

shoulders above the drifting clouds, the same mysterious sea beats upon the shore, the same silent stars keep vigil above a tired world. But to the mountains and sea and stars men forever turn in unwearied homage. And thus with Lincoln. For he was a mountain in grandeur of soul, he was a sea in deep undervoice of mystic loneliness, he was a star in steadfast purity of purpose and service. And he abides."

This timeless description of a timeless man "about whom no new thing can be said" makes reverent the spirit of our assembly tonight as it does that of every meeting hall throughout the nation where men gather to honor his birth date and to examine in their own lives and times the meaning and message of his.

It is well that we remember him, for to forget is to discredit history itself and the very special part of it he ennobled. It is good that we quote from and about him, for his words were not merely spaced and tied with the skill of the expert grammarian, but they told in fun and fable, speech and debate, what lives within a man worthy of expression and fulfillment. To remember, to quote, to stand in awe of Lincoln is memorial to the great leader, and by so doing we can feel reassured that the scriptures have been read and the flowers have been neatly planted by the marker. We can feel comfort that we have paused to recite and reflect, and feel the better for it, as we set out to achieve our own destinies.

But if we stop here, we honor a death and not a life. We sanctify the past and not the future. We inspire a memory and not a purpose. We lay Lincoln to rest with the scorn reserved for unknown soldiers to whom we accord a day of ceremony and an eternity of oblivion.

Let us not search the remains of Lincoln for flesh but for breath. It is not enough to eulogize — we must energize. It is not enough to consecrate, we must activate. It is not enough to sanctify — we must identify!

Let us remember that what lived within him so surely, lives within each one of us. The capacity to feel deeply. The striving to do justly. The courage to act rightly, either with the majority or, if necessary, singly and alone.

Lincoln's was the voice for advancement of human dignity, for the protection of human liberty; and if we will but listen to our own inner conscience, we can hear it, and by a flexing of will, issue a meaningful response.