

LINCOLN LORE

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

No. 350

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

December 23, 1935

LINCOLN'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Abraham Lincoln's exalted code of ethics which reached an exceptionally high moral plane is worthy of exemplification. Some statements gleaned from his writings are compiled for this issue of Lincoln Lore.

Truth is your truest friend.

Feeling prosperity we forget right.

I cannot be an instrument to crush his heart.

Broken by it I, too, may be; bow to it I never will.

Fraud, by the principal of law, invalidates everything.

I have considered this and will not shrink the responsibility.

I have cultivated patience and made no attempt at a retort.

If a man is honest in his mind you are pretty safe in trusting him.

It is better only sometimes to be right than at all times to be wrong.

If I know my heart, my gratitude is free from any taint of personal triumph.

So long as I have been here I have not willingly planted a thorn in any man's bosom.

I shall do nothing through malice; what I deal with is too vast for malicious dealing.

I now wish to make the personal acknowledgment that you were right and I was wrong.

I cannot assume this reckless position or allow others to assume it on my responsibility.

I am slow to listen to criminations among friends and never expose their quarrels on either side.

I have been unwilling to go beyond the pressure of necessity in the unusual exercise of power.

I am very little inclined on many occasions to say anything unless I hope to produce some good by it.

It will be just all we can do to keep out of a quarrel—and I am resolved to do my part to keep peace.

May the Almighty grant that the cause of truth, justice, and humanity shall in no wise suffer at my hands.

I believe you can be my personal witness that no man is less to be dreaded for undue severity in any case.

Stand with anybody that stands right, stand with him while he is right and part with him when he goes wrong.

I am not wanting in purpose though I may fail in the strength to maintain my freedom from bad influences.

What I did, I did after a very full deliberation and under a very heavy and solemn sense of responsibility.

The man does not live who is more devoted to peace than I am, but it may be necessary to put the foot down firmly.

It is with sincere gratification that I receive this early indication of your unwavering purpose to stand for the right.

As I am trying to preserve my own temper by avoiding irritants so far as practicable I decline to read the cross letter.

Let us have faith that right makes might; and in that faith let us to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it.

The possibility that we may fail in the struggle ought not to deter us from the support of a cause which we believe to be just.

In times like the present men should utter nothing for which they would not willingly be responsible through time and eternity.

I now have to beg that you will not do me the injustice to suppose for a moment that I remember anything against you in malice.

I shall always bear with me the consciousness of having endeavored to do my duty in the trying times through which we are passing.

I wish you to do nothing merely for revenge, but that what you may do shall be solely done with reference to the security of the future.

I have no other (ambition) so great as that of being truly esteemed by my fellow men by rendering myself worthy of their esteem.

Engaged as I am in a great war, I fear it will be difficult for the world to understand how fully I appreciate the principles of peace.

I am very glad . . . that I have not, by native depravity, or under evil influences, done anything bad enough to prevent the good results.

It is a cheering thought throughout life that something can be done to ameliorate the conditions of those who have been subject to the hard usages of the world.

I trust that in view of the great responsibility resting upon me, you will perceive no want of respect to yourself in any undue earnestness I may seem to display.

General Schurz thinks I was a little cross in my late note to you. If I was, I ask your pardon. If I do get up a little temper, I have no sufficient time to keep it up.

Remembering that Peter denied his Lord with an oath after most solemnly protesting that he never would, I will not swear that I will make no committals, but I do think I will not.

A public expose, however, though it might confound the guilty, I fear might also injure some who are innocent; to some extent disparage a good cause; reflect no credit on me and result in no advantage to you.