Final draft - Millett Will of 1917 2/9/5 - turned down at J.S.P. because contrary - laid aside until Oct. 1919.

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Title as published
"In Lincoln's Chair"
much revised.

MR. LINCOLN'S GOD.

"What's that?" Lincoln a Christian! Been reading Billy Herndon? I thought so. Well it seems to me the proper one to read on that subject is Mr. Lincoln himself. He set down one place or another what he thought about religion. I'd go to him, that is unless you're one of the history-writers that like to make out things are as you'd like to be, not as they was. Pears to me some times people are good deal more interested in provin' Mr. Lincoln thought like they do than like what he did. Billy Herndon's like that and so're a lot of good Christian people out here -- allus a fightin' about what he believed, one side callin' him an unbeliever, other side makin' out he'd subscribed to all they had.

"There's a good many roads to God. I reckon Mr. Lincoln travelled on Billy Herndon's a while, try'ng to make out if it was the right one. He'd try any road he thought had somewhere. An investigatin' man. Allus lookin' into things. Curious, most curious man I ever knew. You couldn't expect a man like him not to look into religion.

"We didn't get much teachin' on that subject out here when Lincoln was a boy. I know. I lived like him- was born like him -- brought up like him. I take it my mother was same kind of good woman as his, tryin' to make a good boy out me like Lincoln's mother did out of him. They read the Bible to us, counted a lot on that. I remember hearin' him tell once how

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his mother used to tell him Bible stories nights and Sundays about the only kind she knew I expect, teach him verses -- he knew whole chapters -- always quotin' em. They had prayers like we did, for Thomas Lincoln was a prayin' man, if he didn't have much education.

"Nobody can grow up like Lincoln and me did with a good prayin' Bible readin' mother without havin' them ideas take a pretty strong hold. You don't forget 'em, can't. Mr. Lincoln never did.

"But that aint sayin' he wan't willin' to listen to people who had figured it different from Tom Lincoln and the circuit riders he heard preachin' hell fire and brimstone. You couldn't expect him to hold to that kind of religion allus. Twan't big enough for him or reasonable enough.

"They'll tell you he got to be an infidel mighty young -- that he wrote an infidel book. Well now let me tell you something about that. You've got to remember the way we boys grew up out here. Pretty rough. Pretty rough. Discoverin' life is apt to be fairly risky for a boy anywhere, and when he don't have anything more to civilize him than we did he's runnin a fair show of goin' through a spell where he's a tough and character -- just animals. A lot of us was like that out here. You ought to have seen us at Camp Meetings and revivals, teasin' the girls, gettin' the elders mad, all sorts of deviltry, anything to break up the meetin'.

"Mr. Lincoln never jined in that kind of horse play. Didn't like it. Stopped it when he could. And he had influence.

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Toughest gang there liked him. He'd beat up their leader once and you know how that makes a young fellow respected. He could lick every last one of us and we knew it, but he never set himself up above us on that account, no airs at all. He behaved. But that ain't sayin' that he took to hell-fire religion any more than we did. It hit him different, seemed to make him more serious and then he'd got to readin' books, free-thinkin' books. I don't think it was at all surprisin' that considerin' the kind of books that circulated out here in those days he got to be pretty free thinkin'. Two or three of 'em we heard a lot about in those times took pretty tight hold on Mr. Lincoln accordin' to my way of thinkin'. There was Tom Paine's "Appeal to Reason." Wouldn't that sure set a boy like Lincoln to thinkin' hard -- make him feel he'd got hold of something bigger than the circuit riders had ever give him. And there was another -- somebody's "Ruins" -- I forget the name. Volney? Yes, that's it. Volney's Ruins.

" Do you know I think that book took an awful hold on him. I reckon it was the first time he ever realized how long the world's been runnin', how many lots of men have lived and settled countries, and built cities and how time and time again they 've all been wiped out. Mr. Lincoln couldn't get over that. I've heard him talk about how old the world was time and time again and how nothing lasted - men - cities - nations. One set on top of another - men comin' along just as interested and busy as we are in doin' things and then little by little all they done passin' away.

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" He was always speculatin' about that kind of thing. I remember in when he came back from Congress he stopped to see Niagara Falls. Well Sir when he got home he couldn't talk about anything else for days, seemed to knock politics clean out of his mind. He'd sit there in that chair by the stove that winter and talk and talk about it. Talk just like it's printed in those books little Johnnie Nicoley and his side partner got up. I never cared much myself for all those articles they wrote. Wrong, am I? Valuable? Of course, but wasn't enough of Mr. Lincoln in 'em to suit me. I wanted to know what he said about everything in his own words. But I tell you when I saw the books, things he had said and wrote all brought together nice and neat and one after another I just took to that. I've got 'em here in my desk, often read 'em and lots of it sounds just as natural, almost hear him sayin' it, just as if he was settin' there by the stove.

" Now what he says about Niagara in the book is like that,- just as if he was here. You can read in it how when Columbus first landed here, when Christ suffered on the Cross, when Moses crossed dry-shod through the Red Sea, even when Adam was first made, Niagara was roarin' away. He'd talk just as it is printed there, how the big beasts whose bones they've found in mounds must have looked on the falls, how it's older than them and older than the first race of men. They're all dead and gone, not even bones of many of 'em left, and yet there's Niagara boomin' away fresh as ever.

" He used to prove by the way the water had worn away

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the rocks that the world was at least fourteen thousand years old. A long spell, but folks tell me it aint nothin to what is bein' estimated now. Makes men seem pretty small don't it. God seems to wipe 'em out as careless like as if he were cleanin' a slate. How could He care and do that? It made such a mite of a man no bettern' a fly. That's what bothered Mr. Lincoln. I know how he felt. That's the way it hit me when I first began to understand all the stars were worlds like ours. What I couldn't see and can't now is how we can be so blame sure ours is the only worldwith men on. And if they're others and they're wiped out regular like ours, well it knocked me all of a heap at first, 'peared to me mighty unlikely that God knew anything about me.

"I expect Mr. Lincoln felt something like that when he studied how old the world was and how one set of ruins was piled on top of another.

"Then there was another thing. Lots of those old cities and old nations weren't Christian at all, and yet accordin' to them ruins it looked as if the people was just as happy, knew just as much, had just as good laws as any Christian nation now, some of them a blamed sight better. Now how was a boy like Lincoln going to handle a problem like that. Well I guess for a time he handled it like the man who wrote about the Ruins, never seemed queer to me he should have written a free-thinkin' book after that kind of readin'. I reckon he had to write something to get his head clear Allus had to have things clear.

"You know that story of course about that book.

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First time I ever heard it was back in 1846 when him and Peter Cartwright was runnin' for Congress. You know about Cartwright.

Well sir, he made his campaign against Lincoln in '46, not in politics at all -- made it on chargin' Mr. Lincoln with bein' an infidel and the proof he offered was the story of his writin' a free thought book when he was a boy, least wise not much more, only 21 or 22. He didn't pretend he'd seen it of course, said the reason he hadn't was that it was never printed, only written, and that not many people ever did see it because Sam Hill the store keeper down to New Salem thinkin' it might hurt Lincoln had snatched it away and thrown it into the stove and burnt it up. Now what do you think of that?

"Well Cartwright didn't get elected - got beaten - beaten bad and nobody around here ever talked about that book when Mr.

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Lincoln was runnin' for President that I ever heard of. It was after he was dead that they raked up that story again. Two of his friends did it. They was writin' his history -- Ward Lamon, knew him well, used to drop in here almost every time he was in town -- and Billy Herndon. Of course I knew him. He was Mr. Lincoln's law partner. You can see their office out of the window there, second floor - facin' the Court House.

Well, as I was sayin', Ward Lamon wrote a book about Mr. Lincoln and he put in that story about Sam Hill burnin' up that book. It never made much difference to me. I allus thought it likely he did write something along the lines he'd been readin' after. But sakes alive, you ought to seen the fur fly out here. All the church people riz right up and proved it wan't so, and Billy Herndon lit in and proved it was so. They got all the old inhabitants of County who knew Mr. Lincoln to writin' letters. Funniest things! There was a lot of people who said it wan't a book at all that Sam Hill snatched away from Lincoln and burned up: it was a private letter of Hill that had somethin' in about and somebody give it to Lincoln to read.

"One of the most interestin' things accordin to my way of thinkin' was a letter that came out in our paper from Mentor Graham, Lincoln's old schoolmaster. I don't remember it exact, but near as I can recall he said Lincoln asked him one day when he was livin' at his house going to school what he thought about the anger of the Lord, and then he went on to say

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that he had written something along that line and wished Graham would read it. Well sir, Mr. Graham wrote in that letter that this thing Lincoln had wrote was a defense of universal salvation, that far from an infidel book it proved God was too good and just to destroy the people he'd made, and that all the misery Adam brought on us by his sin had been wiped out by the atonement of Christ. Now mind that was a honest man writin' that letter, a man who'd been Lincoln's friend from the start. To be sure it was some time after the event - pretty near 40 years and I must say I always suspicion a man's remembering anything very exact after 40 years. But one thing is sure, Mentor Graham knew Lincoln in those days, and that's more than Billy Herndon did.

"Always seemed to me about as reliable testimony as anybody offered. I contended that most likely Lincoln did write just what Mentor Graham said he did, and that the brethern thought it was dangerous doctrine to make out God was that good, and so they called him an infidel. Nothin' riled those old fellows religiously like tryin' to make out God didn't damn everybody that didn't believe according to the way they read the Scriptures. Seemed to hate to think about Mr. Lincoln's God. I almost felt sometimes as if they'd rather a man would say there wern't no God than to make Him out as Mr. Lincoln did.

"You can see how Mentor Graham's letter didn't settle it for nobody. Billy Herndon wouldn't listen to anything, but that Mr. Lincoln had wrote an infidel book. Said everybody knew. Said he knew Mr. Lincoln was an unbeliever, and that he ought to have put on his tombstone "He died an unbeliever."

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" The boys used to get to rovin' about it in here sometimes around the stove until I could hardly keep track of my perscriptions. The funniest thing you ever heard was one night when they were at it and an old fellow who used to live in New Salem dropped in, so they put it up to him, said he lived in NewSalem in '33, said he knew Lincoln. Wanted to know if he ever heard of his writin' a book that Sam Hill burned up in the stove in his store. The old fellow listened all through without sayin' a word, and when they was finished he said solemn like "Wan't no stove.- Sam Hill never had one. Couldn't 've happened. "

" Well sir, you ought to seen their jaws drop. Just set starin' at him and I thought I die a laffin' to see 'em collapse. I wish Mr. Lincoln could have heard that old fellow "Wan't no stove." How he'd enjoyed that - "Wan't no stove."

"But for all that I never regarded that witness over high. Of course Sam Hill must have had a stove otherwise there wouldn't have been a place for folks to set around.

" It wasn't the believers, it was the free thinkers that riled me, what they said when you came back at them with facts we all knew -- how Mr. Lincoln was a regular church-goer after his boy Eddie died - rented a pew in the First Presbyterian Church over on Street, got a mark on it now that pew has, showin it was his; how he allus went to church every Sunday in Washington. We used to see it in the paper. 'The President and Mr. Lincoln occupied their pew in the New York Avenue Presbyterian.' I went around to see it that time I went down to Washington to visit him. Didn't seem to make any difference. They just laffed at that. Ward Lamon said in his bock that when

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Lincoln went to church it was to mock, and when he came away it was to mimic. His very words. And Billy Herndon wan't no better. I heard him say , shouting out in a lecture in this very town when the excitement was on back in the '70's that he'd heard Mr. Lincoln joke and gibe at Christianity in a way that would shock a Christian people. Them's his very words, and when I heard 'em I got up and left. I was glad though they put the lecture in the paper. I wanted to hear what he had to say. It took me sometime to read. I'd get so stirred up I'd have to put it down, couldn't go back until I'd cooled off.

"When I read that book of Ward Lamon's I was mad clean through never so mad in my life. He came in here soon after I'd read it, wanted quinine. "No sir", I said, "you can't buy quinine in this store or nuthin' else - what's more you can't come in this store. I don't want no man here who'd write what you did about Mr. Lincoln, makin' him out a hypocrite. You ought to know just as well as I do, Mr. Lamon, that whatever Abraham Lincoln believed or didn't believe, he wan't no hypocrite - more'n than that, you know he wan't the kind to poke fun at honest folks. It wan't like him. I don't want you in here." "Come, come Brow", he said, "you don't mean that. How could you know Lincoln like I did? I travelled with him, been with him all through the time he was in Washington. I know what I'm talkin' about."

"Well, Mr. Lamon," I said "mebbe you think you do, mebbe you think you do, but the trouble with you and Billy Herndon is that you don't know the meanin' of things , of some things, you ain't built to understand a man like Mr. Lincoln. I won't sell to you and I won't talk to you."

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I never did a thing like that in my life, but I aint ever been sorry. Sometimes when I git to thinkin' about it I'd give anything to have a chance to do it again.

"I reckon that what they was thinkin' of when they said Mr. Lincoln poked fun at Christian people was some of his jokin' innocent enuff if you understand it. I've heard him say things fit to kill about something that had happened in church or to a minister or somethin' . He saw all the fun there was in everything just natural. He'd a seen it at his own funeral. But that wasn't mockin' at anybody necessary.

"I was speakin' about Peter Cartwright a minute ago. Well Sir, I heard him get back at the elder right in church so that I laff still when I think of it. You recollect I said Cartwright run against him for Congress. Well, he run that campaign or tried to on the issue of Mr. Lincoln bein' an infidel. That winter he was holdin' a revival meetin' here and Mr. Lincoln came in and set in the back of the church. When it came time to ask sinners to come forward, the elder got pretty excited. "Where be you goin?" he shouted, "To Hell if you don't repent and come to this altar" At last he began to call on Mr. Lincoln to come forward. Well you know nobody likes to be called out like that right in meetin'. Mr. Lincoln didn't budge, just set there. The elder he kept it up. Finally he shouted, 'If Mr. Lincoln isn't goin' to repent and go to Heaven, where is he goin?" Intimatin', I suppose that he was headed for Hell. "Where be you goin, Mr. Lincoln?' he shouted.

Well Sir, at that Mr. Lincoln rose up and said quiet like,

"I'm goin' to Congress."

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For a minute you could a heard a pin drop and then - well, I just snorted - couldn't help it. Ma was awful ashamed - said I oughtin' to dont it - right in meetin', but I couldn't help it - just set there and shook and shook. The elder didn't make any more observations to Mr. Lincoln that trip.

"Next day when he came in I said, 'Mr. Lincoln, you just served the elder right last night, shut him up and I guess you're right: you be goin' to Congress."

'Well Billy," he said, smiling and lookin' serious - I've made up my mind that Brother Cartwright isn't goin' to make the religion ofJesus Christ a political issue in this District if I can help it.'

"Now it was things like that made people who didn't understand Mr. Lincln think he was pokin' fun. Think he was mockin' at the Christian religion when he answered back like that to Brother Cartwright? Not a bit. He was protectin' it according to my way of thinkin'.

"I reckon I understand him a little because I'm more or less that way myself - can't help seein' things funny. I've done a lot of things Ma says people misunderstand. A while back comin' back from New York I did somethin' I expect Billy Herndon and Ward Lamon would have called mockin' at religion, Mr. Lincoln wouldn't.

"You see I'd been down to buy drugs and comin' home I was readin' theBible in the morning in my seat in the sleepin' car. Allus read a chapter every mornin'. Ma got me in the way of it, and I like it, does me good, keeps me from bustin' out at somebody when I get mad, that is, it does for the most part.

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"Well, as I was sayin', I was readin' my chapter, and I reckon mebbe I was readin' out loud when I looked up and see the porter lookin' at me and kinda snickerin'.

'See here, Boy,' I says, 'you smilin' at the Bible. Well you set down there. Set down, I says. You see I aint used to bein' disobeyed, and that nigger knew it, and he just dropped. I'm a pretty stout man as you can see, weigh 200, and I reckon I can throw most men my size. Why I've wrestled with Mr. Lincoln, yes Sir, wrestled with Abraham Lincoln, right out there in that alley.

'Boy,' I says, 'I'm goin' to read you a chapter out of this Bible, and you're goin' to listen. And I did it. 'Now, I says, 'down with you on your knees, we're goin' to have prayers.' Well Sir, you never seen such a scared darky. Down he went, and down I went, and I prayed out loud for that porter's soul and before I was through he was sayin' 'Amen."

"Of course the passengers began to take notice, and about the time I was done along came the conductor, and he lit into me and said he wan't goin' to have any such performances in his car.

"Well, you can better guess that gave me a text. He'd a man in that car fillin' himself up with liqu , half the night, just plain drunk and disorderly. 'I ain't heard you makin' any loud objections to the drinkin' goin' on in this car,' I says. 'If that don't disturb the peace a little, prayin' wont.' And two or three passengers just chimed right in and said, 'That's so.' Do us all good if we had more prayin' and less drinkin.' Fact was I was quite poplar the rest of that trip.

"Now I reckon some would a been shocked by what I done. Ma.

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said when I told her, 'Now you know, William, it wan't that porter's soul you was interested in half as much as gettin' a little fun out of him' Well, mebbe so. I won't deny there was some mischief in it. But it wouldn't have shocked Mr. Lincoln. He'd understood. Seems a pity I can't tell him about that. He'd enjoyed it so.

"It's easier to understand their not seein' his jokes than it is their callin' him a hypocrite or lest wise makin' him out one. You see there's a lot of facts for people to point to who want to make out Lincoln was orthodox. He went to church regular from time Eddie died. He prayed and asked people to pray for him—did it again and again. He read the Bible, knew it well and was allus quotin' from it. You can't read his letters and speeches without seein' that all through the war he was takin' God into count. And then there's the kind of man he was. A good man accordin' to Bible ideas as I see it. If you can't call him a Christian I don't see much show for the rest of us.

"But they wouldn't have it so. Ward Lamon said none of these things meant he was a believer, said they meant that he saw that he could never get on in politics out here if people thought he was a free-thinker, and so he took to goin' to church, to readin' the Bible and talkin' in Sunday Schools to deceive people. Called him a 'wily politician ', said he was playing a sharp game on Christians out here - his very words 'playing a sharp game' on people that had knowed him since he was a boy.

"Billy Herndon wan't no better. In that lecture I told you about - one when I got up and left almost soon's he'd started

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because I couldn't stand it, I was that mad - in that lecture he called it twaddle to quote things Lincoln said when he was President to prove he was a Christian, said he only said things that way because he wanted to make people think he was like them - said he was nice in his talk when it was necessary and vulgar when it was not - said he'd seen him change a thousand times from a polite kind Christian-like man to the same old unbeliever he always was.

"Now I call that makin' out Lincoln a hypocrit- pretendin' to be what he wan't. If he'd really been what they said, he'd joined a church. But he wouldn't join because he couldn't swallow the creed. There's where he stuck . Twan't God nor the Bible nor Christ so far as I ever could see , but it's what men have made 'em out to be, what they've read into 'em. You take that creed - they say the Apostles made it , and they ought to know. But accordin' to my readin' of history, that Creed we say didn't appear until the apostles had been dead some hundreds of years. I reckon they settled that Creed same's we settle things in convention now, argue and argue and argue, each man tryin' to get his idea through, and finally the lot of them compromising on somethin', just to get it through. I've always reckoned something like that went on when they made the Creed. Mr. Lincoln couldn't swallow it somehow. I know for a fact he said once right in here, "Billy, when I find a church that will accept Christ's definition of the law and the gospel and don't ask nuthin' of a man but that he love God with all his heart and his brother as himself, I'll join it.'

" That's Christian enough for me, if I do belong to a church,

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and that's what Mr. Lincoln believed. I heard him say it, and so did others, and it was like him.

"I suppose they'd say I was talkin twaddle. Mebbe so. Mebbe so, but that's the way I see it.

"As to his sayin' things in a Christian way just to be politic, you can't say things the way he did unless you believe 'em. All the difference in the world. I know when we get a preacher who believes what he talks, means it, and I know when one is talkin' what he's heard or been taught. All the difference in the world. You read what he said when he was callin' the country to pray or thanksgivin', and you know he's sayin' what he's thought about and means. Now here's one - just read that out loud. Don't it sound like him?

'The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies.

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"Do you think a man could write that just to be politic? No Sir. The man who wrote that meant it. He'd dipped down into his own heart for that.

"They'll tell you all his talk about prayin' was just more humbug, more playin' a sharp game on Christian people. But I tell you any man who heard him askin' us here in Springfield to pray for him that night in '61 when he left for Washington couldn't have no doubt about his interest in prayer, his wantin' it, believin' in it. He never changed - I recollect him not more'n a year after he went in, he reminded a lot of ministers visitin' him in the White House how at the very start he had asked for their prayers, and he went on to say to them how he placed the whole dependence of the government in the favor of God, his very words. I can't make out that he ever changed except to lean more and more on God, to think more and more about His will, and what he was tryin' to work out through the war.

"There's no end of testimony to that right here in this book. And then there's the things along the same line that he said to different men. All of these men couldn't have understood and most of 'em weren't the kind to be easy fooled. Moreover, it wan't like him to try to fool people. Mr. Lincoln was an honest man. He allus took pains to have people know what he thought, no matter what it cost. Why he might have beat Douglas back in '58, if he hadn't been so all-fired honest. He made all the Republicans mad as they could be by settin' forth Douglas views in such a way that he was able to dodge their meanin' fer the time bein'. Mr Lincoln knew what he was doin'. He knew if Illinois didn't see

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what Douglas' doctrine.meant , the country would, and it did, as you recollect.

" Right along through the war he was allus set on makin' people understand . Risked his election in '64, he was so honest. Do you think that kind of a man - a man who said right along that He'd join any church that would cut its creed down to what Christ said was the law and the prophets, was the kind to go to church to read the Bible and to ask people to pray for him simply because it was politic. Do you think he didn't mean it in that speech of his when he was inaugurated when he said Christianity was one of the things that the country had got to depend upon to pull it out of its trouble. Look in the book there, and see exact what he said would keep us out of war if we'd try 'em:-

'Intelligence, Patriotism, Christianity and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land, are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty' Do you think he was 'playin' a shark game on Christians' then, as Lamon said. "Why taint reasonable. Don't go with his chracter. He was a <u>good</u> man. There are men you can't help knowing God would like. Mr. Lincoln was that kind - God's man, near as we get 'em. Hypocrisy ain't in a man of that kind.

"Another thing made me respect Mr. Lincoln's religion and made me feel pretty sure he was gettin' it right was that he was allus seekin'. You never see anybody so sot and unchangeable as the free-thinkers out here were - worse'n Brother Cartwright, and that's sayin' a good deal. Knew it all, couldn't be different from what they figured it out. I've noticed it frequent as I talked

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with 'em all kinds of free-thinkers, includin' the free-lovers of whom we had a right smart sprinklin' at one time. I've noticed about 'em all a lot of pride over what they believe, seemed to think they discovered the last word . Because they thought different must be they thought better. But they stopped thinkin' too soon. Mr. Lincoln wan't that kind of a free-thinker. Used to seem to me more he knew the humbler he got. Wanted to see all sides, slow to make up his mind - willing to change if you gave him the reason.

He was allus mightily concerned about squarin' up his views with God 's views. Wanted to be sure his purpose was pure. He said that he was proceedin' on the lines the Almighty would sanction

One thing he'd held out here in Illinois in all the arguin' on slavery was that it seemed to him it couldn't be accordin' to Divine will that one man should make a slave out of another man, and if you could say he ever was bitter against anybody it was against ministers and elders who upheld slavery. He didn't think it squared with the teachins of the Bible There ain't no doubt in my mind that some of the reason Billy Herndon was so dead sure Mr. Lincoln hadn't any real use for Christians was what he'd heard him say about people who prayed loud at the same time they done hard

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bargains and defended slavery.

"When he got to be President he was always askin' himself whether he was on God's side. Puzzled him bad that both sides thought God was with 'em. He pointed out more than once how the rebel soldiers was prayin for victory just as earnest as ours - how the rebel people got the same kind of help out of prayer that the Union people did. And both couldn't be right.

"There isn't any doubt he often tested out whether God agreed with his argument or not, by the way things swung. It was that way about the Emancipation Proclamation . You know how he thought about that for months, and for the most part kept it to himself. He didn't want to do it that way, was dead set on the North buying the slaves instead of takin' 'em. But he had the Emancipation Proclamation ready, and he'd told God he'd let it loose if He'd give us a victory. Sounds queer, mebbe, but that's what he did. He told the Cabinet so, and they've told about it. A little mite superstitious some would say. But. Mr. Lincoln was a little superstitious. Interested in things like signs and dreams - specially dreams - seemed to feel they might be tryin' to give him a hint. They say after his boy Willie died down in Washington he got interested in spiritualism. I shouldn't be surprised. He allus tested out everything new that come along. Don't worry me if he did hold seances. You can be pretty sure they didn't fool him any, and if he found something that way rest of us don't see, why I don't see but he had a right to it.He tried out new kinds of powder, new rifles. Why shouldn't he interest himself in spiritualism if 'twas new to him.

"As I was sayin' there's no doubt but he kept figurin' on

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what God was tryin' to do by the way things went. You remember how I told you once of havin' a long talk with him at night that time I went down to Washington to see him. He was powerful discouraged just then for him. Things was bad, awful bad. Country just plum worn out with war - comes a time in war, comes pretty often to some men, when they just turn against it. Can't stand the blood-lettin', the sufferin', and the awful wickedness of it. There was a lot of that feelin' in '64. People willin' to give up anything - let the South go - let her keep her slaves - do anything to put an end to the killin'. I tell you a man has to keep his eye ahead in war - keep tellin himself over and over what's it all about. Mr. Lincoln had to. They were talkin' peace to him, riotin' about the drafts, stirrin' up more kinds of trouble for him than he ever knew there was, I reckon. And he felt it - felt it bad, and that night it seemed to do him good to talk it out. You see I come from home and I didn't have no connection with things down there, and 'twas natural he'd open up to me as he couldn't to them on the ground, and he did.

'I've studied a lot ,' Billy', he said, 'whether this is God's side of this war. I've tried my best to figure it out straight, and I can't see anything but that He must be for us. But look how things is goin'. I can't believe God approves of slavery. I know my God don't - can't. The whole Bible teaches liberty - if it teaches anything. I never could understand how men saw it any other way. But good men - good, serious men who pray and who, so far as I can judge , try as hard as I do to see what's the right thing, believe I'm wrong - that God's on their side.

'One thing sure all I can do is to follow what I think's

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right. Whatever shall appear to be God's will, I'll do. There's quite a number of people who seem to think they know what God wants me to do. They come down every now and then and tell me so. I must say as I've said to some of them that it's more'n likely if God is goin' to reveal His will on a point connected with my duty, he'd naturally reveal it to me. One thing I'm sure of that sorta pulls me along is that this war is logical enough. Seems to me to be accordin' to God's laws - has all along. We've been wrong North and South about slavery. No use to blame it all on South. We've been in it too, from start. If both sides had been willin' to give in a little, we might a worked it out, that is if we'd all been willin' to admit the thing was wrong, and take our share of burden in puttin' an end to it. It's because we wouldn't or mebbe couldn't see the wrong that war has come.

'It's for our sins, Bills, this war is. We've brought it on ourselves. And God ain't goin' to stop because we ask Him to. We've got to fulfill the law. We broke the law, and God wouldn't be God as I see him if he didn't stand by His own laws and make us take all that's comin' to us. I can't think we wont win the war. Seems to me that must be God's way, but if we don't and the Union is broken up and slavery goes on, well all it means accordin' to my way of seein' things is that the laws ain't satisfied yet, that we ain't done our part. There'll be more trouble until the reason of trouble goes.

'But I don't lay that up against God, Billy. What it seems to me He's tryin' to do is to get men to see that there can't be any peace or happiness on this world so long as they ain't fair to

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one another. You can't have a happy world unless you've got a just world, and slavery ain't just. It's got to go. I don't know when. It's always seemed to me a pretty durable struggle - did back in '58, but I didn't see anything so bad then as's we've come to. Even if I'd known I couldn't have done different, Billy. Even if we don't win this war and the Confederates set up a country with slavery in it, that aint going to end it for me. I'll have to go on fightin' slavery. I know God means I should.

"It takes God a long time to work out His will with men like us, Billy - bad men stupid men, selfish men. But even if we're beat, there's again. There are more men who see it clear how hard it is for people to rule themselves, more people determined govemment by the people shant perish from the earth , more people willin' to admit that you can't have peace when you've got a thing like slavery goin' on. That's something, that's goin' to help when the next struggle comes.

'You mustn't think I'm givin' in, Billy. I aint, but look how things are goin'. What if we lose the election, and you must admit it looks now as if we would, what if we lose and a Copperhead Government makes peace - gives the South her slaves - lets the enemy sisters Greely calls them set up for
I've got to think about that Billy.

'Seems to me I can't bear the idea that all this blood lettin' should end that way, for I know lasting peace aint in that set of circumstances. That means trouble, more trouble, mebbe war again until we obey the law of God, and let our brother man go free.'

'Always seemed to me that a man who could talk that way had a pretty big God.'

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'And there aint any doubt he felt that way to the end. Ready to agree to what God allowed, ready to admit we couldn't understand God's purpose and 'twar our business to do best we could and wait. He said about that in his last Inaugural. You remember. Allus seemed to me he got the whole Bible, both Testaments, boiled down in that speech. You remember how he pointed out that both sides read the same Bible and prayed to same God, invokin' his aid against the other. 'The will of God prevails,' he said. 'God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same tine. It's possible he has something in view different from what either the North or South had at the start. We didn't start out to fight slavery. We started out to save the Union and the South started out to destroy it. He could have saved or destroyed the Union without a war, yet He lets the war come and go on. Looks as if His will was to this great wrong, and both North and South have got to pay for their share in it.

'The Almighty has his own purpose,' he goes on, 'Woe unto the world because of offenses ! For it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.' Fondly do we hope , fervently do we pray that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away, yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

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"I like to say that just like he said it. Seems kinda like music. He was that way sometimes - swung into that sort of talk and made your heart stop to listen; it was so sweet and solemn-like.

"Now as I see it, that's the Old Testament - whole thing biled down - and what he ended up with seems to me the New, just about as near what Christ taught as any man ever got . Just listen:-

'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 in, to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphans - to do all which may achieve a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.'

"I can't help thinkin' that a man who saw that way was about as near right in his religion as any man ever gets. If that aint what Christ had in mind, then I don't read the Bible right. I know no God I ever heard preached is so big in his ideas, so fair-minded and so [illegible] lovin' as Abraham Lincoln's God."

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