This report is intended to be a resource to help Fundamentalist Christians in studying and evaluating religious leaders and movements. It draws primarily upon materials housed in the Fundamentalism File in the J. S. Mack Library on the campus of Bob Jones University.

Although every effort has been made to provide an impartial study of the topic, this work will naturally reflect the interpretations and viewpoint of its author. This report should not be taken as representing an official statement of the position of Bob Jones University. The University’s theological position is well expressed by its creed.

The staff of the Fundamentalism File would welcome any questions or comments concerning the content of this report.
Abraham Lincoln and the Christian Faith

Most Christians studying the Civil War understandably focus on the religious aspects of that conflict. They may study revivals in the camps, the chaplaincy, or the work of organizations such as the United States Christian Commission. Probably the most popular topics are biographical—the lives of leaders on both sides who had a definite Christian testimony. On the Southern side, Robert E. Lee and especially Stonewall Jackson are prominent. On the Northern side the pious leaders are not as famous as Lee and Jackson, but the careers of figures such as General Oliver O. Howard and Admiral Andrew Foote still are worthy of note.

One controversy in the study of Civil War religion concerns the biography of the most notable leader of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln. In particular, what were his religious views? Was he an evangelical orthodox Christian? Was he an irreligious, “free-thinking” infidel? Or was he somewhere in between? There are strong advocates for all of these views.

The question, frankly, will likely never be settled. There is simply no conclusive evidence to determine the nature of Lincoln’s innermost views on Christianity. Yet examining the evidence that exists is an interesting study of not only what Lincoln believed but also how others interpreted his religious views. In addition, the study of Lincoln’s religious ideas provide a launching point for discussing the concept of God’s control of history.

Lincoln’s Religious Background

Lincoln’s earliest religious experiences were among the Baptists in Kentucky and Indiana. Lincoln’s parents were members of a small Baptist church in Kentucky, and his father was a church officer in the Pigeon Creek Baptist Church in Indiana. These were “Hardshell Baptists,” an extremely Calvinistic group. Many writers believe that it was from this upbringing that Lincoln developed a strong tinge of fatalism. Lincoln described this belief as “the Doctrine of Necessity”:

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 add here, I have always understood the same opinion to be held by several of the Christian denominations.

Lincoln also read the Bible and memorized passages. As he grew older, his church attendance became infrequent. After moving to Springfield, Illinois, in 1837, he wrote to Mary Owens, “I’ve never been to church yet, nor probably shall not be soon. I stay away because I am conscious I should not know how to behave myself.”

After his marriage, particularly after the death of his son Eddie in 1850, Lincoln became more regular in his attendance, attending services in Presbyterian churches in Illinois and later in Washington.

Lincoln never actually joined any church, however. In a memorial address after Lincoln’s death, Congressman H. C. Deming of Connecticut reported how he had once asked Lincoln why he had never become a member of a church:

He said, he had never united himself to any church, because he found difficulty in giving his assent, without mental reservations, to the long complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterize their Articles of Belief and Confessions of Faith. “When any church,” he continued, “will inscribe over its altar as its sole qualification for membership the Saviour’s condensed statement of the substance of both the law and the Gospel, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself,—that Church will I join with all my heart and soul.”

Although not a church member, Lincoln was familiar with the Bible. In 1841 the stepmother of his friend Joshua Speed gave him a Bible when he was in a period of depression. He wrote to Speed’s sister, thanking her mother and saying he would “read it regularly” and adding, “I doubt not that it is really, as she says, the best cure for the ‘Blue s’ could one but take it according to the truth.”

Lincoln often demonstrated a ready grasp of Scripture that showed his easy familiarity with it.
For example, he once sat in a meeting in which his cabinet members were discussing what sort of motto to put on the new paper money, the “greenbacks.” Some thought an appropriate motto would be something like “In God We Trust.” Lincoln said, “If you are going to put a legend on the greenbacks, I would suggest that of Peter and John: ‘Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee’” (Acts 3:6). Likewise, in 1864 a group of Republicans met in Cleveland to try to deny Lincoln the Republican nomination and give it to explorer and soldier John C. Frémont. The insurgents predicted a crowd of thousands; they got only 400. On hearing this, Lincoln picked up a Bible, flipped through its pages, and read aloud I Samuel 22:2, “And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.”

More seriously, Lincoln used the language and imagery of Scripture in his speaking and writing. His most famous speech during his 1858 Senate campaign against Stephen Douglas was based on Mark 3:25, “A house divided against itself cannot stand.” The phrase “fiery trial” that he often used to describe the Civil War was from I Peter 4:12, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.” Clarence Macartney counts 77 distinct quotations and references from the Bible in the writings, speeches, and recorded conversations of Lincoln.

And yet the testimony of some of his contemporaries portrays another side to Lincoln’s religious beliefs. Some acquaintances in Springfield, Illinois, said that Lincoln “bordered on atheism” in his beliefs. Even Mrs. Lincoln herself said in an interview with William Herndon in 1866, Mr. Lincoln had no faith and no hope in the usual acception of those words. He never joined a Church; but still, as I believe, he was a religious man by nature. He first seemed to talk about the subject when our boy Willie died [in 1862], and then more than ever about the time he went to Gettysburg. But it was a kind of poetry in his nature, and he was never a technical Christian.

David Davis, a friend from Illinois and Lincoln’s campaign manager in 1860, said, “I don’t know anything about Lincoln’s religion, nor do I think anybody else knows anything about it.”

Evaluating the Evidence

Although Lincoln left behind no clear account of his religious faith, many of his admirers were quick to fill in the blanks after he was dead. These accounts clash wildly with each other, however.

For example, from the orthodox side: An Illinois clergyman is supposed to have asked Lincoln, “Do you love Jesus?” The president is said to have replied, “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.”

David Hein points out that this account cannot be traced back any farther than a book titled The Lincoln Memorial: Album-Immortelles published in 1882. This book gives no source for the citation other than “an Illinois clergyman” who is not identified. Furthermore, Hein says, the book attributes a number of spurious quotations to Lincoln.

A story of a different cast is the account of the “infidel tract” that Lincoln is alleged to have written as a young man. According to this account, while living in New Salem, Illinois, Lincoln read and was impressed by the writings of various “infidel” writers such as Thomas Paine. Lincoln then proceeded to write his own essay disproving the inspiration of the Bible and the deity of Christ. He read his work to a small group of free thinkers gathered in the store where he worked. One of these, his employer Samuel Hill, agreed with the sentiments of the essay but feared that the essay would harm Lincoln’s political career. Therefore Hill took it from Lincoln’s hands, opened the stove, and tossed it in.

An interesting tale—if true. The evidence for this story, however, is only marginally better than that for the account of “the Illinois clergyman.” Clarence Macartney notes that this account was reported by Lincoln’s former law partner, William
Herndon, from an article written by John Hill, son of the man who supposedly tossed Lincoln’s work to the flames. Macartney points out that the younger Hill was a political enemy of Lincoln and that the incident is alleged to have taken place in 1834, the year Hill was born, so that Hill could hardly have offered a firsthand account of the incident.  

If there is no clear evidence for Lincoln’s orthodoxy, it is also true that there is no clear evidence for his infidelity. There are many such accounts of people claiming to know what Lincoln’s faith “really” was. Even Spiritualists claim him as one of their own. (In fact, Lincoln appears to have attended a few seances in the White House, but accounts indicate that he did not take them very seriously.) The general weight of evidence indicates that in his years of young adulthood, Lincoln was religiously unorthodox. How much his views may have changed over the years is debated.

Are such unsubstantiated stories about Lincoln (or any other figure) of any value? Yes, but only in a limited way. For example, according to an undependable account, during a visit to New Orleans when he was about twenty-one, Lincoln witnessed a slave auction and in anger turned to a companion and said, “If I ever get a chance to hit that thing, I’ll hit it hard.” Considering Lincoln’s clear-cut opposition to slavery, this story could serve as a general illustration of Lincoln’s attitude, consistent with what else is known about him. The account would have no weight, however, in trying to determine precisely what Lincoln’s views were on slavery as a young man.

The problem with citing unsubstantiated stories about Lincoln’s religion is that the evidence concerning his religious views is not clear. Therefore, even as illustrations, such accounts have to be treated cautiously, if used at all.

Evaluating the Sources

Since many accounts of Lincoln’s religious beliefs come from secondhand sources, one should follow clear standards in evaluating them. As suggested above, one test is to weigh how well the accounts mesh with what is known elsewhere of the subject. But even this method is not without its shortcomings. For example, one of the most famous sayings credited to Lincoln is “It is true that you may fool all the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all of the time; but you can’t fool all of the people all the time.” The earliest record of this saying is in Alexander K. McClure’s *Lincoln’s Yarns and Stories* published in 1904—nearly forty years after Lincoln’s death. Sources disagree over even the occasion of the remark. Some say Lincoln said it as president to a visitor, while others claim Lincoln uttered the remark in Clinton, Illinois, in September 1858, during his Senate campaign against Stephen Douglas. Some even credit the comment to P. T. Barnum. In light of the slender and contradictory evidence, it is difficult to defend the authenticity of the quotation. But one reason for its longevity is that it sounds like Lincoln; the saying has about it the homely wit of Lincoln; the saying has about it the homely wit of Lincoln; the saying has about it the homely wit of Lincoln; the saying has about it the homely wit of Lincoln.

As this example suggests, testing an account by its consistency with the style and flavor of a person’s other statements can be highly subjective and inconclusive. A more objective test is to compare an event with other available historical evidence. For example, Charles Chiniquy (1809-99) was a priest who converted to Protestantism in 1860 and became a leading critic of Catholicism in America after the Civil War. In his *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome*, Chiniquy recounts three interviews over several visits with Lincoln during the Civil War. In these conversations, Lincoln not only professes to orthodox Christianity but also fervently denounces Catholicism.

How dependable is Chiniquy? There were no witnesses to the private conversations that Chiniquy relates. One can form some idea of his accuracy, though, by comparing one incident he recounts with other available historical evidence. In his autobiography, Chiniquy says that while he was still a priest in 1856, some enemies in the church hierarchy set out to discredit him. At the instigation of a bishop, alleges Chiniquy, one Peter Spink accused him of immorality and had him dragged into court. There Chiniquy was defended by lawyer Abraham Lincoln. The first trial ended with a hung jury. At the beginning of the second trial, Lincoln helped uncover a Catholic plot against Chiniquy, and Spink withdrew his charges, saying that he knew Chiniquy was not guilty. However, Lincoln’s work so angered the Jesuits that they became his
mortal enemies, their hatred climaxing when John Wilkes Booth (a Jesuit agent, Chiniquy alleges) assassinated Lincoln in 1865.20

As the research of Joseph George shows,21 the records of the Illinois law courts give a somewhat different account. Spink did bring suit against Chiniquy but for slander, for in a sermon Chiniquy had charged Spink with perjury. Chiniquy did hire Lincoln as one of his attorneys, and there were two mistrials. When the case came up the third time, Lincoln negotiated an out-of-court settlement. In that settlement, written by Lincoln, Chiniquy swore that he had never accused Spink of perjury, except by repeating a secondhand story that he personally did not believe; furthermore, he said that he believed Spink had never committed perjury. Spink and Chiniquy then split the court costs.

The differences in detail in this account compared with that in Fifty Years in the Church of Rome at least call into question Chiniquy’s unsubstantiated accounts of lengthy conversations with Lincoln written twenty years after the president’s death.22 The most that one can say, based on Chiniquy’s account of the Illinois court case, is that Chiniquy may have met with Lincoln during the war but that the former priest’s own views deeply colored his recollection of those meetings.23

Sometimes just recognizing the bias of a source will cause one to weigh the source critically and treat his words with caution. Many of the stories of an “infidel Lincoln” come from William Herndon, Lincoln’s former law partner in Illinois. Herndon was a religious skeptic who claimed that Lincoln was a skeptic and who sought to prove that Lincoln always remained one. Herndon’s views affected his selection and presentation of materials and frankly colored his memory of events and conversations. Gore Vidal in his novel Lincoln relied heavily on Herndon’s accounts in his portrait of Lincoln and unwittingly demonstrated the distortion that emerges when a writer relies uncritically on one source with a partisan viewpoint.

On the other hand, bias can sometimes actually help authenticate a secondhand account. Joshua Speed was a skeptic and a friend of Lincoln from Illinois. After Lincoln’s death, Speed wrote:

When I knew him in early life he was a skeptic. The only evidence I have of any change was in the summer before he was assassinated. I was invited out to the Soldiers’ Home to spend the night. As I entered the room, near night, he was sitting near a window intensely reading his Bible. Approaching him, I said: “I am glad to see you profitably engaged.”

“Yes,” said he, “I am profitably engaged.”

“Well,” said I, “if you have recovered from your skepticism, I am sorry to say that I have not!”

Looking me earnestly in the face, and placing his hand on my shoulder, he said: “You are wrong, Speed; take all of this book upon reason that you can, and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a happier and better man.”24

This brief account does not actually say a great deal about Lincoln’s faith. But it is significant in that Speed was not a Christian and had no interest in trying to portray Lincoln as one. In this case, the bias of the observer actually authenticates the account; the story he relates runs counter to his own views and therefore becomes more credible.

Lincoln’s Own Words

A person’s own words are the best evidence of his views. In this case, writings from Lincoln’s own hand and records of his public speeches give further insight into his religious views. These words are indisputably his. Yet even here there is controversy, for the views and biases of the interpreter often determine how the words are interpreted. Three examples will illustrate this point.

In 1846 Lincoln ran for Congress against Peter Cartwright, a famous Methodist circuit-riding preacher. In that campaign Cartwright accused Lincoln of being an atheist. In response, Lincoln gave his first public statement on his religious beliefs. He issued a handbill saying that Cartwright was calling him “an open scoffer at Christianity” and that Lincoln wanted to set the record straight:

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 of any denomination of Christians in particular. . . .

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, of the community in which he may live.\(^{25}\)

Proponents of a skeptical Lincoln are quick to point out that Lincoln claims no religious faith, only that he was not critical of religion. Also he skirts religious questions ("Leaving the higher matter . . .") and focuses instead on public order and decorum. These are points worth weighing. However, Lincoln also says he has "never denied the truth of the Scriptures" nor "spoken with intentional disrespect of religion in general." These statements could not be true if, as writers such as Herndon claim, Lincoln had been in the habit of debunking Christianity for years.

The second example comes from a letter he wrote in 1850 when he received word that his father was dying. Lincoln wrote to his step-brother to tell his father

to remember to call upon, and confide in, our great, and good, and merciful Maker; who will not turn away from him in any extremity. He notes the fall of a sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our heads; and He will not forget the dying man, who puts his trust in Him. Say to him that if we could meet now, it is doubtful whether it would not be more painful than pleasant; but that if it is to be his lot to go now, he will soon have joyous [meeting] with many loved ones gone before; and where [the rest] of us, through the help of God, hope ere-long [to join] them.\(^{26}\)

The responses of historians to this brief notice are astonishingly diverse. Reading the same letter, they come to completely opposing conclusions. Hans Morgenthau finds here, in comparison to Lincoln’s other letters, an "indifference in feeling" and charges that "the expression of religious faith has the appearance of hypocrisy."\(^{27}\) Clarence Macartney on the other hand calls it a "beautiful letter . . . in which he certainly expresses his faith in God and the future life."\(^{28}\) Somewhere between these two is William Wolf who says that "the letter suggests strained relations between father and son" but that it contains "the clearest expression we have of Lincoln’s view of personal immortality."\(^{29}\)

The final example comes from the years of Lincoln’s presidency. When a group of African Americans from Baltimore presented Lincoln with the gift of a Bible in 1864, he responded, "In regard to this Great Book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good the Savior gave to the world was communicated through this book. But for it we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man’s welfare, here and hereafter, are to be found portrayed in it."\(^{30}\)

Even critics of the idea that Lincoln possessed any religious faith have to admit that everything Lincoln says here sounds orthodox. Yet, if one takes a cynical outlook, one can argue that these are the public words of a shrewd politician knowing that he may be quoted. Certainly, history is replete with examples of politicians willing to mouth pious platitudes in order to please their audiences. One response to such cynicism is that it appears odd that some of Lincoln’s "irreligious" admirers seek to defend him by arguing that he was duplicitous. Besides, it is hard to imagine Lincoln maintaining such a pose for an extended period of time. After all, "you can’t fool all of the people all the time."\(^{31}\)

In short, the words of Lincoln himself do not come close to settling the controversy. Even Clarence Macartney, who believes that Lincoln was moving at the time of his death toward a public profession of the Christian faith, feels bound to admit, "It is indeed true that the distinctive thing in the Christian faith, a consciousness of sin and a trust in the atoning and redeeming work of Christ on the cross, is lacking in the recorded utterances of Lincoln as to his faith."\(^{32}\)

**Lincoln on the Sovereignty of God in History**

Sometimes Christians are accused of studying Lincoln’s religious faith only so that they can claim him as a believer. Otherwise, they would allegedly have no interest in the subject. But the study of Lincoln’s religion continues—by Christians, by secular scholars, by others—because one cannot escape the fact that Lincoln possessed religious beliefs that shaped his thoughts and actions. The **nature** of those beliefs may be open to interpretation, but the **fact** of those beliefs is not.

If indeed one cannot determine whether Lincoln was an evangelical Christian, what is the
value in studying his religious beliefs? Perhaps one illuminating topic is how Abraham Lincoln understood the sovereignty of God in history. In Lincoln’s own day, there were bold spokesmen—North and South—who claimed to speak with perfect assurance of the nature of God’s will in the Civil War. Their side was right and God was on their side—depending on which side was speaking. Victory would be the sign of God’s blessing and approval on their cause. From the Northern side, this point of view is expressed in Julia Ward Howe’s “Battle Hymn of the Republic”:

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps;
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim of flaring lamps,
His day is marching on.

Lincoln unquestionably believed that the Northern cause was right and the Southern cause was wrong. He blamed the South for rebellion and for defending slavery. A woman from Tennessee wrote to Lincoln asking for the release of her captured husband, who she said was a religious man. Lincoln granted the release but wrote to her that “the religion that sets men to rebel and fight against their government, because, as they think, that government does not sufficiently help some men to eat their bread on the sweat of other men’s faces, is not the sort of religion upon which people can get to heaven.”

But Lincoln’s view was tempered by a sense that neither he nor any other man could claim to be the infallible interpreter of God’s will in history. He desired “firmness in the right” but confessed that such firmness must be found “as God gives us to see the right.” He approached the question of the will and purpose of God with more humility than most Christians in either section.

Two documents illustrate Lincoln’s thoughts on God’s will in history and how men discern it. The first is a private musing referred to as his “Meditation on the Divine Will” (1862):

The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be wrong. God can not be for, and against the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war it is quite possible that God’s pur-
pose is something different from the purpose of either party—and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are of the best adaptation to effect His purpose. I am almost ready to say this is probably true—that God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet. By His mere quiet power, on the minds of the now contestants, He could have either saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began. And having begun He could give the final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds.

The other is a letter (dated 4 September 1864) to Eliza P. Gurney, a Quaker who had visited and encouraged him two years before:

In all, it has been your purpose to strengthen my reliance on God. I am much indebted to the good christian people of the country for their constant prayers and consolations; and to no one of them, more than to yourself. The purposes of the Almighty are perfect, and must prevail, though we erring mortals may fail to accurately perceive them in advance. We hoped for a happy termination of this terrible war long before this; but God knows best, and has ruled otherwise. We shall yet acknowledge His wisdom and our own error therein. Meanwhile we must work earnestly in the best light He gives us, trusting that so working still conduces to the great ends He ordains. Surely He intends some great good to follow this mighty convulsion, which no mortal could make, and no mortal could stay.

These documents express his belief in the certain triumph of God’s purpose, but they also display a humility about man’s ability to discern that purpose. As he says to Eliza Gurney, “The purposes of the Almighty are perfect, and must prevail, though we erring mortals may fail to accurately perceive them in advance.” Lincoln, for all his belief in the rightness of the Union’s cause, is still willing to admit that “it is quite possible that God’s purpose is something different from the purpose of either party.” The response must be humble submission and trust: “God knows best” and “Meanwhile we must work earnestly in the best light He gives us, trusting that so working still conduces to the great ends He ordains.”
Perhaps Lincoln’s greatest testimony to the sovereignty—and inscrutability—of God’s work in history is his Second Inaugural Address:  

Both [sides] read the same Bible and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. . . . The prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. “Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!” If we shall suppose that American Slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, and which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, 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 any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a Living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bond-man’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said “the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

In this famous address, delivered only a month before his death, Lincoln reiterated that the American Civil War did not boil down neatly to a question of “God’s side vs. the Devil’s side.” “Both [sides] read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. . . . The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully.”

Also consider how he parallels the purpose of God in history with the responsibility of man for his actions. It may be, Lincoln said, that slavery “is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come” and which at “His appointed time, He now wills to remove.” But the sin of neither section is thereby excused. It may be that God “gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offence came.” Is this not, Lincoln asks, in accordance with the righteousness that believers “always ascribe to Him?” Indeed, “if God will that it [the war] continue . . . so still it must be said ‘the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether’” (quoting Ps. 19:9).

Perhaps one may liken Lincoln’s faith in God’s sovereignty to that of Job, that is, trusting in God without really understanding everything that happens. Many Christians miss the point that the Book of Job never records God explaining the temptation to Job. God never informs Job of the challenge of Satan and His desire to vindicate His servant. Instead, God speaks to Job “out of a whirlwind” (chap. 38-41), asserting His sovereign right to act as He pleases and pointing out the folly of a limited human such as Job in challenging Him.

Abraham Lincoln did not claim to understand or explain all the ways of the Almighty. He did, however, believe in God’s good purpose and sought whatever light God would give him to see that purpose. Perhaps one may say at least this much of the faith of Lincoln, that he would have agreed with the testimony of Job: “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15). More than that, Lincoln indeed had faith that “the judgments of the Lord, are true and righteous altogether,” regardless of what those judgments might be.

Notes


3 *Collected Works*, 1:78.

4 Quoted in Wolf, *The Almost Chosen People*, pp. 74-75.

5 *Collected Works*, 1:261.


8 Macartney, p. 7.

9 Macartney, p. 50.


11 *Herndon’s Lincoln*, pp. 359-60.

12 Current, p. 55.

13 Hein, p. 112.

14 *Herndon’s Lincoln*, p. 355.


18 For discussion of the authenticity of this quotation, see Complete Works, 3:18, and *The Lincoln Treasury*, ed. Caroline Thomas Harnsberger (Chicago: Wilcox and Follett, 1950), p. 103.


20 Chiniquy, pp. 442-47, 464-74. He charges that John Wilkes Booth was “the tool of the Jesuits” on p. 512.


22 George reviews evidence that he believes undermines completely the authenticity of the accounts Chiniquy gives of his Civil War conversations with Lincoln (pp. 24-25).

23 Joseph George notes, e.g., that Lincoln biographers William E. Barton and Lloyd Lewis cautiously accept the truth of Chiniquy’s claim to have met with Lincoln while doubting the accuracy of the comments he ascribes to Lincoln (pp. 21-22). George himself rejects even this view. In light of Chiniquy’s claim that Lincoln condemned Catholicism, one should note Lincoln’s comments on the “Know Nothings,” an anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic party of that era: “I am not a Know-Nothing. That is certain. How could I be? How can any one who abhors the oppression of negroes, be in favor of degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we began by declaring that ‘all men are created equal.’ We now practically read it ‘all men are created equal, except negroes.’ When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read ‘all mean are created equal, except negroes, and foreigners, and catholics’” (Letter to Joshua Speed, *Collected Works*, 2:323).

24 Current, pp. 64-65.


27 Morgenthau, p. 9.

28 Macartney, p. 46.

29 Wolf, *The Almost Chosen People*, pp. 81-82.

30 *Collected Works*, 7:542.

31 Clarence Macartney notes how advocates of a “free-thinking” Lincoln severely criticized an account in which Lincoln allegedly confessed to orthodox Christianity to Newton Bateman but said that he hid these views among his friends. Macartney points out how they are guilty of the same fault in claiming that Lincoln hid his “infidelity” for political gain (pp. 42-46). Nonetheless, the argument does not reflect well on one’s view of Lincoln’s honesty, regardless of which party is using it.

32 Macartney, p. 39.

33 *Collected Works*, 8:155.

34 *Collected Works*, 5:404-5.

35 *Collected Works*, 7:535.

36 *Collected Works*, 8:332-33.