

LINCOLN LORE

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LINCOLN'S RELIANCE ON GOD

The atmosphere of the Thanksgiving season invites one to consider some phase of Lincoln's reaction towards a supreme being. There has been much said about the President's scepticism and his reluctance to accept the tenets of organized religion.

No fact stands out more clearly, during the period in which he had the welfare of the nation at heart and was guiding its destinies, than his unqualified reliance on God.

It is the purpose of this bulletin to present a few exhibits which illustrate Lincoln's firm belief that a just God was guiding the destiny of the nation, and that he relied upon Providence to direct him in the conduct of the nation's affairs.

Farewell Address at Springfield, Illinois February 12, 1861

"Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him (Washington), 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."

First Inaugural, March 4, 1861

"If the Almighty Ruler of Nations with his eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North or on yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people. . . . 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 our present difficulty."

Message to Congress, July 4, 1861

"And having thus chosen our course, without guile and with pure purpose, let us renew our trust in God, and go forward without fear and with manly hearts."

Annual Message to Congress, December 3, 1861

"With a reliance on Providence all the more firm and earnest, let us proceed in the great task which events have devolved upon us."

Reply to Resolutions of the East Baltimore Methodist Conference, May 15, 1862

"By the help of an all-wise Providence, I shall endeavor to do my duty, and I shall expect the continuance of your prayers for a right solution of our national difficulties and the restoration of our country to peace and prosperity."

Reply to Committee from Religious Denominations of Chicago, September 13, 1862

"It is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter and if I can learn what it is I will do it."

Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, 1863

"And upon this act, sincerely believe to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I evoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God."

Letter to Alexander Reed, February 22, 1863

"Whatever shall be sincerely, and in God's name, devised for the good of the soldier and seaman in their hard spheres of duty, can scarcely fail to be blest. And what-

ever shall tend to turn our thoughts from the unreasoning and uncharitable passions, prejudices, and jealousies incident to a great national trouble such as ours, and to fix them upon the vast and long-enduring consequences, for weal or for woe, which are to result from the struggle, and especially to strengthen our reliance on the Supreme Being for the final triumph of the right, cannot but be well for us all."

Reply to Members of the Presbyterian General Assembly, May 30, 1863

"Relying, as I do, upon the Almighty Power, and encouraged as I am by these resolutions which you have just read, with the support which I receive from Christian men, I shall not hesitate to use all the means at my control to secure the termination of the rebellion, and will hope for success."

Letter to J. C. Conkling, August 26, 1863

"Let us diligently apply the means, never doubting that a just God, in his own good time, will give us the rightful result."

Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863

"That this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom."

Letter to A. G. Hodges, April 4, 1864

"If God now wills the removal of a great wrong and wills also that we of the North as well as you of the South shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new cause to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God."

Letter to General Grant, April 30, 1864

"And now with a brave army and a just cause, may God sustain you."

Letter to Eliza P. Gurney, September 4, 1864

"I have not forgotten—probably never shall forget—the very impressive occasion when yourself and friends visited me on a Sabbath forenoon two year ago. Nor has your kind letter, written nearly a year later, ever been forgotten. In all it has been your purpose to strengthen my reliance on God."

Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1864

"I regard our immigrants as one of the principal replenishing streams which are appointed by Providence to repair the ravages of internal war."

Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865

"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."

Letter to Thurlow Weed, March 15, 1865

"Men are not flattered by being shown that there has been a difference of purpose between the Almighty and them. To deny it, however, in this case, is to deny that there is a God governing the world."