

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

NUMBER 1358

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

April 18, 1955

MOST TIMELY EDITORIAL — FEBRUARY 12, 1955

The nineteen outstanding Lincoln students who comprise the Lincoln Foundation Advisory Group have selected as the most timely Lincoln editorial appearing in American newspapers for February 12, 1955 a sentiment in *The Washington (D. C.) Post* through whose courtesy we are permitted to print the contribution entitled, "Lincoln Points the Way."

LINCOLN POINTS THE WAY

The continuing impact of Abraham Lincoln upon our civilization is one of its finest characteristics. Lincoln lives as an ideal in the heart of virtually every American—and in the hearts of millions of foreigners as well. It is not so much that he is admired as a great President or wartime leader as that he is loved as a man of humanitarian instincts, of faith, humility, courage, and compassion. His greatness of soul and the strength of his personality are factors of incalculable influence, not only in our history and politics, but also in the general ethos of the American people.

In his annual message to Congress in 1862 Lincoln argued earnestly for a constitutional amendment permitting compensation of the states for the slaves as a means of hastening the end of the Civil War. His message is permeated with the spirit of peace, coupled with determination that the Union must be preserved. "We shall nobly save or meanly lose," he said, "the last, best hope of earth." The Lincoln philosophy that "right makes might" and that a free nation should pursue its policies with restraint, human understanding, and compassion for the vanquished has since been reflected in American policy in a thousand ways.

One recent manifestation of Lincoln's enormous influence is to be found in President Eisenhower's dramatic statement of last December when firebrands were whipping up war sentiment over the imprisonment of 11 American fliers in Red China. "If we are going to take such a fateful decision as leads us one step toward war," the President declared, "let us by no means do it in response to our human emotions of anger and resentment. But let us do it after we have prayerfully considered it and found, as Wilson expressed it, 'no other means of protecting our rights.'" That calm, mature sense of responsibility in the face of danger may be regarded as a present-day emulation of Lincoln.

In these days when mankind seems to live on the edge of a volcano the value of the Lincoln tradition can scarcely be overemphasized. From him we derive a sense of proportion, an appreciation of human values, and a feeling of dedication that light the path of the American people. In the White House he was a lonely, anguished figure who fought the extremists of the North as well as the forces of rebellion in the South. But the place he holds in the hearts of the people is so warm and intimate that it is difficult to imagine what the United States would be like with no Lincoln in our folklore.

EXCERPTS FROM OTHER FEB. 12 EDITORIALS

People loved him for his human qualities before he was a great man, and after he achieved greatness and immortality they remembered him more for what they loved in him than for his fame.—*Baltimore News Post*.

Lincoln's life was a splendid exemplification of the virtues of honesty, patience, tenacity and charity.—*Daily Argus Leader* (Sioux Falls).

At the heart of all that he said, all that he did was his endless esteem for the dignity of the individual.—*Bridgeport (Conn.) Telegram*.

Lincoln's place in the hearts of men is secure because he had "the common touch" and not because he sought to establish himself above other men.—*Burlington (Vt.) Free Press*.

Lincoln had such qualities of gentleness, earthy humor and wisdom, and such a mastery over words, as to become a hero to the entire free world.—*Cincinnati Times Star*.

There are many reasons why he has remained beloved. His qualities of tolerance, of understanding, of charitableness, have made him lovably human to all mankind.—*Columbus Evening Dispatch*.

He was a politician who made his adjustments to the possible within the framework of deep convictions.—*Dayton Journal*.

Because of our world's desperate need for charity we should as never before, assiduously follow Lincoln's example of practicing the Savior's doctrine of love and understanding.—*Deseret News*. (Salt Lake City).

"With firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right." That sort of strength, in this age of peril, is the last best hope of earth.—*Florida Times Union*.

A man of magnificent integrity of mind and heart, of faith in the common man, of belief in human rights, of hatred to whatever robbed any human being of that which belongs to all alike.—*Lexington (Ky.) Leader*.

He is today symbolical to the American people of steadfast courage, clear vision and the will to do what was right as he saw it which are the base upon which this great nation has been built.—*Miami Herald*.

Free men everywhere, and those who yearn to be free, can look to Lincoln as one who lived, worked and died for freedom.—*New York Herald Tribune*.

Lincoln represented great human qualities. This is the Lincoln symbol as valid in deep Africa and the Asian jungle as it is in Springfield. . . . Our liberty and dignity can be made secure so long as we follow the light that has been kindled.—*New York Times*.

His declared intention to treat the vanquished as if they had never left the Union was what the groups that represented human selfishness could not accept—for such an attitude violates all the traditions of relations based on boundaries, distinctions, force and conquest.—*Oregon Journal*.

"I want every man to have a chance." That's how Lincoln felt about the country in which he had a chance—that its liberties were and must always be vital if it is to remain truly great or is to remain a nation at all.—*Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Whether he wrote or spoke, the words that poured fourth lent fierce power to his convictions and infused with the glow of simple honesty his gestures of compassion.—*Portland (Me.) Evening Express*.

Americans can be most grateful to the martyred President for having given them a sense of direction in morality.—*Wichita Eagle*.