

nies from the mother land; but something in that Declaration giving liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but hope to the world for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights should be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance. This is the sentiment embodied in that Declaration of Independence.

“Now, my friends, can this country be saved upon that basis? If it can, I will consider myself one of the happiest men in the world if I can help to save it. If it can’t be saved upon that principle, it will be truly awful. But, if this country cannot be saved without giving up that principle—I was about to say I would rather be assassinated on this spot than to surrender it.”

On the Declaration Of Independence

Lincoln’s speech in Springfield, Illinois, on June 26, 1856, addressed the intent of the Founding Fathers, in including in the Declaration of Independence the phrase, “all men are created equal”:

They meant to set up a standard maxim for free society, which should be familiar to all, and revered by all; constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence, and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all peoples of all colors everywhere. The assertion that “all men are created equal” was of no practical use in effecting our separation from Great Britain; and it was placed in the Declaration, not for that, but for future use. Its authors meant it to be—thank God, it is now proving itself—a stumbling block to those who in after times might seek to turn a free people back into the hateful paths of despotism. They knew the proneness of prosperity to breed tyrants, and they meant when such should re-appear in this fair land and commence their vocation, they should find left for them at least one hard nut to crack.

Now, this is someone you can look at and say, “I think this man means what he says. I think we’d better follow him, because nobody else has a clue about what we are going to do.”

The situation was indeed dire—almost the entire South was seceding in open declaration of war against the United States, armed to the teeth, bankrolled to the maximum that the coffers would bear, by Britain. If you ever get a chance to tour West Point, go to what they call Trophy Point, overlooking that wide expanse of the Hudson, and there you may see a row of gleaming cannons from the Civil War, and on every single one of them is stamped “Made in Birmingham” or “Made in Manchester.” They’re all British-made cannons, that were captured from the Confederates during Union victories.

Lincoln talked about his mission, and the mission of the nation, in his address to Congress on Dec. 1, 1862. He said, “Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this Administration, will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass, will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. We say we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it. We—even we here—hold the power, and bear the responsibility.

“In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free—honorable alike in what we give, and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth. Other means may succeed; this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just—a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud, and God must forever bless.”

Lincoln and the Army

Lincoln has some problems to solve in dealing with the American population. He has to establish an understanding in the people, that when you are fighting to preserve the union, you are fighting for yourself; you’re fighting so that you may have a future. Secondly, Lincoln has to somehow, personally, organize the Union Army. And he has to organize the people and the Army in such a way, that they are able to understand that he is the personal, living embodiment of everything that they cherish, or should cherish, and could come to cherish, about this country, about this human purpose. Now, as long as he is travelling through the country on his way to the inauguration, he is able to speak to thousands of