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### Lincoln and Washington as Guides for To-day

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## LINCOLN AND WASHINGTON AS GUIDES FOR TO-DAY.

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As a text, I have chosen the words to be found in the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel according to John, the first half of the fifteenth verse,—“ For I have given you an example.”

Lincoln's birthday was last Thursday. Next Sunday will be Washington's. As we stand here, then, between the two, with the memories overshadowing and inspiring us of the two greatest men the republic has produced, it seemed to me that nothing could be more fitting than that we should consider a few of the practical problems in the country which face us at the present time.

I shall deal with the personality of Lincoln and Washington only by reference and suggestion. I would like to have you think how they would deal with the questions that are before us. They lived in different times, surrounded by different conditions. But if with the same integrity, the same honesty, the same humanity, the same tenderness, patience, perseverance, we front our problems with which they fronted theirs, then we shall indeed be worthy of their memories.

Do you wonder that I take a theme like this for such a place as this and such a day? There are two theories of the relation of God to the world which have been held in the past and which prevail still. One is that which makes a hard-and-fast distinction between what is called “sacred” and what is called “secular.” One holds to the thought that God revealed himself once and for all, completely, in one Book; and those who believe that would think that it is perfectly proper on Sunday morning and in any church to

preach a sermon that deals with any character whose name is mentioned in the Bible. But perhaps they would think that, if we are to deal with modern men and those whose names are not recorded in the sacred Book, we ought to do it at some other time and in some other place.

There is, however, another theory of the relation of God to the world. According to this all ages and all places and all times are sacred. God is living now, God is speaking now, God is working in present history as well as in that of the Jews. God lifts up and inspires and teaches certain men, and they stand as his representatives and spokesmen to-day as much as others did at any time in the history of the world.

If we can hold that theory, there is even a certain advantage in taking modern men, people of our own race and our own time, because they come close to us. I believe, indeed, that this is the theory which we should hold, and, holding it, we may say, here and now, how grateful we are that God has given this nation great men.

Do you see the significance of it? It means that the fibre of the stuff of which we are made is capable of producing such characters. And do you see next what that means? It means that we have a right to take them as inspirations and examples, as indicating what in our degree we may be and may become.

We may not be able to attain the height which they so easily reached; but we can follow after them and set our feet in their footsteps. And it means also that we have a right to use these names and memories for correction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness. They are of our people, of our blood, of our traditions, of our times. We then can follow them, though it be afar off; and, if we propose to be worthy of the great country which one of them did so much to found, and the other so much to save, then we must meet the questions of this hour in their spirit, and try to be as true and faithful in our day as they were in theirs.

Without any more preliminary, then, I shall suggest for your consideration certain practical problems that face us to-day. I shall not have time to deal with them adequately. Each one of them ought to take one discourse at least. So I can only point out some outline considerations, and perhaps set you to thinking, so that, when the practical solution of these questions comes, you may be ready to face them worthily and in the spirit of our great and noble examples.

People tell us — Secretary Root told us in his address the other day, — that there was apparently a growing gulf of misunderstanding and irritation between the rich and the poor in this country. There are those who say that the rich are not only getting richer, but that the poor are growing poorer. I believe the first of these propositions; but I do not a bit believe the second.

But that there is this sort of feeling is enough to give us a practical problem for solution. We have taught our young men too much in newspapers, in lectures, in books dealing with the opportunities of life here on this continent, dealing with ideals of success, that the one great thing to be aimed at is money.

Take the suggestions of the lives of Washington and Lincoln as bearing on this matter. Washington was rich, one of the richest men in the colonies: Lincoln was poor, one of the poorest men of his time. But note this significant and important fact for us to consider, and remember forever, — when you think of Washington, that he was rich is not the first thing to think of; when you think of Lincoln, your attention is not fastened on the fact that he was poor.

The two men illustrate the great truth that here in this republic manhood is supreme, and that manhood may be attained by both the rich and the poor, by the rich and the poor equally and alike.

Washington used his wealth merely as an opportunity, something setting him free and giving him advantage in the matter of devoting himself to the service of his country

and his time; and Lincoln never dreamed of being overwhelmed or oppressed by the consideration that he was poor. He showed what is still true in this republic,—that any man who has it in him, and who cares, can brush one side the obstacle of poverty, and rise to the highest and best of which he is capable.

Here is the practical solution, then, of the problem of wealth and poverty in this republic. Let us cease fastening our attention on them to this extent. Let us remember that what we are is the chief thing, and that there are open opportunities for any man who will seek the highest heights of manly attainment,—any man, I say.

Another point: for, as I said, I can only suggest some of these matters for consideration. It is very significant, in view of the public discussions that are all the time going on as to our universities and the length of time that a young man should spend at a university before he is permitted to graduate and take his degree, for us to note that neither Washington nor Lincoln ever had any university education at all.

In the technical sense of the word, they were not educated. And yet they were educated as nobly and grandly as any man that has ever trod the soil of our land,—educated in the sense of having their powers and faculties developed so that they could take hold of and deal with the great questions that confronted them; educated in the sense that they knew enough so that this knowledge might cast a light on the pathway along which they would advance to the highest ends of attainment.

They were educated; and no man in America to-day need to be in this essential sense uneducated, whether he ever sees the inside of a university or not. We must broaden our conception of what it means to be educated.

These men became masters of English writing and English speech, Lincoln particularly having produced phrases, passages, orations, which will stand as classics to all time,

which even to-day by the scholar are being compared with the finest products of the finest period of ancient Grecian culture.

There is another point I must speak of very briefly. I would not speak of it at all, did it not seem to me to be my duty. I ask that I may not be misunderstood or my motive misinterpreted. I speak of it, not through any antipathy to the Catholics as such; I speak of it because the Roman Catholic Church to-day illustrates this great, this imminent danger to the welfare of the Republic; and it happens to be represented by the claims which it is making.

Archbishop Farley the other day put in a plea for the city's money to support and endow a Catholic library. That is one point I wish you to note. And the other is kindred to it,—that the Catholic Church is earnestly, patiently, persistently, determinedly making an attack on our public school system. It is endeavoring to do one of two things,—either to get the public schools open to distinctively Catholic teaching or else get public money for the support of distinctively Catholic schools.

And, if the time ever comes when either of these aims is accomplished, it will be a sad day for the future of the republic. England has recently been convulsed from one end to the other over a similar question,—the endeavor of the Established Church of England to get control, or to keep control, of public education.

It seems to me that the principle is so clear that no man who devotes five minutes to careful consideration of it can possibly go astray. Why should Archbishop Farley ask the money of New York for the support of a Catholic library? Why should he ask it for the support of Catholic schools? The principle is here; public money for public uses and public uses alone! I should fight against this just as vigorously if the proposition was to ask for public money to support a Unitarian library or a library of any other sort whatsoever.

You and I are not interested in the fostering and maintenance and spread of a kind of religion in which we do not believe. Let those who are interested in it have all liberty to work for it, to give for it, to build it up in every conceivable way. But what right have they to tax a Jew, a Buddhist, a Presbyterian, an Episcopalian, a Unitarian, an agnostic, to teach and spread the Catholic faith? Why should money be taken out of my pocket to accomplish ends which I not only do not believe in, but which I do not approve, and which I believe to be detrimental to the public welfare? It is injustice, it is robbery, it is outrage.

I warn you to think of these things; for it has been a surprise to me here in New York to note that movements of this sort are being made every little while. And the result of them is not the rising of the people in defence of the republic: it is hardly more than a paragraph in the newspapers; and just because of this apathy and lack of attention we shall wake up some day to find that certain irretrievable steps have been taken, and that the mischief has been accomplished.

There is one other evil that I wish you to consider in the light of the spirit and temper and example of Lincoln and Washington; and that is what seems to me undoubtedly the growing tendency towards violence, North and South, East and West, in the relations between the whites and the colored people not only, but in the relations between workmen and their employers, not only among grown people, but even among the children.

If the matter has been accurately reported, there was a strike the other day in Albany on the part of the messenger boys. They have a perfect right to strike, they have a perfect right to devote themselves to arguing with and persuading other boys not to interfere with the success of the strike, they have a right by every peaceable method to carry out their purpose; but even the boys have taken to violence of late. They stoned the police. They interfered in every way with other boys who proposed to take their places.



The point is this. When a group of men wishes to have its way, they who constitute the group are getting less and less inclined to take the peaceable method of persuasion or of appealing to law or of trying by the ballot to accomplish their end, and are reverting to barbarism; for that is simply what it means.

If half the stories of what occurred in the mines in Pennsylvania during the last year be true, there was violence there that should not be permitted for an hour. If half the stories that come to us from the South be true, there is mob violence there that should not be permitted for an hour. If half the stories that come to us from the West be true, there is mob violence there,—violence as between the whites and the colored people in the Northern States as well as in the South. In other words, when you reproduce the conditions, the same old qualities of this human nature of ours are likely to make themselves apparent and felt.

I can understand violence in Turkey, in Russia, in a good many other parts of the world; for there the people have no rights which are allowed and respected. They have no voice in the government, they have no peaceable method of redress or change. But there is not the shadow of a shade of an excuse for violence under ordinary conditions in a republic like ours.

Who rules this republic? Who rules this city? Who rules the State of Indiana, the State of South Carolina? You do: I do. Each man has a share in it. He is at liberty to write and print: he is at liberty to talk in private and to preach in public. He is at liberty to do everything he possibly can to change public opinion, to get new laws passed, new ideals accepted, new methods established. Anything is open and is possible in a republic where all the people have a vote; and under such conditions as these there is absolutely no possible excuse for violence.

And we shall not be civilized, we shall not have a right to claim that we are civilized, until mob violence anywhere

and for any cause is immediately, ruthlessly, stamped out. Had I the power, I would repress it by the quickest and most forcible means I could control anywhere, everywhere, instantly. For it is barbarism, pure and simple.

And yet, if the stories that come to us are true, it is increasing; and the danger is that the people will get accustomed to it, become tolerant of it; and, when they do, they share in the barbarous nature of that which they permit and condone.

I come now at the end to speak of one of the gravest questions that faces and threatens the future of the republic. I refer to what has come to be called the Race Problem. What are we going to do with the colored people in this republic? What are they going to do to us?

It is thirty-seven years since the war closed; a little more than that since the Proclamation of Emancipation which set between four and five millions of slaves free. Those four or five millions now, I suppose, are at least ten millions. We had the impression — I know I had — that, when we had given them the ballot,—when we had adopted the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution, it was only a matter of time when the thing would work itself out.

We had a sort of belief in the magical power of the ballot. We thought it was going to be an instrument by which the colored man would become civilized, educated, prosperous; and we imagined that he and the whites of the South were going to be able to live together in harmony and good will.

But thirty-seven years have gone by; and the problem, so far as we can see, is not much nearer solution than it was at the beginning. Indeed, there are certain developments of the question which seem more discouraging to us than they did then.

I wish to make my attitude clear to you,—not because I suppose my attitude is specially important; but the attitude

which I hold will determine what I shall say; and you need to understand my attitude, in order to see whether what I have to say is of any practical value.

I do not hold the men of the South responsible for the existence of slavery. They were no more responsible than were the men of the North. All the thirteen colonies had a hand in it at the outset. Merchants and shipmasters sailing from New York and Boston probably did more in the way of bringing slaves from their native jungles to this country and selling them to those who wished their labor than did those of any other part of the country.

Slavery would have continued to exist in the North as it did in the South, had it been equally profitable here. The simple matter of fact was that our industrial conditions were not such as to make it worth while to keep slaves, while the slave labor was just what was needed to carry on the peculiar industries of the Southern States.

We are not then to take a position of superior virtue when we face the condition of things in the South to-day, and hold them responsible. For it is worth our while to note that, even if their fathers were responsible in an even greater degree than were we, the sons are not responsible. Those who are facing this terrible problem and trying to settle it to-day, they certainly are not responsible for its existence.

I had the instruction last night of hearing a dead earnest address on this subject by Senator Tillman, of South Carolina. He spoke before the New York Press Club. He did not change or alter any of my convictions; but I was intensely interested to get his point of view. And, remember, we can never be just to a man until we can get his point of view and look at the problem as it appears to him.

He said with the greatest emphasis that he was thankful that slavery was gone, and if by a stroke of a pen he could bring it back again he would not do it; and yet he is one of the most powerful agencies in the State of South Carolina

in the work of practically disfranchising the negroes, and fighting for the dominance of the white man. This I state neither to approve nor to condemn, but merely to note a matter of fact.

The South is not responsible, then, for the existence of slavery nor of the problem as it exists to-day, whatever you may think of the past. But there this terrible problem is. And let us remember also that the negroes are not responsible for being here, and that we must recognize that fact and their rights as well as those of the white man.

What is it that the people in South Carolina are afraid of? I wonder how many of the people of the North really comprehend the situation. There are a certain number of hundreds of thousands more colored people in the State of South Carolina than there are white people. That means, if the free ballot is allowed to everybody, the rule of the whites by the blacks. And these blacks, no matter what may be said of some of them, are, in the main, unfit to govern themselves, much less to govern anybody else.

What would you do if you were in a State where there were more negroes than whites, and where they were ignorant and coarse and rough and brutal, and where they proposed to control things entirely and have them all their own way? Would you be a great deal better than you think the people of South Carolina are?

I merely put the question for you in the privacy of your own homes to think over and answer; and I ask you to have that side of the problem in your mind when you are about to deal practically with the matter.

What is it that the people in South Carolina are afraid of? I do not know; but I know what Senator Tillman is afraid of, for he told us last night. He says that, if social and political equality are allowed to the colored people, it means, in his judgment, within the next fifty years a gradual mixing, mongrelizing, degrading, of the entire people. And he is ready, in the spirit of dead earnest conviction, to fight against it to the last breath.

It is not a mere matter that we are going to settle by passing laws in Congress, by legislating, by lectures, by newspaper articles: it is a situation, not a theory; and the attitude of the whites in South Carolina and in other Southern States is a part of the problem, must be faced, must be met, must be dealt with. And we desire the education and the civilization and uplifting of the great mass of white people in the South, do we not, as much as we do that of the blacks?

I am not sure that Senator Tillman's fear is well grounded. I merely mention it to you as being a part of the problem with which we have got to deal; and we have got to deal with it, and that speedily. Secretary Root told us the other night that the hopes of the men of thirty-seven years ago had proved futile. The ballot, he said, has been a failure. What did he mean by that? He meant that the ballot had not changed the character, socially, of the colored man; that it had not necessarily educated him; that it had not civilized him; that it had not lifted him up to the level of the whites; that it had not healed the breach between the races; that it had not been the means of making the whites any more ready to associate with him than they were before. Why should we have expected any such result as that from the ballot? Do you know, friends, one thing we have overlooked; and we never shall deal with this problem rationally until we take it into most serious account. That is the difference between the white man and the black. The black man is not simply a white man with a colored skin, and who can be made just like anybody else by sending him to school. We have learned the truth of the great science of evolution; and what light does it cast on this problem? It tells us that there are centuries of natural development between the position which the white man occupies and that occupied by the black.

Why should we expect a thousand years of natural growth to be leaped over in a generation? We did ex-

pect it, thousands of us expected it; but we have learned that the expectation was a foolish one.

And we have got to front another fact. We are learning gradually that merely educating people does not necessarily make them good, whether they are white or black. I think it has been one of the pet theories of this republic that the common school contained in it the solution for every sort of problem; that, if we could only send everybody and anybody to school, we should have the millenium.

But we have found out that an educated scoundrel may be only a sharper and more irresponsible kind of scoundrel. We have found out that habits, customs, traditions, having breathed the atmosphere of a certain kind of civilization, are quite as important as merely knowing how to read and write.

I make a little confession here now. I do not mean in making it to claim any superior wisdom. Those who have been familiar with my ideas for twenty-five years know that I have never been in favor of the kind of suffrage which is conferred upon people in this country, either white or black. Why should a man from Poland or Hungary, the next day after he steps off an immigrant steamer, be made a citizen of the United States?

Perhaps he has been trained in other forms of government until the ideas connected with them are ingrained; and it is almost impossible for him to comprehend what our system means. And, then, in a great many cases, he cannot write his name, and could not read it if you wrote it for him. Why should he be intrusted with a share of the destinies of this great republic? Surely, the negroes, even the worst, poorest, and most ignorant of them, are as capable of voting as are men like these.

I have said for years that, if I had had my way at the outset, I would have made the ballot a prize, to be attained. I would have had it depend, not upon money, not upon color, not upon creed, not upon race, not even upon sex.

I would give it to those persons who have character and intelligence enough to make good citizens.

But it is too late now for that. I suppose we cannot go back on the history of the last fifty years. The question is as to what we shall do to-day. And I frankly confess to you that I come here with no panacea. I do not know what we are going to do. I do not see the way out of it.

There are certain things, which are probably utterly impracticable, which I should like to see tried. I would like to have the colored people scattered over the country in groups, if you please, here and there. Let them have control of towns or small cities; and let them learn self-government, with the example of our methods and our inspiration all around them. In this way let them gradually grow up into self-control, into fitness to take care of themselves.

But, as I said, I have no panacea to-day. And I wish to say again, so that we may be humble and enter upon this great task with a proper spirit, that I do not believe the most of us would have done much better than they have done down South if the conditions had been reversed. We were very bitter against the men who went into the Confederate Army; but we know perfectly well, if we think of it calmly two minutes, that, if we had been born and trained as they were, we should have gone into the Confederate Army just as they did.

We cannot, therefore, plume ourselves on superior virtue. The thing that we need to do is to help the country out of this great difficulty; and, in order to do that, we need sympathy and comprehension of the problem. We need tenderness towards those who are struggling with it, bitterly, fiercely perhaps, sometimes, in the South. We need to know what it means to them, what their hopes and fears are. And we need to remember what I said a moment ago, that the colored man did not come here himself; and we, having brought him here, are under the highest of all conceivable obligations to do for him the very best thing we can discover.

We need his labor. Let us do all we can to educate, to develop him, to give him a free opportunity to become the best and highest possible. And at the same time let us deal with the problems so that there may be no bitterness, antagonism, so that there may be no degradation of the white people as they stand face to face with these masses of the black.

I offer no solution this morning. It is too large a subject to enter upon. I do not doubt for a moment that we shall find one. I have faith in God. I have faith in the calm sense of the people. I have faith in their humanity and in their ability to find a way. But, as we take each new step, I beg of you, remember Washington, remember Lincoln, remember the spirit and temper with which they met the difficulties of their time. Remember their integrity, their humanity, their tenderness, their honesty, their truth, their consecration. Remember their devotion to the republic, their devotion to God, their devotion to their fellow-men.

And, as we remember, let us hear the voice of the Spirit saying to us in the words of our text, "For I have given you an example."

Dear Father, let us love this republic, which means so much to us and which carries not only our destiny, but the hope of liberty and equality for manhood up the future. Let us love it. Let us give to it not only our passionate devotion, but our calm attempt to understand its problems and needs. Let us give our patience and our loving service.

AMEN.