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Saddened by the Civil War, President Lincoln addressed his American audience in order to convince them first, that the war is a tragedy for all, and second, that the war is not in his hands but in the hands of God and to encourage his listeners to, while trusting in God's ultimate authority, work to end the war to achieve and maintain peace. Lincoln uses parallel sentence structure, balanced sentences, and diction unifying the opponents to achieve his purpose.

In his first paragraph, Lincoln uses parallel syntax and inclusive diction to put himself on a more intimate level with his audience. He compares "then", before the war started, to "now", during the war and says that then, his release of information of progress was in order but now, he and the public are at an equal level. He states that "the progress of our arms... is as well known to the public as to myself," putting him and his audience on equal footing, making them more likely to listen to what he has to say as a fellow American and thus to accept his views on the tragic war. He maintains this closeness with his audience throughout the speech.

The second paragraph and the first half of the third deal with the tragedy of the Civil War that enveloped two parts of a whole, neither of which wanted to fight and both of which only resorted to war. Lincoln employs a parallel sentences, and diction that seems to unify the nation in their dislike of war. He uses words like "all", "Both", "neither", and "each" as the subjects for most of the sentences in this portion of his speech, demonstrating that the nation is still a nation and that this war is tragic because "all", "both", "and "each "dreaded", "sought to avert", and "deprecated" the war. Neither party wanted it, and Lincoln uses such diction and parallel sentences to show this. For example, he states that "neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration.... Neither anticipated the cause... might cease with, or even before the conflict itself should cease," showing that both parts of the union were caught in the same tragic trap of war.

In the latter half of the third paragraph, Lincoln logically shows why God has not ended the war and urges his audience not to judge, but to leave judgment to God. He says that though it may seem absurd for slavery's proponents to be allowed to pray to God, that his audience and himself should "judge not, that [they] be not judged," alluding to the Lord's prayer and appealing to his audience's Christian beliefs. He invokes many principles of Christianity in this speech in order to appeal to his audience in this way. He uses a rhetorical

question in lines 53-61, which, as Christians, his audience cannot answer positively. Lincoln states that “fondly do [they] hope, fervently do [they] pray,” but that God’s will overrides them. His use of parallel construction builds up the possible efforts of Lincoln and his people, only to show with a “yet” that they may or may not be heeded. Also, his continuous use of “us” and “we” reinforce his brotherhood with his audience.

In the final paragraphs, he urges his audience to work with him anyway towards lasting peace, doing all that they can to inch towards it, in one long sentence employing parallel construction. He wills his audience to “strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace,” giving them a list of things they can do to help the nation and its unity.

Throughout his speech, Abe Lincoln uses a kind tone to convey a message of brotherhood to his audience.