O Fallon, Ill. Feby. 27th 1911.

Phillips Publishing Company,
New York.

Gentlemen:-

Until recently I was a subscriber for the American Magazine, but my health became so poor that my Physician forbid me reading, and I had to stop that and several other good periodicals,

I have a great duty to perform, and I wish to consult you. My father, the late Rev. James Lemen, jr. was in public life in Illinois for 30 years and a Baptist minister for 60 years. He died at my home on one of my farms a few miles from O'Fallon in 1870, aged 83 years. As a member of the Legislature at Vandalia he made Lincoln's acquaintance in 1837. The first morning they met Lincoln was suffering from one of his attacks of ~~melancholy~~ melancholy and doubt, and learning he was a minister, spent half the night in his room for religious counsel and comfort. From that time on for 20 years my father was Lincoln's confidential religious adviser at Vandalia, Springfield and elsewhere. My father's cousin, Ward Lamon, on my father's introduction and recommendation to Lincoln, became his law partner, and another cousin married a sister to Lincoln's wife. In fact, Lincoln became the warmest friend my father ever had, and a many a night my father labored and prayed with and for him. Lincoln also could make a good prayer. One night at Springfield Lincoln made a splendid prayer, and it so impressed my father

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the latter him if he could repeat it, which he did, and Lincoln having stated it was correct on the back of the paper under his name, My father wrote it down, and preserved it, and critics who have seen it say it is the most eloquent, beautiful prayer in our language. I think so myself.

Lincoln's faith in prayer was such that he once requested my father that they make a pact or agreement to pray for each other often during the lives of both, and that after the death of one the other should pray for or concerning him, and after Lincoln's death my father called the family members present, in and stated that he desired to remember his vow to Lincoln, and he made the promised prayer. The copy I own elsewhere is from the "Lemen Family History" published some years ago. A few years before Mr Lemen's death he wrote up his and Lincoln's interviews and his prayer and Lincoln's. He desired that paper and Lincoln's prayer should not be published until his history was made, in what it should appear. This paper also tells or gives Lincoln's explanation of his little so-called "infidel" book. book, which caused some people to think him an unbeliever. But in fact, it was written in defense of religion as he attained, to illustrate the necessity of faith. "God," he said, was reason, but Christ was of faith", and, appealing solely to reason, he showed that Tom Paine and the others were right in showing that Christ has no place in mere, pure, cold reason. as Christ saith even is contradictory to all reason & experience, but that while we may find God in reason that Christ must be sought in faith. My father said Lincoln's distinction was the most profound suggestion he ever heard, and Lincoln said "the book was destroyed before he wrote out the preface to it explaining his philosophy."

My father's paper of their interviews and his prayer and

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Lincoln's employees some 10 pages of legal cap paper written pretty compactly or closely.

My father's father, Rev. James Lemen, Sr., was a soldier under Washington & La Fayette in Va. He was Thomas Jefferson's idol when a little child and his colaborer and confidante in his early manhood. At Jefferson's request and on his funds, he (with wife and young family), in 1786 came to the North West Territory and settled in what is now Monroe Co., Illinois, to act as Jefferson's confidential agent in shaping matter to Jefferson's views and particularly to oppose slavery. He organized the first 3 Baptist churches in Illinois, the present Bethel church near Collinsville being the last. At Jefferson's wish, he made this an anti-slavery church to lead his movement against slavery. It was made in 1809 and the contest opened and the battle lasted 9 years, but he carried a free state constitution for Illinois, Senators Douglas & Trumbull, Lincoln and others, who were familiar with the facts, said his movement saved Illinois to freedom. He died at New Design, Monroe Co. Ill. in 1823. He was an Indian fighter, state leader and founder of the Baptist cause in Illinois, died in 1909 the Bicentennial year of Revolution of Illinois made him a monument and thousands attended the unveiling with Hon. W. J. Bryan as chief orator.

The writer, a farmer, 75 years of age, has been a member of Bethel church, (the church above named), for 60 years. Completed a course of study at Shurtleff College, Upper Alton, Ill. in 1857. Was well acquainted with Lincoln, who asked him in Sept., 1860, to write something in the papers to the Rebel rain "Barks and

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his candidacy, which he did, and at every biennial election since he has done the same (or written some). Has been in poor health unable to work any or leave home for several years. Was made a member of the State Baptist committee (by the Baptist State Convention of Illinois) on the James Lemen monument in 1908, was unable to leave home but assisted with suggestions and did most of the Committee's writing. The other 4 members were. Rev. M. N. Irving, chairman, Alton, Ill. Rev. J. A. Leavitt, President Irving College, Irving, Ill.; Rev. V. Colbert, D.D. of Collinsville, Ill., Pastor Bethel church, and Dr. S. F. Douglas, Renault, Illinois. I send a letter from Dr. Irving and a letter from Dr. Colbert. Also a letter from Hon. Robt. Lincoln. I sent him a manuscript copy of my father's paper with his and Lincoln's prayers, as my father enjoined the family not to publish them until Robt. Lincoln had seen them or approved them, which he did as you will see by his letter. He also made two beautiful type copies of the paper and prayers, sending one family and keeping one himself. When done with the 3 letters (for you have seen them) please return them to my address. Now as I have told you something of my people and myself, and am too ill to write any more I will close this and write you another letter (briefly), when able.

Very cordially yours - Joseph B. Lemen

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