

Document #1

While Lincoln had already sealed the Whig nomination for Illinois' Representative in the Seventh District, he still had to contend with his Democratic challenger-Peter Cartwright. Cartwright was a well know Methodist minister who had some political clout by influencing a devoted following of orthodox Protestant adherents.

Handbill Replying to Charges of Infidelity

To the Voters of the Seventh Congressional District.

FELLOW

CITIZENS:

A charge having got into circulation in some of the neighborhoods of this District, in substance that I am an open scoffer at Christianity, I have by the advice of some friends concluded to notice the subject in this form. That I am not a member of any Christian Church, is true; but I have never denied the truth of the Scriptures; and I have never spoken with intentional disrespect of religion in general, or 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 to action, or held in rest by some power, over which the mind itself has 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.

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 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, or 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 put such a charge in circulation against me.

A. Lincoln

July 31, 1846

Questions for discussion:

- 1) What are the tenants of Christianity?
- 2) What connections can be made between Christianity, Manifest Destiny, millennialism, and American Democracy?
- 3) How important would it be to be a Christian during the mid 19th century in the United States?
- 4) What is the "Doctrine of Necessity?"
- 5) List and discuss evidence of Lincolnian diplomacy.

Document #2

It has been said that if Lincoln had not been killed in 1865, race relations would be better, and groups like the KKK may never have been formed. These issues were arguably a result of a poorly conducted national Reconstruction. Lincoln ever the diplomat and friend maker would have been able to facilitate a reconstruction with much less malice and a lot more charity. Lincoln had been quite proactive, a full two years before the war's end he had developed his own presidential reconstruction plan-sometimes referred to as Lincoln's Ten Percent Plan. As a response, some of Congress' more strict Republicans (later garnering as majority as Radical Republicans) Ben Wade and Henry Davis presented their congressional reconstruction plan know as the Wade-Davis Bill. This bill would include an "iron clad oath" with a one size fits all mentality.

Proclamation on the Wade-Davis Bill, July 8, 1864

Whereas, at the late Session, Congress passed a Bill, "To guarantee to certain States, whose governments have been usurped or overthrown, a republican form of Government." a copy of which is hereunto annexed:

And whereas, the said Bill was presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, less than one hour before the sine die adjournment of said Session, and was not signed by him:

And whereas, the said Bill contains, among other things, a plan for restoring the States in rebellion to their proper practical relation in the Union, which plan expresses the sense of Congress upon that subject, and which plan it is now thought fit to lay before the people for their consideration:

Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, do proclaim, declare, and make known, that, while I am, (as I was in December last, when by proclamation I propounded a plan for restoration) unprepared, by a formal approval of this Bill, to be inflexibly committed to any single plan of restoration; and, while I

am also unprepared to declare, that the free-state constitutions and governments, already adopted and installed in Arkansas and Louisiana, shall be set aside and held for nought, thereby repelling and discouraging the loyal citizens who have set up the same, as to further effort; or to declare a constitutional competency in Congress to abolish slavery in States, but am at the same time sincerely hoping and expecting that a constitutional amendment, abolishing slavery throughout the nation, may be adopted, nevertheless, I am fully satisfied with the system for restoration contained in the Bill, as one very proper plan for the loyal people of any State choosing to adopt it; and that I am, and at all times shall be, prepared to give the Executive aid and assistance to any such people, so soon as the military resistance to the United States shall have been suppressed in any such State, and the people thereof shall have sufficiently returned to their obedience to the Constitution and the laws of the United States,-in which cases, military Governors will be appointed, with directions to proceed according to the Bill.

Activities and Questions for discussion:

- 1) Using the annotated document above and your own research, create a continuum of Reconstruction plans. On the far right list the plan perceived by Southerners as the most strict and harsh, and working to the left, list more moderate plans and then to the far left list the most lenient plan.
- 2) Where does Lincoln's reconstruction plan fit on the continuum and why?
- 3) What is a pocket veto? Why did Lincoln use it?
- 4) Why does Lincoln still want to continue to uphold slavery in some states? Yet hopes to make it illegal in a constitutional amendment someday?
- 5) List and discuss at least two examples of Lincoln's diplomacy as he responds to his veto of this bill.