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 inspiring significance. He put his trust in God and ever found in Him 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 once proclaimed his fundamental creed in these memorable words, "When any church will inscribe over its altars as its sole qualification for membership the Savior's condensed 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 will 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 the whole thing, and there ain't any doubt he knew it pretty near by heart." In 1850, 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 a delegation 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 disclosed that he was "profitably engaged reading the Bible," adding the admonition, "Take all of this book upon reason that you can and the balance upon faith and you will live and die a better man."

His thoughts, emotions and imagination were profoundly affected by the baffling paradoxes and contradictions of 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. 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.

FOUND 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 wistfully said of the beatitudes, "I have sometimes thought I might claim the benefit of the one that pronounces a blessing upon those who hunger and thirst after righteousness." He regarded the Lord's Prayer as the sublimest composition in 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 and a martyr's destiny, 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 Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail. Trusting in Him Who can go with me and remain with you and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell."

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 tenacity 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 truth announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history that 'those Nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.'"

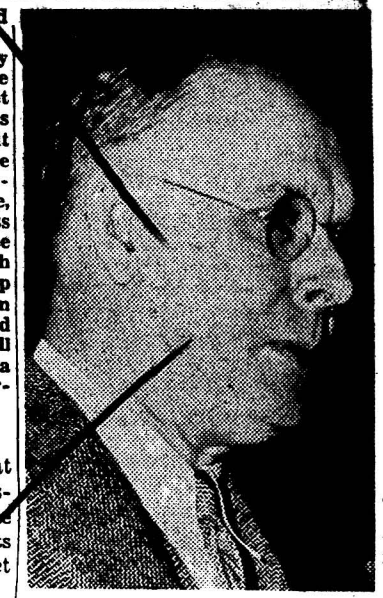
May the leaders of our nation today take something from the life of Abraham Lincoln, the brave and steadfast Man of God. And amid the perils and convulsions that encompass us, may we all find inspiration and an exalted program in those words of the immortal Second Inaugural:

"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 3000 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 Commissioner 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 three lions eat 42 pounds of meat daily and 25 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 Persian art in the world. He is 61 today.

To Ida M. Farrell, Author and Chamber of Commerce Executivist,

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS and high esteem OF

GEORGE R FARNUM