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Abraham Lincoln, Man of God

Sought Strength and Guidance
In Prayer and Bible, Finding Courage

By GEORGE R. FARNUM
Boston Lawyer and Former Assistant Attorney-General of the United States

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 inspiring appeal. It is a story of trust in God and ever flowing from the unfailing source of courage, strength and guidance in all the vicissitudes of those terrible years when he steered the stricken 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 altar as its sole qualification for membership the Savior's conditioned statement of the substance of both law and gospel, 'Thou shalt 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 the first book he learned and the last book that he read. This he said, and though there is no doubt he knew it pretty near by heart. In 1858, in the course of an address before the Springfield (Illinois) Bible Society, he declared, "It is suited to men in all conditions of life, and includes all the duties they owe to their Creator, to themselves, and to their fellow man."

To an assembly of colored men from Baltimore, who called upon him at the White House, he described the Holy Scriptures as the "best gift God has given to men," and to Josiah Speed in the last year of the war, he disclosed that he was "predictably engaged in reading and religious study," which "gave him strength and courage in the face of the great conflict of the time."

His thoughts, emotions and imaginings were profoundly affected by the Bible. In one of his last addresses in the Old Testament, he said, "I cannot praise the Bible too highly, I cannot praise it too highly."

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, omnipotent hand of God."

The sermon on love and its perils and corruptions that we now speak, may we all find inspiration in and an excited program in those words of the immortal Second Inaugural:

"Finally, 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 on 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 do all 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 Commission Swing Towle has concluded the best way to reduce operating costs of the Riverview Park Zoo is to get rid of the heaviest meat eaters.

Towle says he's ready to consider any "reasonable proposition" for the disposal of some of the black bears and an African lion. He says these animals eat 42 pounds of meat daily and 200 pounds is needed for the six bears.

ART CRITIC IS 61—Arthur U. Pope, a native of Phoenix, R. I., and a graduate of Brown University, is considered the foremost critic of Portrait art in the world. He is 61 today.

George R. Farnum

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