

“He Now Belongs to the Ages”

When Abraham Lincoln was campaigning for the presidency, one of his archenemies was Edwin McMasters Stanton. Stanton hated Lincoln, and used every ounce of his energy to degrade Lincoln in the eyes of the public, often using the bitterest diatribes in an attempt to embarrass him.

In the process of choosing his cabinet after his election, Lincoln selected various members and then faced a decision about the important post of Secretary of War. He chose Stanton! The president's inner circle erupted in an uproar when they heard his choice. Numerous advisors came to Lincoln saying, "Mr. President, you are making a mistake. Are you familiar with all the ugly things he has said about you? He is your enemy. He will sabotage your programs."

Lincoln replied, "Yes, I know Mr. Stanton. But ... I find he is the best man for the job."

As Secretary of War Stanton gave invaluable service to his nation and his president. After Lincoln was assassinated, many laudable statements were made about Abraham Lincoln, but the words of Stanton remain among the greatest. Standing near Lincoln's coffin, Stanton called Lincoln one of the greatest men who ever lived and said, "He now belongs to the ages."

Jesus tells us to "love our enemies" (Mt. 5:44).