August 26, 1927.

Mr. Langbourne Williams,
c/o John L Williams & Sons,
7th & Main Streets,
Richmond, Virginia.

Dear Mr. Williams:

I thank you for your letter of August 23, 1927 and enclosures re President Lincoln. It is true you have closed the door against any fair and reasonable discussion of the character of Abraham Lincoln. And yet inasmuch as you continue to express your opinion of him and send me the data on which you base it, I cannot forbear pointing out to you some of the weaknesses of the alleged evidence you present.

The reproduction of the license to operate a tavern which you mailed me and which I herewith return is that on which you and your correspondent, Mrs. Blanche G. Temple, base your evidence that Abraham Lincoln operated a saloon.

The heading applied to the print is "Reproduction From the Original Records of the Saloon License Issued to Abraham Lincoln." The reproduction states that it was issued by the "Literary Bureau of the National Liquor Dealers Association".

I am a bit surprised to find the president of the "Southern Churchman" associated with the National Liquor Dealers Association in promulgating history. And yet it is no stranger than the alliance between the Democracy of the South and Tamany Hall. Yes "politics make strange bed fellows".

However, the source of the reprduction requires that we scan it carefully. The first thing that is self-evident is that it is not a li-

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cense to operate a "saloon" as the head/ing alleges. It is to operate a "tavern". The liquor interests perhaps have misled you. It is an important difference. The Standard Dictionary states:

> "Tavern—A house where wine or other liquors are sold to be drunk on the premises; also, a house where travelers or other transientsguests are accommodated with rooms and meals; an inn or hotel—tavern is often used especially in rural districts of the United States, practically as synonymous with hotel."
>
> "Saloon—A place where intoxicating liquors are sold and drunk; a grogshop;—used commonly of a place where there are no lodgings or regular service of meals as in a hotel."

(1) We thus find a clear distinction between the two places and the license in question is undoubtedly for a "tavern" or hotel as it gives the rates to be charged for meals, rooms, and the care of horses. Its own evidence then is that the place was a perfectly legitimate house of accommodation, and it was at that time entirely proper to serve alcoholic beverages.

But if you still agree with your associates , the National Liquor Dealers, see where it leads to. I take down my copy of the diaries of General Washington, and I find he has made innumerable entries of his visit to Staverns." For example:

> March 21, 1775, he was at Cooley's Tavern in Richmond.
> On March 23, 1775, he was at Galt's Tavern in Richmond.

Nor were these visits always for the purpose of lodging. When attending the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia in 1774, apparently when he was not otherwise socially engaged, and did not stay, as he often did at his "lodgings", he passed the evenings at "taverns" thus we find—

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1774

Sept. 4 "at New Tavern"
Sept. 5 "spent the evening at Tavern"
Sept. 7 "Dined at Mr. Pleasant's and spent the evening in a club at the New Tavern."
Sept. 20 "spent the evening at the City Tavern"
Sept. 27 "Dined at the Tavern with the Virgn: Gentn. etcn:"
Oct. 3 "Went to Christ Church and dined at the New Tavern"
Oct. 18 "spent the evening at the Tavern"
Oct. 24 "spent the evening at the Tavern"
Oct. 26 "spent the evening at the Tavern"

Please note in the above that on one of those visits, he was accompanied by a Virginia gentleman, and at another time he apparently went directly from church to the Tavern.

Do you place General Washington as a "hanger out" at a "grogshop"? If Lincoln was a saloon keeper, Washington seems to have been a habitue of the same sort of an institution.

(2) Further examination of the license shows that it was not secured by Lincoln, but that it was issued to William F. Berry "in the name of Berry and Lincoln". Presumably, of course, Lincoln knew and approved of the action, but the fact remains that Berry secured the license. It is also true that the name "Abraham Lincoln" appears as a signer of the bond, but Miss Tarbell, who gives this item in full in her "Life of Lincoln" states it is not his signature. No doubt she speaks with authority. It seems quite evident that Berry secured this license then on his own initiative. Partners have been known to do such things.

Won't you then be just a wee bit more charitable, Mr. President of the "Southern Churchman" with regard to Mr. Lincoln as a saloon keeper?

Now let us take just a peep at Mr. Lincoln's views of the Bible. You and your correspondents state that he was no believer in the Bible or religion, and that he scoffed at the preachers.

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In the letter you wrote the Rev. Harvey A Cox, dated August 23, 1927, referring to that class of clergymen known as "modernists" you state

"The so called "modernists" teachers we consider agents of the ddvil and Greek horses in the Christian camp"

Are you not engaged in something very like Abraham Lincoln? I too have felt the same feeling of irritation and the desire to ridicule some of the things I have heard from the mouths of preachers. When one considers Mr. Lincoln's intelligence and the type of preacher that he sometimes listened to his attitude can be well understood.

And as to the essay which you allege he wrote to disprove the Bible, his old school-master, Mentor Graham declared that what he actually did was to set out to prove, not that there was no God, but that God was too good to condemn infants to eternal Damnation. That sounds to me like a rather Christian-like doctrine.

And when it comes to the more serious things of life, it seems to me and to many others that Mr. Lincoln was a reverent God-fearing man. I give you but two short examples. Can you say the following came from a scoffer of religion and from one who did not believe in God or the Bible?

"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 cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose 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 that this is probably true; that God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet. By his mere great 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."

"...At the end of three years' struggle, the nation's condition is not what either party, or any man, devised or expect-

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ed/ God alone can claim it. Whither it is tending seems plain. If God now wills the removal of a great wrong, and wills also that we of the North, as well as you of the South, shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new cause to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God.'

I am going to take the liberty of sending a copy of this letter to Major Cooke, and to Mrs. Temple. Here were President Lincoln's feelings toward you all and toward your forebears.

"With Malice toward none; with charity for all."

Won't you then be just a little more kindly disposed? Bear in mind that Jesus Christ once furnished more and better wine to those at a social gathering who had already "well drunk", that He was also criticized for associating with gluttons and wine-bibbers and that He lost his life because He differed with churchman.

Sincerely,

BF:RS

P.S. As per your request I return the publication of the Liquor Dealers Association, your copy of the letter to the Rev. Harvey A. Cox, and a copy of the letter written you by Mrs. Blanche G. Temple.

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