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Article: Abraham Lincoln, Man of God

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Abraham Lincoln, Man of God

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. He placed his trust in God and ever found in 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 condensate statement of the substance of both law and gospel, you 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 the first book he learned and the last book that he was to forget. As his old friend Billy Brown said of him, "The Bible was something he knew and didn't 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.

Toward the end of colored men from Baltimore, who called upon him at the White House, he described it as "the best gift God has given to men," and to Josiah Speed in the last year of the war, he declared that he was "gladly engaged in reading the Bible," adding the admonition, "Take all of this book upon reason that you can and balance upon faith and you will live and die a better man."

His thoughts, emotions and imagination were profoundly affected by the Bible. As one of the Old Testament, by the sacred pathos of its simple and passionate narratives, by its noble poetry, and by its austere and heroic spirit. He felt, as he read, something of the majesty 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 haunting music and mystic appeal of the Psalms.

FIND REFUGE, STRENGTH
In the New Testament he found refuge and strength in those years when it seemed little 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 once winfully said of the beatitudes, "I have sometimes thought I might claim the benefit of one that pronounces a blessing upon those who hunger and thirst after righteousness." He regarded the Lord's Prayer as the sublime composition of the human language.

In the solace and sustaining power of prayer he solemnly pledged his trust. During his farewell remarks to those who gathered about the car that was to take him to Washington, he said, "I 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 contractions of the Old Testament, by the dramas and pathos of its simple and passionate narratives, by its noble poetry, and by its austere and heroic spirit. He felt, as he read, something of the majesty and awe of the 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 on to finish his work as we are new 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 Roy Towl has concluded the best way to reduce operating costs of the Riverview Park Zoo is to 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 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 Person art in the world. He is 61 today.