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West Liberty, Ohio 43357

June 29, 1999

O-Amw Pns

C-SPAN
400 N. Capitol St., N.W. ~~#650~~ #650
Washington, D.C. 20001

Gentlemen:

Like so many others, I am enjoying immensely the presidential series, especially the Lincoln program.

However, even though he did not join a church, and was even a skeptic in early life, I think his faith was not adequately covered. Perhaps it seemed too complex for consideration.

While it is water over the dam, I hope my modest effort may be of some interest.

Keep up the good work.

Very truly yours,

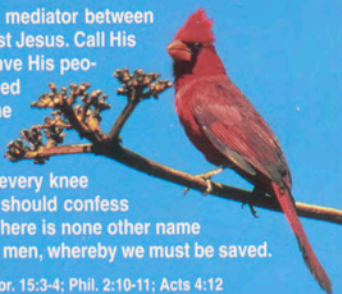
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Enc.

JESUS CHRIST IS LORD

There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. Call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. He was buried. He rose again the third day. At the name of Jesus every knee should bow. Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

1 Tim. 2:5; Matt. 1:21; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; Phil. 2:10-11; Acts 4:12



Y Sow

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Very truly yours,

[Redacted Signature]

Enc.

1999 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

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Was Lincoln a Christian?

On a cold fall day in 1860, a St. Louis, Alton, and Chicago train rumbled into downtown Chicago (population then 109,263). No crowd welcomed the gaunt, sombre 6 feet 4 inches of muscular manhood on board who two weeks earlier had been elected U.S. President, Abraham Lincoln.

Political conferences and a public reception naturally followed. But three days later, on Sunday, Nov. 25, 1860, Lincoln attended St. James (Episcopal) Church in the morning, and visited D. L. Moody's mission Sunday school in the afternoon. Moody's noisy street urchins were then meeting in North Market Hall, a forerunner of today's great Moody Memorial Church. (Incidentally, North Market Hall also doubled as 8th Ward Republican headquarters.)

A month earlier, the Sunday school had celebrated its first anniversary in that building. Yet it already had made such an impact throughout the Midwest that Lincoln accepted the invitation of John V. Farwell, merchant prince and early Sunday school superintendent, to visit it, on the condition that he not be asked to make a speech. (He had made or written five in the last few days, and at his public reception on Friday he shook hands with a "constant stream of visitors.")

As the tall, gangly President-elect was about to leave, Moody, with his characteristic boldness, said to the Sunday school, "If Mr. Lincoln desires to say a word as he goes out, of course all ears will be open." Mr. Lincoln continued on his way, but as he reached the center of the hall, he suddenly stopped and with great tenderness addressed the hundreds of children. He closed by saying, "With

close attention to your teachers, and hard work to put into practice what you learn from them, some of you may also become President of the United States in due time like myself, since you have had better opportunities than I had."

From the very time that Lincoln entered public life, his Christian faith (or lack of it) has been one of the most debated questions in the vast literature that has arisen around this great American leader. Even in recent years, he has been attacked as an infidel, an atheist, a deist, or a Universalist. Exactly what was his relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ?

A few years ago the discovery of the personal signed copy of a small devotional book owned by Lincoln excited the public and historians alike—for here is a new testimony to the depth of Lincoln's faith, new light in an area previously clouded by uncertainty.

This volume, consisting of a Scripture passage and poem for each day of the year, was originally published in 1852 as *The Believer's Daily Treasure*, by the Religious Tract Society of London. Channel Press, Inc., Great Neck, N.Y., has reprinted it as *Lincoln's Devotional*. Sections read like these:

Justification Through Christ—"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24).

No righteousness but His we own,
No ransom but His blood alone,
While on the Father's name we call,
Our faith pleads Christ as all in all.

Live in Peace With All Men—"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18).

His purpose is that we should bear
His image now on earth,
And by our peaceful lives declare
Our new and heavenly birth.

Of Support in Affliction—"Unless

Thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction" (Psa. 119:92).

God of my life, how good, how wise
Thy judgments to my soul have been!
They were but blessings in disguise,
The painful remedies of sin.
How different now Thy ways appear,
Most merciful, when most severe!

Even use of such an inspiring volume, of course, could not of itself prove that Lincoln was born again. Neither could glowing tributes to the Bible, faith and prayer. And as a matter of fact, all kinds of conflicting statements exist as to his religious views and experiences, many of which could be resolved by fitting them into a proper timetable, such as this one, suggested by Rev. William Johnson in *Abraham Lincoln the Christian*: his mother's spiritual training (1809-18); drifting (1818-31); questioning (1831-35); indifference (1835-48); honest seeking (1848-58); great soul coming into full fellowship with his Master (1858-62); true follower of Jesus Christ, with his last months marked by a deepening of his spiritual life (1862-65).

In extensive research, including the monumental nine-volume *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, I have not found, in Lincoln's own words, what we would consider a clear testimony of saving faith. Perhaps the nearest to it is this item, headed "Reply to an Illinois clergyman" in *The Lincoln Memorial: Album-Immortelles*, collected and edited by Osborn H. Oldroyd (New York: G. W. Carle-

**Lincoln visited
D. L. Moody's
mission Sunday
school.**

The author is a free-lance writer of Arlington, Va. The material in this article is adapted from TODAY'S LIVING by permission of Baptist Publications, Denver, Colo.

ton and Co., 1883):

"When I left Springfield, I asked the people to pray for me. I was not a Christian. When I buried my son, the severest trial of my life, I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg, and saw the graves of thousands of our soldiers, I then and there consecrated myself to Christ. Yes, I do love Jesus."

Not everybody pronounces "shibboleth" the same. And I did find what seems to be ample evidence of Lincoln's regeneration in the testimony of others, apparently competent witnesses.

Rev. J. A. Reed, in "The Later Life and Religious Sentiments of Abraham Lincoln" (*Scribner's Monthly*, July, 1873), quoted a letter from Noah Brooks, a New York *Tribune* correspondent, after pointing out that "Mr. Brooks is himself an earnest Christian man," who would have become private secretary to the President had he lived. Mr. Brooks wrote, December 31, 1872:

"I have had many conversations with Mr. Lincoln more or less of a religious character, and while I never tried to draw anything like a statement of his views from him, yet he freely expressed himself to me as having a 'hope of blessed immortality through Jesus Christ.' . . . His lan-

guage seemed not that of an inquirer, but of one who had a prior settled belief in the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion. Once or twice, speaking to me of the change which had come upon him, he said, while he could not fix any definite time, yet it was after he came here (White House), and I am very positive that in his own mind he identified it with about the time of Willie's death."

Mr. Brooks went on to say that from many conversations, he absorbed the firm conviction that "Mr. Lincoln was at heart a Christian man, believed in the Saviour, and was seriously considering the step which would formally connect him with the visible church on earth."

Dr. Phineas D. Gurley, pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C., faithfully preached "Christ and Him crucified" to his congregation, including President Lincoln, concerning whom he said:

"I have had frequent and intimate conversations with him on the subject of the Bible and the Christian religion . . . and I considered him sound, not only on the truth of the Christian religion, but on all its fundamental doctrines and teaching."

He added that after Willie's death and the visit to Gettysburg, Lincoln

said, with tears in his eyes, "that he had lost confidence in everything but God, and that he now believed his heart was changed and that he loved the Saviour, and if he was not deceived in himself, it was his intention soon to make a profession of religion."

Most of the salient facts about Lincoln's last 24 hours have been grippingly recounted in Jim Bishop's *The Day Lincoln Was Shot*. Here is an important one, however, which seems to be generally unknown today. Dr. N. W. Miner, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Springfield, Ill., and an intimate acquaintance of Lincoln, is quoted in Mr. Reed's article as saying:

"The very last moments of his (Lincoln's) conscious life were spent in conversation with her (Mrs. Lincoln) about his future plans, and what he wanted to do when his term of office expired. He said he wanted to visit the Holy Land and see the places hallowed by the footprints of the Saviour. He was saying there was no city he so much desired to see as *Jerusalem*; and with that word half spoken on his tongue, the bullet of the assassin entered his brain and the soul of the great and good President was carried by angels to the New Jerusalem above." [F]

The Place of Prayer

"... by a riverside, where prayer was wont to be made..." (*Acts 16: 13*).

My good friend and evangelist, Mike Guido, of Metter, Ga., relates this incident:

"In Florida one night I spoke to some politicians and urged them to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.

"Afterwards, a deacon drove me to the hotel, and I suggested before leaving him, 'Let's pray for some of the men who seemed visibly moved.'

"In a car?" he asked.

"Jonah prayed in the belly of a fish and Paul prayed in jail. Why not pray in an automobile?"

"Hesitatingly, he said, 'All right.' I prayed, 'Heavenly Father, please save the mayor and the attorney general.'

"Suddenly the deacon poked me in the ribs and cried, 'Pray for me too!'

"You, a deacon, and you're not a

Christian?" I asked.

"No," he admitted, 'I'm not. I wanted to become a Christian. I joined the church. I turned over a new leaf. I determined to live the Christian life. But I know that if I were to die right now I'd go to hell.'

"That night, sitting in his car, the deacon received the Lord Jesus and became a child of God."

I, too, was saved in an automobile—led to the Lord on the way home from an evangelistic meeting conducted by the late Dr. Harry Rimmer at Metropolitan Baptist Church, Washington, D.C.

Another time a car also became a cathedral for me. A friend I hadn't seen for years was visiting this area, and I fellowshipped with him at his motel. For privacy, we sat and talked in my car, recalling the Lord's gracious leading and enabling in so many difficult days.

As we were about to part, we bowed for a prayer.

Suddenly it seemed as if "heaven came down and glory filled my soul."

This man of God had been a blessed burden-bearer so many times in the past; his visit was bringing back, like the rush of a cold wind, memories of many a midnight hour. It was wonderfully enriching.

Contrary to the diehard beliefs of many, it's not the place, nor the pomp, nor the pose—it's just the Person that sanctifies prayer and makes it a sublime experience, rather than a routine exercise.

In the incidents above, the Lord was very much present, in demonstration of the Spirit and power. Multitudes of His own have laid hold of Him in office, shop, farm, or many other places—not to mention the battlefield and other crisis situations.

"Pray at all times—on every occasion, in every season—in the Spirit, with all [manner of] prayer and entreaty. To that end keep alert and watch with strong purpose and perseverance, interceding in behalf of all the saints (God's consecrated people)" (*Eph. 6:18, Amplified*). [F]