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Article: Abraham Lincoln, Man of God

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Sought Strength and Guidance
In Prayer and Bible, Finding Courage

By GEORGE R. FARNUM
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In these days of danger and tribulation, when the hearts of men are sorely oppressed and their vision darkly clouded, the life of Abraham Lincoln is eloquent with instructive lessons and inspirations. In his trust in God and ever-firm faith in the unfailing source of courage, strength and guidance in all the vicissitudes of those terrible years when he steered the ship of State through the hurricane of the Rebellion.

Though he never formally joined any church or subscribed to any doctrinal beliefs, he was at heart a deeply religious man. This became more evident with the passing years as his heart mellowed and his mind matured, and as he grew in spiritual wisdom — particularly during the searing and purging days of his great stewardship. He claimed his fundamental creed in these memorable words, "When any church will inscribe over its altars as its sole qualification for membership the Savior's condemned statement of the substance of both law and gospel, 'Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and love thy neighbor as thyself,' that church will I join with all my heart and all my soul."

BIBLE HIS FIRST BOOK

The Bible was his first book, he learned the La Bible and the last book that he was to learn. As his old friend Billy Brown said of him, "The Bible was the first book he learned and the last book that he was to forget." His feelings were deeply stirred by the humming music and mystic appeal of the Psalms.

FOUND REFUGE, STRENGTH

In the New Testament he found refuge and strength in those years when it seemed short of a miracle that any man could carry so grievous a load of work and responsibility, so sore a burden of care and sorrow. The Sermon on the Mount, he asserted, "contained the essence of all law and justice." He spoke of his deplorable state as "the last year of the war, the year of the compromise. He regarded the Lord's Prayer as the sublime composition of a human language. In the solace and sustaining power of prayer he solemnly placed his trust. During his farewell remarks to those who gathered about the car that was to take him to Washington, he said, "Now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested on Washington. Without the assistance of that divine paradox and contradiction, the Old Testament, by the drama and pathos of its simple and passionate narratives, by its noble poetry, and by its austere and heroic spirit. It felt, as he read, something of the majestic and awe of the eternal and nameless Presence, who from its pages seemed to speak to him betimes as to Moses "mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches." His feelings were deeply stirred by the humors and mystic appeal of the Psalms.

PAPERS REFLECT FAITH

No leader of the nation ever sought with deeper earnestness or more constancy the divine guidance and protection for his people. His state papers, speeches and informal utterances all reflect the depth and intensity of his faith. In a memorable proclamation in the middle of the war, he declared, "It is the duty of Nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling, power of God . . . and to recognize the sublime truths announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by the history of that 'those Nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.'"

May the leaders of our nation today take something from the life of Abraham Lincoln, the brave and steadfast Man of God. And amid the perils and convulsions that encompass us, may we all find inspiration and an exalted program in those words of the immortal Second Inaugural.

"Fondly do we hope and fervently do we pray that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away; yet if God wills that it continue . . . as was said 2000 years ago, so still it must be said. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are now in, to bind up the Nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and orphan, to care for him which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

BEARS ON THE MARKET

OMAHA, Feb. 7 (AP)—With meat prices what they are, Park Commissioner Roy Towl has concluded the best way to reduce operating costs of the Riverview Park Zoo is a get rid of the heaviest meat eaters.

Towl says he's ready to consider any "reasonable proposition" for the disposal of some of the black bear and an African lion. He says three lions eat 42 pounds of meat daily and 28 pounds is needed for the six bears.