

## **Desperate Times in Our Civil War March 1864**

In The Spring of 1864, The Union was at a desperate crossroads. The President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, had asked the U.S. Congress to appoint U.S. Grant as Lt. General, in command of all Union Armies. This was a key move as Lincoln finally had a General who would do what was needed to win the war. It was as Lincoln himself knew a difficult road to travel, but a necessary one. The Rebel forces of Robert E. Lee had eluded capture, and though they had been stopped and repelled at Gettysburg the previous summer, they had not been totally defeated or vanquished. Lincoln knew that a crossroads had appeared, not only for the course of the war, but also more importantly for the course of the United States as a nation.

He wrote, "The restoration of The Rebel States to the Union must rest upon the principle of civil and political equality of both races (White and Black) and it must be sealed by general amnesty." His meaning was clear: Total acceptance by all concerned in all aspects of the conflict toward these issues. In other words, the rebel states had to accept freedom and equality for all if they wanted to be accepted back into a united nation.

Lincoln was also pragmatic in the sense that he was well aware this was a dangerous and difficult path. The Southern States in rebellion would not accept this, except by force and the Union would not accept these Rebels back, except if they accepted these terms (among others of course). In the end, after the terrible conflicts at Cold Harbor, Petersburg, the Wilderness, and countless other places, the peace could and would be won with the awful spilling of blood and thousands of lives lost. The object of the end of hostilities and the restoration of the Union was always the President's goal. As the tide began to turn, Lincoln wrote, "Much is being said about peace; and no man desires peace more ardently than I. Still I am yet unprepared to give up the Union for a peace which, so achieved, could not be of much duration."

His thoughts were his meaning: A lasting just peace for the United States, reunited for all time, and with a place and Justice for all.

In Fraternity ,Charity , and Loyalty  
John W. Bates  
National Patriotic Instructor