

He will have to learn I know,
that all men are not just,
all men are not true.
But teach him also that
for every scoundrel there is a hero,
that for every selfish politician,
there is a dedicated leader.
Teach him that for every enemy,
there is a friend.

It will take him time I know.
But teach him if you can
that a dollar earned is
of far more value
than five pounds.
Teach him to learn to lose.
And also to enjoy winning.

Steer him away from envy, if you can,
teach him the secret of quiet laughter.
Let him learn easily that
the bullies are the easiest to lick.
Teach him if you can, the wonder of books
But also give him quiet time to ponder
the eternal mystery of birds in the sky,
bees in the sun, and
flowers on a green hillside.

In school, teach him
it is far more honourable to fail than to cheat.
Teach him to have faith in his own ideas,
even if everyone tells him they are wrong.
Teach him to be gentle with gentle people,
and tough with the tough.

Try to give my son the strength
not to follow the crowd,
when everyone is getting on the band wagon.
Teach him to listen to all men.
But teach him also to filter all he hears
on a screen of truth,
and take only the good that comes through.

Teach him if you can
how to laugh when he is sad.
Teach him there is no shame in tears.
Teach him to scoff at cynics
and to beware of too much sweetness.

Teach him to sell his brawn and brain
to the highest bidders,
but never to put a price tag
on his heart and soul.

Teach him to close his ears to a howling mob.
and to stand and fight if he thinks he is right.

Treat him gently, but do not cuddle him,
because only the test of fire makes fine steel.
Let him have the courage to be impatient.
Let him have the patience to be brave.
Teach him always to have sublime faith in himself
because then he will always have
sublime faith in mankind.

This is a big order
but see what you can do.
He is such a fine fellow,
my son!

By Abraham Lincoln