

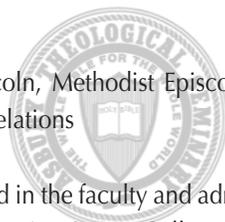
Samuel J. Rogal
Lincoln Among the Methodists

Abstract:

While not a professed member of any religious denomination, the relationship between Abraham Lincoln and the Methodist Episcopal Church of his time is important, both in terms of their views on the abolition of slavery and the political rise of the number of Methodists in the United States. This article charts the course of that relationship from before Lincoln's Presidency, his election campaign against Peter Cartwright, and the significance of Bishop Matthew Simpson. This was period when the rise of Methodism was to have serious implications politically because of the rapid size, growth, and moral views of the church.

Keywords: Abraham Lincoln, Methodist Episcopal Church, United States history, religion, church relations

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The seemingly endless biographers of Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) have generally and collectively concluded that attempts to adorn their subject's lapel with a firm denominational label prove more than difficult. His impoverished nomadic parents, Thomas Lincoln (1778-1851) and Nancy Hanks Lincoln (?-1818), as well as his widowed step-mother from Elizabethtown, Kentucky, Sarah Johnston, held rigidly to the teachings of the Baptist Church, but there exists little evidence that their son committed to that line of thought or discipline. Although Lincoln, following the death of his four-year-old son, Edward Baker Lincoln, on 1 February 1850, regularly attended Presbyterian churches in Springfield, Illinois, and Washington, DC., he did not become a communicant of that denomination. Indeed, there lies even less detail concerning his interest in Christian creeds or formal theology. The Bible lay upon his reading table as the sole source sufficient to meet his religious needs.¹

One historian of American religion has referred to Lincoln's religious habits and conduct as having been the result of a "son of a hard-shell Baptist who [Abraham Lincoln] never lost hold of the proposition that nations and men are instruments of the Almighty."² Support for that statement derives most readily from Lincoln's "Second Inaugural Address" on 4 March 1865, where, within a span of less than two paragraphs appear no less than fifteen (15) undisputed references to the Supreme Being and thirteen (13) direct references and allusions to Biblical passages: Both parties engaged in the present war, claimed the President, "read the same *Bible* and pray to the same **God** and each invokes **His** aid against the other."³ It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just **God's** assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces..." "The **Almighty** has **His** own purposes."⁴ "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!"⁵ If we should propose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of **God** must needs come, but which having continued through **His** appointed time,⁶ **He** now wills to remove,⁷ and that **He** gives to both North and South, this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein my departure from those **divine attributes** which the believers in a **living God**⁸ always ascribe to **Him**?⁹ "Yet, if **God** wills it [the Civil War] continue, until. . . the bondman's. blood drawn with the lash. . . shall be paid by another... it must be said 'the judgments of the **Lord** are true and righteous altogether."¹⁰ With malice toward none,¹¹ with charity for all;¹² with firmness

in the right,¹³ as **God** gives us you see the right,¹⁴ let us strive on to finish the work we are in;¹⁵..."¹⁶

Despite Lincoln's knowledge of the substance of holy scriptures and evidence in his willingness to accept the spirit and the workings of a Judaic-Christian God, he offered main line Protestant denominations few opportunities to recruit him into their ranks. Thus, his relationships with those religious organizations existed principally on social and political levels. The Methodists had entered the game early in the history of the new Republic. In May 1785, Thomas Coke (1747-1814), one of two superintendents appointed by John Wesley for Methodism in the infant United States, organized a petition calling for either immediate or gradual elimination of slavery in Virginia, encouraging that document to be sent directly to the retired General George Washington. Coke and his co-superintendent, Francis Asbury (1745-1816), managed to arrange a dinner meeting on the petition with Washington at Mount Vernon in late May or early June 1785, and the two Methodist leaders believed, at the end of that session, that Washington supported the petition. However, Washington never signed the document. Although he appeared generally receptive to the notion of a gradual emancipation, he hesitated at the thought of a large population of freed slaves in Virginia and, eventually, throughout the nation. Coke and Asbury would achieve a small token of success when, Washington, in his will, declared freedom for his own slaves. "Indeed," remarked Francis Asbury's biographer, "his [Washington's] intention to free his slaves appears to have taken shape in about 1789, a decade before his death and not long after his meeting with Asbury and Coke."¹⁷ As for Coke, he found himself in political difficulty at, and following, the Methodist Conference in New York on 28 May-5 June 1789. There he participated in the drafting of an address to the newly elected President of the United States, George Washington, expressing the loyalty of the Methodist Episcopal Church to the nation and to its leader. Coke also served on the delegation that delivered the document to the President. The problem arose from Coke's continued British citizenship, as well as his continued affiliation with the Tory Party in England, resulting in severe criticism from the New York press, public disapproval in England, and condemnation from the British Methodist Conference. As though taking his cue from the departed John Wesley, Coke excluded mention of the affair in his journal.¹⁸

The connection between the third Wesley appointed superintendent for American Methodism, Richard Whatcoat (1736-1806),

and George Washington proves difficult to translate, principally because its source, the entries in Whatcoat's journal between 1 August 1789 and 31 December 1800, appear as hasty jottings and fragmentary notes, as opposed to extended observations and recollections of persons and events. Thus, his entry for 2 September 1790 reads, "B.D.T. [breakfast, dinner, tea] at Bror manlys [Henry Manly's] preachd [*sic*] in the Evning [*sic*] to A Small [congregation] this Day for the first time I saw his Exelency [*sic*] president Washington [.]" The reader cannot determine whether Whatcoat actually visited with Washington, or if he simply caught sight of the President. However, Whatcoat's colleague on the Methodist itinerancy, Thomas Morrell (1747-1838), a native of Staten Island, New York, had distinguished himself as a captain of militia, then promoted to major, in the Continental Army during the American Revolution, and he had maintained and retained a friendship with George Washington, although the specifics of that post-war relationship have not yet come to light.¹⁹ Of course, the exact number of Methodists who had served in the Continental Army from 1775 to 1783 and knew, both then and later, George Washington cannot be determined; Thomas Morrell might have been one among hundreds.

As George Washington evidenced an awareness of the infancy of American Methodism both during and following the creation of a new nation, Abraham Lincoln would recognize the growing strength and maturation of the Methodist Episcopal Church both prior to and during a national crisis that threatened the destruction of that nation. The discussion needs to begin, naturally enough, with Abraham Lincoln's parents, Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks Lincoln. The couple had been married, in Hardin County, Kentucky, by a Methodist minister, Rev. Jesse Head, known only as an outspoken opponent of slavery, and thus, logically, attended Methodist services. At some point, however, they removed to a congregation of Separate Baptists, their worship house located at South Fork, two miles from their farm, and when the debate over slavery seriously divided that church in August 1808, the Lincolns joined the newly formed Little Mount Baptist Church, situated three miles east of the farm. Most likely, Abraham Lincoln knew little concerning his parents' Methodist experience, and he demonstrated even less interest in pursuing the matter.²⁰

Nonetheless, Lincoln would not lose sight of the Methodists. For six years—from 1831 to 1837, from the ages of twenty to twenty-six—he resided and worked in New Salem, Illinois, a settlement on the Sangamon River, twenty miles northwest of Springfield, a village then

without a church, but one in which its settlers experienced no barriers to the practice of their religious sentiments. The Baptists met in the local schoolhouse, while the Presbyterians and Methodists did the same in one another's homes. In the summers members of each denomination removed themselves to weekly outdoor campground meetings. The itinerant Methodist minister and frontier preacher, Peter Cartwright, whom Lincoln would have to confront in the next decade, conducted a number of revival meetings at New Salem during the future President's residence there, and one might reasonably speculate that the young man knew of those events and, possibly, attended at least one—out of curiosity, if for no other reason. "The anti-intellectualism and emotionalism of the of the revivals turned some residents away," argued one of Lincoln's biographers, treading upon the thin ice of generalization, "while inspiring a search in others for a more rational faith."²¹ The writer does not commit his subject firmly to the "some" or to the "others." Nonetheless, during his youth in Kentucky and Indiana, and in the brief New Salem period, Lincoln observed the deep divisions within he Baptist Church—General Baptists, Particular Baptist, Separate Baptists—and the rancor among Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists, all of which tended to widen the distance between those principal nineteenth-century denominations and him.

Occasions did arise, however, when Lincoln responded to a friendly wave from the Methodist Episcopal Church. There crossed his path for a brief moment another frontier preacher, Orceneth Fisher (1803-1880). Born into a Baptist family at Chester, Windsor County, Vermont, Fisher accompanied his parents to the Indiana territory at some point prior to 1821, after which he left the Baptist fold and embraced Methodism. In 1823, he joined the Missouri Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, then, a year later, removed to the Illinois Conference. Fisher spent 1839-1840 on the Methodist itinerancy in Texas, returned to Illinois for a short tour, then spent the remainder of his years on the itinerancy in the Northwest, Texas, and the Pacific Coast. At Springfield, Illinois, Fisher preached in "a modest-looking [Methodist] meeting-house, which speaks more for the simple piety of the inhabitants, than the ostentatious taste of the citizens..." Further, the state capitol then under construction, the Illinois Senate met in Fisher's church, and his tenure in Springfield coincided with Lincoln's early law practice there—the latter having moved to that town from New Salem in 1837. According to one Methodist historian, Orceneth Fisher had related to his children those occasions when Lincoln attended

his services.²² What prompted Lincoln to do so rises as a question without satisfactory answers. Ronald White stroked his readers' imaginations by noting that despite Lincoln's position in the Illinois General Assembly, he remained practically friendless in Springfield. "Lincoln considered attending a church in Springfield, but, remarked, 'I've never been to church yet, nor probably not be soon. I stay away because I should not know how to behave myself.'" ²³ How does one reconcile that statement, even though it had been filtered through a secondary source, with Rev. Orceneth Fisher's tales to his children? To accept both means to establish Lincoln's view of a church service, including a *Methodist* service, as a social occasion, as opposed to participation in a meaningful religious experience.

Before releasing entirely the thin grasp of a connection between Lincoln and Methodism during the young legislator-lawyer's early period in Springfield, Illinois, consider this interesting (coincidental?) link. On 15 October 1924, at the intersection of Sixteenth and Mt. Pleasant Streets, Washington, D.C., occurred the dedication of the Methodist Bishop Francis Asbury monument—an equestrian statue of Asbury created by Everette Wyatt: a book in the right hand clutched to his breast, the left hand on the reins, and the horse, head bowed, as though paused and prepared for a drink from a stream.²⁴ A similar equestrian statue of Asbury, seemingly recreated by Wyatt, stands adjacent to Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky.²⁵ Beside the Wyatt piece place the equestrian statue *Life on the Circuit*, executed by Anna Vaughan Huntington Hyatt (1876-1973),²⁶ depicting Abraham Lincoln in the saddle, reading, as he travelled across the Eighth Judicial Circuit in central Illinois, his horse paused, drinking from a stream. Was Anna Huntington attempting a relationship of some sort between the patriarch of American Methodism and the young lawyer embarking upon his road to prominence? After all, both men rode the circuit—one to save souls, the other to serve justice.

Lincoln's experience with Methodism assumed a totally new dimension at the very outset of his political career. When, at age twenty-three, he sought a seat in the Illinois General Assembly in 1832, he came in eighth in a field of thirteen candidates; ahead of him stood a forty-seven-year-old Methodist itinerant preacher on the western frontier by the name of Peter Cartwright (1785-1872). Born in Amherst County, Virginia, Cartwright accompanied his family in 1790, to Kentucky. Offered little in the way of formal education, the boy eventually embraced horse racing and gambling until, at a camp meeting in 1801, he underwent religious

conversion. A year later he obtained a license to preach as an exhorter in the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1803, Cartwright, having mastered the skill of contemporary preaching, became a circuit rider, thus beginning two decades of preaching at least one sermon per day. Then followed ordination as a deacon in 1806, elder in 1808, presiding elder of the Methodists' Cumberland circuit from 1821 to 1823, transfer to the Illinois Conference in 1824, and presiding elder for that Conference over the next half-century. Described as "a rugged man, about five feet ten inches tall, Cartwright bore his nearly two hundred pounds on a medium frame. His resolute personality exuded from a face with high cheekbones, a firm jaw, and piercing black eyes,"²⁷

Cartwright expressed little patience with religious formalism, having been convinced that daily reading of holy scriptures and consistent prayer comprised the essential components of the truly spiritual life. The "texts" of his sermons focused upon the clear message of free salvation and rigid moral conduct—the guiding purpose of early American Methodism. He also advanced a form of anti-intellectualism, maintaining that Methodists could ignite the spirits of their congregations while their denominational rivals spent their time earning college degrees and negotiating for their stipends. By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, Cartwright's fundamentalist views began to recede, and he lamented the fact that the Methodist Episcopal Church had begun to ignore the popular enthusiasm that had cultivated the essence of the movement. Again, he mounted a rhetorical assault upon those Methodist ministers who had become "downy doctors and learned presidents and professors," while Methodist laymen and women desired little beyond affluence, social fashion, and maternal comfort.²⁸

In an effort to establish his reputation and solidify his leadership, Peter Cartwright turned his attention to politics. Twice he gained election to the Illinois General Assembly, representing his district from 1824 to 1840, embracing an anti-slavery policy. At the 1844 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, featuring a debate over slave-holding, he attempted, without success, to prevent a division between the two factions, resulting, in 1845, with the formation of the Protestant Episcopal Church, South. Nonetheless, Cartwright's career remained without serious blemish. Reportedly, throughout a career spanning seventy years, he had preached nearly 15,000 sermons and baptized close to 10,000 persons while

traveling circuits in Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Peter Cartwright died at Pleasant Plaines, Illinois, on 25 September 1872.

Fourteen years following their initial 1832 political confrontation, the sixty-one-year-old Democrat Cartwright and the thirty-seven-year-old Whig Lincoln entered the arena in an effort to represent the Illinois Congressional District. Interestingly enough, they waged the contest at a distance from each other—no debates, no joint appearances. To the surprise of but a few, Cartwright injected religion into the campaign as a principal issue. Lincoln received word that in a number of the northern counties in the district, “Mr. Cartwright was whispering the charge of [religious] infidelity against me...”²⁹ In response, Lincoln prepared a handbill addressed “To the Voters of the Seventh Congressional District,” dated 31 July 1846—four days before the election: “That I am not a member of any Christian Church is true,” he confessed;

...but I have never denied the truth of the scriptures; and I have never spoken with intentional disrespect of religion in general, or of any denomination of Christians in particular. It is true that in early life I was inclined to believe in what I understand is called the ‘Doctrine of Necessity’—that is that the human mind is impelled into action, or held in rest by some power, over which the mind itself had no control, and I have sometimes (with one, two or three, but never publicly) tried to maintain this opinion in argument. The habit of arguing thus, however, I have entirely left off for more than five years. And I add here, I have always understood this same opinion to be held by several of the Christian denominations. The foregoing is the whole truth, briefly stated, in relation to myself, upon this subject.

Lincoln then concluded,

I do not think I could myself, be brought to support a man for office, whom I knew to be an open enemy of, and a scoffer at, religion. Leaving the higher matter of eternal consequences, between him and his Maker, I still do not think any man has the right thus to insult the feelings, and injure the morals, of the community in which he may live. If, then, I was guilty of such conduct, I should blame no man who should condemn me for it; but I do blame those, whoever they may be, who falsely out such a charge in circulation against me.³⁰

Lincoln’s “friends,” for whatever reason, never published this document.

Undeterred by the failure of that initial response, Lincoln, eleven days later, from Springfield, Illinois, on 11 August 1846,³¹ addressed a letter to Allen N. Ford, a publisher at Lacon, Illinois,³² and the editor of the *Illinois Gazette*. He had just returned from a campaign tour of the northern counties of the district and received a letter from Jacksonville, Illinois, claiming that Peter Cartwright had been spreading rumors about his [Lincoln's] infidelity. "I have little doubt now," asserted Lincoln,

that to make the same charge—to slyly sow the seeds in the same spots—was the chief objective of his mission through your part of the District, at a time when he knew I could not contradict him, either in person or by letter before the election. And, from the election returns in your county [Marshall], being so different from what they are in parts where Mr. Cartwright and I are both well known, I incline to the belief that he has succeeded in deceiving some honest men there.³³

Lincoln then turned his attention to a person identified only as

"Mr. Woodward, our worthy commissioner from Henry"³⁴ spoken of by your [Jacksonville] correspondent, I must say it is a little singular that he should know so much about me, while, if I ever saw *him*, or heard of him, save in the communication in your paper, I have forgotten it. If Mr. Woodward has given such assurance of my character as your correspondent asserts, I can still suppose him to be a worthy man; he may have believed what he said; but there is, even in that charitable view of his case, one lesson in morals which he might, not without profit, learn of even me—and that is, never to add the weight of his character to a charge against his fellow man, without *knowing* it to be true. I believe it is an established maxim in morals that he who makes an assertion without knowing whether it is true or false, is guilty of falsehood; and the accidental truth of the assertion, does not justify or excuse him. This maxim ought to be particularly in view, when we contemplate an attack upon the reputation of our neighbor. I suspect that it will turn out that Mr. Woodward got his information in relation to me, from Mr. Cartwright; and I here aver, that he, Mr. Cartwright, never heard me utter a word in any way indicating my opinions on religious matters in his life.³⁵

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In the end, all of this excitement came to naught. A total of 11,169 white males from the Illinois Seventh Congressional District cast votes on 3

August 1846: 6340 (56.8%) for Abraham Lincoln, 4829 (43.2%) for Peter Cartwright.³⁶

How, then, does one interpret Lincoln's victory? Other than second-hand newspaper reports, Lincoln's broadside of 31 July 1846 and his 11 August letter to Allen Ford, little specificity concerning the Congressional campaign of 1846 has emerged. Peter Cartwright never mentioned it in his 1858 *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, the Backwoods Preacher*, nor did later editors of that volume take note of it. Prior to the election of 1846, Cartwright had declared his commitment to the "born again/holiness gospel when he stated that 'real religion'" embraced the notion of the Holy Spirit "'bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God,'³⁷ which results in an effective expression of faith, a 'sensible evidence of change of heart.'" When Cartwright opposed Lincoln in the 1846 Congressional election, his principal campaign issue focused hard upon Lincoln's "unsuitability for office because of his rational realistic skepticism." He harped upon Lincoln's "unwillingness to affirm a palpable conviction of sin and an explicit new birth encounter with Jesus." In Cartwright's view, Lincoln emerged as "an infidel." To the majority of voters in the District, presumably aware of Cartwright's religious agenda because of his years of preaching in that area of the state, "his insistence on evangelical conversion" proved to have been "typical Methodist fare."³⁸ Would that campaign and its election result, then, be considered Lincoln's victory over Methodism or over the Methodist Episcopal Church? No! He had campaigned against Peter Cartwright as a purely political opponent, Whig versus Democrat. His election proved that one need not necessarily be obliged to practice frontier-style Methodism to be considered a Christian. One needed only to be Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln appeared to have little contact of importance with Methodism, its people or its Church, until two years prior to the 1860 Presidential election. In the seventh of the campaign debates on 25 October 1858 between Senator Steven Arnold Douglas (1813-1861) of Illinois, Lincoln declared,

There never was a party in the history of this country, and there probably never will be of sufficient strength to disturb the general peace of the country. Parties themselves may be divided and quarrel on minor questions, yet it extends not beyond the parties themselves. But does not the question make a disturbance outside of political circles? Does it not enter into the churches and rend

them asunder? What divided the great Methodist Church into two parts, North and South? What has raised the constant disturbance in every Presbyterian General Assembly that meets?³⁹

The answer, of course: slavery! Two years later, on the eve of his first Presidential term, Lincoln found his way into the poverty-stricken sections of New York City. By 1860, the Five Points Mission House of Industry, situated in that metropolis as an adjunct of the Methodist Ladies' Home Missionary Society, had become a regular stop for visitors seeking to examine, first hand, a well-publicized prime example of Methodist piety and charity. Lincoln, by now an knowledgeable politician, campaigning for the Presidency, visited the Five Points Mission on 24 February 1860.⁴⁰

Following the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, in the North, an interdenominational organization, the United States Christian Commission, had been created, with significant assistance from Methodist Bishop Edward Storer Janes (1807-1876),⁴¹ to supply relief, carried forth mainly by Methodist women, and to conduct worship services by the ministry, both for the benefit of Union soldiers. Further, nearly five hundred pastors from the Methodist Episcopal Church volunteered as regimental chaplains. President Lincoln would later respond to the wholesome support of the war effort of the Methodist Episcopal Church North, emphasizing to Church leaders the point that the Church, "by its greater numbers... sends more soldiers to the field, more nurses to the hospitals, and more prayers to heaven than any. God bless the Methodist Church."⁴² Indeed, throughout the war, Bishop Matthew Simpson (1811-1884)⁴³ became a close and trusted associate of Lincoln, an "informal" chaplain, if you will, and the President, in turn, viewing him as the "greatest orator he had ever heard," extended his favor toward Simpson. Following Lincoln's assassination Simpson preached the President's funeral sermon in Springfield, Illinois, a highly patriotic oration, labeling Lincoln a Christian hero and a martyr, endowed with noble virtues and godly character—a far cry from two decades earlier when Peter Cartwright had branded Lincoln an infidel. During the war the aged Cartwright had mellowed in his opinion of Lincoln and extended his appreciation to the President for his leadership.⁴⁴

Following the issuance of the first draft of the Emancipation Proclamation on 22 July 1862, Lincoln received an unheralded measure of support from a different segment of Methodism, The Methodist Protestant Church, comprised of a group of democratic-leaning reformers

and innovators disenfranchised from the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1830. They formed, in the same year, the Methodist Protestant Church as a denomination without bishops or presiding elders, with preachers appointed by an elected “President” of Conference—and those appointments could be appealed. The laity and clergy of the new denomination achieved equal representation in denominational meetings, an egalitarian polity that all members viewed as truly “Protestant.” However, the Methodist Protestant Church assumed a conservative view on the issue of slavery, obviously a concession to Southern members, a position that, thirty years later, brought about serious disruption and division.⁴⁵

At the General Convention of the Methodist Protestant Church, held at Cincinnati, Ohio, on 5-12 November 1862, by then devoid of membership from any of the Confederate States,⁴⁶ the Committee on the Country, chaired by Dennis B. Dorsey, Jr., from Western Virginia, “reported a series of whereases and resolutions,” the principal item reading,

Resolved, That we heartily endorse the Emancipation Proclamation of President Lincoln; because it strikes at that baleful cause of all our civil and ecclesiastical difficulties, American slavery, the sum of all villainies,⁴⁷ the darling idol of all villainies, the central power of villainous secessionism, but now, by the wisdom of the President, about to be made the agent of retributive justice in punishing that culmination of villainous enterprises, the attempt to overthrow the most glorious civil government that God’s providence ever established on earth.⁴⁸

Lincoln’s reaction and response to the resolution (if, indeed, a response ever came forth) have not survived.

During the second half of the war, one could uncover a time or two when the stream of cooperation between Lincoln and the Methodists did not always flow with harmony, more the result of failures within the President’s own administration than from actions by the Methodists. As but one instance, note this situation that arose in the winter of 1863-1864. From the Executive Mansion in Washington, D.C. Lincoln wrote to Secretary of War Edwin McMasters Stanton (1814-1869), notifying him that

In January 1863, the Provost-Marshal at St. Louis, having taken the control of a certain church from one set of men, and given it to another, I wrote Gen. [Samuel Ryan] Curtis [1807-1866, head of the Department of Missouri]

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on the subject, as follows: "the U.S. Government must not, as by this order, undertake to run the churches. When an individual, in a church or out of it, becomes dangerous to the public interest, he must be checked; but the churches, as such, must take care of themselves. It will not do to appoint trustees, Supervisors or other agents for the churches."

Then on 22 December 1863, Lincoln wrote to Oliver D. Filley of St. Louis and repeated to him his order to General Curtis, adding, "I have never interfered, nor thought of interfering as to who shall or who shall not preach in any church; nor have I knowingly, or believingly, tolerated any one else to so interfere by my authority. If any one is so interfering by color of my authority, I would like to have it specifically made known to me... I will not have control over any church on my side.' After having made these declarations in good faith, and in writing," concluded Lincoln to Stanton, "you can conceive of my embarrassment of what having brought to me what purports to be a formal order of the War Department, bearing date Nov. 30th 1863, giving Bishop Ames⁴⁹ control and possession Southern Military Departments, whose pastors have now been appointed by a loyal Bishop or Bishops, and ordering the military to aid him against any resistance which may be made to his taking such possession and control. What is to be done about it?"⁵⁰ Whether the question yielded a response proves difficult to determine, and no mention of the matter arises in further correspondence from Lincoln to Stanton.

Perhaps the last "direct" contact between Abraham Lincoln and the Methodist Episcopal Church occurred approximately eleven months prior to the assassination of the President. From the General Conference of that Church, held at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in mid-May 1864, emerged an epistolary address directly to the President, dated 14 May 1864 and signed on behalf of the members of the Conference, by Joseph Cummings,⁵¹ the General Conference chairman. Be aware that this address to Lincoln extends far beyond a pile of paragraphs of bloated rhetorical praise and perhaps devoid of ninety percent of no other purpose other than the obligatory knee-bending before the monarch. The Conference had an agenda here, beginning with informing the President of its strength as a religious organization: "The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, now in session in the city of Philadelphia, representing nearly seven thousand ministers and nearly a million of members, mindful

of their duty as Christian citizens, takes the earliest opportunity to express to you the assurance of the loyalty of the Church, her earnest devotion to the interest of the country, and her sympathy with you in the great responsibilities of your high position in this trying hour.”⁵² Unfortunately, the Conference did not appreciate, or did not even know, how “trying” the hour had become; it hoisted the flags much too soon by claiming. “Loyal and hopeful in national adversity, in prosperity thankful, we most heartily congratulate you on the glorious victories recently gained, and rejoice in the belief that our complete triumph is near.”

However, a triumph of another sort did emerge, one to which the Methodist Episcopal Church North had developed and maintained a passionate interest—a triumph that these representatives of the Church could confine to but a single sentence: “We honor you for your proclamations of liberty, and rejoice in all the acts of the government designed to secure freedom to the enslaved.”

Following the issuance of assuring the continued loyalty of Northern Methodists, the writers of the address proceeded to outlie for the President the record of that loyalty established by the Methodist Episcopal Church. “With exultation we point to the record of our Church as never having been tarnished by disloyalty. She was the first of the Churches to express, by deputation of her most distinguished ministers, the promise of support to the Government in the days of [President George] Washington. In her Articles of Religion⁵³ she has enjoined loyalty as a duty, and has ever given to the government her most decided support.” In terms of what the writers labeled, albeit in general terms. “this present struggle for the nation’s life many thousands of her members, and a large number of her ministers have rushed to arms to maintain he cause of God and humanity. They have sealed their devotion to their country on every battlefield of this terrible war.” Further, reads the address, the writer(s) pressing hard to underscore the extent of Methodist loyalty to the Union cause, “Our earnest and constant prayer is, that this cruel and wicked rebellion may be speedily suppressed; and we pledge you our heartfelt cooperation in all appropriate means to secure this object.”

The address also provided Lincoln with a degree of opportunity to view the collective mood of the Methodist leadership toward the role of government in the face of open rebellion.

We regard this dreadful scourge now desolating our land and wasting the nation's life as the result of a most unnatural and utterly unjustifiable rebellion, involving the crime of treason against the best of human governments and sin against God. It required our government to submit to its own dismemberment and destruction, leaving no alternative but to preserve the national integrity by the use of natural resources. If the government had failed to use its power to preserve the unity of the nation and maintain its authority it would have been justly exposed to the wrath of heaven,⁵⁴ and to the reproach and scorn of the civilized world.

One significant and apparent gap within the argument of the Church proved to have been the fact that, in the North, moderate anti-slavery politicians had placed equal blame upon their radical abolitionist colleagues for abstaining from attempts, prior to 1861, to seek means of compromise and thus diffuse efforts toward secession and war. The "reproach and scorn" had been equally merited by both North and South. Nonetheless, the Methodists continued to believe "that our national sorrows and calamities have resulted in a great degree from our forgetfulness of God⁵⁵ and oppression of our fellow-men. Chastened by affliction, may the nation humbly repent of her sins,⁵⁶ lay aside her haughty pride,⁵⁷ honor God in all future legislation, and render justice to all who have been wronged."

Should those directives be pursued, the address can then proceed to its conclusion upon two hopeful notes: First, a positive look to the future, wherein "We trust that when military usages and necessities shall justify interferences with established institutions, and the removal of wrongs sanctioned by law, the occasion will be improved, not merely to injure our foes and increase the natural resources, but also as an opportunity to recognize our obligations to God and to honor his law. We pray that the time may speedily come when this shall be truly a republican and free country, in no part of which, either state or territory, shall slavery be known." Second, the piece ends with a call to prayer for the President and the nation. "The prayers of millions of Christians, with an earnestness of millions of Christians never manifested for rulers⁵⁸ before, daily ascend to heaven that you may be endued with all needed wisdom and power. Actuated by the sentiments of the loftiest and purest patriotism, our prayer should be continually for the preservation of our country undivided, for the triumph of our cause, and for the permanent peace, gained by the sacrifice

of no moral principles, but founded on the word of God, and securing in righteousness, liberty, and equal rights to all.”⁵⁹

Abraham Lincoln responded to the General Conference address four days later, on 1 May 1864,⁶⁰ having done so in the tone and manner of an elected official, carefully avoiding expressions of personal feeling: “Gentlemen,—In response to your address, allow me to attest the accuracy of its historical statements, endorse the sentiment it expresses, and thank you, in the nation’s name for the sure promise it gives.” He held a firm grip upon the line of objectivity, claiming that

Nobly sustained as the government has been by all the Churches, I would utter nothing which might in the least appear invidious against any. Yet without this it may fairly be said that the Methodist Episcopal Church, not less devoted than the best, is, by its greater numbers, the most important of all. It is no fault in others that the Methodist Church sends more soldiers to the field, more nurses to the hospitals, and more prayers to heaven than any. God bless the Methodist Church! bless all the Churches! And blessed be God who in this our great trial giveth us the Churches.

A closing salutation does not follow, only, “May 18, 1864, A. Lincoln.”⁶¹

At the end of it all, and on the surface—meaning in public—Lincoln managed to maintain his personal distance from American Methodism. Nonetheless, as a politician, he certainly must have understood the numbers involved; he could count church membership and he could translate the figures into votes. For example, according to one source, by 1860, the combined lay membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church (1,661,086) and the Evangelical United Brethren (141,841) had reached a total of 1,802,927—or 5.7% of the population of the United States (31,443,321).⁶² Because of the number of political and ecclesiastical variables that occurred from 1860 to 1865, one cannot accept those figures as “official,” but if nothing else, they do allow one to assess the political strength of American Methodism during Abraham Lincoln’s relatively brief tenure in the executive mansion. Place that beside the President’s close relationship with Bishop Matthew Simpson and a vision emerges that might have tantalized the imaginations of one or two historians or biographers; but those seeds took no roots. There arises no evidence that Lincoln consciously sought to acquaint himself with or to read seriously the Articles of Religion

of the Methodist Episcopal Church, or that he ever contemplated entering into its membership. There ends that story.

The Methodists, however, held little reservation in claiming Abraham Lincoln as among their own. The President's Emancipation Proclamation harmonized well with the strong abolition position of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and his equally strong determination to preserve the Union fit well with the political agenda of the church. More importantly, however, the church wanted a hero to rise above the bloody destruction of civil war, and a number of its members truly believed that Bishop Matthew Simpson, a long-time abolitionist, had inspired Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. No matter that such a belief lacked validity, for the purported hero became an actual martyr on 14 April 1865 when John Wilkes Booth put a bullet into his head and he died the next day. At Lincoln's funeral in Springfield, Illinois, Bishop Matthew Simpson, speaking on behalf of his nation and his church, concluded, "Chieftain, farewell! The nation mourns thee... Mute though thy lips be, yet they still speak. Hushed is thy voice, but echoes of liberty are ringing throughout the world, and the sons of bondage listen with joy. Thou didst fall not for thyself. The assassin had no hate for thee. Our hearts were aimed at; our national life was sought. We crown thee as our martyr and Humanity enthrones thee as her triumphant son. Hero, martyr, friend, farewell."⁶³ In the end of that story, the Methodist Episcopal Church could claim, for five short years, both its hero and its martyr.

End Notes

¹ For those who will be satisfied with but a brief yet accurate overview and/or summation of Lincoln's "religion," *The Encyclopedia of American Religious History* of Edward L. Queen II, Stephen R. Prothero, and Gardiner H. Shattock, Jr. (New York, NY: Facts On File, Inc., 1996): 1:362-363, will do. For more in-depth study of the subject, see Glen E. Thurow, *Abraham Lincoln and American Political Religion* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1976), and William I. Wolf, *The Almost Chosen People: A Study of the Religion of Abraham Lincoln* (1959), revised as *Lincoln's Religion* (Philadelphia, PA: The Pilgrim Press, 1970). Of course, one will always be best served by attentiveness to the primary sources—the speeches and the letters.

² Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1972): 686.

³ My *italics* and **bold**.

⁴ Jeremiah 51:29—"And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant." (KJV)

⁵ Matthew 18:7 (KJV)

⁶ Genesis 18:14—"Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." (KJV)

⁷ 2 Kings 23:27—"And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city of Jerusalem which have chosen and the house of which I have said, My name shall be there." (KJV)

⁸ Deuteronomy 5:26—"For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?

⁹ Deuteronomy 32:3—"Because I [Moses] will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God." (KJV)

¹⁰ Psalms 19:9—"The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." (KJV)

¹¹ 1 Peter 2:1—"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, , and all evil. . . ." (KJV)

¹² 2 Thessalonians 1:3—"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith growth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth." (KJV)

¹³ Job 41:24—"His [a leviathan's] heart is as firm as a stone; ye, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone." (KJV)

¹⁴ Deuteronomy 12:28—"Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee forever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the Lord thy God." (KJV)

¹⁵ Colossians 1:29—"Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his [God's] working, which worketh in me mightily." (KJV)

¹⁶ Don E. Fehrenbacher (ed.), *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings, 1859-1865* (New York, NY: Library Classics of the United States, Inc., /Library of America, 1989): 687.

¹⁷ John A. Vickers (ed.), *The Journals of Dr. Thomas Coke* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books/Abingdon Press, 2005): 63-64; John Wigger, *American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodists* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009): 251-252.

¹⁸ J.A. Vickers, *Journal of Coke*, 92, 126-127.

¹⁹ See William Warren Sweet, *Religion on the American Frontier, 1783-1840. Volume IV: The Methodists: A Collection of Source Materials* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1946):113, 117; Samuel J. Rogal (ed.), *To Go and Serve the Desolate Sheep in America: The Diary/ Journal of Bishop Richard Whatcoat, 1789-1800* (Bethesda, MD: Academica Press, LLC, 2001): 35; James Grant Wilson and John Fiske (eds.), *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York, NY: D. Appleton and Company, 1888-1901), 4:407.

²⁰ Donald C. White, Jr., *A. Lincoln: A Biography* (New York, NY: Random House, 2009): 17-18.

²¹ White, *Lincoln*, 45.

²² Sweet, *The Methodists*, 469, 476. Sweet, in turn, cited from John C. Simmons, *History of Southern Methodism on the Pacific Coast* (1886): 141.

²³ White, *Lincoln*, 86. White noted his sources for Lincoln's statement as Joshua F. Speed, *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln and Notes of a Visit to California. Two Lectures* (Louisville, KY: John P. Morton and Company, 1884): 23; and Lincoln's conversation with Mary S. Owens, 7 May 1837, in Roy P. Basler (ed.), *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953-1955), 1:78. Lincoln had courted Mary Owens, the daughter of an affluent Kentucky family, but the relationship eventually came to an end.

²⁴ Wigger, *American Saint*, 412-414.

²⁵ Kenneth Cain Kinghorn, *The Heritage of American Methodism* (Strasbourg, France: Editions du Signe, 1999), 36.

²⁶ Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts; studied in Boston and New York; wife of American writer and Hispanic scholar, Archer Milton Huntington (1870-1955); Huntington's work represented by bronzes of animals in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; carved lions in New York City; statues of Joan of Arc in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, in New York City, and in Blois, France; statues of El Cid in New York City, Seville, Spain, Buenos Aires, Argentina; memorial monuments to Collis Potter Huntington (1870-1955), railroad magnate, in Newport News, Virginia; bust of the Swiss naturalist Jean-Louis Rudolphe Agassiz (1807-1873) in the American Hall of Fame; additional work in Carnegie, Cleveland, San Diego, San Francisco, Luxembourg and Edinburgh museums; honored by the governments of France and Spain; member of the National Sculpture Society, American Academy of Arts and Letters.

²⁷ White, *Lincoln*, 134.

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²⁸ Queen, *et al*, *American Religious History*, 1:107.

²⁹ White, *Lincoln*, 135.

³⁰ Don E. Fehrenbacher (ed.), *Abraham Lincoln. Speeches and Writings, 1832-1858* (New York, NY: The Library of America/Library Classics of the United States, Inc., 1989): 139-140.

³¹ The election had been held a week earlier, on 3 August 1846, but even by the 11th, all votes would not have been collected and counted, nor the result of the election known.

³² Lacon, Illinois, on the Illinois River, forty (40) miles northeast of Peoria.

³³ Fehrenbacher, *Lincoln, 1832-1858*, 140-141.

³⁴ Henry, Marshall County, Illinois, on the Illinois River, thirty miles north of Peoria.

³⁵ Fehrenbacher, *Lincoln, 1832, 1858*, 140-141.

³⁶ White, *Lincoln*, 135.

³⁷ Romans 8:16—"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (KJV)

³⁸ Jason E. Vckers (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to American Methodism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 67.

³⁹ Fehrenbacher, *Lincoln, 1832-1858*, 805.

⁴⁰ Russell E. Richet, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt, *The Methodist Experience in America. A History* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010), 1:129.

⁴¹ Bishop Janes, born in Sheffield, Berkshire County, Massachusetts, the son of a mechanic who united with the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1820, at age thirteen; a self-educated country school teacher, Janes removed to New Jersey and entered the Methodist ministry; admitted (1830) into the Philadelphia Conference, which embraced the entire state of New Jersey; appointed (1835) financial agent for Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania and (1840-1844) financial secretary of the American Bible Society, an office that required travel throughout various sections of the country; at age thirty-eight elected and ordained (1844) bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church by the General Conference assembled in New York City; visited Europe (1854) to represent the church in the session of the British Wesleyan Conference, visiting, as well, the Irish and French Methodist Conferences and the overseas missions of his own church in Germany, Switzerland, Norway, and Sweden; as a preacher, he achieved a reputation for his rhetorical simplicity and his correctness; a resident of New York City from 1844 until his death on 18 September 1876. See Wilson and Fiske, *Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, 3:400-401.

⁴² J.E. Vickers, *Companion to American Methodism*, 75.

⁴³ Born in the village of Cadiz, Harrison County, northeastern Ohio, receiving his initial education there, following the death of his father in 1813, from his uncle, also Matthew Simpson—educated, a scholar familiar with Greek and Hebrew, state senator for a decade, and a judge of the Harrison County Court; in 1827; at age sixteen, young Matthew Simpson left Cadiz for Madison College (now Allegheny College), Meadville, Pennsylvania, where he became a tutor before he had reached the age of nineteen; studied medicine (1833) and opened a practice; attracted to Methodism, and entered the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church; minister on trial (1834); third preacher of the St. Clairsville circuit, Ohio; removed to Pittsburgh (1835); transferred (1837) to Williamsport, Pennsylvania; elected (1837) vice president and professor of Natural Science, Allegheny College; president of Indiana Asbury (now De Pauw University) College, Greencastle, Indiana (1839-1848); elected (1848-1849) to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, appeared at the Conference of 1852 as the leader of his delegation, and the Conference elected him bishop; sent abroad (1857) as a delegate to the English and Irish Wesleyan Methodist Conference and a delegate to the World Evangelical Alliance at Berlin, Germany; further travels to Pakistan, Turkey, Palestine, Egypt and Greece; removed (1859) from Pittsburgh to Evanston, Illinois, where he became the nominal head of the Garrett Biblical Institute; removed to Philadelphia, where he delivered a series of sermons, while his official duties in 1870 and 1875; became the nominal head of the Garrett Biblical Institute. Evansville, Illinois; removed to Philadelphia, where he delivered a series of sermons, while his official duties in 1870 and 1875; removed to Philadelphia, where he delivered a series of sermons, while his official duties in 1870 and 1875 carried him abroad; visited Mexico (1875); delivered the opening sermon at the Ecumenical Council in London; delivered an address upon the death of President James Abram Garfield (1831-1881) at Exeter Hall; selected by the faculty of Yale College to deliver a series of addresses before the students of the theological department, those published as *Lectures on Preaching* (New York, 1879); although in serious ill-health, he attended the General Conference of 1884 in Philadelphia; his publications included *One Hundred Years of Methodism* (New York, 1876) and *Cyclopaedia of Methodism* (Philadelphia, 1878; 5th 3e., rev., 1882); a volume of his sermons appeared posthumously in 1885; appearances in his later years appeared mostly patriarchal; his delivery from the pulpit described as simple and natural eloquence, but increasing in power from the beginning to the close; outwardly described as “peculiar to himself and equally attracted to the learned and the ignorant... at his best few could refuse his pathetic requests”; further described as a man of natural soundness and judgment, a parliamentarian of remarkable aptitude and promptitude, and one of the best presiding officers and safest of counsellors; Bishop Simpson died at Philadelphia on 18 June 1884, with a window in his memory to be placed by American admirers in John Wesley’s West Street Chapel, London. Wilson and Fiske, *Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, 5:538-539.

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⁴⁴ J.E. Vickers, *Companion to American Methodism*, 80, 94, 339.

⁴⁵ J.E. Vickers, *Companion to American Methodism*, 71.

⁴⁶ At the 1862 General Conference, the Methodist Protestant Church comprised the Conferences of Boston, New York (including the Conferences of Onondaga and Genesee counties), New Jersey, Pennsylvania (including the Pittsburgh Conference), Ohio, Michigan, Western Michigan, Indiana (including the Wabash Conference), Illinois, North Illinois, South Illinois, Iowa, North Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon, and Commissioners from Western Virginia.

⁴⁷ "In returning [to London from Dorking, Surrey], I read a very different book, published by an honest Quaker [Anthony Benezet (1713-1784), *Some Historical Account of Guinea* (Philadelphia, 1771)], on that execrable sum of all villainies, commonly called the 'slave trade.' I read of nothing like it in the heathen world, whether ancient or modern. And it infinitely exceeds, in every instance of barbarity, whatever Christian slaves suffer in Mahometan countries." John Wesley, Wednesday, 12 February 1772. See W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater (eds.), *Journal and Diaries V (1765-1775)*, in *The Works of John Wesley, Volume 25* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993): 307.

⁴⁸ Edward Jacob Drinkhouse, *History of Methodist Reform, Synoptical of General Methodism, 1703-1898, with Special and Comprehensive Reference to the Most Salient Exhibition in the History of the Methodist Protestant Church* (Baltimore, MD and Pittsburgh, PA: The Board of Publication of the Methodist Protestant Church, 1899), 2:450-451, 452-453.

⁴⁹ Edward Raymond Ames (1806-1879), born in Athens, Ohio, ; studied for two years at the Ohio State University, Columbus, before opening and maintaining (1828-1830) a high school in Lebanon, Illinois, which eventually developed into McKendree College; joined the Indiana Methodist Episcopal Conference and became an itinerant minister; chosen, at the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (1849), secretary of the Missionary Society; journeyed throughout the South and West, and among the Indian tribes, in all a distance of more than 25,000 miles; presiding elder (1844-1852), then elected bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church—the first Methodist bishop to visit the Pacific Coast; during the Civil War, rendered service as a member of several Federal commissions; died at Baltimore, Maryland, 25 April 1879. Wilson and Fiske, *Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, 1:64.

⁵⁰ Fehrenbacher, *Lincoln, 1859-1865*, 573.

⁵¹ Joseph Cummings (1817-1904?), born in Falmouth County, Maine; graduated (1840) Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, then taught school at Amenia Seminary, Amenia, Dutchess County, New York, becoming principal there in 1843; joined (1846) the New England Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and stationed in Massachusetts—Malden, Chelsea, and Boston (Hanover Street Methodist Church and Bromfield Street Methodist Church); professor of theology, Methodist General Biblical Institute, Concord, New Hampshire (1853-1854); president of Genesee College, Lima, Genesee County, New York (1854-1857); president of Wesleyan University (1857-1875) and then

(1875-1877) professor of Mental Philosophy and Political Economy; president (1881) of Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois; delegate to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (1864, 1876, 1880, 1884); awarded Doctor of Divinity degrees from Wesleyan University and Harvard College and the Doctor of Laws from Northwestern University. See Wilson and Fiske, *Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, 2:30-31.

⁵² From the Union point of view, both civil and military, the end of the war, during the first two weeks of May 1864, appeared off in the distance. On 5-6 May 1864, the armies of Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee batted to a bloody stalemate in the tangled woods of the Virginia "Wilderness." Four days later, Grant, attempting to circumvent Lee's troops, arrived at Spotsylvania, Virginia, to discover the Confederate army waiting for him. For five days (8-12 May 1864) the two armies battled to an inconclusive decision and retired to their trenches. Grant then determined to wear away Lee's force, whatever the cost to his own army, writing on 11 May to the chief-of-staff of the Union Army, General Henry Wager Halleck, and setting down the oft-quoted line, "I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer." In the West, on 13-15 May 1864, General William Tecumseh Sherman led his superior Union force to Resaca, Georgia, on the road to Atlanta, and a victory over Confederate troops under the command of General Joseph Egleston Johnston. However, Johnston's movements in retreat saved a considerable number of his troops. Finally, on 15 May, Confederate cavalry and infantry, under the command of Lieutenant-General Jubal Anderson Early, defeated a Union force led by the German-born Major-General Franz Sigel, thus thwarting the Federal attempt to sweep the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. These events succinctly summarized in a number and variety of American historical reference works, including Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., and John S. Bowman (eds.), *The Almanac of American History* (New York, NY: A Bisson Book/G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1983): 280.

⁵³ Articles of Religion = a redacted and especially dogmatic version of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England, as well as a redacted (and equally dogmatic) version of the Book of Common Prayer, drawn forth by American Methodists in the late eighteenth century. By 1808, those articles numbered twenty-five, including a restrictive rule that made them applicable to teaching and prohibited the changing or altering of them in any manner. Membership into the Methodist Episcopal Church, as well as ordination therein, required public affirmation of the Articles. Historically, the Articles of Religion marked the actual beginning of the decline of John Wesley's influence upon American Methodism. See J.E. Vickers, *American Methodism*, 12, 17; Richey, et al, *The Methodist Experience in America*, 1:81-82, 578 (note 22).

⁵⁴ Ezra 5:12—"But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house and carried the people away into Babylon." (KJV) Romans 1:18—"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." (KJV)

⁵⁵ Hosea 4:6—"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, because thou hast rejected knowledge. I will also reject thee, that thou shall

be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.” (KJV)

⁵⁶ Acts 5:31--:Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.” (KJV)

⁵⁷ Jeremiah 48:29—“We have heard the pride of Moab; he is exceeding proud; his loftiness and his arrogance, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart.” (KJV)

⁵⁸ Interestingly, in the final sentence of the paragraph immediately preceding, there resides the phrase “this shall be a republican and truly free country”; yet, here, the address places Lincoln within the group of *rulers*! The writers might well have lost sight, for the moment, of their republican idealism.

⁵⁹ Richey, *et al*, *Methodist Experience in America*, 2:326-327.

⁶⁰ The response not “selected” by Fehrenbacher in *Lincoln, 1859-1865*.

⁶¹ Richey, *et al*, *Methodist Experience in America*, 2: 327.

⁶² “United Methodist Lay Membership as Compared to United States Population Census,” in Richey, *et al*, *Methodist Experience in America*, 2:22.

⁶³ Cited from Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism: A History of the United Methodists and Their Relations* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1974): 243.



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