

September 23, 1936

My dear Mr. Rankin:

Please do not think that my long delay in replying to your letter of August fifth has come from any lack of interest in it. The day after it was received I fell up at my home in the country and broke my right arm. It is still in a cast and I sign my name only with difficulty. If I had had a secretary around I of course would have answered you immediately but I had none and all my correspondence has been neglected waiting my return to town. So please tell me that you forgive me.

And now as to your question, whether or no I recall the incident of which you speak - Lincoln's reply to a political friend who told him he must "get right" with a certain party, and Lincoln's answer, "Get right with God."

I do not recall the incident nor can I find it in my notes. I can quite believe that he made that or some similar answer because there is no question at all that after the War began one of Lincoln's serious constant concerns was whether or no he was, and he said once I believe, on God's side. There was the South and the North each praying to the same God. His business was to know God's will if he could find it.

I am sorry I cannot locate this particular incident. I have been over my notes so far as they are at hand but I do not find it. I wonder if you ever saw a little book of mine called "In Lincoln's Chair" - an effort to get down what an old crony in Springfield thought about him. If you haven't and would like it I will be glad to send it to you. As you have no fixed abiding place, as you say, I do not want to encumber you with even a little book.

You were good enough to say that you would like to send me the new Life of Moody by Arthur Fitt. It would greatly interest me. I have never known much of

Moody's life, though no one could have lived through the years of his activities without recognizing his influence, the influence which you put so admirably as "making bad men good and good men better."

In looking over my notes for something on the incident of which you speak I have come across many of your old letters and of course I have a big file of clippings which you have sent me from time to time. I am hoping one of these days to get them all arranged in a scrap book, letters and clippings, which I shall entitle "Abraham Lincoln and Henry W. Rankin." Something of that sort. If I ever get time I want to write sketches of three or four men whom I have known who were truly, as I see it, Lincoln lovers - something more than collectors, something more than biographers, men with whom Lincoln was a kind of a companion and to whom anything they could glean about him was of interest. I do not know if I shall ever get around to do this, there seems to be so much to do in the world, particularly when one is still earning a living as I am. And then, too, I am trying to get my Lincoln collection ready for my old college - Allegheny - in Northwestern Pennsylvania. Not a large collection and not particularly valuable excepting in its correspondence. There I think I have something that properly studied and classified would be interesting, something at least that shows the abiding and continuing devotion to Lincoln's manner of life and thinking.

Thank you for your letter, dear Mr. Rankin, and wishing you the best of health as well as deep contentment of mind, believe me

Faithfully yours

Mr. Henry W. Rankin  
East Northfield, Mass.