

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY

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A MAN OF ALL GENERATIONS -- SON OF ILLINOIS -- PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES -- ABRAHAM LINCOLN WAS EACH AND ALL OF THESE, BUT HE WAS A GREAT DEAL MORE AS WELL. FOR THIS WAS A MAN OF MANY PARTS, ALL OF THEM HUMAN AND MOST OF THEM GREAT.

THIS WAS THE POLITICIAN WHO IN 30 LONG YEARS OF DEVOTED SERVICE IN HIS PARTY'S RANKS CAME TO REALIZE THAT POLITICS, LIKE LIFE, IS THE ART OF ACHIEVING THE POSSIBLE AND WHO LEARNED THAT HE HAD NOTHING WHATSOEVER IN COMMON WITH ^{some} POLITICAL PLATFORMS WHOSE PLANKS WERE PLATTITUDES AND WITH MEN OF NO DISCERNIBLE PRINCIPLE.

THIS, TOO, WAS THE HUSBAND AND FATHER WHOSE HOME LIFE WAS TORN BY STRIFE AND DISSENSION AND THE TRAGIC DEATH OF CHILDREN.

BUT THIS, TOO, WAS THE PRESIDENT -- THE PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ... DEVOTED ABOVE ALL ELSE TO PRESERVING THE UNION "WITH THE DIGNITY, EQUALITY AND RIGHTS OF THE SEVERAL STATES UNIMPAIRED." SO HE SAID; SO HE DID.

(PAUSES)

AND IN SO DOING, HE BROUGHT FREEDOM TO THE ENSLAVED. AS HE WROTE IN HIS ANNUAL MESSAGE FOLLOWING THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION: "IN GIVING FREEDOM TO THE SLAVE, WE ASSURE FREEDOM FOR THE FREE, HONORABLE ALIKE IN WHAT WE GIVE AND IN WHAT WE PRESERVE."

THIS WAS ABRAHAM LINCOLN, POLITICIAN, HUSBAND AND FATHER, PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, MARTYR FOR ALL MANKIND.

NOW, IN 1968, IT SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT WE SHALL NEVER SEE HIS LIKE AGAIN. THIS IS A SOBERING THOUGHT, BUT IT SHOULD BE A KINDLING ONE. FOR UPON US NOW, AS A PEOPLE, HAS BEEN LAID PERHAPS THE GREATEST RESPONSIBILITY ANY NATION WAS EVER ASKED TO SHOULDER, YET CERTAINLY NOT GREATER THAN WE CAN BEAR. OUR DAYS ARE NO LONGER THAN WERE LINCOLN'S, OUR NIGHTS ARE NO DARKER, AND IF THERE IS ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIS TIME AND THIS IT LIES IN THE TREMENDOUS ADVANTAGE THAT IS OURS, THAT THIS SON OF ILLINOIS STOOD SO TALL BEFORE US.