

LINCOLN LORE

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LINCOLN'S MANUAL ON LIBERTY

Patriot's Day, April 19, on which the Battle of Concord and Lexington was fought, should be more generally observed throughout the nation. In Weems' "Life of Washington" Lincoln first read this dramatic account of the struggle:

"Never before had the bosoms of the swains experienced such a tumult of heroic passions. Then throwing aside the implements of husbandry, and leaving their teams in the half-finished furrows, they flew to their houses; snatched up their arms; and bursting from their wild shrieking wives and children, hasted to the glorious field where liberty, heaven-born goddess, was to be bought for blood."

We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last, best hope of earth.

As a nation of free men we must live for all time, or die by suicide.

Slavery and oppression must cease, or American liberty must perish.

I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong.

The struggle of today is not altogether for today, it is for a vast future also.

Slavery is founded in the selfishness of man's nature—opposition to it in his love of justice.

Those who shall have tasted actual freedom I believe can never be slaves or quasi-slaves again.

I go no further than this because I wish to avoid both the substance and the appearance of dictation.

Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally.

The people will save their government if the government itself will do its part only indifferently well.

Little by little, but steadily as a man's march to the grave, we have been giving up the old, for the new faith.

If we cannot give freedom to every creature, let us do nothing that will impose slavery upon any other creature.

The fight must go on. The cause of civil liberty must not be surrendered at the end of one or even one hundred defeats.

Let not him who is homeless pull down the house of another, but let him labor diligently to build one for himself.

They (Negroes) would help, in some trying time to come, to keep the jewel of liberty within the family of freedom.

Thanks to all: for the great republic—for the principle it lives by and keeps alive—for man's vast future—thanks to all.

Equality in society alike beats inequality, whether the latter be of the British aristocratic sort or of the domestic slavery sort.

I wish to see all men free. I wish the national prosperity of the already free, which I feel sure the extinction of slavery would bring.

Free labor has the inspiration of hope; pure slavery has no hope. The power of hope upon human exertion and happiness is wonderful.

The white people of Nebraska are good enough to govern themselves, but they are not good enough to govern a few miserable negroes.

By general law life and limb must be protected, yet often a limb must be amputated to save a life; but a life is never wisely given to save a limb.

I leave you, hoping that the lamp of liberty will burn in your bosoms until there shall no longer be a doubt that all men are created free and equal.

We see it, and to us it appears like principle, and the best sort of principle at that—the principle of allowing the people to do as they please with their own business.

We have attempted no propagandism and acknowledged no revolution. But we have left to every nation the exclusive conduct and management of its own affairs.

As labor is the common burden of our race, so the effort of some to shift their share of the burden onto the shoulders of others is the great durable curse of the race.

I have always thought that all men should be free; but if any should be slaves, it should be first those who desire it for themselves, and secondly, those who desire it for others.

If there is anything which it is the duty of the whole people to never intrust to any hands but their own, that thing is the preservation and perpetuity of their own liberties and institutions.

Each head is the natural guardian, director, and protector of the hands and mouth inseparably connected with it; and that being so, every head should be cultivated and improved by whatever will add to its capacity for performing its charge.

It is not much in the nature of man to be driven to anything; still less to be driven about that which is exclusively his own business; and least of all where such driving is to be submitted to at the expense of pecuniary interest or burning appetite.

The same spirit says, "You toil and work and earn bread, and I'll eat it." No matter in what shape it comes, whether from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his own nation and live by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men as an apology for enslaving another race, it is the same tyrannical principle.

I accept with gratitude their assurances of the sympathy and support of that enlightened, influential, and loyal class of my fellow-citizens in an important crisis which involves, in my judgment, not only the civil and religious liberties of our own dear land, but in a large degree the civil and religious liberties of mankind in many countries and through many ages.

I think a definition of genuine popular sovereignty in the abstract, would be about this: That each man shall do precisely as he pleases with himself, and with all those things which exclusively concern him . . . that a general government shall do all those things which pertain to it, and all the local governments shall do precisely as they please with respect to those matters which exclusively concern them.

The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as his liberator, while the wolf denounces him for the same act, as the destroyer of liberty, especially as the sheep was a black one. Plainly, the sheep and the wolf are not agreed upon a definition of the word liberty; and precisely the same difference prevails today among us human creatures, even in the North, and all professing to love liberty.