

ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
WAS HE A CHRISTIAN?

by  
John Eleazer Remsburg

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Abraham Lincoln: Was He a Christian?  
by John Eleazer Remsburg

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## PREFACE



Almost immediately after the remains of America's most illustrious son were laid to rest at Springfield, one of his biographers put forward the claim that he was a devout believer in Christianity. The claim was promptly denied by the dead statesman's friends, but only to be renewed again, and again denied. And thus for a quarter of a century the question of Abraham Lincoln's religious belief has been tossed like a battle-door from side to side.

As a result of this controversy, thousands have become interested in a subject that otherwise might have excited but little interest. This is the writer's apology for collecting the testimony of more than one hundred witnesses, and devoting more than two hundred pages to the question, "Was Lincoln a Christian?"

About few other men has so much been written as about Abraham Lincoln; while no other American's life has engaged the pens of so many biographers. A thousand volumes record his name and refer to his deeds. In a hundred of these he is the central figure. Nearly a score of elaborate biographies of him have been written. As many more books pertaining wholly to his life, his martyrdom, and his character have been published. Of the many works on Lincoln which the writer has consulted in the preparation of this volume, the following deserve to be mentioned: Nicolay and Hay's *Life of Lincoln*, Herndon and Weik's *Life of Lincoln*, Lamon's *Life of Lincoln*, Holland's *Life of Lincoln*, Arnold's *Life of Lincoln*, Raymond's *Life of Lincoln*, Stod-

dard's *Life of Lincoln*, Barrett's *Life of Lincoln*, *Every-Day Life of Lincoln*, Arnold's *Lincoln and Slavery*, Carpenter's *Six Months at the White House with Lincoln*, *Reminiscences of Lincoln*, *Anecdotes of Lincoln*, *Lincolniana*, *The President's Words*, *The Martyr's Monument*, *Tribute of the Nations to Lincoln*, *Lincoln Memorial* and *Lincoln Memorial Album*.

The testimony concerning Lincoln's religious belief presented in this volume has been derived chiefly from three sources. 1. A part of it has been gathered from the works above named. In a single volume is published for the first time matter which heretofore was only to be found scattered through numerous volumes, some of them inaccessible to the general reader. 2. A considerable portion of it has been gleaned from newspapers and periodicals containing statements brought out by this controversy, many of which would otherwise soon be lost or forgotten. 3. A very large share of it has been obtained by the writer from personal friends of Lincoln; and when we realize how rapidly those who lived and moved with him are passing away – that ere long none of them will remain to testify – the importance of this evidence can hardly be overestimated.

The writer believes that he has fully established the negative of the proposition that forms the title of his book. He does not expect to silence the claims of the affirmative; but he has furnished an arsenal of facts whereby these claims may be exposed and refuted as often as made.

This effort to prove that Lincoln was not a Christian will be condemned by many as an attempt to fasten a stain upon this great man's character. But the demonstration and perpetuation of this fact will only add to his greatness. It will show that he was in advance of his generation. The fame of Abraham Lincoln belongs not to this age alone, but will endure for all time. The popular faith is transient and must perish. It is unpopular now to reject Christianity, but the day is fast approaching when to accept its dogmas will be considered an evidence of human weakness. To perpetuate the claim that Lincoln was a Christian is to perpetuate an idea that in a future age will lessen the luster of his name.

It will be urged by some that the intent and purpose of

this work is solely to promote the interests of Freethought. But it is not. The writer advocates no cause that requires the prestige of a great name to make it respectable. The cause that requires the indorsement of the great to sustain it is not worthy to survive. He has prosecuted this investigation, not in the interest of any belief or creed, but in the interest of truth; and truth is certainly as high as any creed, even if that creed be true. In proving Lincoln a disbeliever he does not presume to have proved Christianity false, or Freethought true; but he has shown that some Christians are not honest, and that an honest man may be a Freehinker.

Atchison, Kansas, April, 1893.



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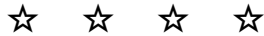
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# INTRODUCTION



Was Abraham Lincoln a Christian? Many confidently believe and earnestly contend that he was; others as confidently believe and as earnestly contend that he was not.

Before attempting to answer this question, let us define what constitutes a Christian. A Christian is one who, in common with the adherents of nearly all the religions of mankind, believes, 1. In the existence of a God; 2. In the immortality of the soul. As distinguished from the adherents of other religions, he believes, 1. That the Bible is a revelation from God to man; 2. That Jesus Christ was the miraculously begotten Son of God. He also believes in various other doctrines peculiar to Christianity, the chief of which are, 1. The fall of man; 2. The atonement.

Those who in nominally Christian countries reject the dogmas of Christianity are denominated Infidels, Freethinkers, Liberals, Rationalists, unbelievers, disbelievers, skeptics, etc. These Infidels, Freethinkers, represent various phases of belief among which are, 1. Deists, who affirm the existence of a God and the immortality of the soul; 2. Atheist who deny the existence of a God, and, generally, the soul's immortality; 3. Agnostics, who neither affirm nor deny these doctrines.

The following are the religious views Lincoln is said to have held as presented by those who affirm that he was a Christian:

1. He believed in the existence of a God, and accepted the Christian conception of this Being.
2. He believed in the immortality of the soul, and in the Christian doctrine of the resurrection.
3. He believed that the Bible is a revelation from God –

the only revealed will of God.

4. He believed in the divinity of Christ – believed that Christ is God.

5. He believed in the efficacy of prayer, and was accustomed to pray himself.

6. He believed in the doctrine of experimental religion, and had experienced a change of heart.

7. Although he never united with any church, he was contemplating such a step at the time of his assassination.

8. The church with which he would have united, we are led to infer, was the Presbyterian.

The following is a statement of the theological opinions of Lincoln as understood by those who deny that he was a Christian:

1. In regard to a Supreme Being he entertained at times Agnostic and even Atheistic opinions. During the later years of his life, however, he professed a sort of Deistic belief, but he did not accept the Christian or anthropomorphic conception of a Deity.

2. So far as the doctrine of immortality is concerned, he was an Agnostic.

3. He did not believe in the Christian doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures. He believed that Burns and Paine were as much inspired as David and Paul.

4. He did not believe in the doctrine of Christ's divinity. He affirmed that Jesus was either the son of Joseph and Mary, or the illegitimate son of Mary.

5. He did not believe in the doctrine of a special creation.

6. He believed in the theory of Evolution, so far as this theory had been developed in his time.

7. He did not believe in miracles and special providences. He believed that all things are governed by immutable laws, and that miracles and special providences, in the evangelical sense of these terms, are impossible.

9. He rejected the doctrine of total, or inherent depravity. He repudiated the doctrine of vicarious atonement.

10. He condemned the doctrine of forgiveness for sin.

11. He opposed the doctrine of future rewards and punishments.

12. He denied the doctrine of the freedom of the will.

13. He did not believe in the efficacy of prayer as understood by orthodox Christians.

14. He indorsed, for the most part, the criticisms of Thomas Paine on the Bible and Christianity, and accepted, to a great extent, the theological and humanitarian views of Theodore Parker.

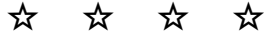
15. He wrote a book (which was suppressed) against the Bible and Christianity.

16. His connection with public affairs prevented him from giving prominence to his religious opinions during the later years of his life, but his earlier views concerning the unsoundness of the Christian system of religion never underwent any material change, and he died, as he had lived, an unbeliever.



# CHAPTER ONE

## Christian Testimony



Dr. J. G. Holland – Hon. Newton Bateman – Rev. J. A. Reed  
Rev. James Smith, D.D. – N. W. Edwards – Thomas Lewis  
Noah Brooks – Rev. Byron Sunderland, D.D. – Rev. Dr. Miner  
Rev. Dr. Gurley – Hon. I. N. Arnold – F. B. Carpenter  
Isaac Hawley – Rev. Mr. Willets – A Pious Nurse  
Western Christian Advocate – An Illinois Clergyman  
Rev. J. H. Barrows, D.D. – Rev. Francis Vinton, D.D.  
Bishop Simpson

In confirmation of the claim that Lincoln was a Christian, the following evidence has been adduced:

### Dr. J. G. Holland

President Lincoln died on the 15th of April, 1865. In the same year, the *Life of Abraham Lincoln*, written by Dr. J. G. Holland, appeared. In the fields of poetry and fiction, and as a magazine writer, Dr. Holland had achieved an enviable reputation. His *Life of Lincoln* was written in his usually entertaining style and secured a wide circulation. He affirmed that Lincoln was a Christian, and by means of this work, and through *Scribner's Magazine*, of which he was for many years the editor, contributed more than any other person to render a belief in this claim popular. Referring to Lincoln's administration, Dr. Holland says:

The power of a true-hearted Christian man, in perfect sympathy with a true-hearted Christian people, was Mr. Lin-

coln's power. Open on one side of his nature to all descending influences from him to whom he prayed, and open on the other to all ascending influences from the people whom he served, he aimed simply to do his duty to God and man. Acting rightly he acted greatly. While he took care of deeds fashioned by a purely ideal standard, God took care of results. Moderate, frank, truthful, gentle, forgiving, loving, just, Mr. Lincoln will always be remembered as eminently a Christian President; and the almost immeasurably great results which he had the privilege of achieving were due to the fact that he was a Christian President.<sup>1</sup>

### Hon. Newton Bateman

Dr. Holland's claim rests chiefly upon a confession which Lincoln is said to have made to Newton Bateman in 1860. During the Presidential campaign Lincoln occupied the Executive Chamber at the State House. Mr. Bateman was Superintendent of Public Instruction at the time, had his office in the same building, and was frequently in Lincoln's room. The conversation in which Lincoln is alleged to have expressed a belief in Christianity is thus related in Holland's *Life of Lincoln*:

On one of these occasions Mr. Lincoln took up a book containing a careful canvass of the city of Springfield in which he lived, showing the candidate for whom each citizen had declared it his intention to vote in the approaching election. Mr. Lincoln's friends had, doubtless at his own request, placed the result of the canvass in his hands. This was toward the close of October, and only a few days before the election. Calling Mr. Bateman to a seat at his side, having previously locked all the doors, he said: "Let us look over this book. I wish particularly to see how the ministers of Springfield are going to vote." The leaves were turned, one by one, and as the names were examined Mr. Lincoln frequently asked if this one and that were not a minister, or an elder, or the member of such or such a church, and sadly expressed his surprise on receiving an affirmative answer. In that manner

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1. *Life of Lincoln*, page 542.



they went through the book, and then he closed it and sat silently and for some minutes regarding a memorandum in pencil which lay before him. At length he turned to Mr. Bateman, with a face full of sadness, and said: "Here are twenty-three ministers, of different denominations, and all of them are against me but three; and here are a great many prominent members of the churches, a very large majority of whom are against me. Mr. Bateman, I am not a Christian – God knows I would be one – but I have carefully read the Bible, and I do not so understand this book;" and he drew from his bosom a pocket New Testament. "These men well know," he continued, "that I am for freedom in the territories, freedom everywhere as far as the Constitution and laws will permit, and that my opponents are for slavery. They know this and yet, with this book in their hands, in the light of which human bondage cannot live a moment, they are going to vote against me. I do not understand it at all."

Here Mr. Lincoln paused – paused for long minutes – his features surcharged with emotion. Then he rose and walked up and down the room in the effort to retain or regain his self-possession. Stopping at last, he said, with a trembling voice and his cheeks wet with tears: "I know there is a God and that he hates injustice and slavery. I see the storm coming, and I know that his hand is in it. If he has a place for me – and I think he has – I believe I am ready. I am nothing, but truth is everything. I know I am right, for Christ teaches it, and Christ is God."

The effect of this conversation upon the mind of Mr. Bateman, a Christian gentleman whom Mr. Lincoln profoundly respected, was to convince him that Mr. Lincoln had, in his quiet way, found a path to the Christian standpoint – that he had found God, and rested on the eternal truth of God. As the two men were about to separate, Mr. Bateman remarked: "I have not supposed that you were accustomed to think so much upon this class of subjects. Certainly your friends generally are ignorant of the sentiments you have expressed to me." He replied quickly: "I know they are. I am obliged to appear different to them; but I think more upon these subjects than upon all others, and I have done so for years; and I am willing that you should know it."<sup>2</sup>

## Rev. J. A. Reed

In 1872, seven years after the publication of Holland's work, Lamon's *Life of Abraham Lincoln* was published. In this work the statements of Holland and Bateman concerning Lincoln's religious belief are disputed, and the testimony of numerous witnesses cited to prove that he lived and died a disbeliever. Soon after Lamon's book was published, the Rev. J. A. Reed, a Presbyterian clergyman, of Springfield, Ill., delivered a lecture in which he attempted to refute or modify the evidence of Lamon's witnesses and prove that Lincoln died a Christian. He admitted that Lincoln was an Infidel up to 1848 and possibly as late as 1862, but endeavored to show that previous to his death he changed his views and became a Christian. The following extracts present the salient points in his discourse:

Having shown what claims Mr. Lamon's book has to being the "only fair and reliable history" of Mr. Lincoln's life and views, and of what "trustworthy materials" it is composed, I shall now give the testimony I have collected to establish what has ever been the public impression, that Mr. Lincoln was in his later life, and at the time of his death, a firm believer in the truth of the Christian religion. The Infidelity of his earlier life is not so much to be wondered at, when we consider the poverty of his early religious instruction and the peculiar influences by which he was surrounded.

It does not appear that he had ever seen, much less read, a work on the evidences of Christianity till his interview with Rev. Dr. Smith in 1848. We hear of him as reading Paine, Voltaire, and Theodore Parker, but nothing on the other side.

While it is to be regretted that Mr. Lincoln was not spared to indicate his religious sentiments by a profession of his faith in accordance with the institutions of the Christian religion, yet it is very clear that he had this step in view, and was seriously contemplating it, as a sense of its fitness and an apprehension of his duty grew upon him.

In support of his claims, Dr. Reed presents the testimony of Rev. Dr. Smith, Ninian W. Edwards, Thomas Lewis, Noah Brooks, Rev. Dr. Sunderland, Rev. Dr. Miner, and Rev. Dr. Gurley.

## Rev. James Smith, D.D.

The Rev. James Smith was for many years pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Springfield. Lincoln formed his acquaintance soon after he located there, remained on friendly terms with him, and with Mrs. Lincoln frequently attended his church. Dr. Smith was one of the three Springfield clergymen who supported Lincoln for President in 1860, and in recognition of his friendship and fidelity, he received the consulship at Dundee. Dr. Reed quotes from a letter to W.H. Herndon, dated East Cainno, Scotland, January 24, 1867, in which Dr. Smith says:

It is a very easy matter to prove that while I was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Springfield, Mr. Lincoln did avow his belief in the divine authority and inspiration of the scriptures, and I hold that it is a matter of the last importance not only to the present, but all future generations of the great Republic, and to all advocates of civil and religious liberty throughout the world that this avowal on his part, and the circumstances attending it, together with very interesting incidents illustrative of the excellence of his character, in my possession, should be made known to the public. . . . It was my honor to place before Mr. Lincoln arguments designed to prove the divine authority and inspiration of the scriptures accompanied by the arguments of Infidel objectors in their own language. To the arguments on both sides Mr. Lincoln gave a most patient, impartial, and searching investigation. To use his own language, he examined the arguments as a lawyer who is anxious to reach the truth investigates testimony. The result was the announcement by himself that the argument in favor of the divine authority and inspiration of the Scriptures was unanswerable.

## Hon. Ninian W. Edwards

Ninian W. Edwards, a brother-in-law of Lincoln writes as follows:

Springfield, Dec. 24th, 1872.

Rev. Jas. A. Reed:

Dear Sir –

A short time after the Rev. Dr. Smith became pastor of the First Presbyterian church in this city, Mr. Lincoln said to me, “I have been reading a work of Dr. Smith on the evidences of Christianity, and have heard him preach and converse on the subject, and I am now convinced of the truth of the Christian religion.”

Yours truly,

N. W. Edwards.

Thomas Lewis

In corroboration of Mr. Edwards’s statement, Thomas Lewis, of Springfield, Ill., testifies as follows:

Springfield, Jan. 6th, 1873.

Rev. J. A. Reed:

Dear Sir –

Not long after Dr. Smith came to Springfield, and I think very near the time of his son’s death, Mr. Lincoln said to me, that when on a visit somewhere, he had seen and partially read a work of Dr. Smith on the evidences of Christianity which had led him to change his views about the Christian religion; that he would like to get that work to finish the reading of it, and also to make the acquaintance of Dr. Smith. I was an elder in Dr. Smith’s church, and took Dr. Smith to Mr. Lincoln’s office and introduced him; and Dr. Smith gave Mr. Lincoln a copy of his book, as I know, at his own request.

Yours etc.,

Thos. Lewis.

Noah Brooks

Noah Brooks, a newspaper correspondent of New York, and the author of a biography of Lincoln gives the following testimony:

New York, Dec. 31, 1872.

Rev. J. A. Reed,

My Dear Sir:

In addition to what has appeared from my pen, I will state that I have had many conversations with Mr. Lincoln, which were 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 view seemed to settle so naturally around that statement that I considered no other necessary. His language 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, and I am very positive that in his own mind he identified it with about the time of Willie's death. He said, too, that after he went to the White House he kept up the habit of daily prayer. Sometimes he said it was only ten words, but those ten words he had. There is no possible reason to suppose that Mr. Lincoln would ever deceive me as to his religious sentiments. In many conversations with him, I absorbed the firm conviction that Mr. Lincoln was at heart a Christian man, believed in the Savior, and was seriously considering the step which would formally connect him with the visible church on earth. Certainly, any suggestion as to Mr. Lincoln's skepticism or Infidelity, to me who knew him intimately from 1862 till the time of his death, is a monstrous fiction – a shocking perversion.

Yours truly,

Noah Brooks.

Rev. Byron Sunderland, D.D.

Mr. Reed presents a lengthy letter from the Rev. Byron Sunderland, of Washington, dated Nov. 15, 1872. Dr. Sunderland in company with a party of friends visited the President in the autumn of 1862. In this letter he says:

After some conversation, in which he seemed disposed to have his joke and fun, he settled down to a serious consider-

ation of the subject before his mind, and for one half-hour poured forth a volume of the deepest Christian philosophy I ever heard.

### Rev. Dr. Miner

The Rev. Dr. Miner, who met Lincoln in Washington, says:

All that was said during that memorable afternoon I spent alone with that great and good man is engraven too deeply on my memory ever to be effaced. I felt certain of this fact, that if Mr. Lincoln was not really an experimental Christian, he was acting like one. He was doing his duty manfully, and looking to God for help in time of need and, like the immortal Washington, he believed in the efficacy of prayer, and it was his custom to read the Scriptures and pray himself.

### Rev. P.D. Gurlet, D.D.

While in Washington, Lincoln with his family attended the Presbyterian church of which the Rev. Dr. Gurley was pastor. Mr. Reed cites the following as the testimony of Dr. Gurley in regard to the alleged Infidelity of Lincoln:

I do not believe a word of it. It could not have been true of him while here, for I have had frequent and intimate conversations with him on the subject of the Bible and the Christian religion, when he could have had no motive to deceive me, and I considered him sound not only on the truth of the Christian religion but on all its fundamental doctrine and teachings. And more than that, in the latter days of his chastened and weary life, after the death of his son Willie, and his visit to the battle-field of Gettysburg, he 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 Savior, and, if he was not deceived in himself, it was his intention soon to make a profession of religion.

## Hon. Isaac N. Arnold

One of the most ardent friends and admirers of Abraham Lincoln was Isaac N. Arnold, for several years a member of Congress from Illinois. Mr. Arnold wrote a work on *Lincoln and Slavery*, and a *Life of Lincoln* which was published in 1885. Lincoln's religious views are thus described by Mr. Arnold:

No more reverent Christian than he ever sat in the Executive chair, not excepting Washington. He was by nature religious; full of religious sentiment. The veil between him and the supernatural was very thin. It is not claimed that he was orthodox. For creeds and dogmas he cared little. But in the great fundamental principles of religion, of the Christian religion, he was a firm believer. Belief in the existence of God, in the immortality of the soul, in the Bible as the revelation of God to man, in the efficacy and duty of prayer, in reverence toward the Almighty, and in love and charity to man, was the basis of his religion. . . .

His reply to the Negroes of Baltimore when they, in 1864, presented him with a magnificent Bible, ought to silence forever those who charge him with unbelief. He said, "In regard to the Great Book I have only to say that it is the best gift which God has given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated through this book. . . ."

His faith in a Divine Providence began at his mother's knee, and ran through all the changes his life. Not orthodox, not a man of creeds, he was a man of simple trust in God.<sup>3</sup>

## F. B. Carpenter

Mr. Carpenter, the artist, in his popular book entitled, *Six Months in the White House With Abraham Lincoln*, uses the following language: "I would scarcely have called Mr. Lincoln a religious man – and yet I believe him to have been sincere Christian."<sup>4</sup>

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3. *Life of Lincoln*, pp. 446, 447, 448..

4. *Six Months in the White House With Abraham Lincoln*, p. 185.

### Isaac Hawley

In the spring of 1887, in going from Springfield to Havana, I met Isaac Hawley, one of the early settlers of Illinois, and who for nearly twenty years resided within a few blocks of Lincoln in Springfield. In answer to the question, "Was Lincoln a Christian?" Mr. Hawley replied: "I believe that Lincoln was a Christian, and that he was God's chosen instrument to perform the mighty work he did."

### Rev. Mr. Willets

The Rev. Mr. Willets, of Brooklyn, N. Y., is credited with the following statement concerning Lincoln's reputed conversion. The information it contains was obtained, it is said, from a lady of Mr. Willets's acquaintance who met Lincoln in Washington:

The President, it seemed, had been much impressed with the devotion and earnestness of purpose manifested by the lady, and on one occasion, after she had discharged the object of her visit, he said to her: "Mrs. —, I have formed a high opinion of your Christian character, and now, as we are alone, I have a mind to ask you to give me, in brief, your idea of what constitutes a true religious experience." The lady replied at some length, stating that, in her judgment, it consisted of a conviction of one's own sinfulness and weakness, and personal need of a Savior for strength and support; that views of mere doctrine might and would differ, but when one was really brought to feel his need of divine help, and to seek the aid of the Holy Spirit for strength and guidance, it was satisfactory evidence of his having been born again. This was the substance of her reply. When she had concluded, Mr. Lincoln was very thoughtful for a few moments. He at length said, very earnestly, "If what you have told me is really a correct view of this great subject I think I can say with sincerity that I hope I am a Christian."<sup>5</sup>

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5. *Anecdotes of Lincoln*, pp. 166, 167.



### A Pious Nurse

A pious lady, who served in the capacity of a hospital nurse at Washington, and who sometimes visited the White House, testifies to Lincoln's belief in the efficacy of prayer. The incident narrated occurred while a battle was in progress. The report says:

The possibility of defeat depressed him greatly but the lady told him he must trust, and that he could at least pray. "Yes," said he, and taking up a Bible, he started for his room. Could all the people of the nation have overheard the earnest petition that went up from that inner chamber as it reached the ears of the nurse, they would have fallen upon their knees with tearful and reverential sympathy.<sup>6</sup>

### Western Christian Advocate

Soon after the close of the war, the *Western Christian Advocate*, the leading Christian journal of the West, published the following:

On the day of the receipt of the capitulation of Lee, as we learn from a friend intimate with the late President Lincoln, the cabinet meeting was held an hour earlier than usual. Neither the President nor any member was able, for a time, to give utterance to his feelings. At the suggestion of Mr. Lincoln all dropped on their knees, and offered in silence and in tears their humble and heartfelt acknowledgment to the Almighty for the triumph he had granted to the national cause.

The above is quoted by Raymond and other biographers of Lincoln.

### An Illinois Clergyman

In the *Lincoln Memorial Album* appears what is reported

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6. *Anecdotes of Lincoln*, p. 120.

to be Lincoln's "Reply to an Illinois Clergyman":

"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."<sup>7</sup>

Rev. John H. Barrows

In the *Lincoln Memorial Album*, Dr. J.H. Barrows contributes an article on "The Religious Aspects of Abraham Lincoln's Career," from which I quote as follows:

In the anxious uncertainties of the great war, he gradually rose to the heights where Jehovah became to him the sublimest of realities, the ruler of nations. When he wrote his immortal Proclamation, invoked upon it not only "the considerate judgment of mankind," but "the gracious favor of Almighty God." When darkness gathered over the brave armies fighting for the nation's life, this strong man in the early morning knelt and wrestled in prayer with him who holds in his hand the fate of empires. When the clouds lifted above the carnage of Gettysburg, he gave his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. When he pronounced his matchless oration on the chief battlefield of the war, he gave expression to the resolve that "this nation, under God, should have a new birth of freedom." And when he wrote his last Inaugural Address, he gave to it the lofty religious tone of an old Hebrew psalm.<sup>8</sup>

Rev. Francis Vinton, D.D.

This clergyman, a resident of New York, and stranger to Lincoln, visited the White House in 1862, it is claimed, and indulged in an argument and exhortation, the effect of which was to convert the President to a belief in the Christian doctrine of

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7. *Lincoln Memorial Album*, p. 366.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 508.

the resurrection and the immortality of the soul. During the interview, Lincoln, it is reported, fell upon the neck of his clerical visitor and wept like a child.

Before retiring, Dr. Vinton said: "I have a sermon upon this subject which I think might interest you." "Mr. Lincoln," the report continues, "begged him to send it at an early day, thanking him repeatedly for his cheering and hopeful words. The sermon was sent, and read over and over by the President, who caused a copy to be made for his own private use before it was returned."<sup>9</sup>

### Bishop Simpson

The most eminent Methodist divine of that period was Bishop Simpson. During the war his commanding influence and rare eloquence did much to secure for the Union cause the united support of Northern Methodists. Lincoln appreciated the services of the distinguished divine, and they became warm friends. When the remains of the President were conveyed to their final resting-place at Springfield, Bishop Simpson was selected to deliver the funeral oration. Alluding to the religious phase of Lincoln's character, he spoke as follows:

As a ruler, I doubt if any President has ever shown such trust in God, or in public documents so frequently referred to divine aid. Often did he remark to friends and to delegations that his hope for our success rested in his conviction that God would bless our efforts because we were trying to right.<sup>10</sup>

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9. *Anecdotes of Lincoln*, pp. 107, 108.

10. *Lincoln and Slavery*, p. 673.