost seat he had been permitted to thread his way. That liberty he chiefly sought in struggling youth. That liberty he chiefly prized as president. And this, not alone for himself, not alone for all Americans, but for "all the world." Thus spoke Lincoln, "all unprepared" in February of 1861. [143]

But these spontaneous words were no passing breath of transient sentiments. In July of that same year he sent to Congress his first Message. That paper was Lincoln's studied and formal argument, a president's deliberate State Paper, addressing to Congress his responsible demonstration that the war was a necessity. In that argument and demonstration his fundamental postulate was a definition of our government. In that definition he affirms its "leading object" to be "to elevate the condition of men—to lift artificial weights from all shoulders; to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all, to afford all an unfettered start, and a fair chance in the race of life." And so he calls the war a "people's contest." And he speaks of its deeper purport as something that "the plain people understand." And he speaks of the loyalty of all the common soldiers—not one of whom was known to have deserted his flag—as "the patriotic instinct of the plain people."

Those words of Lincoln in Trenton and Philadelphia, defining the "leading object" in the minds of the founders of our government in the hours of its birth-travail, define his own idea and ideal as he approached the hour of his presidential oath. That a national government, thus beneficently designed for the equal weal of all, should be preserved inviolate and preserved from dissolution was his supreme desire and his supreme resolve. Its majesty and its integrity must be held most sacred and most jealously preserved. This was the apple of his eye. By the light of this ideal and in the pursuit of this alluring, wistful hope he studied and judged all the movements of his time. And in this, his initial message, he registers his official verdict upon those surrounding evolutions and events. A vast and ever-expanding Confederacy of intelligent and resolute men, leagued together in a Union of Confederate States, and pledged to secure to all men within its bounds a clear path, an unfettered start, and a fair chance in every laudable pursuit, was judged by him a civic undertaking too preciously freighted with promise and hope for the welfare of the world to be ever disrupted and destroyed by the disloyalty and the withdrawal of any one or any cluster of its constituent parts. It was a Union as sacred and holy as all the worth and all the hopes of men. To separate from such a league was a capital disloyalty. To disintegrate such a union was the ultimate inhumanity. To stand fast forever by such a federation was a crowning fidelity. To preserve, protect and defend such a Union, at whatever cost of life or wealth, and therein to adventure however sacred honor was a primary and a final obligation. By its perpetual preservation unimpaired was secured to all mankind the vision and the priceless promise of liberty and hope. By secession, defiance, and violent assault, that precious human treasure was being endangered and defiled. Hence his anxious all-consuming eagerness as he approached his ominous task. Hence his firm acceptance of awful, inevitable war. [144]

Such were the marshalings of Lincoln's thoughts and sentiments as he approached and undertook his mighty work—fit prelude in Independence Hall, and befitting explanation and defense in the Halls of Congress of the mighty rallying of those regiments of men for the awful combats of a people's war. [145]

This was Lincoln's argument. That the rights of life and liberty and happiness were designed and decreed by the Maker of all to be equal for all was for him, as an American, and for him as a fellow and a friend of all, under God, an axiom. And to that firm truth the war was but a corollary. Because the Union was a league of freemen, kindred to God, and peers among themselves, bound together in mutual goodwill and for mutual weal, it must at all hazards and through all perils and sorrows be made perpetual. Not that slavery should be immediately removed, though its existence in such a league was an elemental unworthiness and affront; but that the Union should be forever secured was his immediate aspiration and resolve. This once achieved and forever assured, and slavery with every other kindred inequality would in "due time" be done away.

This is the key and the core of his ringing and irresistible retort to Greeley. This was the inspiration of that immortal appeal at Gettysburg, the very pledge and secret of its excellence and immortality—the plea that government of the people, by the people, for the people should not perish from the earth.

And it was definitively this axiomatic verity that provided to his deeply thoughtful mind that deeply philosophic interpretation of the divine intention in the war, which he so carefully enshrined within his last inaugural. The sin of slavery had transgressed a primary law of God. Human shoulders had been heavily laden with artificial weights. Brother men had been denied by fellow-men an equal start. The paths of laudable pursuit were not kept equally clear to all. Multitudes of men, by the inhuman tyranny of the strong upon the weak, and that from birth to death, had been accorded no fair chance. Men had toiled for centuries, and that beneath the lash, without requital. Hence the awful doom and woe of war—God's visitation upon ourselves of our own offense, the wasting of our unholy wealth and the leveling of our inhuman pride. And all of [146]

this was being guided through to its predestined and most holy end with the divine design that through the awful baptism of blood our national life should begin anew in humble reverence for him whose just and fiery jealousy demands that all his little ones shall share with all the mightiest in equal rights. Thus Lincoln viewed the war as God's avenging vindication of the just and gracious principles that all men everywhere are entitled to share together equally in liberty and hope.

But Lincoln felt all of this to be, not alone the law of God, but quite as truly the common and compelling affirmation of the human heart. This way and style of phrasing it found eloquent annunciation in that earliest and unanswerable address respecting slavery at Peoria in October of 1854, where were deeply laid and may still be seen the foundations of all his power and fame. In that address he said, "My faith in the proposition, that each man should do precisely as he pleases with all which is exclusively his own, lies at the foundation of the sense of justice there is in me." And upon that foundation he laid this cornerstone of social and civic order: "No man is good enough to govern another man without that other man's consent." To so invade the liberty of another man is "despotism." Such invasion is "founded in the selfishness of man's nature." "Opposition to it is founded in his sense of justice." "These principles are in eternal antagonism." When they collide, "shocks and throes and convulsions must ceaselessly follow." These sentiments of liberty are above repeal. Though you repeal all past history, "you cannot repeal human nature." Out of the "abundance of man's heart" "his mouth will continue to speak." And to demonstrate that this sentiment of liberty, this consciousness that human worth is sovereign, is a verity of human nature which even holders of slaves corroborate, he points to the over 400,000 free negroes then in the land. Their presence is proof that deep in all human hearts is a "sense of human justice and sympathy" continually attesting "that the poor negro has some natural right to himself, and that those who deny it and make merchandise of him deserve kickings, contempt and death." This irrepealable law of the human heart was a mighty rock of confidence in Lincoln's social and political faith. All men were made to be free, and entitled equally to a happy life; and of this divine endowment all men everywhere were well aware. Human nature is by its nature the birthplace and the home of liberty and hope.

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Especially serviceable for the purposes of this study upon Industrialism is the section in Lincoln's Message to Congress of December, 1861, dealing with what he calls our "popular institutions." With his eagle eye he discerns in the Southern insurrection an "approach of returning despotism." The assault upon the Union was proving itself, under his gaze, an attack upon "the first principles of popular government—the rights of the people." And against that assault he raised "a warning voice."

In this warning he treats specifically the relation of labor and capital. In this discussion his motive is single and clear. He detects a danger that so-called labor may be assumed to be so inseparably bound up and indentured with capital as to be subject to capital in a sort of bondage; and that, once labor, whether slave or hired, is brought under that assumed subjection, that condition is "fixed for life."

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Both of these assumptions he assails. Labor is not a "subject state;" nor is capital in any sense its master. There is "no such thing as a free man's being fixed for life in the condition of a hired laborer." So he affirms. And then he argues that "labor is prior to and independent of capital." "Capital is only the fruit of labor." "Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration." Hired labor, and capital that hires and labors not—these do both exist; and both have rights. But "a large majority belong to neither class—neither work for others, nor have others working for them." This is measurably true even in the Southern States. While in the Northern States a large majority are "neither hirers nor hired." And even where free labor is employed for hire, that condition is not "fixed for life." "Many independent men everywhere in these Northern States, a few years back in their lives, were hired laborers." The "penniless," if "prudent," "labors for wages awhile;" "saves a surplus;" "then labors on his own account;" and "at length hires another new beginner to help him." "This is the just and generous and prosperous system which opens the way to all, gives hope to all." Here is a form of "political power;" here is a "popular principle" that underlies present national prosperity and strength, and infolds a pledge of its certain future abounding expansion. Thus Lincoln argued in his Annual Message of 1861.

In his Annual Message of 1862, he pursued in a similar strain, a vital and kindred aspect of the same industrial theme. He was arguing with Congress in favor of compensated emancipation. In the course of that argument, speaking of the relation of freed negroes to white labor and white laborers, he said: "If there ever could be a proper time for mere catch arguments, that time surely is not now. In time like the present, men should utter nothing for which they would not willingly be responsible through time and in eternity." And then, after appealing with utmost patience and consideration and with ideal persuasiveness to every better sentiment and to every proper interest, he drew towards the close of his plea with these arresting, prophetic, almost forboding words, words richly worth citation for a second time:—"The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion." "We must disenthral ourselves, and then we shall save our country." "We cannot escape history." "The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation." "We know how to save the Union." "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." "The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just—a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud, and God must forever bless."

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Thus Lincoln voiced, and in terms that human-kind will not lightly suffer to be forgotten, his

seasoned and convinced belief about the principles that should hold dominion in the industrial realm. They reveal that in his chastened and chastening faith Civics and Economics are merged forever in Ethics, and that therein they are forever at one. Individuals, however lowly or however strong; parties or combinations of men or wealth, however massive or however firm; governments or nations, however puissant, ambitious or proud, are alike endowed and alike enjoined with sovereign duties and with sovereign rights. The negro, however poor, may not be robbed or exploited or bound by any master, however grand. The soil of a neighboring government, however alluring its promise of expansion or wealth, may never be invaded or annexed by force of any Nation's arms, however exalted and humane that Nation's professions and aims. If any man, or any Nation of men be but meagerly endowed, that humble heritage is inviolably theirs forever to enjoy. The person of Dred Scott and the soil of Mexico are holy ground—heaven-appointed sanctuaries that no oppressor or invader may ever venture to profane. If to any nation, or to any man "God gave but little, that little let him enjoy." Slavery and tyranny are iniquitous economy. "Take from him that is needy" is the rule of the slaveholder and the tyrant. "Give to him that is needy" is the rule of Christian charity. As between the strong and the weak, the rich and the poor, the timid and the bold, "this good earth is plenty broad enough for both."

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Here is indeed an eternal struggle. But underneath is "an eternal principle." And among the many Nations of the earth this American people are bringing to this principle in the face of all the world a world-commanding demonstration of its benign validity. By the sweat of his face shall man eat bread. And the fruit of his toil shall man enjoy.

So would Lincoln guard, in the industrial world, against all exaggeration and all infringement of human liberties and rights, and this quite as much for the sake of the strong as in defense of the weak. Tyranny, in despoiling the weak, despoils the tyrant too. Liberty does harm to none, but brings rich boon to all. Thus Lincoln cherished freedom.

But deep within this treasured liberty Lincoln saw the shining jewel of human hope. And hope with him was ever neighborly. And this generous sentiment, expanding forever in his heart, he cherished, not merely as common civilian, but as president. It was while at Cincinnati, on his way to his inauguration, that he said, "I hold that while man exists it is his duty not only to improve his own condition, but also to assist in ameliorating mankind." "It is not my nature, when I see people borne down by the weight of their shackles ... to make their life more bitter by heaping upon them greater burdens; but rather would I do all in my power to raise the yoke."

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But true as was Lincoln's view of our national mission, and clear and just and generous as was his own desire, he saw in the Nation's path before his face a mighty obstacle. He knew the fascination of "property." And he knew that this fascination held its malevolent sway, even though that "property" was vested in human life. Here was the brunt of all his battle. The slaves of his day had a "cash value" at a "moderate estimate" of \$2,000,000,000. He saw that this property value had "a vast influence on the minds of its owners." And he knew that this was so "very naturally" that the same amount of property "would have an equal influence ... if owned in the North;" that "human nature is the same;" that "public opinion is founded to great extent on a property basis;" that "what lessens the value of property is opposed;" that "what enhances its value is favored."

With this prevailing tendency, native and universal in all men alike, he had to deal. Indeed he had no other problem. All his presidential difficulties reduced to this:—the universal greed of men for gain; and deep within this inborn greed, man's inborn selfishness. And all his all-absorbing toil and thought as statesman and as president were to exalt in human estimation the values in men above all other gain. This desire lay deep in his heart at the beginning of his struggle in 1854. At the end of his conflict in those closing days of his life in 1865 this longing came forth as pure and shining gold thrice refined.

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From the time of his second election his thoughts moved with an almost unwonted constancy upon these upper heights. With immeasurable satisfaction he brooded and pondered over the emerging issues of the stupendous strife. With an almost mother's love he considered and counted over and reckoned up those outcomes of the sacrifice that should worthily endure. With a vision purged of every form of vanity and every form of selfishness, not as a miser, but in very deed with a mother's pride and inner joy, he recited over the precious inventory of the chastened Nation's wealth.

Touching evidence of this is in his habitual tone of speech when addressing soldiers returning from the field to their homes. Over and over again he would remind the men of the vital principle at stake, alike in war and in peace. "That you may all have equal privileges in the race of life;" that there may be "an open field and a fair chance for your industry, enterprise, and intelligence—this is 'our birthright,' our 'inestimable pearl.'" Nowhere in the world is presented a government of so much liberty and equality." "To the humblest and the poorest among us are held out the highest privileges and positions." It is hard to say, when he was voicing his satisfaction and his gratitude to these returning regiments, to which his words were most directly addressed, to the soldier in the uniform, or to the citizen. All those veteran soldiers were to his discerning eyes the precious sterling units of the Nation's lasting wealth. In their service as defenders of the Union they had saved the most precious human heritage that human history ever knew or human hope conceived. And of that heritage and hope they were themselves the exponent. Their service under arms and their civilian life in coming days of peace were one. And with a deep and fond solicitude he would charge them to shield and guard, to champion and defend with ballot as with sword their dear-bought liberty and right. These peaceable precious fruits of the deadly terrible war he

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well foresaw and greeted eagerly. The verdict of the ballots in his re-election in 1864 proclaimed afar a word the world had never heard before. It "demonstrated that a people's government can sustain a national election in the midst of a great civil war." That verdict declared authoritatively that government by the people was "sound and strong." And it also showed by actual count that after four terrible years of war the government had more supporting men than when the war began. This abounding victory filled and satisfied his heart. And in the presence of that unexampled proof that equal liberty for all was safe within the guardianship of common men, he exclaimed with a prophet's vision of the living unison of civic and economic weal:—"Gold is good in its place, but living, brave, patriotic men are better than gold."

Such were Lincoln's principles as he defined a Nation's true prosperity and wealth. A Nation's strength, a Nation's honor, a Nation's truest treasure is in her men. Men of freedom and men of hope, men intolerant of tyranny, men resolved to be worthy of themselves and conscious of kinship with their Maker, men jealous equally of their own and their brother's liberty, men who welcome all the bonds involved in a friendly league of equal duties and equal rights, men in whom the amelioration of all is a ruling desire, these are the chief and best achievement in the proudest Nation's wealth. To undervalue men, preferring any other good, is to cherish in a Nation's heart the source of its undoing. More to be prized than finest gold is every citizen. However weak and humble any man may be, his honor is sacredly above offense. To leave the burden of the feeble unrelieved, or to clog the progress of the slow is in any Nation's history a primal sin, and is sure to be abundantly revenged. For such a sin no store of wealth has power to atone. A sin like that a sinner himself must bear. This is the central thought of the last inaugural. These were the human sentiments lying underneath all Lincoln's economic faith. To these firm virtues he held devotedly, whether counseling the Nation as its president, projecting negro colonies as the negro's friend, or offering to an idling, impecunious brother a dollar gratis for every dollar earned.

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Men are equal; men are free. Men are royal; men are kin. Men are hopeful; men aspire. Men are feeble; men have need. Men may prosper; men may rise. Melioration is for all. Men have duties; men have rights. Rights are mutual; duties bind. Every man resents offense. Only despots can offend. Human tyranny is doomed. Vengeance waits on every wrong. God is sovereign, kind and just. These are Lincoln's sentiments. These he nobly illustrates. These are laws which he defends. These are truths he vindicates.

These few fundamental principles, applied anywhere in the industrial field, would soon and certainly put in force wholesome, everlasting, all-embracing laws. If, like Lincoln himself, men start in penury with never a favor and never a friend, then, like him, they must hire themselves to other men for the going wage. But every such a contract must be forever subject to a fair and orderly recall. The humblest earner of a daily wage must be forever free, free to continue or to withdraw. To his freedom and improvement, to his enheartenment and hope all industrial regulations must conduce. This is basic. This alone is generous and fair. And only here can any government win permanence and peace.

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Here are Lincoln's primal postulates in social economics. Moral imperatives are over every man. Moral freedom is in every breast. Within the nethermost foundations of any mortal's share in any social fellowship must rest his own self-wrought integrity and self-respect. To make that social fellowship in any form perpetually secure each man must seek with all his heart and with continual willing sacrifice the lasting welfare of every party and of every part. That this be safely guaranteed each man must learn to estimate his brother-man, not by epaulets and coins, but by immortal standards, such as only living persons can achieve. To make this social league invincible within, each member in the fellowship must show a true humility, abjuring all temptation or desire to be a despot or a grandee. And through it all this social compact must be cherished and revered as ordained by a God of pure and sovereign truth and love. Thus by friendly ministry, in unpretending honesty, in brother-kindliness, as sharing in a common immortality, under the favor and in the fear of God, may fellowmen in multitudes be fellow citizens in a civic order that may hope for perpetual prosperity. This is the resounding message that Lincoln's life transmuted into speech through his pathetic and inspiring rise from poverty.

### **HIS PHILOSOPHY—THE PROBLEM OF REALITY**

The study of Lincoln's moral versatility, examined in a former chapter, ranging as it does through all the measure of the moral realm, verges all along its border on the domain of philosophy. Lincoln has scant familiarity, it is true, with the rubrics and the problems, the theories and the methods of the schools. His boyhood was in the wilderness; locusts and wild honey were his food. Such education as he achieved was in pathetic isolation. It was a naked earth, unfurnished with any aids or guides, from which his homely hard-earned wisdom was laboriously wrung. But his Maker dowered him with a mind attempered to defiance of every difficulty. And, however stern the face of his life's fortune might become, his sterner will and diligence found in her solitudes her choicest treasures. To minds that nimbly traverse many books, thinking to have gained the substance of great truths, when they have only gained vain forms, this may seem to be impossible. But Lincoln's mind had traversed severest discipline. He found rare substance of intellectual wealth. And he knew its solid worth. Of this, as has been shown, his first inaugural yields shining proof. Almost every sentence is as the oracle of a sage.

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But his second inaugural, too, is a gem of wisdom, clear and pure, fit ornament for any man to wear in any place where wisest men convene. Let keenest eyes examine narrowly the aspiration

with which this second inaugural concludes. There shines a wish as bright as any human hope that ever shone in human breast—a wish that all the earth might gain to just and lasting peace. That yearning plea was voiced upon the very breath that spoke of the battles and wounds, the dead and the bereft, of a mighty Nation in fratricidal war. The peace he sought for within all the land, and through all the earth, was to be the national consummation of a conflict in which multitudes of men and millions of treasure had been offered up under God in the name of charity and right. Such was the wording and the setting of this wish.

Comprehend its girth. It encircled all the earth. This cannot be said to be nothing but the ill-considered aspiration of an inexperienced underling. It is the prayer of one who for four terrific years had held the chief position in conducting the executive affairs of one of the major empires of the world. During all that time, among the bewildering and imperious problems of an era of unexampled civil convulsion, hardly any complications had been more obstinate or more disturbing than those bound up in the relation of the United States to the other major Nations of the world. Within those international complications were infolded problems and principles as profoundly fundamental as any within any Nation's single life, or within all the reach of international law. In such a situation and out of such a career Lincoln culminates the declaration of his policy for a second presidential term with an invocation of just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all Nations.

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Again let it be said, and be it not forgotten, that it is from the lips of Lincoln that this appeal ascends. He is not a novice. He is a seasoned veteran. Coming from that heart, and spoken in that hour, those words cannot be lightly flung aside. They are the longing of a man who, through almost unparalleled discipline, has attained an almost peerless sobriety, sincerity, and clear-sightedness. Too honest to utter hollow words, too deliberate to accept an ill-judged phrase, too discerning to recommend a futile and unlikely proposition, and sobered far beyond any power or inclination to play the hypocrite, we must concede that Lincoln meant and measured what he said. In simple fairness, and in all sobriety, we must allow that Lincoln understood that the principles which guided him as national chief magistrate, and the goal towards which he was driving everything in his conduct of the war, contained all needed light and power for winning all the world to perpetual harmony. This is nothing less than to allow in Lincoln's deeds and words the sweep and insight of a philosopher. And it is but simple justice, though of vast significance, to append just here that it was in the office and person of John Hay, Lincoln's private secretary, when later he was our Secretary of State, that there dawned and brightened the new era in international diplomacy, now in our day so widely inaugurated, and so well advanced. It can be truly added that in this vast arena, where mighty Nations are the actors, and in very fact all the world is the stage, those cardinal moral traits of Lincoln, and his transparent and commanding personality, so steadfast and vivid and gentle and meek, have no need to borrow from other and ancient theories and illustrations of world-wide statesmanship either light or power. That each individual retain unsmirched and undiminished his pristine self-respect as the cornerstone of all reliability, his neighborly kindness as the prime condition of all true comity, his child-like deference towards God as the basis of all genuine dignity, and his rating of human souls above all perishable goods as the absolute and essential foundation of any perpetuity, forms a programme as elemental and imperial among mightiest Nations, as among humblest neighborhoods of men. Lincoln's obedient recognition of the Almighty's purposes in over-ruling national affairs, his king-like resolution to hold loyally by his innate sense of equity, his eagerness for the elevation of all the oppressed, his instinctive aspiration in his civic life for foundations that cannot fail, and his uncomplaining fellowship with the penal sorrows of his erring fellow citizens,—all apprehended and defended and adhered to with such a lucid mind and steadfast will and prophetic hope upon the open platform of our American Republic—propose both in active practice and in reasoned theory a pattern of statesmanship, capable of comprehending the political conditions, and directing the diplomacy of all the governments of the world. Here are the primal conditions and constituents of international amity. Agreements constructed and defended thereupon among the Nations could not fail to be fair. They would surely endure. And as the centuries passed, the faith of Lincoln in a Ruler of Nations, just, benign, eternal, supreme, would aboundingly increase.

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But once again it must be said that these are not the themes, nor this the flight of an untrained imagination. The peace among all Nations towards which Lincoln's hope appealed, was being patterned upon a just and lasting achievement among ourselves. And among ourselves the government was being tried in the burning, fiery furnace of a civil war. It was being proved in flames what factors in a national civic order were permanent, and fair, and approved of God. It was out of deep affliction and unsparing discipline, rebuking all our sins, humbling all our vanity, purging all our hopes, and cementing among ourselves a just and lasting brotherhood, that Lincoln found the heart to hope for perpetual fraternity through all the world. Within his wish deep-wrought, hard-earned, clear-eyed wisdom was crystallized. It was an imperial proposition, momentous, comprehensive, profound. It embodied nothing less than a political philosophy.

But these assertions demand a closer scrutiny. Does Lincoln's thought, in scope and mode, deserve in any sense to be entitled a philosophy? In soberness, is any such pretension justified? Are Lincoln's principles so radical, so comprehensive, so well-ordered, as to deserve a title so supreme?

All turns on truly understanding Lincoln's apprehension of reality. Lincoln's world was a society of persons. God, himself, his fellowman engrossed his thought and interest. Among all persons, as seen and known by him, there was a full affinity. All men were equal, and all were kindred to the great God. This was the starting point, this the circuit, and this the goal of all his conscious

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thought and toil. This was his world. To penetrate its nature was to handle elements. To grasp those elements was to be inclusive. And to comprehend their native correlation was to master fundamental wisdom.

Here Lincoln shows his mental strength. Among all these elements he traced a fundamental similarity. A common pattern embraced them all. The highest and the lowest were essentially alike. All were dowered with kindred capacities for nobility. He never suffered himself or any of his fellowmen to forget his own elevation from lowliest ignorance and poverty to the presidency. However humble, all could rise. However ignorant, all could learn. However unbefriended, all deserved regard. Life and liberty and happiness were a common boon, an even, universal right. For fellowship with God, even when buffeted beneath divine rebukes, all might hope. The ultimate, open possibility of such divine companionship is shown in this last inaugural, where Lincoln's keen discernment avails to comprehend, that even sinning men may, through penitent acceptance of heaven's rebukes, win heaven's favor and walk with God. Thus Lincoln learned and knew that among all men, and between all men and God there was a fundamental ground of imperishable affiance. Here lies the foundation of his philosophy.

And this affiance was in its being moral. With him the real was ethical. Pure equity was the primal verity. By character were all things judged. Politics and ethics were identical. In the thought of Lincoln the qualities constituting our American Union, the qualities that defined and contained its very being, the qualities that made it a civic entity, securing to it its coherence and perpetuity, the qualities guaranteeing that it should not dissolve and disappear in the fate and wreck of all decaying things, the qualities that made it worth the faithful care of God and the loving loyalty of men, were identical with the qualities constituting himself a free, responsible soul. The same humble reverence, the same mutual goodwill, the same regard for durability, the same jealousy for integrity as informed his personal conscience and inspired his personal will, should form the law and determine the deeds of the Nation as well, if the Nation was ever to have in its civic being a dignity worthy to survive. Here is a standard conformable at once with the measure of things in heaven, the measure of a Nation, and the measure of every man.

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Such is the scope of this inaugural. In penning that grave paragraph touching "unrequited toil," Lincoln had his eye alike upon the individual slave, upon the Nation as a whole, upon long centuries, and upon the ways of God. It may be said with equal truth that he was pondering the sin and hurt of a single act of fraud, the vital structure of organic civic life, the continual tenure of right and guilt through lives and times that seem diverse, and the unison of moral estimates that hold with God and men alike forever. This may not be denied. The sin inflicted in a single wrong, like that of slavery, may implicate a Nation in a guilt that, under the impartial and upright rule of God, the centuries cannot obliterate. Inhuman scorn, short-sighted greed, disloyalty and cruelty, however disguised, or however upheld, entail a doom too certain and too sovereign for the centuries to unduly defer, or for any nation to ever annul.

Here are principles undeniably. And as undeniably these principles are supreme. A just God is over all. To his high purposes all things, even the most perverse, must eventually conform. To his right rule even unrighteous men must bend. Into intelligent harmony with his will all upright men may come, finding in lowly acknowledgment of his great majesty their true dignity, in loyalty to his pure righteousness their own complete integrity, in imitation of his universal benignity their perfect mutual friendliness, and in a vision of his eternal purity their assurance of personal and civic perpetuity. Thus in the midst of all being, and in the conscious presence of Him in whom all being finds its source, our personal, human being finds its transcendent dignity and crown. Living thus, and living thus together, men find life indeed. Thus all, endowed alike with the common sanctity of life, enjoying equally the common right to liberty, share equally a common boon of happiness. Thus each man alone and thus the civic order as a whole may survive and flourish under God in just and lasting peace.

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This, in Lincoln's thought, was final, comprehensive truth. Taken in all its foursquare amplitude and unison, there was nothing human it did not avail to fitly arrange and fully circumscribe. Whether for man alone or for men in leagues, whether for States supreme or for States confederate, it provided every needful guide and bond. As for the international arena, so for every lesser realm of social life, the principles enshrined in this inaugural are civic wisdom crystallized. They proffer to our human social life nothing less than a philosophy.

This is the wisdom literally inscribed upon the tablet of this last inaugural. To unveil its face before an ever heedful and ever more attentive world is being found a sovereign function of succeeding time. Men are ever learning, but have ever yet to learn what Lincoln was. Despite his fame, his proper glory has been veiled. His features have been shadowed, almost smirched. His reputation has been overlaid with rumours and reports of excessive pleasure in ribald, rollicking hours in wayside inns. But in his very laughter there were deep hints of measured soberness. Seasoned wisdom flavored all his wit. His very folly was profound. But when his mood of frolic passed, when, and almost without any inner change, his outer mien grew serious, and sadness brooded on his face, then his speech was fed from nether springs. Then his lips were freighted from afar, and his speech was rich with precious lore.

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In his inmost instinct Lincoln was a philosopher. Out of life's complexities he was always searching for its clue. His speeches deal at bottom with nothing but details. But out of the mesh of those details he was always weaving principles. It is this that gives his words their weight. He is by his own right a true philosopher. It was true wisdom with which he dealt. With true wisdom he was in love. In his own character he has garnered all his gains. By self-refinement he has

become a Nation's pattern. In himself are treasured all the honors, dignities, and rewards that appertain to a worthy devotee of wisdom. Assuredly, and beyond all fair dispute, the author of this last inaugural, when fairly measured and esteemed for what he was, and what he did, and what he overcame in civic realms by sheer original research, far more than any Dr. Faust, deserves his doctorate and degree. In sober verity the author of this inaugural is a true Doctor of Philosophy.

### HIS THEODICY—THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

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The last preceding chapter closed with an allusion to Dr. Faust. That reference may now be profitably resumed. Goethe's Faust is introduced as in deep uneasiness before the unsolved mysteries of life. He is described as having mastered all that all the Faculties can give, but all to no sure end, and as being then beguiled into other paths and scenes, there to prosecute afresh his quest for present satisfaction. In this new quest he accepts the guidance of a scorners into realms of magic, sorcery, and witchcraft; into scenes of ribaldry, debauchery, and basest sordidness; into lust, murder, and treacherous unfaithfulness; into a devilish trade for present carnal happiness, at cost of freedom, reason, and any heed for future destiny.

One notable feature in all this quest is its submergence in the sea of things that surge up around the passing life, only to pass away themselves and disappear. His riddles and his quests, his ideals and delights are largely physical. His guide does not conduct him into the steadfast presence and observation of things permanent and spiritual. He is prone to make him roam in realms of magic, where forms and deeds are too thin and vague to be even shadows, and too false to be even artificial, but where yet each scene excites the imagination to perishing desires for joys of sense. Carnal potions, charms, and lust; physical tumults and delights so largely occupy the central place in all the scenes, that the riddles Faust would fain resolve are, to a large degree, the mysteries of the universe of sense.

Now let any man compare the major problems in the mind of Goethe's Faust with the problems that Lincoln felt to be supreme. One discovers instantly a vast divergence. Themes and questions, that to the very end of Goethe's life perplexed and vexed his thought, were in Lincoln's writings not so much as named.

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But far beyond all this. The vast, unwieldy world of solid sense, so baffling, but so sure, now so terrible, and now so kind, now serving, and now crushing boastful, trembling man, now begetting, and now absorbing endless, countless generations and multitudes, seems not to constitute a vexing or perplexing theme in Lincoln's most insistent thought. This can never be explained as due to a painless, care-free, earthly lot; nor to a pampering environment; nor to physical stolidity; nor to incapacity for aesthetic joys. The lines that seamed his face, the muscles that leashed his frame, the structure of his hands, the meaning message upon his lips, his shadowed, sobered, brooding eyes attest a different tale. Lincoln was sufficiently aware of the plain and common sorrows incident to our earthly environment. He knew what havoc cold and heat, hunger and pain, toil and want, plague and death could visit upon our human life. But none of these things seemed to trouble him. So engrossed was he with questions he called "durable," that all physical discomforts and distresses, with their connected pleasures and desires and hopes and fears, were but passing, minor incidents.

This undoubted fact in Lincoln's mental habitude is a signal and significant factor, to be held in careful estimation in a final judgment of Lincoln's character. Ethics, pure ethics, themes that dealt with realms where man is truly responsible and truly free, were his supreme concern from first to last. And so it comes to pass that the problem, which for him is truly fundamental and ultimate, passes wholly by at once all that burden of so-called evil, in the fear and hurt and mystery of things inflexible, and clings fast hold of things alone that are responsible and free.

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Touching the theme of this chapter, and touching also this last inaugural, the following letter, written March 15, 1865, to Thurlow Weed, already cited and considered once, deserves a bit of heed again:—

Every one likes a compliment. Thank you for yours on my little notification speech and on the recent inaugural address. I expect the latter to wear as well as—perhaps better than—anything I have produced; but I believe it is not immediately popular. Men are not flattered by being shown that there is a difference of purpose between the Almighty and them. To deny it however, in this case, is to deny that there is a God governing the world. It is a truth which I thought needed to be told, and, as whatever of humiliation there is in it falls most directly on myself, I thought others might afford for me to tell it.

Truly yours,  
A. LINCOLN.

This letter shows what Lincoln judged to be the secret of this inaugural's permanent hold on human approbation. It was its humble testimony to the fact that, amidst and above the errors and sins, the struggles and failures of men and Nations, there is a world-governing God. Here opens a theme that is truly sovereign and ultimate.

The last inaugural reveals that Lincoln was closely pondering two incongruous themes: the bitter career of slavery; and the just rule of God.

Touching the first—the fact of human slavery—whatever other men might think, in Lincoln's view

it was always abhorrent, a primary immorality. He was naturally "anti-slavery." Even in this address, guarded against all malice, and suffused with charity, he could not forbear from saying:—"It may seem strange that any men should dare to seek a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from other men's faces." Man's right to live was in his thought primal. That right carried with it the right to enjoy the bread that his own hands had earned. Such a privilege was the central element in human happiness. Such felicity was elemental. Such freedom and such joy were the simplest common boon in our common, earthly lot.

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The institution of slavery blasted that joy, denied that liberty, robbed that right to life. This annihilated hope. It ranked men with brutes. Such a ravaging of human desires and human rights Lincoln judged, from the side of the slave-holder, a paramount crime; and from the side of the slave, an insufferable curse. The terrible enormity of both crime and curse was measured in Lincoln's estimation by the enormity of the war. Viewed any way, that war was the indication and register of the wrong done, and the wrong borne, by men in the centuries of slavery. Arrogance and insolence, ruthlessness and cruelty, dishonesty and faithlessness, luxury and lust, trailed all along its path. That, in a Republic dedicated to liberty, men would go to war and fight to the death with their fellow-citizens in defense and perpetuation of tyranny and bonds, gave evidence to the strange and obdurate perverseness involved and nurtured in the mood and attitude of men that were bent on holding fellow men as slaves. The existence of such an institution in any land Lincoln deemed a national calamity; in a free Republic he felt it to be a heaven-braving anomaly and affront. It was a flagrant evil, bound to bring down woe.

But in the deep entanglements of history this baleful institution had to be condoned, even in this land made sacred to the free. Inbred within the Nation in the Nation's very birth, that it be sheltered within the Nation's life became a national responsibility. From this firm bond Lincoln himself could not escape. In the Constitution that Lincoln swore to uphold, when first he took the presidency, slavery was sheltered, if not entrenched. As chief magistrate of the whole Republic, however obnoxious slavery might be, he had the obnoxious thing to protect. This he freely admitted, and explicitly declared in his first inaugural.

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Here was the beginning of his final, moral debate. How should he morally justify himself in defending what he morally abhorred? That this dual attitude should be assumed he seemed fully to concede. This shows most clearly, and in its sharpest moral contradiction, when, in his first inaugural, he volunteered to permit an amendment to the Constitution, enacting, as the supreme law of the land, that slavery should remain thereafter undisturbed forever. How he brought his mind to take that stand has never been made clear. He said in that connection that such an amendment was in effect already Constitutional law. But previous to that date he had always pledged and urged forbearance with slavery, on the understanding that such forbearance was only for a time; that, as foreseen and designed by the men who framed the Constitution, slave holding was always to be so handled, as to be always on the way to disappear. It is not easy to see how a man, to whom the practice of holding slaves was so morally repellent, could participate in making it perpetual. One could wish that just this problem had been frankly handled under Lincoln's pen. It must have been plainly before his thought. And the words of few men would be more worthy of careful record and review than deliberate words from Lincoln upon this world-perplexing query:—how adjust one's thoughts and acts to a moral evil, that inveterately endures, and is never atoned? But in fact that amendment was never carried through. One of the fruits of slavery was its rash unwisdom at just this juncture.

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Still, though the amendment lapsed, slavery held on. And slaveholders tightened their resolution to retain their rights in slaves, or rend the Union. This precipitated war. This may seem to have doubled Lincoln's problem, slavery and national dissolution. Standing at the apex of national responsibility, he had to bear the hottest brunt of the physical anguish, the mental perplexity, and the moral sorrows of a war waged by a slave-holding South in militant secession. But in reality, in his thought, the two were one. All turned on slavery. This was the burning blemish in the Constitution. This was the intent of the war. This was the burden on his heart. Here was a load too grievous for any man to bear. It bore preponderantly on him. And yet, as regards any personal and conscious desire or deed, he was through and in it all conscious within himself of innocence. His trial and sorrow were without cause. How now, in his soberest thought, was all this moral confusion explained? Hating slavery with all his heart, innocent all his life of any inclination to rob another man of liberty, but pledged and sworn to shelter slavery under the arm of his supreme and free authority, how could he prove himself consistent morally?

Here emerge the profoundest thoughts of Lincoln on the ways of God. And herein appears his contribution to a theodicy—a vindication of God's moral honor, where his moral government seems slack. How can thoughtful men conceive and hold that God is just, when such injustice and disaster are allowed at all, much less for centuries; in any corner of the earth, much less where heaven's favor seems to dwell?

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Upon this subduing theme this last inaugural gives us Lincoln's most explicit words. Of God's personal being, and of his personal care, this address shows Lincoln to be perfectly assured. This was his standing attitude and confidence. Throughout his years in the presidency this trust had seemed unwavering. Indeed, by repeated, almost unconscious attestations, it was his stablest trust. Some of his utterances are tender and touching testimonials to his belief that God rules in his own personal career. But mainly his confessions of belief in the Providence of God are connected with national concerns. He did joyfully, almost jubilantly believe that this Republic was under God's special watch and care. His own hope for our national future well-being and honor rested mainly, we must judge, upon the tokens he thought he could trace in our thrilling and

inspiring history of the divine controlling care. At bottom it was this faith that underlay all his patriotism. That the fundamental affirmations of our Constitution were rescripts and digests from the will and word of God was the lively ground and unfailing confirmation of his pure devotion to his Nation's honor and weal. More than aught in all the world beside, it was this religious faith that steadied and girded his will through all those strenuous days.

It is just here that this study of a theodicy sets in. Above all his former thoughts about himself, about his land, about the clash of right and wrong; above all thoughts of other men, and other times; even above his own and his opponents' former prayers and faith, he lifts new thoughts in new reverence and new docility towards God.

Still naught but slavery in his theme—its undeniable iniquity; its strange, prolonged permission; his own, and all other men's responsibility; its unavoidable entail in penalty; and the divine, enduring terms of new liberty and peace. Here are themes and fixed realities that seem eternally to disagree. Can they ever all be morally harmonized? Could even God enlighten that dark past? Could his own historic acts be morally unified? Nothing he had ever done with slavery, not even its utter elimination in his act of freedom, had ever been done, he explicitly affirmed, on moral grounds. Yet slavery, and by his own hand, was indeed undone. But even so the spirit of the South was still invincible, and war was holding on. What indeed could be the thoughts and plans of God? [171]

To begin with, he confesses both North and South and all the land gone wrong. This is the first component in his theodicy. Neither North nor South, not even in the act of prayer, had walked with God, nor found the truth, nor gained its wish. All thoughts of men, in the righteous rule of God, were being overturned. This confession verges near to worship, acclaiming, as it does, the Almighty's designs; and venturing as it does, to trace and reproduce the Almighty's thoughts.

Here is seen how genuine is the moral earnestness in Lincoln's earnest thoughtfulness. As though by a very instinct, his form of words betrays his reverence. He refrains from dogmatism. He refrains even from affirmation. He knows he is venturing upon a daring flight. He is assuming to conjoin together into a moral unison that bitter sample of the age-long cruelty of man against his brother, and the transcendent sovereignty, the eternal justice, and the age-long silence of God. His formula is a modest supposition. But within its modesty is an eye that searches far.

He takes resort in one of the most trenchant declarations of Christ, that momentous saying in his colloquy about the majesty and modesty of a little child:—"Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." [172]

In this colloquy Jesus seems to be moved by a tender impulse of affectionate jealousy for the model beauty and grace of children. But that tenderness is roused into one of the most terrific outbursts that ever passed his lips. Little children are Christlike, Godlike, models of the citizenship in the heavenly Kingdom. God is their jealous guardian and defender. But Godlike, and of heavenly dignity though they be, they are shy and frail. And men, as they grow gross and impudent, abuse and offend their defenselessness. So things have to be. But woe to such offenders. They were better tied to that mammoth stone that the mule turns in the mill, and submerged in the abyss of the deep of the great sea.

Here are four noteworthy elements:—a blended heavenly modesty and majesty and innocence; an insufferable insolence; a trebly-terrible penalty; and a strange and ominous necessity.

Over these four factors Lincoln's mind must have pondered long. Else how explain their place in this inaugural? They form the foundation of its central paragraph, and constitute its paramount argument; forming alike a sobering admonition, and a humble ground of hope to all the Nation, while at the same time holding aloft before the Nation's thought the outline and substance of a stately vindication of the ways of God. Evidently here is shapely fashioning in lucid speech of Lincoln's ripest, surest thought. As one faces all its range, it seems like the open sky, clear but fathomless. But its wisdom is doubly sealed, and it bears a double claim to our respect. It shows the way of Lincoln's mind, and the way of the mind of Christ. Not quickly will any other thinker, however disciplined, traverse all its course. But travel where he will in the mighty orbit of this inquiry, the modern thinker, whatever his attainment, may find in this inaugural shining indications that Lincoln's thought has gone before. [173]

In this modest, far-searching supposition, transferred to American history from the lips of Christ, Lincoln firmly grasps two solid facts, elemental and universal in human life:—the beautiful modesty of the meek; and the ugly arrogance in the strong. Strength and weakness needs must be. These invite to rudeness and retreat. Then the powerful overbear. The gentle are overborne. Offenses multiply. The arrogant prevail. So must it be. But when the meek go down beneath the wicked rudeness of the strong, then the Most High God, within whose firm dominion both strong and weak share equally in all the privileges and rights of liberty and law, sets over the offended one his shield, and against the proud offender his sword, until pity and equity are enthroned upon the earth again. Thus must it be. The meek must suffer. Offenders must arise. But meekness is a heavenly, Godlike quality. And as with God, so with his gentle little ones, patient gentleness will be duly vindicated; rude arrogance will meet exact and fit rebuke; and it will stand clear that strength and weakness may dwell together in equity and liberty and peace.

This was the age-long moral process which Lincoln's eye discerned, and the final issue which his expectation hailed. Then and therein his eye discerned that all voices would be constrained to

proclaim that in all the moral world pity and equity were prevalent; that the least had Godlike majesty; that humility gave to all the great their courtliness; and that there was within all men a fadeless worth, far outranking all other wealth.

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But it is essential to note, not alone that Lincoln offers this in the modest form of supposition; but that, as it leaves his lips, it assumes the formula of a confession. Even the meek receive rebuke. The gentlest have wandered also away from God. The problem has surpassed us all. All have somewhat to learn from God. That arrogance may meet its due, meekness must be yet more meek. It must needs be that offenses come. Greater than all our wrong, and all our patience, is the patient truth of God. This must be fully learned. It is under wrong that wrong is made right. It is by meekness under arrogance that arrogance is put to shame. It is by gentleness under rudeness that rudeness is subdued. Offenses must needs be. Only in sacrificial submission to its woe is the problem of evil ever resolved. Only thus is the iniquity of the sin measured back upon the evil doer in a symmetrical and equivalent rebuke.

But this is never to exculpate the offender or condone the offense. Blood with the sword, drop for drop, must be meted out to the slaveholder, as he meted out to the slave blood with the lash. All the wealth that the bonds-man's lord has snatched from the toiling slave must be yielded up. Over human scorn and greed and injustice and cruelty hang unfailingly judgments that are true and righteous altogether. Neither may they who are offended rail, nor they who offend exult, over the divine delay. Nor when God's judgments fall may they who are rebuked complain, nor they who are redeemed turn exultation into arrogance. God's ways, and his alone are even, and altogether true.

In thoughts like these Lincoln's final explanation of the ways of God took form. In patient, repentant, adoring acquiescence his heart found rest. His sorrows were profound, the sorrows of a patriot, kinsman to all the sorrowful in the land. But he learned, however deep the stroke, to forbear complaint. He received the sorrows of the war into his own breast as heaven's righteous woe upon a haughty land, and as heaven's discipline, teaching offenders the woe of their offense. So his ways became coincident with the greater ways of God.

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But in this moral explication of the war, and of all that the war involves, two vastly different types of character persist. Lincoln's solution of the enigma was in diametrical contrast with the views of the leading spirits of the South. Not like him did they rate slavery, nor conceive the war, nor understand the ways of God. How, now, could Lincoln's view assimilate this obduracy in the South? This question was clearly within the scope of Lincoln's thought, and its answer is embraced in what has already been explained. Given an even penalty for any sin, drop for drop with the avenging sword for blood with the lash, and it is morally indifferent whether men rail, or whether they acquiesce. The wrong is made right. The meek are redeemed. God's delay is vindicated. Rudeness is reversed. The law is fully revealed. Man's liberty is honored equally. Cruelty and unfairness are rebuked. The gains of greed are scattered. Humblest men are crowned with eternal dignity. To such, whether from the North or from the South, as with melting sorrow and repentance welcomed to their bosoms this bitter vindication of those primal rights, the sorrows of the war opened into perennial peace. To such as repelled that proffered vindication, there was in the sorrows of the war no alleviation. But for both, nevertheless, and for both identically, the sorrows of the war completed the moral vindication of a pure and Christlike equity and friendliness. Thus all the ways of God, with the repentant and the rebellious alike, are just and righteous altogether. This it is the highest wisdom of men to acquiescently confess. To this even those who rebelliously complain and rail must finally utterly submit.

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And now one final matter remains—the idea and definition of happiness. When men discuss the problem of evil in the universe, and in its awful presence try to substantiate their confidence in the just and friendly care of a transcendent Deity, one subtle touchstone governs all they say:—What is their conception of human weal, and of human woe? What in actual fact is deepest misery; and what is true felicity? What do they assume man's highest good to be?

Just here is wide and multiform diversity. For illustration, let thought recur to the contrast with which the topic of this chapter was introduced. The idea of happiness that Goethe plants in Dr. Faust, and the idea of happiness that ruled in Lincoln, are as separate as the poles. And again, to keep within the setting of this inaugural, the happiness towards which Lincoln strove, and in which his thought found satisfaction, contrasted mightily with the happiness that informed the aspirations of the leaders of the South. In their ideal, disdain of all inferiors, delight in easy luxury, unequal acknowledgment of rights, and a cruel stifling of the very rudiments of love, were mixed and working mightily. Desiring and enjoying that Elysium, their estimate of evil, their definition of the highest good, and their programme for a final consummation under God could have no fellowship with any final plan of thought approved by Lincoln.

What was Lincoln's highest happiness? This merits pondering anywhere; but compellingly, where one tries to trace his views upon this problem of theodicy; and yet still more when one conceives in this inquiry how in Lincoln's life his ethics, his civics, and his religion became coincident.

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As this mighty problem resolves itself in Lincoln's mind, it comprehends, along with his own welfare and worth and true contentment, the equal dignity and happiness of every other man, and a harmonious consonance with the being and decree of God. He sees that scorn of any other man involves in time the scorner's shame. He sees that robbery, however veiled, entails a debt whose perfect reimbursement the slowest centuries will in their time exact. He sees that any form of malice or unfriendliness, housed and fed in any heart, will forfeit all the joy of gratitude, and fill that heart at last with vindictive hate and bitterest loneliness. He sees that fleshly joys,

however lush and full, are marked and destined for a swift and sure decay and weariness and vanity. And so, to realize the perfect welfare, he commends to himself, and urges persuasively on all other men, the sovereign good of an even justice, upheld within himself, and so measured out to other men by the perfect standard of God's self-respecting loyalty; of universal charity, eager everywhere to minister universal benefit and peace; of supreme enthusiasm for enduring life; and of a genuine humility, that shares all hope with all the lowly, and trusts and honors God. In this fourfold, composite unison of conscious, deathless life Lincoln sees the fairest goal, the choicest boon, the highest good of man. In the presence of such a standard, and before the outlook of such a hope Lincoln fashions his theodicy.

Here then is the sum of Lincoln's thought upon this bewildering theme:—

The evil that makes this earthly lot so dark and hard is man's wrong to man; the awful sorrows of the meek; the offenses wrought upon the helpless by the arrogant. [178]

Before this mystery all other mysteries, however deep and terrible, such as hurricanes and famine, plagues and death, may not be named.

This most sovereign evil is most clearly understood by those who are oppressed. Their eyes pierce all its deeps. The rude are, by their rudeness, blind.

The names of all who suffer and are still are registered on high for full solace and redemption.

The register of the rudeness of the strong is also full, and destined for full requital.

This redemption and requital shall be wrought by God.

In this redemption the ruthless may relent and share with all the meek the full measure of all their sorrows, and so become partakers of all their joy.

If ruthlessness persist, full requitals shall still descend, and in the presence of God's even righteousness every mouth shall be stopped.

And so shall all evil be fully rectified.

### **HIS PIETY—THE PROBLEM OF RELIGION**

Of all the words of Lincoln, evincing what he thought of God, none outweigh the witness of this last inaugural. His reply to Thurlow Weed regarding this address, referred to in another place, concerned precisely just this point—the movements and the postulates of his religious faith. As his ripened mind prepared and pondered and reviewed this speech, there accrued within his consciousness a solemn confidence that it was destined to become his most enduring monument; and that as coming generations became aware of its outstanding eminence, their eyes and hearts would fasten on those words about the age-long, just, and overturning purposes of God. There was a confession, so Lincoln felt assured, embracing and conjoining North and South and East and West in an equal lowliness and shame; and declaring and extolling God's divine supremacy over all the erring waywardness and awful sufferings of men. [179]

In this outpouring of his burdened heart before his God, and in the presence of his fellowmen, there is evidence respecting Lincoln's piety that courts reflection.

In the first place it indicates where Lincoln's sense of moral rectitude found out its final bearings. Those purposes of God, as Lincoln watched their operation, were working out the moral issues in the awful wrong of age-long, unrequited toil in perfect equity. Strong men had been wronging weaklings and inferiors. Helpless men had been suffering untold sorrows. Indignant men had been crying out in hot and hasty protest for full and speedy vengeance. Thoughtful men had been tortured over weary, futile wonderings as to how the baffling problem could be solved. Convulsions and confusion, which no arm or thought of man could start or stay, were shaking and bewildering all the land.

But through and over all, as Lincoln came reverently to believe, a sovereign God held righteous government; and out of all the baffling turmoil he was, by simple righteousness, bringing perfect unison and peace. The dark mystery of unrequited wrong was being illuminated by the righteous majesty of complete requital. But in its full perfection, it was a righteousness such as no mind of man devised. It was the righteousness of God. Here Lincoln's moral sense was purified. He was being taught of God. And this he clearly, humbly recognized. And he took full pains in this address to give God all the praise. And so his reverence towards Deity, and his affirmation touching righteousness became identical. His sense of equity stood clothed in piety. [180]

In the second place, deep within the heart of these divine instructions were such unveilings of God's high majesty, in his steadfast reign above the passing centuries, as awoke on Lincoln's lips such lowly adoration as attuned these words of Godly statesmanship unto a psalm of praise. Here Lincoln's lowliness attains consummate beauty. It is indeed an utterance of profound abasement. It sinks beneath a strong rebuke. It acknowledges sad wanderings. It accepts correction, and meekly takes God's guiding hand. It also sees God's excellence, his high thoughts and ways, his irresistible dominion, his moral spotlessness. And before that revelation he humbly walks among his fellow-citizens, the lowliest of them all, confessing that the reproach involved in what he said fell heaviest upon himself; and therein, as a priest, leading the Nation in an act of worshipping submissiveness before the Lord. Herein his comely, moral modesty becomes an act and attitude of simple reverence towards God. And thus his humility, just like his sense of righteousness,

becomes apparelled all about with Godly piety.

In the third place, this new discernment of the ways of God unfolds profound discoveries of the divine evaluation of the diverse, contending interests in our commingled life. It makes clear which values fade, and which shine on eternally. The problem upon which Lincoln had transfixed his eye was that two and one-half centuries of hard and sad embondagement. By that gross sin men's deathless souls were bought and sold for transient gain. Past all denial, therein was moral wrong; else moral wrong had no existence. Its presence, every time he faced it, tortured Lincoln, and made him miserable. And it affronted heaven, overturning God's creative fiat of equality in all mankind. It set and ranked brief creature comforts and desires above the worth of heaven's image in a brother man. Every day it challenged heaven's curse. But heaven's judgment was delayed. Long centuries seemed to show that heaven was indifferent whether human souls or carnal pleasures held superior rank.

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But now, within the awful tumult of the war there boomed an undertone, conveying unto all who had quick ears to hear, how God adjudged that wrong. Upon dark battle clouds shone heavenly light, making newly plain God's estimate of slaveholder and of slave; of joys and gains that perish with their use, or await recall; and of souls that never die. Those awful tidings told how ill-gotten, carnal wealth is mortgaged under woe, and to the uttermost farthing must be released; how offending men affront the Lord; and how all offenses must be avenged. They made full clear how he who grasps at earthly gain by wrecking human dignity commits a primal sin—a sin that time, though it run into centuries, cannot obscure, or mitigate, or exempt from strict review. They reveal infallibly that God's pure eye is on God's image in every son of man; that supreme, far-seeing ends are lodged in all the good but unenduring gifts wherewith God's wise and kindly bounties crown man's toil; that a perfect moral government holds dominion everywhere and forevermore; and that beneath this rule, in God's own time, it shall come supremely clear that feasts and luxury and fine attire, that wealth and lust and pampered flesh have lesser worth and pass away, while souls of men may thrive, and gain, and win new worth eternally.

As Lincoln's eye reviewed these centuries of reveling wealth, and impoverished hearts; and beheld, in the issues of the resultant war, that wealth laid waste, and those pure hearts fed and filled with hope and liberty; his wisdom to compare all earth-born, mortal things with things unperishing and heavenly passed through new birth, new growth to new completeness in depth and clarity and confidence. And all this gain to Lincoln, while wholly ethical, dealing as it did with the wrong and right in human slavery and liberty, owed all its increase to truer understanding of the Lord. Here again his ethics was purified by faith. His faith was deeply ethical. As with his lowliness, and his rectitude, so with his moral valuation of the human soul. It was vested all about with Godly piety.

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In the fourth place, within the awful wreckage of the war, with which this last inaugural is so absorbed, there were mighty attestations that God was pitiful. That war could be defined as God's vengeance on man's cruelty. Precisely this was what Lincoln grew to see. To all who toiled in slavery the war had brought deliverance. Thereby the stinging lash was snatched from human hands; the human heel was thrust from human necks; the shameless havoc of the homes of lowly men was stayed; countless sufferings were assuaged; and true blessedness was restored to souls hard-wonted to unrelenting grief.

And this achievement was alone the Lord's. Of all down-trodden men high heaven became the champion. In all its awful judgments he who ruled that conflict remembered mercy. High above all the bloody carnage of those swords there swayed the scepter of the All-pitiful. In the very doom upon the strong God wrought redemption for the poor. And so, as that dreadful wreckage brought to nothing all the pride in the extorted gain of centuries, it published most impressively that he who reigned above all centuries was All-compassionate.

To this great thought of God, Lincoln keyed this last inaugural. The majesty of God's sovereign law of purity and righteousness was robed in kindness. Into this high truth ascended Lincoln's patriot hope. Let men henceforth forswear all cruelty, and follow God in showing all who suffer their costliest sympathy. This was a mighty longing in his great heart, as he prepared this speech. Before God's vindication of the meek, let the merciless grow merciful. Yea, let all the land, for all the land had taken part in human cruelty, confess its wrong, accept God's scourge without complaint, thus opening every heart to God's free, healing grace, and binding all the land in leagues of friendliness. Let men, like God, be pitiful. Like God, let men be merciful. In mutual sympathy let all make clear how men of every sort may yet resemble God, the All-compassionate. This was the trend and strength of Lincoln's gentleness, as it stood and wrought in full maturity beneath God's discipline, within this last inaugural. It was nothing but an echo and reflection of the gentleness of God. And so, in his benignity, as in his rectitude and lowliness and purity, he stood in this address attired in Godly piety.

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So Lincoln's ethics can be described, in his ripened harvest-tide of life. So it stands in this inaugural. It is alike a living code for daily life, and a religious faith. It is born and taught of God. It is Godliness without disguise, upon the open field of civic statesmanship. It is a prophet's voice, in a civilian's speech. It is the seasoned wisdom of a man familiar equally with the field of politics, and the place of prayer. It shows how God may walk with men, how civic interests deal with things divine. It proves that a civilian in a foremost seat may without apology profess himself a man of God, and gain thereby in solid dignity. It shows how heaven and earth may harmonize.

But this manly recognition in Lincoln's mind of the inner unison of ethics and religion was in no respect ephemeral, no careless utterance of a single speech, no flitting sentiment of a day. It was

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the fruition of an ample season's growth. It was royally deliberate, the issue of prolonged reflection, the goal of mental equipoise and rest to which his searching, balanced thought had long conduced. It was in keeping with an habitual inclination in his life.

This proclivity of his inwrought moral honesty to find its norm and origin, its warrant and secure foundation in his and his Nation's God must have taken shape controllingly within those silent days that intervened between his first election in 1860, and the date of his inaugural oath in 1861. Else, in those brief addresses on his way to Washington, that marvelous efflorescence upon his honest lips of an ideal heavenward expectancy is unaccountable. In those dispersed and fugitive responses, from Springfield to Independence Hall and Harrisburg, there breathed such patriotic sentiments of aspiration and anxiety as owed their ardor, their excellence, and their very loyalty to his eager trust and hope, that all his deeds as president should execute the will of God. Throughout his presidential term this wish to make his full official eminence a facile instrument of God, attains in his clear purpose and intelligence a solid massiveness, all too unfamiliar in the craft of politics.

The witness to this, in a letter to A. G. Hodges of April, 1864, is most explicit and unimpeachable. This letter is a transcript of a verbal conversation, is written by request, and is designed distinctly to make the testimony of his mortal lips everywhere accessible and permanent. Its major portion aims to give his former spoken words a simple repetition. Then he says:—"I add a word which was not in the verbal conversation." And upon this he appends a paragraph, as of something he could not restrain, the while he was conscious perfectly that what he was about to write was certain to be published and preserved among all men. In this letter, so doubly, so explicitly deliberate, he is defending his decree for unshackling the slave, by the plea, that only so could the Union be preserved. In the appended paragraph, he disclaims all compliment to his own sagacity, and accredits all direction and deliverance of the Nation's life, in that dark mortal crisis, to the hidden, reverend government of a kind and righteous God.

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If any man desires to probe and understand the thoughtfulness of Lincoln's piety, let him place this doubly-pondered document and the last inaugural side by side, remembering discerningly the date of each, detecting how each conveys Lincoln's well-digested judgment of unparalleled events, and not forgetting that Lincoln foresaw how both those documents would be reviewed in generations to come. Here are signs assuredly that Lincoln's lowliness and reverence, his prayerfulness and trust, his steadfastness and gratitude towards God had been balanced and illumined beneath the livelong cogitations of an even, piercing eye. Pursuing and comparing every way the tangled, complex facts of history; the endless strifes of men; the broken lights in minds most sage; and the awful evidence, as the centuries evolve, that greed and scorn and hate and falsity lead to woe; his patient mind grows poised and clear in faith that a good and righteous God is sovereign eternally. The truth he grasped transcended centuries. His grasping faith transcends change.

But Lincoln's piety was not alone deep-rooted and deliberate, the ripened growth of mixed and manifold experience. It was heroic. It was the mainspring and the inspiration of a splendid bravery. This is finely shown in the early autumn of 1864. On September 4 of that year he wrote a letter to Mrs. Gurney, a Quakeress. This letter bears a most curious and intimate resemblance to the central substance of the last inaugural. It witnesses to his earnest research after the hidden ways of God.

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Within this search he sees some settled certainties. He sees that he and all men are prone to fail, when they strive to perceive what God intends. Into such an error touching the period of the war all had fallen. God's rule had overborne men's hopes. God's wisdom and men's error therein would yet be acknowledged by all. Men, though prone to err, if they but earnestly work and humbly trust in deference to God, will therein still conduce to God's great ends. So with the war. It was a commotion transcending any power of men to make or stay. But in God's design it contained some noble boon. And then he closes, as he began, with a tender intimation of his reverent trust in prayer. The whole is comprehended within this single central sentence, a sentence which involves and comprehends as well the total measure of the last inaugural:—"The purposes of the Almighty are perfect, and must prevail, though we erring mortals may fail to accurately perceive them in advance."

Here is a confession notable in itself. It would be notable in any man, and at any time. But when one marks its date, its notability is enhanced impressively. For Lincoln was traversing just there some of the darkest hours of his overshadowed life. It was the period following his second nomination for the presidency in May of 1864, and before the crisis of election in November of the same year. Central in that season of wearisome and ominous uncertainty fell the failure of the battle in the Wilderness under Grant; the miscarriage of his plans for Richmond; and the awful carnage by Petersburg. Here fell also the date of Early's raid, with its terrible disclosure of the helplessness in Washington. Thereupon ensued, in unexampled earnestness, a recrudescence of the great and widespread weariness with the war; and of an open clamor for some immediate conference and compromise for peace. Foremost leaders and defenders of the Union cause throughout the North sank down despairingly, convinced that at the coming national vote Lincoln was certain to meet defeat. At the same time the army sorely needed new recruits; but another draft seemed desperate. Then Lincoln's closest counselors approached his ears with heavy words of hopelessness about the outlook in the Northern States confessedly most pivotal.

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In the midst of those experiences, on August 23, 1864, Lincoln penned and folded away with singular care from all other eyes, these following words:—

"This morning, as for some days past, it seems exceedingly probable that this administration will not be reelected. Then it will be my duty to so co-operate with the president-elect as to save the Union between the election and the inauguration, as he will have secured his election on such ground that he cannot possibly save it afterward."

Those words were written eleven days before he penned the sentiments cited above from the letter to the Quakeress. Between those two dates the Democratic Convention of Chicago had convened and nominated General McClellan.

Amid such scenes, in the presence of such events, and among such prognostications, Lincoln chiseled out those phrases about the perfect, hidden, but all-prevailing purposes of God. Here is Godly piety in the sternest stress of politics. Here faith is militant, and unsubdued. Its face is like a burnished shield. Its patience no campaign outwears. In its constancy suggestions of surrender can find no place. It was forged upon a well-worn anvil, under mighty strokes, and at a fervent heat. Fires only proved its purity. It was fighting battles quite as sore as any fought with steel. It was the deathless, truceless courage of a moral hero. It was pure and perfect fortitude. Its struggle, its testing, and its victory had not been wrought on earthly battle-fields. Its strife had been with God. More than with the South, Lincoln's controversy had been with the Most High. He wrestled with the heavenly angel through the night, like the ancient patriarch. Like the ancient saint, he bore the marks of grievous conflict. And like him of old, he gained his boon. He achieved to see that God and perfect righteousness were in eternal covenant.

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Such was Lincoln's piety. His view of God gave God an absolute pre-eminence. In Lincoln's day, as in the day when Satan tempted Christ, vast areas of human life seemed to give all faith in God's control the lie; and men in multitudes abjured such futile confidence. But Lincoln kept his faith in God, and truth, and love, and immortality. And in that faith he judged his trust, and hope, and prayer to be preserved on high inviolate. There above, he firmly held, were lodged eternally the perfect pattern and assurance of full rectitude and charity. And in that understanding he held on earth unyieldingly to the perfect image of that heavenly norm, in a pure and acquiescent loyalty and love. Thus discerningly, submissively, triumphantly did Lincoln's heart aspire to unify an honest earthly walk with a living faith in God.

One word remains. As Lincoln makes confession of his faith in this inaugural, extolling God supremely, and therein announcing to his fellowmen the groundwork of his morality, it comes to view that the qualities held fast in Lincoln's heart, and the attributes of God have marvelous affinity. The equity he adores in God he cherishes within himself, and recommends to all. God's estimate of the incomparable value of a human soul, when set beside the variable treasures men exchange, Lincoln's judgment reverently approves, and as reverently adopts, establishing thereby a standard quality in his conscious life. God's tender pity for the poor, hidden deep in his divine rebuke of slavery, and hidden deeper still within his mercy for all who help to bear its awful sacrifice, melts and molds the heart of Lincoln to the same compassion. And to the very outlines of God's majesty, as his sovereign purposes are all unrolled and all fulfilled throughout the earth, Lincoln's soul conforms ideally, in its humble vision and expression of devout, discerning praise.

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Here is something passing wonderful. Between a fragile, mortal man and the eternal God, when each is limned in terms of ethics, appears a deep and high agreement. There is enthroned in each a common righteousness. In each, the laws of mercy are the same. In each are constituted principles inwrought with immortality. And within the eternal interplay of reverence and majesty between mankind and God, there is a fellowship in dignity that proves the holy Maker and his moral creature to be immediately akin. And so the mind and will of Lincoln, in this their moral plenitude, may interpret and recommend, may apprehend and execute the eternal purposes of God. This high commission Lincoln humbly, firmly undertook. And in his commanding life there is a mighty hint, not easy to silence or erase, that Godliness and ethics, which have been set so often far apart, were eternally designed for unison.

### **HIS LOGIC—THE PROBLEM OF PERSUASION**

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In the study of Lincoln's ethics it is not enough to describe it as an ideal scheme of thought, however notable its range and poise and insight may be seen to be. As Lincoln's character stands forth in national eminence among our national heroes, he figures as a man of deeds, a man of powerful influence over the actions of other men, a man of masterly exploits. However truly it may be affirmed that multitudes of adjutants reinforced his undertakings at every turn and on every side, it still holds also true, and that a truth almost without a parallel, that his sheer personal force was the single, undeniable, over-mastering energy that shaped this Nation's evolution through an outstanding epoch in its career. It was primarily out of those prolific and exhaustless energies, stored and mobilized within himself, that he rose, as though by nature, to be national chief executive. It was straight along the line of his far-seeing vision and advice that Congress and the Nation were guided to accept and undertake that terrible enterprise of war. In that great struggle he came to be in firm reality, far more than any other man, the competent, effective commander-in-chief. He was chief councilor in a cabinet whose supreme function dealt singly with matters wholly executive. It was by the almost marvelous unison of wisdom and decision resident in him that Congress and the Nation were day by day induced to hold with an almost preternatural inflexibility to the single, sovereign issue of the strife. When, after four years of unexampled bitterness, multitudes were wearying of all patience in further hostilities, it was his personal momentum and weight, more than any other influence, that held the prevailing majority of the national electorate to predetermine by their free ballots that, at whatever cost of

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further war, the principles of liberty, equality, and national integrity should be placed above all possible challenge or assault forever.

And in the period before the war and before his elevation to the presidency this same executive efficiency, this singular capacity to mold the views and stir the motives of other men, was likewise in continual demonstration. Discerning how supreme a factor in our American affairs was the power of public sentiment, and observing how that power was being utilized to undermine the national tranquillity, he challenged and overthrew single handed the leading master of the day in the field of political management and debate. Trusting in the same confidence, and pursuing the same device, he appealed to the civic consciences of men in the open field of free debate, by the single instrument of reasoned speech, until, by his persuading arguments, he consolidated into effective harmony and led to national victory a party of independent voters, with watchword, platform, and experience all untried. In all the process by which that new-formed party gained access to national pre-eminence it was Lincoln's governing influence that went ahead and gave the movement steadiness. And through it all he vitally inspired a Nation, now undivided and indivisible, with a prevailing, corporate desire, that all succeeding days and all beholding Nations are now deeming, for any stable civic life, the true enduring ideal.

And all of this was compassed and set afoot within scarcely more than one decade. In October of 1854 at Peoria, he consciously took up his strenuous enterprise. In April of 1865, he laid it down and ceased to strive. Single handed he undertook the task. Through all its progress the weight of that one hand was undeniably preponderant. And when that hand relaxed, the task that its release left trembling was one that stirred a mighty Nation's full solicitude. [192]

Here is something marvelous. These affirmations, as thus far made, seem certainly overdrawn, and totally incredible. An agency and an efficiency of national dimensions, introducing and completing an epoch in our national history; but an agent and an outfit almost defying inventory, his personality seeming in every phase so simple and without prestige, and all his ways and means seeming so unpromising and plain; the while through all his course he was confronting a resistance and a hostility whose impulse was rooted in centuries of firm and proud dominion, and whose onset made a Nation tremble. How can such stupendous affirmations be clothed with credibility? Was it indeed the hand of Lincoln that turned the Nation from its mistaken path? Was it Lincoln's will that reinaugurated our predestined course? Was it Lincoln's overcoming confidence that established in the land again a good assurance that its integrity was indestructible?

If questions such as these were addressed to Lincoln himself for his reply, we may be sure his answer, like all his ways, would contain a beautiful mingling of modesty and confidence. Heeding well the mortal crisis, and hearing the Nation's call for help, he would not refuse, when bidden and appointed, to take his stand alone at the very apex of the strain, knowing well that the burdens to be borne would be greater than tasked the strength of even Washington; and affirming as he advanced warily to his post, that in his appointment many abler men had been passed by. But then he would re-affirm and urge again all the arguments of his great addresses and messages and debates, beginning with that initial trumpet peal in Peoria in 1854, and not concluding until, after all had been rehearsed and reavouched, he recited again with prophetic earnestness this last inaugural. And throughout all his devout re-affirmation of all the spoken and written appeals to which his patriotic mind gave studied form and utterance in that intense decade, a discerning ear could distinguish in every paragraph profound and penetrating attestations, such as these:—This is a mighty Nation. Its future is far more vast. Its present perplexities are intricate. It has been misled. It needs most sane direction. I am stationed at her head. Difficulties environ me. My burdens outweigh Washington's. But this land was conceived in liberty. It was dedicated to be free. Here all are peers. God's hand has been on our history. Our destiny enfolds the highest human weal. God is with us still. Human hearts are with us. Here is overcoming power. Despite my frailty and poor descent, I will never leave my place. I see how other men prevail with multitudes by personal appeal. This shall be my confidence. Though I have no name, though there is perhaps no reason why I should ever have a name, I can plead. I can plead with men. It is a Godlike art. Grave as is my problem, this is its grand solution. I will study to persuade. I will take refuge in the mighty power of argument. I will confer, and conciliate, and convince. I will employ my reason to the full. I will address, and assail, and enlist the reason of other men. I will put all my trust in speech, in ordered, reasoned speech. I will arrange all my convictions and hopes and plans in arguments. I will approach men's wills with momentous propositions. I will open a path to human hearts through open ears by my living voice. I will make righteousness vibrate vocally. To men's very faces will I rebuke their wrong. Argument, pure argument shall be my only weapon, my only agency, my only way. By naked argument, honest and unadorned, I will undertake to turn this Nation back to rectitude. I will rest all my confidence in truth, truth unalloyed, abjuring every counterfeit and all hypocrisy. It is truth's primal and mightiest function to persuade. Through persuasion alone can freemen be induced by freemen to yield a free obedience. The heavenly art of persuading speech shall be for me the first and the last resort. By this most comely instrument shall my most eager and ambitious wish gain access to all this peopled land, and win vindication through all coming time. [193]

Something such as this, as one must judge from Lincoln's practice, was Lincoln's science and evaluation of the art of logical appeal. By every token Lincoln was a master of assemblies. Upon a public platform he was in his native element. There he won his place and name. Whatever any one may say about Lincoln's reputation or Lincoln's power, that power and that reputation were [194]

mined and minted in the very act and exercise of reasoning appeal. As iron sharpeneth iron, so he, in the immediate presence of audiences of freeborn men, assembled from his very neighborhood, shaped and edged and tempered his total influence. It was when upon the hustings, and while engaged in pleading speech, that he commanded the Nation's eye and gained the Nation's ear. And once advanced to national pre-eminence, it was still by logical persuasion that the Nation's deference was retained.

What now was the inner nature of Lincoln's arguments? What was the fiber, what the texture in the composition of his thought that made its arguments so convincing? What was the structure, and what the carrying power in his appeals that made their logic so prevailing, so compelling, so enduring?

To find an answer to this inquiry let men review yet once again this last inaugural. Here is a product of Lincoln's mind whose single motive is persuasion, whose momentum does not diminish, and which seems destined to be adjudged by history a master's masterpiece. What does this short speech contain that gave it in 1865, and gives it yet, an influence almost magical? [195]

There can be but one possible reply. The factor in that address that makes its influence so imperial is the moral majesty of the argument in its major paragraph. That paragraph enshrines an argument. Though fashioned in the mode and aspect of a reverent supposition, the steady pace and import of its ordered thought is such as every ordered mind admits to be compelling. But in substance and in structure that argument is purely ethical. All turns upon that cited, undoubted fact of age-long, unrequited toil. Upon that stern actuality hinges all the arrangement of the thought. Its phrases move with rhythmic fluency; but they bind together inseparably a Nation's duty, sin, and doom; not omitting to enfold, with a marvel of moral insight, an almost hidden intimation of a healing cure.

Here are weighty thoughts, thoughts that press and urge, thoughts that carry and communicate the gravity of centuries. They contain an interpretation. They clarify and illuminate. And they all co-ordinate. They combine and operate together to enforce agreement. They demonstrate that tyranny breeds a baleful progeny of guilt and woe; that robbery binds the robber under debt to the full measure of his rapine; that such guilt can never be forgotten; that such a woe is pitiless; that the centuries, though slow and mute, are attentive and impartial witnesses; and that God's even judgments are over all, and are altogether just. This is all the content and all the purport of this paragraph, and of all this speech: an exposition of American slavery and of its resultant civil war, in moral terms, before the moral bar of every hearer's conscience, and beneath the thought of God's eternal righteousness; all turning upon the self-evident verity that unpaid toil is wrong. In this prolific affirmation is the fertile germ of all that Lincoln ever thought or undertook in that supreme decade. Here are enfolded all his axioms and postulates and propositions. By interlocking its multiform, infolded, self-evident certitudes he framed all his arguments. Its overflowing, resistless demonstrations in active human affairs formed all his corollaries. Toil unrequited is a moral wrong. It cries to heaven, and shall be avenged. In this avenging, if we but see our day, there is an open door to join with heaven, and transmute its vengeance into recompense and reconciliation. [196]

This was Lincoln's logic. It was purely ethical. This was the master-key to his transcendent statesmanship. Here was the secret of his political efficiency. Thus, and in no other way, he swayed the Nation. Himself a Godlike man, and discerning in every other man the same Godlikeness; trusting his own soul's honesty, and appealing to honest manhood in all other men; he took his stand beside all the oppressed, and against all extortion; and voiced and urged and trusted the sovereign moral plea for perfect charity, and perfect equity for all.

But Lincoln's logic was interlaced with history. All through his debates and addresses are woven the facts and sequences of our national career. And to these connected events he clung in all his arguments, as a man clings to the honor of his home. There was in those events an argument. To tamper with that history, discrediting its sure occurrences, or distorting their right connection, was in his conception a downright immorality.

But mere historical exactitude was not the motive of Lincoln's appeal to past events. The momentum of our past was for Lincoln's use entirely moral. Here upon this continent, as he conceived our great experiment, was being tried, in the presence and on behalf of all mankind, a government in which the governed were the governors. Here men are inquiring and being taught what true manhood can create, uphold, and consummate upon a continental scale, in mutual equality. Here men are schooled for independence. Here men may dare to fashion their own law. Here men are nurtured towards full fraternity. Here men are forced to heed the civic necessity of being fair. Here a boundless impending future has to be kept steadily in view. Here the God of Nations is teaching a Nation that he should be revered. Here, in brief and in sum, men are being disciplined to know and cherish the rudiments of civic character. [197]

Thus Lincoln interpreted the meaning of our national history. In his rating, its total purport was ethical. Any logical exposition of our national career, if its statements are historically exact, will carry moral consequences. If the logical sequence of any statement of our historical course is morally perverse, then that statement of our history is historically untrue. Thus Lincoln's jealous zest for truthful history, for truthful argument, and for true morality became coincident.

But Lincoln's logic was his own. His zeal for history was a freeman's zest. His arguments were not the cold reflection of a borrowed light. They were the fervid affirmations of his own convictions, compacted into reasoned unison, out of the indivisible constituents of his very

manhood's honor. When in his appeal his soul most glowed, when the ordered sequence and pressure of his thought waxed irresistible, he was simply opening to his auditors the balanced burden of his honest heart. Then genuine manhood became articulate. Then pure honor found a voice. Then eloquence became naught but plain sincerity. Then arguments became transparent, and affirmations convinced like axioms. Then demonstrations moved. Assertions did persuade. Then the very being of the orator took possession of the auditor in an intelligent fraternity. True, indeed, a solid South, and multitudes besides, derided his postulates, contemned his arguments, and scorned derisively his tenderest appeals. But better than they themselves he understood their hearts; and holding fast forever his deeper faith and confidence, he maintained his reasoning and his plea, knowing surely that in some future day their chastened hearts would vindicate his words.

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But in all of this exposition of Lincoln's logical force and skill there has been no mention of a syllogism. Did Lincoln then neglect that famous formula of argumentative address? To this natural inquiry it must be replied that Lincoln understood right well the fine utility of this strict norm of formal thought. Indeed, he had taken special pains to perfect his skill in just that form of argument. To the logical click in a well-formed syllogism his inner ear was well attuned. Repeatedly he summoned in its aid. An excellent illustration may be seen in his rejoinder to Douglas at Galesburg in September of 1858. But Lincoln's confidence was not in syllogistic forms, however trim. His trust was in his moral axioms. Unaided, naked truth; truth whose total urgency is self-contained, whose perfect verity is self-displayed, and whose proudest triumphs are self-achieved; pure truth, shaped forth in speech of absolute simplicity; truth that works directly in the human mind, like sunshine in the eye, was Lincoln's handiest and most common instrument in an argument. Thus he sought to so use reason as to awaken conscience and arouse the will. And thus his arguments prevailed.

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This was Lincoln's logic. It was the orderly exposition of his honest manhood, pleading with the honest intelligence of every other man for his free assent. Himself a freeman whom God made free, and greeting in every other man an equal dignity; with loyalty to himself and with charity for all; with Godly deference and unfailing hope; he urged and argued from his own true manhood, and from no other grounds, with a logic that no true freeman can ever refute: that in this heaven favored land, and for the welfare of all the world, these ethical foundations of all true civic welfare be kept unmoved forever. In such a moral character, and in such a moral argument is this expanding Nation's only pride and sure defense. At any modern Round Table of civic knights Lincoln is true King Arthur, and his persuading speech the true Excalibur.

### **HIS PERSONALITY—THE PROBLEM OF PSYCHOLOGY**

When Plato took his pen to write his dialogues; when Michael Angelo took his chisel to fashion his Moses; when Raphael took his brush to paint his Madonna; they were designing to make their several ideals of personality pre-eminently beautiful and distinct. And each artist in his way won a signal, a supreme success. Moses, Socrates, the Madonna, are shining revelations of human personality. Success herein is the height of highest art.

But what is personality? It seems an eternal secret, despite all human search and art. Yet its secret is everywhere felt instinctively to be of all quests the most supreme. By every avenue men are trying to reach and reveal its hiding place. Our goal is nothing less than the human soul. And upon this inquest the eyes and instruments of our inspection are being sharpened with a determination and zeal hitherto unparalleled.

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Suppose this quest be turned to Lincoln. Surely here is a human person. He stands enough apart in his preeminence to be pre-eminently distinguishable and distinct; while yet his face beams near enough to be as familiar and accessible as our most accessible and familiar friend. For surely, despite all his proneness towards a musing solitude, Lincoln, of all Americans, displays through all his published statements, and in all his public life, an instructive and unstudied openness and unreserve. Just here his marvelous power and influence lie. He practiced no concealment. He held communion with all his fellowmen. Herein consists his honesty.

Now may not an honest scholarship, honestly conceiving that of all investigations our pursuit for the ways and dwelling place of personality is easily supreme, as honestly believe that in the open, waiting heart of Lincoln that supreme inquiry may find its supreme reward? Surely here is promise of a labor that will pay. In Lincoln's personality is a vein, a mine whose worth and sure utility no mineral wealth can parallel.

What in very truth, what in solid fact, what in absolute reality is Lincoln's personality? For undeniably in facing and regarding him, we confront and apprehend a human life, compact and self-controlled, the native home and throne of all the conscious and self-directed energies that are ever resident within and representative of any man. If human personality ever took evident and conscious shape and form, then Lincoln is an open and easily approachable illustration of its embodiment. Upon no object may a student of psychology more easily or more wisely fix his eye than upon the soul of Lincoln, when it thrills in resolute, intense endeavor, as in this last inaugural.

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For one thing, that Lincoln should be the specimen of psychology commanding any student's choice is suggested by Lincoln's notability. Here is an exhibit in no way ordinary. He has secured the attention of us all. And the attention of us all is athrill with mighty interest. However it has come about, in some way, as a human personality, he illustrates a type, he presents a sample so

powerful and positive as to stand before all eyes almost alone, while also so attractive as to be by everyone beloved. This fact may fairly beget assurance from the start that in any heedful search for the very substance of human personality, an interior and intimate fellowship with Lincoln may show us closely and clearly where it dwells, and what it is. For from the start it stands plain that Lincoln's hold upon our hearts is in its controlling co-efficients purely personal. That hold clings fast and spreads afar, indifferent to space, or time, or even death. His influence over us, so gladly welcomed and so clearly felt, is no wise physical or temporal. It cannot be handled or weighed. It is personal. Herein is high encouragement. And that in this sense of our response to his enduring sway should be enfolded on our part, a kindred, pure, enduring delight attests convincingly that within Lincoln's personality and our own there is something mutual. Within the thing we search and us who seek there is profound affinity. In this our encouragement may heighten, and that with solid soberness, unto hope.

And then the scene of this his last inaugural is all aglow with promise. For here if anywhere Lincoln's personality may be seen engaged in the ripeness of his finished discipline, and the fullness of his manhood's strength. The scene itself swells full of meaning; and Lincoln's part and contribution fix and fill the center of its significance. Surely if anything within that scene is plain to see and localize, it is Lincoln's own identity. The living Lincoln is surely there, wholly unreserved and unconcealed. There Lincoln's personality is in fullest play, an evident and mighty revelation, plainly felt and seen. [202]

But it is only in the action that the actor comes to view; only in his words does the thinker stand revealed. Here and thus, and nowhere else or otherwise, is Lincoln's personality unveiled. And yet herein, within the compass of this speech, Lincoln unloads a burden of such grave concern, and unrolls a problem of such profound complexity as could nowhere come to birth and utterance but in a mighty human heart. In the vastness of that problem and anxiety can be gauged the vastness of the measure of that heart. Here open into immediate view at once an object and a method of research, fitted at once to challenge and appall the bravest student's heart. But once its summons is distinguished, it is irresistible.

One thing that meets the student, as he seeks the speaker in this speech, is its witness to his titanic and pathetic toil. The words he utters are the message of a laborer far foreshadowed, voiced with mingled weariness and hope, well towards the sunset of a weary day. The sun had been fiercely hot. The field had been full of thorns. And through the arid hours he had tasted little food, or rest, or joy. No husbandman ever chose his seed or tilled his ground at greater cost of patient care. None ever had to bend his frame to ruder weather, or battle against more malicious and persistent pests. And all the agony of that toil had been wrought through within the anguish of his mind. In exactest and exacting thought he had engrossed and consumed the full measure of his full strength. On all he had to bear and do he pondered mightily. No mortal ever pondered more intently on all that mortals ever have to meet. In this inaugural scene the soul of Lincoln is straining at its full strength. No portion of his personal life is idling. If a student's hand is truly deft, he can feel, as he fingers the throbbing life of this address, the pulse beats of a full heart. [203]

And within the grasp and compass of that heart are revolving vast and strenuous themes. The soul of Lincoln is dealing with a Nation's destiny. His speech is borne upon his single voice; but with that single voice he pleads for millions; and its vibrations carry through a continent, as a national oracle. Expounder and defender of the Nation's vital honor, beleaguered all about with war, distressed by all oppression, eager with a sacrificial passion that all men everywhere may have liberty and an equal share in equity, searching for a just and stable basis for the world's tranquillity, as he stands and strives throughout that speech the structure of his soul grows luminous. As he studied Providence and scanned the grounds of government; as he peered far into the depths of freedom, the majesty of duty, and the sanctions of inviolable law; as he pondered the nature of eternal right, and the deadly mischief of moral wrong; as he watched the ways of hate and pride and falsity and sensual delights, he was not alone compacting the substance and order of this immortal address; but in the shapely body of his argument he has embodied and uncovered his honest, guileless heart. In the very scars and seams upon his sorrow-shadowed face, as he overcomes his task and fills out his duty in this address, discerning eyes can see through the furnace of how deep refinement his humble and majestic soul has been forever beautified. Transforming themes possessed his mind. By the ministry and inner influence of these themes he grew to be transformed; and in the process and issue of that change the outline and texture of his inner being becomes traceable. [204]

And of this inner revelation the most notable mark is its simplicity. As in this speech his inner life is introduced, its texture is not perplexing and intricate. It is perfectly apprehensible. The total speech can be quickly scanned. Its sentiments barely get your full attention before they are at an end. Its entire compass can be comprehended in a single glance. Its whole sum can be reviewed in a single breath. And still its themes and propositions are imperial. Within its fine simplicity its stateliness stands uneclipsed. Hence its marvelous power to command. Upon all who look and listen, its action and appeal are like the dawning of a day. Its major propositions are assented to unconsciously. It works like light. It is genial, winsome, clear. And it is irresistible. It moves. It rules. It is an argument, the ordered appeal of a candid, earnest mind to the reasoned thought of honest men. Gentle and modest throughout, it contains and conveys compelling energy. It has the sturdiness of a hardy oak. And yet its first appearing was like a new unfolding of our flag. It is a kingly word, alike in lasting beauty and enduring strength. In this there is surely some sure reflection of that hidden man within, Lincoln's real, undying self.

And this still further may be said. Amid these sovereign interests and affirmations their agent is

thus employed of his own free choice. He is no automaton. The Lincoln whom we seek, the Lincoln whom this address is helping us to see can never be defined by physical terms. Through the realm of physics things move as they are moved. Lincoln in this address moves and guides and governs himself. And he is here self-judged. This inaugural teems with moral verdicts, verdicts that define eternal issues irrevocably. No higher function than this can be imagined in any sphere of being, or in any form. These verdicts Lincoln fastens upon himself. And before the same complete authority he summons the whole Nation to bow. Deep within those verdicts there throbs omnipotently a sense of moral duty, moral right, man's highest good and goal. This ideal of what should be stands evident in this inaugural in Lincoln's own humble conformity with God, in his own unimpeachable integrity, in his unreserved benevolence, and in his pure esteem for souls. In each one of these constituents of human duty Lincoln sees unchallengeable authority. For the honor of each one he deems himself responsible. Their mingled rays create the light in which he writes this speech, by which this speech is read, and under whose clear radiance he records his oath. Surely here are more than hints for any one, who seeks to see just where this speech originates, and most precisely how its author may be defined.

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Within this last preceding paragraph one feels again the presence and the movement of all that all the chapters of this volume have contained. Herein we seem to face a sort of final synthesis of all our study. If this be true, or only true approximately, then its face and contents should be scrutinized until they are cleared of every shadow or alloy. For this research is surely approaching its goal, and some of its boundaries may surely be defined.

One line that shows indelibly is his intelligence; an intelligence comprehending total centuries, and assembling within its scope extreme diversities; an intelligence that has a piercing eye, acute to distinguish and divide; an intelligence that has power to estimate, compare, and summarize; an intelligence intolerant of error, and eager after truth; an intelligence that can frame an argument designed to clarify, convince, and win all other minds; an intelligence that assumes to deal with God, receiving and reflecting within its own interior and proper vision a revelation of the divine intent. Here is an energy, at once receptive and original, fitted marvelously for a reflection that can embrace and authorize eternal truth.

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This intelligence is within control. It is not a vagrant or unguided force. It is under conduct, all its action to observe, inspect, and estimate being ordered reasonably. And all this influence operating to understand and counsel, all this wisdom, while gathering light and substance from everywhere, is informed within, and wonderfully self-contained. As Lincoln reasons in this inaugural, as he resolves and purifies his argument, its power to convince is most intimate and deep within himself. As he guides and shapes his thoughts for the thought of other men, the convictions within the speaker, and their power to persuade, so inwrought in the speech, become identical. In his own consent choice and judgment are combined. Here is freedom indeed, a freedom to discern as truly as to choose, to distinguish as truly as to decide, to estimate as truly as to select, the freedom of the intelligence, an intelligence that is truly free.

This freedom fashions character. It is a moral architect. It is original, able to create. The author of this speech is self-produced. The personality that comes to view among those words is self-determined and self-made. Its plan was sketched by his own hand. His position and his posture, his sentiments and his sympathies, his bent and inclination, his moral postulates and axioms, his moral stamp and trend and tone, his stability and moral sturdiness are all his own invention, originally, essentially, inseparably his own. Lincoln's character is Lincoln's handicraft. Its title vests in him. It never was, nor could it ever become the property of another man. This all men recognize. But this universal recognition is pregnant with significance to any seeker amid the phenomena of Lincoln's life for the substance of his personality. Somewhere within those statements just now made, somewhere within Lincoln's conscious authorship and invention of his moral worth is precious intimation of the whereabouts and constitution of his personality.

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This blend in Lincoln of freedom and intelligence, of liberty and sanity is notable for its evenness. Lincoln's liberty is not chimerical or riotous. It is regulated, orderly, real. Within himself and over his full destiny, an unimpeachable sovereign though he is, he is not prone towards wilfulness, but towards composure and sobriety. He moves as one fast-held beneath the law that for all his movements he will be accountable. He always wears the mien of one who carries high responsibilities. Far from being arbitrary, he behaves as facing within himself a court of arbitration, truly self-invested, and just as truly sovereign. Of all his words and deeds and attitudes he is himself self-constituted, reverend judge. Whether seeking to resolve a doubt, or waiting to receive a verdict, his appeal is finally to himself. This is his mood and posture in this inaugural. He is giving an opinion. This scene is a literal crisis in a review in which a Nation's history and delinquency have met incisive, balanced examination, to the end that his own view of duty as president might come clear to his own judicial eye, and all gain the approbation of all mankind. In his loftiest originality, where his conscious power and right to elect the path he takes is most self-evident, the way he takes is also owned to be an unimpeachable obligation. Here is another signal hint for the seeker after the living and abiding source of Lincoln's words and deeds. Somewhere within this sense of duty, so sane and free and serious, lives the very Lincoln whom we seek.

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This judicial evenness within the free and reasoned movements of Lincoln's action and argument is due to a balanced store of moral ballast. His stalwart mind and sturdy will and steadfast consciousness that duty binds his life stand leagued together in a partnership employing infinite wealth. With these resources he daily ventures vast investments. This speech is such a venture, laden with most goodly merchandise. Indeed he ventures here, as everywhere, his all. His fear of

God, his self-respect, his neighbor love, his thirst for things that last—these are the priceless treasure he examines with a searching insight, estimates with judicial carefulness, enjoys with soul-filling admiration, and then responsibly invests. On these and these alone he chooses and resolves to seek returns. These are the only seas where sail his ships. Here is all his merchandise. Here is the only exchange where Lincoln ever resorts. Here and here alone can one make computation of his wealth. If he has wisdom, it is here. Here is all his liberty. Here is a full register of his life's accounts, and of his full accountability. Here are all his goodly pearls. These are the jewels that delight his heart. And if only students have the eye to see, within this joy deep secrets are revealed.

Just here this study has to pause. For while it seems to be facing straight for that in Lincoln which is innermost—his essential and immortal self, transcending all the mere phenomena of life—and standing where nothing intervenes between our eager search and his steadfast soul, the outlook, as it is scanned by different eyes, reflects in different minds world-wide diversity. Lincoln sees this difference, and deals with it in this speech. He knows his chosen estimates of God and man and government, of prayer and equity and happiness, of right and wrong and penalty, awake resentful protest. Just here his manhood shows its breed. Without resentment, but without surrender, he takes and keeps his oath, expecting that God, humanity, and time will vindicate his insight and his choice. This valiant expectation stands today fulfilled, a commanding testimony that Lincoln's personality, though so simply childlike in its every trait, has majestic permanence and comprehension. Its inmost attributes, as purified in him, reflect and clarify to other souls, however opposite and hostile they may seem, their own essential and enduring rank. This gives pointed intimation that in Lincoln's conscious life, deep underneath his daily words and deeds, there is a conscious unity, the very seat of freedom and law, a shrine of reverence, an altar of love, a throne of truth, a fountain-head of purity—a unity that no antagonist can overcome, that neither time nor death can decompose.

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But an objection still persists. Some man will say that the search for Lincoln's personality, as thus far carried on, has only dealt with ethics, whereas research in personality is at bottom a problem of pure psychology; and that in pure psychology the position holds impregnable that naught beneath men's words and deeds can ever be discerned; that naught indeed is real for this investigation but sensible phenomena; that a human soul is something it is impossible to place.

This matter plainly claims respect. As an objection it is inveterate; and whenever urged, it gains wide heed. In treating with it some things rise up for hearing. To begin with, the intimation cited in the former paragraph will honor pondering. Though that paragraph is intent on ethics in its every word, no paragraph in all the volume more strictly so, still its statements clear more ground than a single hasty glance is liable accurately to survey. It is concerned with ethics truly—again be that conceded. But in no concern of morals whatsoever did Lincoln vacate intelligence. Never was pure intelligence more intellectually engaged than when Lincoln's mind was scanning moral problems. In such engagements Lincoln's total being was occupied. And if amid the clustering multitudes of moral judgments and decisions that attend his moral inquiries and activities, there is witness to the presence of a freeborn judge whose identity remains continuously and consciously single and the same, that fact sheds searching light upon the problem with which this paragraph deals.

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Let one listen again to this address—listen with a due intentness as it speaks of Union and destruction and defense; of bondage and lash and unpaid toil; of offenders, offenses and woe; of malice and charity and right; of God and Bible and prayer; of widows and orphans and wounds; of war and sorrow and peace; of Nations and centuries and Providence. Here are trilogies and tragedies and millenniums, in ethics and religion and philosophy—but borne from perishing lips to perishing ears upon the perishing vehicle of a passing breath. This human breath is frail, these human words are faint, this scene bursts forth and vanishes. But those trilogies! They are more than flitting words, and shifting scenes, and dying breath. The actor outlasts the scene; the speaker outlives his word; the mortal breath is not the measure of the man. He by whom these massive trilogies were marshaled and deployed before a national audience, upon a Nation's stage, to form a national spectacle, and expound a Nation's history, does not perish with his breath, nor vanish with this scene. Before, within and afterwards he lives, pre-arranging, fulfilling and surviving this mighty drama of his life, mightily resembling God. A speech and scene like this bear witness to an author and actor outdating and outranking both scene and speech. An author looms within this speech, self-moved, creative, free. An actor moves within this scene, self-made, poetic, unconstrained. Speech and scene, voice and form are not the man. These are but his fading vesture. Deep within those solemn trilogies, as within a kingly robe, conveying to his vestment all its dignity, though all unseen among its shapely folds, stands Lincoln's living, Godlike self. It was to this the people paid their deference. Through those clear syllables that came to utterance upon those mortal lips it was Lincoln's immortal soul that became articulate. In those ringing accents Lincoln's self became identified. If ever a human personality crossed a human stage, not as actor echoing the words and attitudes of other men, but as an author and creator, fulfilling within himself, in God's fear, on other men's behalf, and with an eye to deathless destinies, his own responsible trust, that man was Lincoln in this second inaugural address. There he asserted and declared himself.

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Here then, in the tone and impress of this address is the sovereign place to find the tone and impress of Lincoln's soul. If that living soul ever gave a conscious hint of its living lineaments and hidden dwelling place, here is that hint's finest published utterance. Here, then, is the total measure of our task. Upon this transparent speech, and not upon vacant air, is the student of

psychology to direct his eye. Here is the final challenge. Deep within the deeps of this supreme address, clear within the rhythms of these resounding trilogies, what does one see and hear?

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To the question thus defined an answer something such as this must be returned:

Here in this inaugural address is designation and signature of a man astute to comprehend a Nation's history, reverent towards responsibility, a champion and exponent of liberty, commending with radiant earnestness that all his fellow men so walk with God, so cherish equity, and so walk in charity as to secure in all the earth an amity that time can never disrupt.

Something such is the personality which this address attests. While this speech exists, this testimony will endure. Its word stands firm. And its signature is plain. He who wrote the speech has left upon its manuscript his clear and sacred seal. He who gave its body shape was a freeman none could bend, heedful of the arbiter none might disobey, humble towards God, loyal to himself, a friend to every man, an aspirant for life.

Surely these are intimations of personality. Here is Lincoln, a vivid plenitude in living unison of timeless quietness and harmony, ordaining freely his own law of even heed for self and brother man, for God and spirit life. Here is the full manhood of a living soul, Godlike and earthly-born. None of its features are solidified in flesh, to be again and soon resolved. All its face is spiritual; all its action free, self-ordered, and self-judged; all preserving jealously its own kingly honor; all beaming graciously on other men; all bearing homage up to God; all vivid with immortality; abhorring mightily all pride and hate, all falsehood and decay; all sharing sacrificially with other men the cost and shame entailed in righting human wrong. This is Lincoln's personality. In Godlike, friendly, undying self-respect; in heavenly, upright, immortal kindness; in humane, divine, self-honoring heed for spirit-life—in each and any one of these four identical affirmations is Lincoln's personality exhaustively engrossed, each and any one declaring that he contains within himself a free and deathless soul, akin alike to God and man, and bound therein by the self-wrought law of love and truth.

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These terms define a life at once of human and of heavenly range, at once inhabiting and transcending realms of change, at once self-ruled and environed with responsibility. Here is elemental personality, in inwrought and indivisible unity, with measureless capacity for versatility, easily blending fulness of vigor with complete repose, vested and transfused with native symmetry and grace. In some such living, breathing words, themselves transfigured and illumined by the quickening verities they strive to body forth, may the pure, immortal soul of Lincoln, and of every child of man, be defined, unburdened, and declared.

Something thus must written words describe the soul that surged beneath this speech, and freely gave this speech its being. Surely such an undertaking must not be despised. That aspiring, creative spirit, so earnest and so resolute, far more than any speech its vision or its passion may body forth, demands to be portrayed. Grand as are these paragraphs, their author has a far surpassing majesty. Fitted as are these accents to reach and stir the auditors of a continent, the soul from which these accents rise has an access to all those auditors far more intimate.

If readers of this essay spurn the effort which it undertakes, let them not be scorers merely. From among their number, let some one arise, artist enough in insight and handicraft to make some truer delineation of that living Lincoln, the abiding origin and author of this and his every other noble speech and deed. Such an artist is sure to find, if ever the conscious soul of Lincoln shines through his hand, that when the inner face of Lincoln is portrayed, that portrait will carry speaking evidence of a joyful and abiding consciousness of liberty and law, of self and brother man, of things eternal, and of God; that in his countenance, so sorrow-shadowed and yet so serene, will shine a close resemblance to every other man; that through his quiet eye will gleam that image of God in which he and all his fellow men have been made; and that deep within it all will beam a radiant assurance that by the way of sacrifice the awful mystery of sin has been resolved.

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Hitherward must men who seek the soul of Lincoln turn their eye. Humble, gentle, and loyal, eager after the life that is its own reward, at once dutiful and free, lavishing out his life to take the sting from sin—this is the soul of Lincoln. In this image every man will see himself reflected, either in affinity, or by rebuke, herein revealing how all men resemble God. Something such is man. Something such is our common manhood. Something such is our inherent testimony as to our origin and source. And something such is the task of him who would frame a valid definition of personality. No undertaking is more profound, none more supreme. And once it is accomplished, forms of statement will have been found availing to embody all man can ever know of self or God.

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## PART V. CONCLUSION

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## LINCOLN'S CHARACTER

In all the chapters that have gone before, the essential constructive factors have been very few. This is evident from their continual reiteration—a reiteration that is too conspicuous to be overlooked. In this is intimation that the last inclusive affirmation of this study will be remarkable for its brevity and also for its open clarity. The simple elements of such a closing synthesis may be here set down.

As encouraging this attempt, it may be first remarked that Lincoln's life attests and demonstrates the primacy of character. This is the foundation of his fame; and hereby his fame is felt to be secure. To this all men agree. This world-wide consent may be said to be unhesitant, spontaneous, unforced, arising as though by common instinct, or by a moral intuition, all men everywhere viewing him alike, even as all eyes everywhere act alike in receiving and reflecting light. Here is something of a significance nothing less than imperial for a student of ethics. For it seems to say that by universal suffrage an international tribute is rendered to a common pattern of human life; that there is a world ideal in the moral realm; that this ideal is visibly near; and that this realized ideal is so altogether friendly, admirable and excellent as to win from every land an overflowing flood of thankfulness and joy. So genuine, so genial, and so grand is Lincoln's moral life. In the face of such a life, and of such a tribute, a student of ethics may be emboldened to assume that his science has indeed foundations; that those sure grounds are after all not far to seek; and that when those cornerstones are once uncovered, they will be within the easy comprehension of common men. Here, then, in Lincoln's open and exalted life is at once a challenge and a test for all who would like to attempt a careful survey of the moral realm. [216]

One sterling, standing coefficient of Lincoln's character was its thoughtfulness. Piercing, pondering thought was with him a habitude. His mind had insight, and he used its eye unsparingly. This was no mere mental cunning, though he was surely passing shrewd and keen. In Lincoln insight was so inseparably allied with an active sense of responsibility that it may be best defined as searching honesty. Into the massive, solid, stubborn problems of his perplexing day he drilled and pierced by plodding, patient, penetrating thought. Kepler never fixed his mind more steadily upon any study of geometric curves than Lincoln his upon the intricate questions of government. And not in vain. It may be truly said that Lincoln's moral judgments and resolves were without exception the long-sought winnings of exactest and most exacting mental toil.

One fruit of this sharp scrutiny was a quite unusual foresight. In this keen certitude touching things to come he was almost without a peer. But its design and its utility for him were ethical. The coming issues towards which he explored were moral. The future he foresaw was thick with evolving sanctions involved in moral deeds. For such events, whether near or far, he had a seeing eye. And with a steady view to those oncoming certainties he shaped his resolutions, and plotted out his life. That those high purposes involved his soul in untold sorrow he well and unerringly foresaw. It was not by mental blunders that he became enmeshed in the anguish and anxiety that made his life so shadowed and solitary. And it was not by shrewder wits that other men escaped his all but constant fellowship with reproach and grief. Lincoln saw beforehand whither his studied view of duty and his clear-eyed obedience led. Where other men stood blind he achieved to see that his selected, sorrow-burdened path was the only way to the happiness that could wear and satisfy. His insight was betrothed right loyally to the faithful league of moral verities. Thus Lincoln's character was stamped and sealed with prudence. Here gleams his wisdom. His thought was balanced, looking many ways and comprehending many parts. Hence his sane judiciousness. [217]

But this well-pondered carefulness was no mere mental sapience. The world of Lincoln's painstaking thought was a world of character; a world of liberty; a world of binding obligation; a world of right and wrong; a world of God-like opportunities; a world of awful sanctions; a world where dignity and shame are infinite; a world of manhood and of brother men; a world where human souls outrank all other things, like God.

These were the themes that Lincoln's mind inspected and adjudged. It is by virtue of his life-long search to find in such mighty interests as these their rational consistency, that mental values of the highest grade pervade and signalize his character. No mortal course in all our history was ever reasoned out more carefully than the course that Lincoln chose and held with moral heroism to his death. To overlook or underrate this thoughtfulness in any reasoned estimate or exposition of Lincoln's character would be infinitely unfair. As with light and vision, his thoughtfulness is the medium in which his character stands manifest. [218]

Quite as elemental in Lincoln's character as his thoughtfulness is his courtly deference to duty. Lincoln's conscience controlled and held him in his course, as gravitation holds and guides this globe. This all men discern; and discerning, they admire. Deep in the center of this unanimous admiration is a respect for Lincoln that amounts almost to reverence. Lincoln's estimate of law was most profound. When, after humble and all-engrossing search, he found and traced those sovereign obligations to which he bowed his life, his estimate and attitude were as though he stood face to face with God. But in that deference was a courtliness that was beautifully Lincoln's own. He too admired, where he obeyed. His thoughtfulness was a stately, sovereign court that sanctioned and made supreme every law that he revered. This transcendent, all-commanding sense of duty, springing from within, and also descending from above, seated centrally within his character, is centrally and inseparably inwrought within his fame. While his name abides this princely heed for duty will persist to challenge and to test each studied statement of his character.

Another factor of Lincoln's character, likewise radical, impossible to omit, is his free and self-formed choice. That Lincoln's choice was truly free, self-moved, and truly unconstrained comes clear impressively when one for long inspects and understands his thoughtfulness. Lincoln's mental action in its riper stages was a pure deliberation. In that careful pondering we can feel and see his ripening moral preference grow clear and free from trammels of every sort, and gain towards decisions that know no other influence but reason wholly purified. So inseparable in him were choice and seasoned wisdom. From this it follows that Lincoln's ripe decisions can be understood only when one comprehends his mental equilibrium.

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And here it comes to view that Lincoln's moral resolutions led him far asunder from the multitudes. It is here that Lincoln's isolation takes departure. This parting of the ways needs noting narrowly. From his selection of his path for life the world at large draws back. Yet even so he still retains the world's applause. Here opens the true secret of his distinction, as of his excellence and power. This secret lies deeply hidden, and yet openly revealed in the comely balanced law his thoughtful wisdom led his noble will loyally to admire, adopt, and struggle unto death to keep.

What now in true precision was this comely, balanced programme of a moral life that Lincoln's wisdom led his will to adopt? Here is the apex of this study. That it is not beyond man's reach, the world's applause and Lincoln's lowly plainness and full accessibility may well encourage any man to hope. That this inquiry should stand unanswered, or be answered heedlessly, or with any vagueness, is unworthy of our day or of our land. But in the answer should be verbally embodied adequate and intelligible explanation of Lincoln's moral majesty, of his unexampled intimateness with every sort of men, and of an undivided world's applause.

These tests are heeded by the answer which this study ventures to suggest, when it says that Lincoln's thoughtful ponderings on the ways of God, on the souls and lives of men, on the microcosm in every man, and on the principles of all society, revealed to him the obligation, in deference to himself, to his neighbor, and to his God, and with full heed to immortality, to choose and follow to its full perfection the law of even truth and love. To be fair, and kind, and pure, as a lowly, kingly child of God—this was the wisdom, the obligation, the aspiration of Lincoln's life. This was the moral sum and substance of his thoughtful, free, obedient life. Here in brief and in full is Lincoln's character.

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In such a character is Godlike potency, and fluency, and dignity. Within its easy interplay is true simplicity, and unison. Within its harmony shines the eye of beauty. Amid all turbulence it holds serene. Its movements convey a majesty that awakens deference. It is free, like God, to devise, adjust, and originate, ever having inner power creatively to overcome or reconcile outright antagonism. Its thoughtfulness has a master's power to divide, combine, and comprehend. It can gaze unblenched and unamazed into the awful face of evil. It can plant and wield a leverage that can overturn every evil argument. In its finished ministry it can present a portrait of the human soul true to its very life. In such a character, though compassed in a single life, and marked with signal modesty, there dwells a fulness adequate to delineate and comprehend all the mighty magnitudes within the moral universe.

Such is the character that Lincoln's life leads all the world to admire. Its beauty lies enshrined within the blended light of wisdom, freedom and obedience along the way where loyalty, charity, humility and hope of immortality shine ever brighter unto perfect day. Here is wisdom. And here is worth. And here these two are one.

### LINCOLN'S PREFERENCE

In the chapter just concluded, the field of ethics is termed a "universe." In the chapter upon Theodicy, it was noted that in Lincoln's most thoughtful ponderings, the great world of reality that passes under the name of physics, or the physical world, seemed to lie outside the field of his concern. Here is a matter demanding something more than a bare allusion. The ponderable universe of material things has impressive majesty. It is too solid and real and present in our life to be ignored. Among the stars and beneath the hills and within the seas are solid and substantial verities. We are environed by their influences on every side. It is deep within their strong embrace that our predetermined fate is being continuously unrolled. What can be the scope and what must be the value of any view of ethics or any plan of life in which this solid, ever-present, all-embracing material world is so indifferently esteemed?

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It is with just this query in mind that this research into the mind of Lincoln was first conceived. And the query which has been throughout in immediate review, but unpropounded openly as yet, now demands to be defined and scrutinized. Did the mind of Lincoln, engrossed as it was upon interests supremely ethical, and ignoring, as it seemed to do, all those vast and deep complexities of the purely physical world, find for our unquiet human thought the true and perfect equilibrium? Or was the thought of Lincoln unbalanced and incomplete, misguided and inadequate essentially? In brief, how must ethics and physics, these two and only two supreme realities, when each is most fairly understood, be conceived to correlate and harmonize? As between these two realities, each so imperial and so irreducible, which holds primacy?

Here is for any thoughtful mind well nigh the last interrogation. To attain a competent reply the essential qualities of each and either realm must be uncovered and compared. In physics here, and in ethics there, what attributes pervade, abide, and are essential? And, these true qualities being seen in each, as between the two, which proves itself superior; in which does the soul of

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man find rest?

In the universe of physics, in all the world of things men see and touch and weigh one pervading and abiding quality is change. We speak indeed of the eternal hills; and before their age-long steadfastness that phrase seems accurate. But it is only soaring rhetoric, surely sinking from its flight, when sober science sets about to cipher from the distinct confessions of their very rocks the date of their birth, the story of their growth, and the sure predictions of their complete decay. In all the stability of the solid hills there is nothing permanent. So with the ageless stars. So with the ever-flowing sea. And so with the very elements of which hills and stars and sea are mixed. All the story of all their genesis and journeying and vanishing is a never-ending tale of change. Nothing physical abides the same. Beneath the daring rays of present-day research all things are being proved impermanent, all found verging over the infinite abyss. Transmutations are in progress everywhere.

In the soul of Lincoln there was craving for a sort of satisfaction which nothing mutable could ever meet. Amid this pageantry of change, among these ceaseless transformations, with all their passing beauty, and all their final disappointment, there was in him a hungering after something that should hold eternally. And within this very eagerness was genuine kinship with the changeless foothold in things eternal which it aspired to find. His very longing was innerly undying. His thirst for immortality was in itself averse and opposite to death essentially. Deep within his desire, deep within himself were living verities, within themselves immutable. His admiration before God's majesty, his free covenant with perfect loyalty, his friendly kindness towards all others like himself, and his God-like sacrificial grief for all wrongdoing, held within their pure vitality visions and passions and aspirations that no mortal darts could touch. And when with clear discernment he freely chose to fill his soul with hopes and deeds that eternally evade decay, he selected, as between things that change and things that abide, that reality to whose eternal primacy every passing day yields perfect demonstration. Nowhere in physics, in ethics alone could be found the perfect solace of conscious perpetuity. [223]

Another quality of all things physical, a quality likewise all-pervading and persistent, is their want of spontaneity. Within the nature of this mighty physical bulk, that is forever altering its garb and form, and within all its flowing change there is no liberty. Through all the ever-varying orbit of the moon; in all the marvelous wedlock of the elements within the rocks and soils and plants; in all convulsions and explosions of air and sea and fluent gas; in lightning, fire, and plague; in all the age-long monotony of instinct, habit, and proclivity, there is no conscious choice, no character-worth, no ennobling and terrifying responsibility. Through all this change of mortal things all things are fixed. Naught is nobly free.

In the soul of Lincoln there was a passion to be free. In this desire there was a clear intelligence, and a purpose like to God's. He coveted a dignity that was self-achieved. He deemed that worth, and that alone, supreme that was his own creation. Only in deeds that he himself determined could he discern true excellence. Herein he stood apart from brutes, ranked above the hills, and pierced beyond the stars. And when, with such an insight, and such a soaring wish, and in such high dignity, he freely chose to hold supreme the life and thought and joy that are truly free, rating all things fixed and physical as forever far beneath, he allotted certain primacy to that which he discreetly judged undoubtedly pre-eminent. In closest consonance with what has last been said, comes now to be affirmed, a central quality of all things purely physical—persistent and pervading everywhere—their absolute inertia morally. They move as they are moved, and never otherwise. The law by which their being is controlled is not their own. At the last and evermore physics, though the measureless arena of unmeasured active energy, is powerless. It cannot even obey. But most demonstrably it can never command, not even itself. It is vastly, deeply, and forever only passive; although within its ponderous frame are playing with baffling constancy forces that weary all too easily our most stalwart thought. [224]

In such a realm as this, forever unawakened and evermore unjudged, Lincoln's awakened and judicial soul could never find contentment. Within that manly heart was enthroned a conscience, alert alike to receive and to originate, as also to approve and fulfill all noble and ennobling obligations. He knew the meaning and the sense of duty, the weight of duty claimed, and the worth of duty done. In his true heart was a living spring of moral law. And in cherishing with exalted satisfaction this imperial quality of all true moral life, therein deciding that physics held nothing worthy of any comparison, he gave kingly utterance to a judgment and decision and desire that could estimate infallibly the ultimate competitors within his conscious life for primacy. For ever in ethics, as never in physics, right judgment finds its source.

Yet another quality of physics, likewise all-pervasive and permanent, is the mocking, paralyzing mystery in which all its certainties are veiled. The mighty acquisitions to our certain knowledge in the realm of nature are superbly manifold and as superbly sure. The swelling catalogue of things well certified in the material world seems to advance the modern scientific mind almost to genuine apotheosis. But of all these stately certitudes there is not one but walks in darkness no human eye nor thought can penetrate. Before heroic and unexampled diligence and daring the scientific frontiers are receding everywhere; but only to make still more amazing and unbearable their inscrutability. On every horizon of the physical realm yawn infinitudes, whether of space or time, of geometry or arithmetic, of electron or of cell, so defiant, so bewildering, and so overwhelming in their complete defeat and mockery of our bravest and best intelligence that our proudest powers are palsied utterly. Whichever ways we turn, whatever gains we win, we face at last, in the very eye of our research, and in the very heart of our desire, a changeless silence that mocks all hope, and leaves us standing in an utter void. In the realm of simple physics the human [225]

intellect, despite the fact that in the physical realm the mind of man has triumphed gloriously, is faced forever with the taunting consciousness that its primal task is still undone.

In an undertaking such as this, and in such a hapless outcome, the mind and life of Lincoln could never be engrossed. He was ever facing mystery indeed in the perplexities that throng the moral realm. In fact, in the darkness and confusion that enshroud and mystify the world of duty and award were all his sorrows born. But in those mysteries moral honesty is not mocked. Where iniquities prevail, the soul that bows towards God sees light. Where sin abounds, the heart that yields the sacrifice of penitence finds peace. In the face of hate and strife and bloodshed, to banish malice and to cherish charity is to enter and to introduce complete tranquillity. Where lives grow coarse and souls are base and purity is all denied, the soul that seeks refinement grows refined and consciously approaches God. When God is mocked and scorners multiply and hearts grow hard in pride, the heart that meekly, humbly holds its confidence in the transcendent, all-controlling Deity opens in that lowly faith deep springs of never-failing hope. In these mysteries, however baffling and persistent, these efforts towards relief find sure and great reward.

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In such a field and in such endeavors it was Lincoln's sovereign preference to measure out all the forces of his conscious life. Attent towards God, benign towards men, upright within, and prizing life, he found, not defiance and despair, but perennial quickening and encouragement, whatever problems darkened round his life. For him such soul-filling verities, and such a corresponding faith held far-transcending primacy. And so in conscious, sovereign and everlasting preference for the truth that shows all its light in character, and for the faith that such clear truth forever illuminates, Lincoln testified his confidence that in the face of physics ethics holds supreme pre-eminence.

Of all this searching estimate and supreme comparison of these two divergent realms one's mind may gravely doubt whether Lincoln's mind had perfect consciousness. Concerning this no one may speak, except with hesitance. But any one whose mind has entered into intimate partnership with all the wealth of Lincoln's words is well aware that it was a habit of his mind to pursue its themes to their farthest bourne. In penetration and in pondering not many minds were ever more evenly taxed. His mental persistence and deliberation were almost preternatural. Discovering this, a student of his mental ways will grow to feel that, in a likelihood almost equivalent to full certainty, Lincoln was wittingly aware of all the meaning in his proclivity to rate ethical interests uppermost.

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At any rate, in his life and writings, so the matter stands. And standing thus in the deeply conscious soul of Lincoln, the matter has a high significance. It seems to testify with a prophet's steady voice that in all the total realm of being, the realm of freedom, of consciousness, and of character is the first and sovereign verity; that the real is fundamentally ethical; that he who seeks for perfect satisfaction must bring to his inquiry the glad allegiance of a moral freeman and a moral judge; that in every undertaking becoming him as man each cardinal moral excellence must grow and shine increasingly; that every mental acquisition must conduce to a lowliness that adores, to a gentleness that loves, to a purity that pledges immortality, to a self-respect that is the mirror and original of all reality; that only thus, in all this universe, and to all eternity, can the soul of man gain triumphs that can satisfy. Only so will truth grow fully radiant, and mystery become benign. Only so can finite man find peace before his Maker, and face serenely all that wisest unbelief finds terrible. This is truth. Here is freedom. Such is faith. Thus, in a freeman's faith truth stands complete.

Such is Lincoln's preference. Like another Abraham, and with a kindred insight and determination, he won all his triumphs and renown by faith—a free and conscious faith in God, and soul, and character.

Here are designations, at once so plastic and so precise, at once so simple and so profound, as to signify and demonstrate how souls of men may conquer death; how one may be a perfect devotee to another person's weal, and still preserve his own integrity; how perfect sanctity may assume a full companionship with sin, whether by redemption or rebuke, and still remain unflecked; and how in man's humility may be enshrined a dignity wherein supernal majesty may be unveiled.

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In some such vivid, moral terms, mobile to grasp and manifest the boundless range and priceless worth within the sovereign moral law; as also to declare unerringly the fateful and unbounded issues of a moral choice, may students hope to trace with true intelligence the real foundations of Lincoln's all but unexampled power and fame.

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## AN EPILOGUE

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ADDRESSED TO THEOLOGIANS

In designing and constructing the chapters that precede, three motives have been actively at work. There has been a desire to set within the realm of Civics a clear and balanced exposition of Lincoln's moral grandeur. There has been a desire to introduce within the realm of Ethics a fertile method of discussion and research. There has been a desire to intimate how in the realm of pure Religion the finished outline of a transparent character may provide a pattern for a true description of the problems of Theology.

Of these three motives the one last named has been preponderant. Lincoln's public life was keyed alike to moral honor and to faith in God. In his most quickening aspirations and in his most sacrificial sorrows his sense of personal obligation and his belief in an over-ruling Providence held fast together in a most notable unison. Guileless, luminous, and single-hearted in his rectitude and in his reverence, he affords a signal illustration of the way in which faith and conscience may vitally co-operate and even coalesce. He presents in consequence a signal opportunity for exploring the inner kinship of ethics and religion. His personality challenges us to inquire and see how honesty and godliness consort; how in a complete and balanced character the categories that define the basis of one's moral excellence may prove themselves to be the very categories that inform and underlie the religious life.

Here opens an engaging investigation. May the ultimate principles of a true ethical theory and the ultimate rationale of a true theology be found in living deed to coincide? To bring this question into open view is the ulterior aim of this book, and more particularly of this appended Epilogue. [230]

In the open petals of the plainest flower soil and sunlight, earth and heaven meet in almost mystic union. Be this our parable. In the ample compass of a normal character, such as Lincoln shows, there is in very deed a mystic union—a vital partnership of man with fellowman, and of men with God. Be this deep fellowship described; for here commingle indivisibly the essential elements in any pure and full display in human life of morals and religion.

In Lincoln's public life there was undeniably a close companionship with God. Earth-born and earth-environed though he was, he had supreme affinity with heavenly realms. His face was seamed with suffering; he wore a humble mien; his habitual posture was a pattern of unstudied modesty. But through those sorrow-shadowed features shone a radiant exalted hope, as he walked and toiled in reverend covenant with the sovereign God of Nations. Besieged by day and night with difficulties and distresses such as rarely burden mortal men, in his nightly vigils and in his daily labors he clung to Deity, true civilian and true man of God at once. The terms of this high covenant were specific and distinct. They were the very terms that defined the conscious qualities of his upright, God-revering character. Be those qualities described.

In the first place, here in Lincoln's open character it becomes heavenly clear how profoundly intimate and at one are majesty and true humility. When the guise of each is fully genuine, they minutely correspond. In Lincoln's lowliness lay the very image of the majesty of God. To that high majesty his lowliness conformed. As in a mountain lake may be enshrined a perfect pattern of the heavenly firmament, so was Lincoln's reverence a conscious, free reflection of the excellence of God. His obedience was an intelligent recognition and re-enthronement of the sovereign law of God. His lowly posture, when in supplicating or interceding prayer, was induced by the bending pity of a compassionate God. That trusting appeal was the very echo of God's benign concern; and within the wrestlings of those intense entreaties the divine designs gained place in human history. Lincoln in his lowliness was Godlike. His humility was supremely dignified, supremely beautiful. In its open face, as in the face of a flower opening towards the sun, was resident a heavenly glory. [231]

In the second place, this vital unison of man with God stands superbly evident in the stately wedlock of Lincoln's honesty with God's righteousness. In Lincoln's soul there lived a faith in God's integrity which no dark storm of human faithlessness, and no delay of heaven's righteous judgments could eclipse or wear away. This belief was in him an active energy. It grew to be a partnership with God's uprightness—a covenant in which his own soul's eagerest ambitions and resolves became upright. In his inmost soul it was his inmost aspiration to be an agent for enthroning here on earth the equity of God. And so, in fact, as a mighty nation's chief executive, he did become the executive of the will of God. In his transparent honesty there was a reflection of the sincerity of God. In his firm constancy there was upheld before this people's eye an index finger pointing to the steadfast constancy of God. In his pure jealousy for the utter sanctity of his plighted word there burned a fire that was kindled in the eye of God. In all his even, glowing zeal for righteousness he has been adjudged by all his fellowmen pre-eminently a man of God. And as signal devotee to honesty he demonstrates most signally that God and man may set their lives in unison. [232]

In the third place there was in Lincoln's patient gentleness a profound resemblance to the all-enduring gentleness of God. His mastery of malice and his universal charity in the face of multitudes of bitter and malignant men attest eternally an intimate companionship with divine forbearing grace. His sacrificial intervention on behalf of all God's little ones whom human heartlessness had oppressed is world-arresting evidence and demonstration that in his kindly heart was throned the Heavenly Father's sympathy. Unto costly fellowship with this divine forbearance and compassion Lincoln opened unreservedly all the compass of his life. For afflicted and afflicting men he felt a sorrow, mixed with pity and rebuke, both born of the affection fathers feel, both proved sincere by years of sacrificial anguish unto death. And this he did with a discerning and deliberate mind. It was thus he understood the heart and ways of God; and thus

by clear design he undertook in his own life to recommend the ways of God to men. In verity he was partaker and dispenser of the manifold grace of God. In him the mighty love of God found living medium. Like a gentle flower drinking gratefully the warmth and beauty flowing towards it from the sun, his soul absorbed the gentle ways of God and itself grew kind and beautiful. Here again it may be seen how intimate may be the life of man in God, the life of God in man.

In the fourth place there was in Lincoln's soul an all-prevailing confidence touching future destiny. This living confidence was the outcome of his close partnership with God. His faith believed that God's designs held fast eternally, and that conviction clouds and night and death were impotent to overshadow or obscure. The rather, as his faith and hope confided in that unfailing verity, that faith and hope became themselves unfailing. His sure belief became participant in God's dependability. Here is the deepest secret of his abiding steadiness. Hence his calm indifference to death.

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And this illumines all his great appeals to his fellowmen with the light of a prophetic vision. For his fellow-citizens, as for himself, his sovereign aspiration was after permanence. This abiding life, whether in the Nation or in himself, he had the mind to comprehend, must be the very life of God within the soul. In civic Godliness alone could there be civic permanence. In the Nation's life the life of God must be incorporate. Then and then alone would any Nation long endure. For this bright civic hope, for this alone he lived. And this ever-springing hopefulness and confidence is the shining efflorescence of his Godliness. He clung to things eternal in a conscious league with God.

Here is something wonderful—something replete alike with mystery and with certitude—a vital unison of God and man in undeniable verity—a unison in righteousness and kindness, in lowly and majestic dignity, in immortal spirit purity—a unison in which all that is most sacredly elemental in God and man most intimately coalesce, while yet remaining most unmistakably distinct—a unison in which is freely and consciously engaged all that personality, however self-discerning and free, can ever contribute or contain—a unison as historically real as it is immeasurably profound—a unison in which space and time provide the theater, while yet a unison in which time and space dissolve. Here is surely ample range for ample exposition of many a major problem in theology, and all within the open and familiar bounds of a normal moral life.

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In close alliance and affinity with Lincoln's vital partnership with God, and of almost equal pregnancy for the problems of religious thought, is the marvelous intimacy of his inner and essential fellowship with men. This feature of his public life is becoming more commanding and impressive every year. To a degree altogether notable it is becoming widely understood how he and all his fellowmen were wonderfully allied. It is becoming seen by all of us that the qualities essential to his commanding excellence are qualities deeply typical of us all. His attitudes of deference and modesty, his promptings towards things permanent and durable, his equities, his kindnesses are universal. They are enthroned within us all. Everywhere, in everyone they ultimately predominate.

Wonderful as it may seem, this holds as true of enemies as it does of friends. Hosts of people, while Lincoln lived, held him their deadliest foe. Through all those bitter years, while they defamed, he meekly, mightily held his own, subduing malice, disdaining subtlety, despising scorn and arrogance, abhorring sordid greed; pleading humbly, but as a prince instead, for righteousness and charity and man's immortal destiny. And now all men detect that however deep and overmastering those aversions and animosities may have been, there was in his enemies and himself a moral kinship and agreement far more powerful and profound. His humble, hopeful plea that every man be fair and pitiful is winning everywhere today glad witness to its eternal and imperial validity.

And the wonder of this deep partnership with men but deepens, when we consider that the form of this all-appealing, all-prevailing partnership was sacrificial. This leads straight into the innermost interior of the problem of vicarious suffering—one mortal, suffering in another's place and for another's sake. Never in all that era of civic anguish in the civil war did any human mortal suffer keener or more continual sorrow than did he who of all the Nation's multitudes stood most untainted and innocent of the iniquity which that stern civic judgment was to purge away. Guiltless utterly of any part in slavery for his own profit or by his own consent, he partook with all the guilty ones of all the sorrows of its expurgation.

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And yet more wonderful is the sequent fact that in precisely this voluntary and conscious unison of innocence and suffering in his outstanding life stood and moved the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud that led this Nation through those sorrows by night and day.

Here again is something wonderful—something again replete with mystery and with certitude. And here again do mystery and certitude stand truly unified and harmonized. Truly they are unified. But in that unison their identity stands clarified. There where Lincoln's manhood shows most humane and universal, a Nation's common symbol, outlining nothing less than a puissant Nation's boundless majesty, there stands defined, as with engraver's finished art, his separate, ever sacred, individual nobility. Even there where his moral being merges most completely into deepest sympathy with the afflictions that descend on sin, there his own integrity and personal jealousy for righteousness are most outstanding and distinct. But be it said again, in Lincoln do that broad humaneness and that erect nobility, that sympathy and that jealousy subsist in unison. In strict verity he is our Nation's surrogate. Surely here again is ample range for ample exposition of many a major problem of theology, and all still held within the open and familiar bounds of a normal moral life.

So Lincoln stood in unison with God and fellowman. Ideally complete in his own identity, he was ideally allied with other lives through all the personal realm. And be it well and truly seen that the elements of this affianced with his God, and the elements of his firm league with brothermen were identically the same. In each and either realm the binding bonds were fealty to charity, to equity, to humility, to purity. These four qualities explain and guarantee completely his allegiance. These and these alone were the constituent elements of all his brotherhood and of all his reverence. And it is within the nature of these four vital qualities, at once so Godlike and so human, and within their ever-living interplay that one must look to find whatever Lincoln's character can contribute to the problems of theology.

What averments tremble here! Our mighty human race does truly live in unison. Within that peopled unison the life of one may have far-ranging partnership. That partnership is closely definable in terms of character. In Lincoln's life as private soul, and as vicar of us all alike, his constancy and kindness, his purity and lowliness embrace and body forth his total being, with all he bore and wrought. Herein unfolded all his beauty and all his worth, whether as a single citizen or as a Nation's representative.

And our humble human life does also truly share the life in God. Within that heavenly unison the lowliest soul may have exalted fellowship. And so in Lincoln's loyalty and tenderness, his lowliness and thirst for immortality, as man of God, unfolds the heavenly beauty of God's eternal purity and majesty, God's benignity and faithfulness.

So do lives of free and conscious beings most truly flourish and so do they most truly blend. Our fellowship with Lincoln, and Lincoln's fellowship with us; God's fellowship with Lincoln and Lincoln's fellowship with God; this mystic unrestricted partnership of noble souls; unfolding and unrolling sovereign harmonies, even when they antagonize; in vengeance or compassion fulfilling all their mission and dominion through the earth—these are indeed our sovereign realities. In scanning these we may indeed discern deep ways of God and men.

Mighty highways open here—highways that enter every major province of theology. Be these avenues observed.

Whence came the blight of slavery? How in human soil could such inhumanity germinate? What is the virus of its contagion? What makes its guilt so terrible?

Must inhumanity be avenged? May avengers still be merciful? May hardened men become regenerate? May guilt and innocence be reconciled?

Why such anguish on the innocent? Why should little ones be crushed? Why such hosts of patient ones meekly bearing wrong and shame? Why do offenses need to come? How does patience work on sin? How does sorrow work on guilt?

What is human brotherhood? May fellowmen be surrogates? May men's honor interchange?

Wherein stands human character? What makes a man responsible? How sovereign is man's liberty? How supreme is man's intelligence? Are moral beings subject to decay?

May finite man come near to God? Does God come near to finite man? May plans of men and God's designs combine? May God be seen in human life? May human hearts partake of God? Are love and truth and liberty, the crown of human dignity, enthroned in God ideally?

Is Christ indeed the Lord of men? Is he our life? Are his teachings true? Is his love divine? Can he indeed redeem?

Upon such queryings as these, all running deeply into mystery, each one fast rooted in reality, and each one voicing in each human soul an urgent quest, those sterling elements of Lincoln's character, his lowliness, his living hope, his pity, and his faithfulness shed grateful light.

Be these four qualities unveiled before the face of sin, that sin may be defined.

When in the presence of some noble majesty or of some courtly modesty a free and conscious soul is arrogant or insolent; when a being born for endless life in freedom, light and purity, exchanges God and immortality for idol forms and baseness and decay; when recipients of God's unnumbered benefits, and participants in the joys and sorrows of a teeming world of brothermen remain ungrateful and unpitiful; when beings destined to be sons of light prefer hypocrisy and unbelief; then, irreverent, corrupt, ungracious, and untrue, sin shows all its horridness and iniquity.

And when in the presence of pure grace and truth all such perverseness stands revealed; then the beauty of a quiet modesty, as it respects all worthy majesty, will make supremely plain the ugliness of every form of insolence; then the life that opens towards perpetual dawn will most mightily and forevermore reproach the life that feasts upon corroding food, fattening and hardening towards decay; then outpouring, patient love will visit on ingratitude and hate their most unbearable rebuke; and then the radiant light of simple truth and pure sincerity will set all falsity and unbelief in uttermost disgrace. In such an awful penalty, supreme and unavoidable, will sin incur its doom.

But in the very penalty it stands proclaimed how sinful souls may be transformed, and hostile hearts be reconciled.

When pride, subdued by majesty, rejoices in humility; when grossness, shamed by purity, welcomes purging fires; when malice, melted by forbearance, partakes the sacrifice and becomes itself compassionate; when falsity, unveiled by verity, submits to its rebuke and welcomes truth with deep docility and faith; then within the sinner's penitence is every penalty absolved, and between embittered souls comes perfect reconciliation.

Be these four qualities addressed to that supreme transaction named atonement.

When, in perfect loyalty and in perfect lowliness, with a perfect charity and with an utter trust in immortality, one like a Son of Man consents to bear the dark affront of insolence and perfidy from base and deadly men, enduring meekly what his soul abhors, then to all the sons of men is published equally, and with supreme assurance, that sins of men must be indeed avenged, and that sinful men may be indeed redeemed.

In that transaction malice faces patience, and patience faces malice for a final strife. There candor bears the lying taunt of acting in disguise. Humility endures the shameful charge of shameless arrogance. Compassion bows as though a thief to all the brutal rudeness of a mob. The soul of immortal purity is bartered for by traders greedy after silver coins, and driving through their trade with lamps and clubs.

But in the measure and in the manner of that transcendent patience malice is preparing for itself the manner and the measure of its own just doom. And in the measure and the manner of that same transcendent patience contrition may discern the manner and the measure of its release. In that mighty mingling of aversion and endurance sin must behold alike its omnipotent redemption and its omnipotent rebuke. Thus love, in perfect sympathy, and truth, in perfect equity set forth in heavenly purity the sovereign majesty of an atonement for the world.

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Be these four radiant qualities applied to him we call alike the son of Mary and the Son of God. In him, the Son of God, shines such a plenitude of grace and truth as becomes the glory of the very God, revealed in such immortal purity as proves him heir and very Lord of all eternity, and wearing such a dignity as belongs at once to heaven's majesty and our most genuine humility; while deep within his open life as son of Mary there shines such a full and genial truth and grace as proves his true humanity, so free from mortal taint through all our transient scenes as proves his spirit's immortality, and manifesting everywhere to all the sons of man their own ideal lowliness. These are all his beauty. In him they fully blend. They blend in him indeed. But they do not dissolve. And so may we with souls akin to him whom Mary bore behold in him the proper image of our complete humanity; and still with eyes and vision all unchanged, behold within those same fair traits the very image and the unbounded fulness of the glory of the infinite God.

Be these same radiant qualities our proper medium for beholding Deity. Conceive of One in whose being the only light and glory reside in the pure majesty of a perfect grace and truth. Conceive how these free living qualities permit a unison in fellowship, a fellowship in unison. Conceive how such a unison permits to each participant complete equality and a full infinity. Conceive thus how perfect constancy and perfect kindness, revealed in perfect purity, and clad in perfect majesty may manifest eternally in mystic unison the blessedness of a perfect personality. Conceive how such a partnership in unison, and unison in partnership will be evermore containing and enjoying within itself an evermore unsullied Spirit life, engendering and completing all the finite forms of being of the created universe; an evermore unfolding Love that is the one original of every fatherhood in heaven and earth; and an evermore Responding Love that is the primal inspiration of the admiring and adoring thankfulness of every child of God; while evermore displaying in a loyal self-respect the eternal archetype and origin of every verity and every equity enthroned in any earnest upright mind. And so conceive in terms as vivid as our own intelligence and liberty how true transcendent Deity may wield no other energy and know no other blessedness than unfolds forever in a free and conscious unison and partnership in pure transcendent love and truth.

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Transcendent thoughts and ventures these. But abounding other thoughts and ventures no less transcendent wait and urge for utterance. They all assume no less, and nothing more, than that in the living vision of a living personality hides and shines the harmony that may unite the mysteries and the certainties of this universe. Let Truth, as personal self-respect; and Love, as self-devoting life; and Purity, that fears no death; and Dignity, that crowns all worth—let these be clearly seen, each one apart; and clearly seen again when fully unified—and human thought holds categories in hand whereby the problems of our mental and ethical and religious life may be resolved.

Of all of this what goes before is but a brief and bare suggestive hint. Its development and vindication call for the completed exposition of such a balanced round of thought as may be found in a prophet like Isaiah, an apostle like Paul, or an evangelist like John.

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# LINCOLN'S SECOND INAUGURAL

Fellow-Countrymen:

At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the Nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it—all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the Nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the Government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered—that of neither has been answered fully.

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The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the Providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

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With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the Nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all Nations.

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## Transcriber's Notes:

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