ANDREW JOHNSON AND THE MINISTERS OF NASHVILLE: A STUDY IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WAR, POLITICS, AND MORALITY

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty of The University of Akron

In Partial Fulfillment

of the requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Lucius Wedge

August, 2013

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Approved:

_____
Advisor
Dr. Lesley J. Gordon

_____
Committee Member
Dr. Gregory Wilson

_____
Committee Member
Dr. Kevin Adams

_____
Committee Member
Dr. Zachary R. Williams

_____
Committee Member
Dr. William Lyons

Accepted:

_____
Department Chair
Dr. Martin Wainwright

_____
Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences
Dr. Chand Midha

_____
Dean of the Graduate School
Dr. George R. Newkome

_____
Date

ABSTRACT

"Andrew Johnson and the Ministers of Nashville: A Study in the Relationship between Politics, War, and Morality."

In early 1862 Andrew Johnson was appointed the Military Governor of Tennessee, and charged with bringing the state back into the Union. In the prosecution of this office he quickly arrested all residents of Nashville he deemed threatening to national unity. Johnson targeted the political leaders of the community including city council members and newspaper editors. He then targeted the ministers of Nashville. In his initial sweep, he found six ministers in the city who were expressing pro-Confederate sentiments from the pulpit. Johnson demanded they swear an oath of loyalty as a group. The ministers, Robert B.C. Howell, Samuel Baldwin, Collins Elliott, Edmund Sehon, William Sawrie, and Reuben Ford considered the oath and rejected it. Johnson arrested them and sent them into prisoner of war camps farther North. Johnson quickly followed the arrest of these ministers by arresting the chaplain of the state penitentiary, again for aiding the Confederacy.

The figures involved were themselves fairly typical midcentury southerners. The ministers were respectable middle class men with families and civic responsibilities. Johnson had emerged as a successful, but unremarkable politician. The war and

subsequent arrest transformed these, otherwise, unremarkable individuals. The ministers through their experiences emerged as prime advocates of mass Southern identity. The ministers understood this identity as being rooted within their assumptions of divine providence, racial hierarchy, and their own position in society. As such, the war also required an adjustment of the ministers' apocalyptic understanding of their nation. The arrest itself served to define their understanding of these theological and social norms. The ministers adjusted to a changing landscape as they adapted to the challenges presented by the Confederacy's defeat. The requirements of Reconstruction pushed the ministers to explain the failure of God to support the South, which they managed through the promotion of the Lost Cause. The creation of the Lost Cause myth served as a new civic religion for the South, and the ministers acted as its prime adherents.

Johnson presents a very different view of antebellum southern Christianity. Johnson never claimed membership in a church, and early in his political career he was accused of being an atheist. Despite this Johnson articulated a nationalistic version of Christianity in which devotion to God was coequal to devotion to the democratic state. This provided Johnson with a clarity concerning God's providence. Johnson clearly recognized the importance of Christianity in helping to shape public opinion, and as such he understood religious leaders served the Confederacy as significantly as political figures. As a result of these concurrent factors Johnson emerged as a religious figure, despite the historiographical interpretation of him as nonreligious. The ministers emerge as one of the animating factors of southern identity, and Confederate nationalism. Moreover, the proslavery ideology of the Southern ministers and their millennial

interpretations of America's place in the world continue to be significant throughout the typical historical periodization of the mid nineteenth century.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On June 18, 1862, Andrew Johnson held a meeting with several of Nashville's more prominent and pro-secessionist ministers. The transcript of the meeting that made its way to the Nashville Union, and eventually the New York Herald, offered only a few indications of the ministers' opinion of Johnson's request that they subscribe to a loyalty oath.[1] The ministers asked for varying lengths of time to consider the request. Collins Elliot, one of the most prominent of the ministers gathered, had the sharpest reaction to the oath. The conversations ended with a terse exchange between Elliot and Johnson. Elliot claimed that under the terms of Nashville's surrender he could not be required to take the oath. Johnson replied by naming Elliot as disloyal and a traitor, particularly for the stance he had taken with the Nashville Female Academy. Elliot had served as the president of this school almost since he had moved to Nashville, and when war broke out

[1] It seems that Johnson adjusted the exact wording of the Oath to be taken from case to case. He required the ministers to swear the following: "I do solemnly swear that I will support, protect and defend the Constitution and government of the United States against all enemies, whether domestic or foreign, and that I will bear true faith, allegiance and loyalty to the same, and laws ordinances, resolutions or conventions to the contrary notwithstanding; and farther, that I do this with a full determination, pledge and purpose without any mental reservation or evasion whatsoever; and, further, that I will well and faithfully perform all the duties which may be required of me by law. So help me God." Ibid., 513.

he unabashedly proclaimed the school to be pro-Confederate.[2] Ten days later, Johnson received the minsters again this time with Robert B.C. Howell speaking for the group on many points concerning the Loyalty Oath. Howell phrased his response entirely in his own words, and seemed to speak only for himself. This is, however, the only recorded response despite several of the other ministers having a national reputation in their own right. Howell's response can be taken as the attitude of the entire group. He offered seven specific problems with the oath that kept him from assenting to it. These ranged from matters of wording to a feigned lack of understanding of what the oath might imply. Howell's most pointed response to the oath stated his preferred position on the matter:

> I have ever scrupulously conformed myself to the government under which I have lived. I do this as a religious duty I have never knowingly violated and law of the Federal government now established… I intend not to resist the "powers that be," but to comply with their requisition as far as they do not come in conflict with my duty to God.[3]

Johnson responded to this letter by ordering Lieutenant Colonel Richard McClain to hold the reverends RBC Howell, Collins Elliot, Reuben Ford, Edmund Sehon, and William Sawrie under arrest until they were willing to swear the oath or could be transferred beyond Union lines. Johnson further underlined his order by sending another to McClain later on the 28th directing him to keep the ministers away from visitors, and without any tokens or luxuries that might be brought to them. In Johnson's words, "These men were not sent to the Penitentiary there to be kept as objects of especial attention from traitors,

[2] John Windrow, "Collins D. Elliott and the Nashville Female Academy," *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, 1932, 96; Andrew Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 5, 1861-1862*, vol. 5 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1979), 487–489.
[3] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 5, 1861-1862*, 5:513–516.

nor to be lionized by a class of people, who, if properly dealt with, would be allowed the privilege of expressing their sympathy only within the same place of confinement."[4]

Johnson followed his meeting with the ministers of Nashville by holding a dialogue with the Chaplain of Tennessee's State Penitentiary. According to the Nashville Union, Chaplain William Wharton was present, but not involved with the ministers' refusal to swear the oath. Once the ministers were arrested, Johnson turned his attention to Wharton. Johnson's ire seemed to be up and he approached Wharton more directly than he had the other minsters. Johnson declared that Wharton was, "suspected of being hostile to the government whose agent I am."[5] Wharton professed his loyalty similarly to the other ministers, in that he was loyal to the government in charge and the state of Tennessee. Johnson then presented Wharton with portion of his chaplain's report from last October. In this, he recommended releasing any prisoners willing to join the Confederate army. Wharton had little chance of defending himself and was arrested after a few days of recovery from an illness.[6] Johnson's desire to target ministers was not contained within the city of Nashville alone. Johnson ordered the arrest of several ministers from the countryside surrounding Nashville, and continued his loyalty purges for at least another month.[7]

To what degree did Southern ministers interpret the Civil War as a religious conflict, and how did this interpretation impact the actions of participants in the war?

[4] Ibid., 5:517.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid., 5:517–519.
[7] Ibid., 5:519, 562.

Mid-nineteenth century Americans lived in a society that experienced massive growth in terms of its geographic size, its economic potential, and it religious establishment. America increasingly found two distinct and dominant cultural expressions emergent across the sections. The strains of business and progressive culture that would dominate the end of the nineteenth century began to emerge in the north while the south embraced a nationalistic separatism that held to a more conservative opinion toward of cultural change. These identities never fully or uniformly formed and exhibited variations dependent on the specific realities of a particular place. Despite the uneven realities of the manifestation of regional identities these imagined communities served as the hallmarks of southern and northern interpretation of their own time.[8] In this context, the Civil War emerged as not only a military, but also a cultural conflict between opposing visions of the United States. In formulating these cultural understandings, Christianity served as the foundation of antebellum interpretation of the world.

American Christian ministers interpreted the war as an eminently religious conflict.[9] This interpretation pushed ministers to advocate a specific political position

[8] Many historians have contributed to describing the intricate relationships between the sections during the Antebellum period. Combined they have demonstrated the lack of a single North or South. Rather these cultural constructions emerge as the intellectual project of nationalism as it is expressed within these regions. Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin And Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006); Edward L Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies: War in the Heart of America, 1859-1863*, 1st ed, The Valley of the Shadow Project (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003); William W Freehling, *The Road to Disunion, Volume II: Secessionists Triumphant Volume II, 1854-1861*, vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion: Volume I: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854*, vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 1991); Lacy K. Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (Oxford [England] ; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[9] Mark A Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*, Oxford University Press paperback edition, The Oxford History of the United States (New York: Oxford

from their pulpits. This tendency occurred in both northern and southern pulpits throughout the conflict. Henry Ward Beecher provides the best example of a northern minister engaged in explaining the conflict to his congregation. This relied oftentimes on the interpretation of the war as a sign of God's providence. God would not will the Union to victory until it made abolition an aim of the war.[10] The South had its share of ministers who advocated a providential interpretation of the war. James Henley Thornwell, Benjamin Palmer, and Robert Dabney, all proclaimed a pro-Confederate interpretation of the circumstances of the Civil War.[11] The interpretive frame put forth by these ministers, that the war represented the unfolding of God's intentions for the world, was not the project of the most prominent ministers alone. Many local ministers picked up the same ideology, and embraced it as the best possible interpretation of the war. Through these actions the ministers of the North and South became instruments of political and military policy in the midst of the Civil War. Ministers entering political life from their pulpits emerged as a regular feature of the evangelical explosions of the two American Great Awakenings. For the Civil War generation the second awakening served as the example of Christian engagement with political life.[12] In areas of the North, especially the Burned

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University Press, 2009); George C Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

[10] Constance Rourke, *Trumpets of Jubilee: Henry Ward Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lyman Beecher, Horace Greeley, P.T. Barnum*, 1st Harbinger books ed, Harbinger Books (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963).

[11] Jeff Irvin, *Millennialism and Slavery from the Perspectives of Four Southern Antebellum Ministers: James Henley Thornwell, James Robinson Graves, William Gannaway Brownlow, and Samuel Davies Baldwin*, 1996; Sean Michael Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney: a Southern Presbyterian Life*, American Reformed Biographies 1 (Phillipsburg, N.J: P&R Pub, 2005); Christopher M. Duncan, *Benjamin Morgan Palmer: Southern Presbyterian Divine* (ProQuest, 2008).

[12] Richard Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

Over district of New York, the evangelical fervor manifested itself in a series of voluntary societies. These organizations sought to improve or perfect society through ameliorating the issues that prevented the emergence of Christ's kingdom on earth.[13] These efforts to address social evils could be aimed at the problems of early industrialization, alcoholism, or the institution of slavery. The southern regions of the nation typically experienced the organizing impetus of the Second Great Awakening differently. For southern evangelicals voluntary societies could represent a danger to the existing social order; especially the abolitionist societies. As such, southern evangelicals typically endeavored to persuade individuals to self-improvement rather than to compel society as a whole to move toward perfection.[14]

Many authors who have recently considered the meaning and importance of the Second Great Awakening have failed to expressly demonstrate the differences that emerged between sections through the Awakening. Howe in *What Hath God Wrought* and Goldfield in *America Aflame*, are particularly guilty of describing the evangelical experiences of mid-century America as fundamentally the same across sections. Typically, historians considering the Second Great Awakening move through a formulaic progression of voluntary associations including temperance and abolitionist societies, utopian communities, and concluding with the emergence of Pentecostalism and

[13] The emergence of Christ's kingdom varied according to each evangelical group's interpretation of events. For some, direct human action would bring about the millennium, or Christ's return to earth. Other groups posited that Christ already returned. Both groups emerged at similar practical ends; society could achieve a state of perfection or near perfection with the application divine guidance. Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 285.

[14] Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*; David Goldfield, *America Aflame: How the Civil War Created a Nation* (Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2011).

Mormonism. These movements however, predominate in the North and are experience dramatically differently in the South. The southern experience can better be described by examining the emergence of locally autonomous evangelical denominations, along with missionary and Sunday school societies. This work will in part demonstrate through examination of a specific group of ministers this difference in experience.

More importantly, this work demonstrates the centrality of religious experience to an appropriate understanding of midcentury America. [15] This is done through consideration of a group of ministers arrested by Andrew Johnson during the course of the military occupation of Tennessee during the Civil War. Being situated in the Boarder South they attempted to compromise across varying interpretations of evangelical Christianity, both denominational and political. In this instance denominational compromise describes the emergence somewhat ecumenical polities across denominations. During the Second Great Awakening clergy could be shared freely across

[15] Though much work in the last decade has attempted to explore the religious experience of the mid-nineteenth century much is yet to be done. A good example of the deficiencies of current scholarship is William Freehling's colossal two volume explanation of the coming of the Civil War. Within these two volumes Freehling expertly dissects the political machinations that resulted in numerous sectional crises. His analysis remains predominately focused on the political creation of the Confederacy. Particularly Freehling disproves the myth of an antebellum monolithic South. In the midst of this Freehling avoids considerations of the schisms within the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches. The inclusion of ecclesiastical history would have deepened Freehling's understanding of how the divided south established itself as a section and how it emerged as a nation. Similarly James McPherson in composing, arguably, the best single volume history of the Civil War did so without once mentioning the importance of Christianity, or faith in general, to the causes, conduct, or consequences of the war. Eric Foner, meanwhile, produced an impressive and intricate examination of Reconstruction. This, however, again focused on the political creation and destruction of the Reconstruction regime, and as such managed to overlook the creation of a new post-bellum status quo within American churches. While historians have made some progress in addressing the importance of churches within the larger narrative of the Nineteenth century much remains to be done for the history of the churches to be fully included within the seminal works of the period. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*; Freehling, *The Road to Disunion, Volume II: Secessionists Triumphant Volume II, 1854-1861*; James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Oxford University Press, 1988); Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, 1st ed (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).

denominations on the western frontier. In addition, several prominent ministers interjected themselves into conflicts between denominations. For this dissertation, the Landmarkist controversy represented the most important example of this. The Landmark Baptist rejected all Christianity except their version of the Baptist denomination. The Landmarkists were quickly attacked by both the Southern Baptist leadership, and the Methodist church in Tennessee. Politically, slavery emerged as the most important issue for Southern clergy. Clergy in the south amended their positions on slavery through the 1810's and 20's such that most clergy at very least defended slavery as a necessary institution. As the Antebellum period continued the support of southern ministers hardened. By the Civil War most ministers, even within the Boarder South, would publically proclaim slavery to be a positive good rather than a necessary evil. Simultaneously, ministers would extoll their congregants to adhere to the strictest restrictions of the biblical institution. Though they defended slavery, they readily admitted to their congregations that the practice required moral improvement among slave holders. This compromise maintained a general rejection of northern abolitionism as a far greater evil than slavery itself.[16] Beyond attempts at compromise, the arrest of the ministers demonstrated the religiosity of Johnson, a figure who has never been

[16] J. R Graves, *The Great Iron Wheel, or, Republicanism Backwards and Christianity Reversed in a Series of Letters Addressed to J. Soule, Senior Bishop of the M.E. Church, South* (Nashville, Tenn: Graves and Marks, 1855); William G. Brownlow, *The Great Iron Wheel Examined; or, Its False Spokes Extracted, and an Exhibition of Elder Graves, Its Builder. In a Series of Chapters. By William G. Brownlow.*, Michigan Historical Reprint (Scholarly Publishing Office, University of Michigan Library, 2005); James A. Patterson, *James Robinson Graves: Staking the Boundaries of Baptist Identity* (B&H Publishing Group, 2012); David B Chesebrough, *Clergy Dissent in the Old South, 1830-1865* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996); Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight Against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism* (Oxford University Press, 2012); Stephen R Haynes, *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery*, Religion in America Series (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

interpreted in a religious light. Johnson experienced Christianity attached to his experience of democratic America. This meant that Johnson interpreted the ministers as both religious and political figures far more easily than many of his contemporaries.

Johnson focused his attention so thoroughly on the area surrounding Nashville because he understood the importance of the region to the securing the state. Nashville stood in the center of a rich and prosperous region in 1860. It benefited from agricultural fertility that spurred economic development, and had led to the city quickly becoming the most prominent city of Tennessee. With the proliferation of internal improvements Nashville managed to shape Middle Tennessee around itself through the thirty years preceding the Civil War. The 308,000 residents of Middle Tennessee looked to Nashville, with a population of 17,000, as the "Queen City of the Cumberland." Memphis was home to roughly 5,000 more than Nashville, but if the surrounding counties are considered, the populations were equal with a slight edge to Nashville and Davidson county. Davidson County was predominately rural as was most of Tennessee. Davidson was home to a large number of slaves and free Blacks, with these populations comprising slightly over a third of the total. [17]

Johnson's task of returning Tennessee to the union seemed possible because the state attempted to offer a middle ground both in the presidential election, and the secession crisis that followed. Tennessee cast its electoral ballots for John Bell of the

[17] Joseph Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census* (Washington, D.C: Govt. print. off., 1864), 466–467, http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1860.html; United States. Bureau of the Census, *Preliminary Report on the Eighth Census, 1860, of the United States* (G.P.O., 1862), 2,4; Stephen V Ash, *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed, 1860-1870: War And Peace in the Upper South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 1–9.

Constitutional Union party. With Lincoln's victory in the election, the Deep South began the process of leaving the Union. Tennessee perceived the same threat as the Deep South; an imminent attack on slavery. For much of the Upper South, including Tennessee, the best solution was to address the danger from within the Union. This was far from a universal opinion, and within Tennessee, the governor himself led the charge for secession. Isham G. Harris openly and strongly advocated for the removal of Tennessee from the Union. Harris and his supporters pushed hard after the secession of South Carolina to have Tennessee follow. The effort was not without success, and a plebiscite was scheduled for February 1861. The vote was premature and the secessionist cause failed miserably. Not only did voters fail to approve a secession convention, but the delegates who would be elected if the proposal had passed were overwhelmingly Unionist.[18]

Despite early setbacks, Harris continued to pursue secession by any means available. The secession movement had the irony of forcing longtime political adversaries into cooperative relationships. Andrew Johnson made several speeches in the US Senate during the secession crisis opposing withdrawal. Meanwhile his opponent in East longtime political Tennessee, William Ganaway Brownlow, also spoke out and published in opposition to secession. These two figures never failed to lose the opportunity to publically spar. At times, their exchanges could become very personal including accusations of atheism and liable. Yet such was the power of Harris that the threat of

[18] Peter Maslowski, *Treason Must Be Made Odious: Military Occupation and Wartime Reconstruction in Nashville, Tennessee, 1862-65*, KTO Studies in American History (Millwood, N.Y: KTO Press, 1978), 7; Robert W Winston, *Andrew Johnson: Plebeian and Patriot* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969), 176.

secession pushed these rivals into alliance to maintain the Union. With the bombardment of Ft. Sumter, however, unionism became a less tenable position in Tennessee. Harris still did not have a clear majority for secession in the state, and took a legislative route toward joining the Confederacy. By April 25, 1861, Harris convinced the Tennessee legislature to pass several pro-secession resolutions. The first, withdrew the state from the Union, quickly followed by resolutions entering the state into a military league with the Confederacy, and submitting the withdrawal to a referendum. The vote itself took place June 8th, and withdrew Tennessee from the United States. Harris had begun military preparations as soon as the legislature had acted for withdrawal. Military appropriations were made and troops began to assemble. Almost overnight a new industrial base sprung up in Nashville to support the war.

By early 1862, Tennessee had seceded from the Union, and stood on the frontier of Confederate society. When Ft. Henry and Ft. Donelson fell to Ulysses Grant there were no defenses in place with which to hold Nashville against the oncoming Union armies. Confederate military leaders seemed to expect the city to be defended farther up the Cumberland River. Troops from the army of Major General Don Carlos Buell occupied the city of Nashville on February 23, 1862. This presented a significant challenge to the occupying forces. The problem quickly became a matter of establishing a loyal government. This required a different kind of force than the military could provide. The Lincoln administration benefited from the Tennessee Unionists who had fled the

rising Confederate wave. Among these refugees Andrew Johnson stood out prominently.[19]

Andrew Johnson presented a unique opportunity to the Lincoln administration. He was a senator from Tennessee, and the only member of the legislative branch from a Confederate state who chose to remain loyal to the Union. In 1862 after Union armies had conquered much of Western Tennessee, Lincoln asked Johnson to become the Military Governor of his home state and offered him a free hand to bring the state back into the Union. A correspondent from the *Cincinnati Commercial* commented on Johnson's first public speech after his return to Tennessee, "He came with no hostility or animosity in his heart; he came for the defense of the weak, the restoration of the erring, the punishment of the guilty, the reestablishment of the Union and Constitution in Tennessee."[20]

With vengeance in mind or not, Johnson faced a number of serious problems upon returning to his home state. Though Tennessee left the Union reluctantly, it had seceded, and that disruption had pushed many of his supporters out or deeply underground. In addition, the Union army had not yet secured the entirety of the state. Tennessee would remain an active zone of operation through much of the war, though there would be few attempts to retake Nashville itself. Johnson could not deny that his authority in the state had its foundation in Union military power. Johnson, thus, sought to secure his position by requiring the newly enacted "Oath of Office" for federal officials to the municipal

[19] Paul H Bergeron, *Andrew Johnson's Civil War and Reconstruction*, 1st ed (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2011), 11–12.
[20] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 5, 1861-1862*, 5:203.

officers of Nashville.[21] The oath itself required absolute loyalty to the Union in order to be subscribed to earnestly:

> I, A. B., do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I have never voluntarily borne arms against the United States since I have been a citizen thereof; that I have voluntarily given no aid, countenance, counsel, or encouragement to persons engaged in armed hostility thereto; that I have neither sought nor accepted nor attempted to exercise the functions of any office whatever, under any authority or pretended authority in hostility to the United States; that I have not yielded a voluntary support to any pretended government, authority, power or constitution within the United States, hostile or inimical thereto. And I do further swear (or affirm) that, to the best of my knowledge and ability, I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States, against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter, so help me God.[22]

The oath yielded the results for which Johnson was looking. The City council of Nashville viewed the oath as too rigid, and not applicable to their positions. They refused to subscribe to its terms. Johnson responded by making an example of the mayor of Nashville, Richard Cheatham. Johnson ordered Cheatham's arrest on March 29, and by May 12th the mayor had relented and sworn an oath of loyalty to the Union.[23] Having successfully cowed the city administration of Nashville, Johnson sought to expand his application of the oath of allegiance. Roughly a week after Cheatham took the oath, Johnson wrote to the bankers and employees of the banks of Nashville and required they

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[21] "A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875," 502, accessed March 5, 2012, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=012/llsl012.db&recNum=533.
[22] "A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875."
[23] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 5, 1861-1862*, 5:247–248,253,379.

acquiesce to it. After an initial refusal they quickly relented, and Johnson moved on to the ministers of Nashville.[24]

The ministers arrested by Johnson were not sent south beyond Confederate lines. Rather, Johnson placed them in Northern prison camps, mainly Camp Chase Ohio, though at least one minister seems to have made it to Johnson's Island, and Howell never left the State Penitentiary. This fairly sudden reversal of opinion seems to be partially related to a series of letters sent between Johnson and Lincoln at the beginning of June. This correspondence directly related to who should have control over the political prisoners from Tennessee; an issue that clearly would have arisen after the arrest of the mayor and city council. Johnson asked both for control over these prisoners, and the authority to negotiate their exchange to the Confederacy for unionists in Southern prisons. Lincoln responded on the 9th of June, "I certainly do not disapprove the proposition."[25] The lukewarm response might have been a function of a telegrapher's error. Johnson advocated threatening any prisoners exchanged south with arrest and punishment as spies if they were found to have returned to the North. Johnson wrote that the "spies" would be "dealt with accordingly"; Lincoln read that, "they shall be treated as spies and with death accordingly."[26] The tepid response did not bother Johnson and he set about the task of rounding up Southern sympathizes immediately. The ministers, who were first interviewed a little more than a week after Lincoln's reply, were caught in the middle.

[24] Ibid., 5:412, 426.
[25] Ibid., 5:445–446.
[26] Ibid., 5:446.

If the intention behind arresting the ministers was to initiate exchanges with the Confederacy, the policy can only be understood as a failure. Instead of exchanging the ministers, Johnson paroled all but Collins Elliott. Howell was the first minister to be paroled after being held in the Tennessee Penitentiary for just under two months. He did not subscribe to the oath, but reaffirmed his original position; that he conformed to the government under which he lived as a religious duty. After having served some time in the Tennessee Penitentiary this proved enough of a concession for Johnson to allow his release.[27] Howell remained under military surveillance, or house arrest, but he was able to continue his pastoral duties which grew increasingly burdensome due to the strains of the war.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the citizens of Nashville, however, tended to be more sympathetic toward the imprisoned ministers than toward Andrew Johnson. They attempted to relieve the ministers of the hardships of imprisonment by supplying them with additional provisions, as had been customary for the other political prisoners Johnson had sent to the penitentiary. In addition, the other prisoners found comfort in being able to share a Sunday service with the clergy, and entreated them to conduct services on the Sabbath for those prisoners who had the liberty to congregate. Johnson had clearly not intended to send comfort to the other political prisoners at the penitentiary. In response for their willingness to provide Sunday services Johnson

[27] Ibid., 5:616.

ordered all special treatment for the ministers suspended, and required them to be kept under close confinement, separated from all other prisoners.[28]

The other six ministers were transferred at various points, first north to Kentucky where they were held by Jeremiah T. Boyle at Louisville. In the period between their arrest and transfer north, Johnson attempted to find a means of disposing the ministers by either sending them to a northern state or beyond Union lines. Neither his communication with the Governor of Indiana nor the commander of the Union Army at Memphis yielded the desired result.[29] As such, when Boyle agreed to take charge of two to four of the ministers Johnson sent all six ministers that could travel, and a Nashville lawyer who had been arrested as well.[30]

It seems Boyle bit off more than he could chew in accepting the ministers. Four days after the second group arrived, he wrote Johnson to complain, "Your preachers are a pestiferous set— I enclose letters or petitions with which they are bothering me."[31] The letters contained a petition claiming that the ministers were being held with no charge. Johnson quickly refuted this claim and stated that the ministers had not been arrested for their religious vocations. Rather they were hostile to the government, and thus could not be allowed to influence the citizens in their congregations. Johnson then continued, "But aside from this, their preaching in the pulpit was treasonable itself as understood here and

[28] Ibid., 5:517; Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "A Memorial of the First Baptist Church Nashville, Tennessee from 1820-1863," Unpublished Manuscript (Nashville, Tenn, 1863), 405, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.
[29] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 5, 1861-1862*, 5:567, 574.
[30] Ibid., 5:576, 578.
[31] Ibid., 5:587.

asserted by concurring persons of undisputed character— These assumed Ministers of Christ have done more to poison & corrupt the female mind of this community than all others, in fact changing their entire character from that of women and ladies to fanatics and fiends."[32] Johnson's motives for making this attack against the women of Nashville were not entirely clear. Several possibilities credibly emerge to explain the liability of the arrested ministers for the actions of the women of Nashville. Johnson could easily have interpreted the women as instruments of political ventriloquism. They had clearly gotten their rebellious ideas from someone, the ministers proved an easy target for blame. Not only were most American congregations dominated by women the husbands of many women were far from Johnson's reach in the Confederate army. The ministers also served as a means for Johnson to explain the resistance of women. Women were not expected in this period to be a part of the resistance against the Union, but as the war continued and occupations increased they proved among the more implacable foes of the occupying armies.[33]

Johnson also faced similar criticisms from the population in Nashville; whom the arrest of the pastors had outraged. The complaints reached the point where Johnson

[32] Ibid., 5:595–596.
[33] Jacqueline Glass Campbell, *When Sherman Marched North from the Sea: Resistance on the Confederate Home Front*, Civil War America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Anne S Rubin, *A Shattered Nation: The Rise and Fall of the Confederacy,1861-1868*, Civil War America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 219–220; Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 98–100; Stephen V Ash, *When the Yankees Came: Conflict and Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865*, Civil War America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 44.

addressed them in his 4th of July speech. Johnson perhaps could have done more in terms of calming the crowed he addressed;

> If ever the devil was let loose in the world, I believe that now is the time, and that he is actuating the Southern rebellion. Yet men who had aided this diabolical rebellion now pretended to talk of tyranny and oppression! How long has it been since men were driven from their homes for the crime of loyalty?... Yet men talk of oppression, and complained of the arrest of Ministers of the Gospel. Ministers of the Gospel indeed! Pardon the expression! Oh, it was a great outrage to arrest Parson Elliot, and Parson Howell, and Baldwin — Armageddon Baldwin![34]

Though this speech, at any rate, was inadvisable; Johnson managed not only to rant, mock and berate his audience, but he also demonstrated that he believed he had not treated the ministers any worse than the South treated him at the outset of the war. He had in fact cited his own forced exile as a result of the initiation of hostilities. It is also intriguing that in stating, "If ever the devil was let loose..." he is a referring to the book of Revelation and a common sequence of events employed in millennial discourses. This seems appropriate, and explains some of Johnson's umbrage at the complaints he had been receiving. He certainly considered himself to be a Southerner. He repeated his charges against the ministers as well, "I punish these men, not because they are priests, but because they are traitors and enemies of society, law and order. They have pursued and corrupted boys and silly women, and inculcated rebellion, and now let them suffer the penalty."[35]

[34] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 5, 1861-1862*, 5:537.
[35] Ibid.

Nonetheless, Johnson transferred the ministers to Camp Chase, Ohio. Johnson also took steps to relieve himself of the problem of determining the fate of these ministers. He appointed a commissioner to examine the cases of all Tennessee prisoners wherever they were held in the North and determine the terms of parole or exchange. The War Department simultaneously created a similar position at the national level. Eventually the War Department's post was filled by Samuel Galloway. The commissioners granted terms of parole to four of the Nashville ministers in early October, and offered parole to Collins Elliot in mid-November. With Howell's parole in August the only minster unaccounted for was Edmond Sehon. No record of his parole can be readily found, but he was paroled by 1863 as he appears in Macon working on planning Methodist missions to the Confederate army.

The ministers represent a useful opportunity to examine the role of Christian practice on the events of the mid-nineteenth century. Until recently, historians typically focused their attention on attempts to understand Christianity, as part of the Civil War, insofar as it impacted the armies in the field. Christianity has served as a reason for troops to remain in the field, a comfort during the moments of conflict, and an assurance of the justification of the cause.[36]

[36] The religious life of the armies offers a well-developed historiographical theme. The religious lives of soldiers typically revolved around the battlefield and the few chaplains in the ranks. The understanding of the soldiers' life and the role of the chaplain in that life has typically followed a single common narrative. The soldier looked to God, along with his representative the chaplain, for reassurance of the righteousness of their actions in the army. The chaplain provided that reassurance, while extolling the virtues of the Christian life, and typically the chaplain went the extra step of extending God's favor to their side and offering the eventual certainty of victory. This narrative remains the same regardless of which army the chaplains or soldiers belong to. Historians have examined the structural dissimilarities between the

In the past decade, historians have begun to seriously consider the role of Christianity and theology in the lives of nineteenth century Americans. This effort begins with volumes aimed at examining the broad sweep of theological development in America. These works tend to focus a good deal of energy on the creation of a specifically American theology. In comparison with traditional European protestant theology America developed a more democratic understanding of theological innovation. The bible can freely be interpreted by all American citizens in a way that had proved far more difficult of Europeans to achieve. Mark Noll and E. Brooks Holifield have authored the preeminent works of this kind.[37] These two works offer an important overarching understanding of American theological development. They most importantly support the understanding that American theology began to separate itself from European interpretations, and this developed out of American dedication to an understanding of the importance of scriptural revelation. Moreover through the revolution the expectation that all could interpret scripture seemed not only to fit, but support republican governance. As Christianity in the American context had become more democratic all believers had the ability to read, interpret, and reach their own independent conclusions on the nature of

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positions of the chaplains North and South, and efforts to determine the relative faithfulness of either army. Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007); Steven E Woodworth, *While God Is Marching on: The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers*, Modern war studies (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001); Gardiner H Shattuck, *A Shield and Hiding Place: The Religious Life of the Civil War Armies* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987); James M McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Common Soldier in the Civil War* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1958); Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Common Soldier in the Civil War* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1958).

[37] Mark A Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003).

biblical revelation. If biblical interpretation could provide clear and simple directives for living a godly life, or creating a godly nation; then the failure of theologians and laity to arrive independently at the same conclusions is problematic. If the Bible provided the means for righteousness how could one group use the Bible to defend slavery as being a divine institution, while another group used the same Bible to condemn the institution? This question rests at the heart of Nineteenth century theological development, and both Noll and Holifield ably trace the development of this question. However, by ending their narratives at the Civil War these historians fail to examine the practical resolution of this question as it relates to the determination of moral authority in American life. The consequences of the Civil War have enormous importance to these questions.

The failure to examine theological development through the Reconstruction period and potentially into the Gilded Age results in a failure to examine the consistency that exists in theological development. Though antebellum theologians regularly conflicted over the interpretation of scripture and right action, they developed a number of coping mechanisms to bridge the intellectual gap. Providence, the interpretation of current events as the illustration of God's will, provided the most significant of these mechanisms, and allowed theologians to interpret the battlefield as well as scripture. The use of providence did not resolve the conflicts among theologians, but it represents an extension of theological arguments into the political realm. The mixing of theology and politics helped to create a situation in which the political solution to slavery that emerged from the Civil War transferred a sort of moral authority or expectation to the federal

government. Though politicians never sought to resolve a theological issue, and for the most part theologians never desired to engage in politics, the two were nonetheless comingled to the point that the federal government from reconstruction on had a role to play in maintaining the morality of the nation. Slavery and emancipation caused the blurring of these lines. Slavery existed in the antebellum period as both a political and theological problem. The final destruction of slavery by the federal government ended the political problem, and placed the government in a position to act as a moral arbiter in society.[38]

The connection of Christianity to the Civil War is not a new idea. The most notable of these commentators was a Presbyterian seminary professor from Kentucky, R. L. Stanton. Before the war concluded, he published an extensive treatise on the connection of the Southern churches to the outbreak of the war.[39] Stanton drew a direct link between the outbreak of the war and the actions of Southern clergy and the churches they headed. In Stanton's estimation southern ministers, "and the houses of worship of all denominations, from first to last, [had] echoed the utterances of treason and rebellion from the pulpit in all parts of the South."[40] The southern church helped to induce rebellion, support the movement, and according to Stanton should bear a significant portion of the responsibility for its outcome. Stanton continued on to describe the proper

[38] James Oakes, *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861-1865* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), 68–72; Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin*, 4–7.
[39] R. L. Stanton, *The Church and the Rebellion Against the Government of the United States; and the Agency of the Church, North and South, in Relation Thereto.*, Michigan Historical Reprint (New York: Derby & Miller, 1864).
[40] Ibid., 171.

role of clergy in the state, and of divine providence. These issues were far more pressing to the minister witnessing the tumult of the war than they would prove to be for several generations of historians.

Stanton's cogent and descriptive critiques failed to gain adherents among successive generations of historians. In the nearly four hundred pages of Charles Sydnor's study of Southern sectionalism only a dozen pages consider the growth of evangelical churches or their subsequent sectional division. In so far a Syndor considered the experience of the churches he did little more than to present their experience as another example of the conservative nature of the South that had emerged over preceding decades and centuries. The divisions of the churches became a feature of Abolition rather than a cause of study unto themselves.[41]

Southern nationalism and the importance of Christianity in fostering this idea reappeared in the historical discourse with the work of Emory Thomas. In his classic work, *The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience*, Thomas frames the Confederacy as a cultural project that enlisted all aspects of Southern society into the effort to realize the nation. This effort included the ministers and churches of the south, but was not limited to their efforts alone. Though, Thomas successfully demonstrates that the South underwent an inadvertent revolution in their attempt to uphold their institutional ideas and stave off innovation; he provides little explication of what it meant to participate in the religious South. Thomas mostly takes the protestant Christian participation in the

[41] Charles S. Sydnor, *The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848*, A History of the South v.5 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948), 294–302.

intellectual project of rebellion for granted. Despite this shortcoming Thomas does point to an exceptionally important combination of factors that contribute to the forming of the Southern mentality. The mind of the South was simultaneously capitalistic, religious, patriarchal, and ardently pro-slavery. Historians have continued to develop these themes over the four decades since Thomas first published his book.[42]

Within a decade of Thomas' book, John McCardell advanced the discussion farther by arguing that the development of Southern Identity had extended throughout the Antebellum period, and as that identity grew more refined it pushed American politics to the breaking point. To defend this idea McCardell examines in great depth the development of the dominant issues of the Antebellum South. Beginning with an examination of the defense of slavery, McCardell recognized the emergence of pro-slavery ideology as shifting from defending the institution as a necessary evil toward exemplifying it as a positive good. This development emerged as a reaction to the emerging political disputes over Missouri and nullification. "Southern nationalism eventually became associated with the most extreme and, at the same time, the most apparently convincing strain of the proslavery argument."[43] McCardell interpreted the emergence of scientific racism, and the dominance of the civilizing mission as much more persuasive arguments that the continued biblical justification of slavery. McCardell fails to recognize how fractured this development was. Throughout the South many pro-

[42] Emory M Thomas, *The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 7,9,12–19.
[43] John McCardell, *The Idea of a Southern Nation: Southern Nationalists and Southern Nationalism, 1830-1860*, 1st ed (New York: Norton, 1979), 49.

slavery advocates continued to proclaim the biblical justification of the institution through the 1850's. Beyond this false progression McCardell illuminated the critical relationship between the sectional schisms and the approaching political schism. The narrative presented develops seamlessly from a discussion of the proslavery argument into the conflict that emerged within the denominational churches over abolition. McCardell would not be the last historian to investigate this connection; in fact, the linkage would become even more pressing as the idea of Southern identity became increasingly linked to a distinctively Southern version of Christianity.[44]

Along with the work of Thomas and McCardell historians began looking at the nature of southern denominational Christianity. Donald Mathews made a foundational contribution in, *Religion in the Old South*. This work in many ways established the standard definition of Southern Christianity for a generation of scholars. Mathews established an understanding of the sometimes contentious relationship between the major denominations of the Antebellum South. While Mathews focused on the divisions within these groups a generation later Samuel Hill reassessed this work attempting to focus on the similarities between denominations within the South. Hill's understanding, that more united the denominations of Southern Christianity than divided them, generally restated what most historians accepted as the truth of Southern Christianity. Mathews' emphasis on more of the interdenominational rivalries has helped contribute a substantial

[44] Ibid., 54,78–79,208–222.

degree of nuance to the historical interpretation of Southern religion. This nuance helped inform later studies of the mind and attitudes of the elite class of the South.[45]

Simultaneously with Mathew's assessment of Southern Christian development, Bertram Wyatt-Brown looked at the relationship of the churches across sectional lines. Wyatt-Brown accepted fully the link between the churches and the slavery debate. Wyatt-Brown further demonstrated that a biblical argument emerged both for and against the maintenance of the Peculiar Institution. Believers of the North and South from several denominations, used many of the same arguments to support or attack slavery. Except for a single negative word in a sentence the two sides seemingly agreed in Wyatt-Brown's conception. This agreement of course did not exist, and Wyatt-Brown does not claim that it could have. He, however, described the religious defense of slavery, and the religious attack on slavery with equally dynamic portrayals. This helped to challenge the misleading assertions of McCardell, and demonstrated the fundamental need for a rethinking of the role of religion in the Antebellum period.[46]

This revision would begin with C.C. Goen. He challenged the narratives of the causes of the Civil War, and reasserted the position taken by Stanton more than a century earlier. Goen argued that the emergence of the sectional division was heightened by the schisms of the major denominations. Goen presented the question, if the churches who

[45] Samuel S Hill, *One Name but Several Faces: Variety in Popular Christiandenominations in Southern History*, Jack N. and Addie D. Averitt Lecture Series no. 5 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996); Donald G Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).
[46] Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Yankee Saints and Southern Sinners* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985).

promoted forgiveness and conciliation could not maintain their bonds what hope could exist for politicians.[47] Goen's attempt to offer a provocative thesis stopped short of advocating a direct relationship of causation. He preferred to layout the events that animated his study and leave the issue at that. Fortunately, others picked up where Goen left off. Most notably, Drew Glipin Faust, Mitchel Snay and Richard Carwardine took up the task of filling out Goen's unfinished thesis.

Drew Gilpin Faust provides the most succinct exposition of the relationship between southern nationalism and southern Christianity. In her published collection of lectures, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, Faust ably establishes the intricate relationship between the churches and the emergence of Confederate identity. Both through symbolic actions, such as the creation of a national seal, and through highly political acts, like the inclusion of an appeal to God in the constitution, the Confederate government placed gaining divine favor at the center of nationalist sentiment. Faust in very general terms examines the experience of the south as it approached its antebellum encounters with the north. The central role of the Christian God provides an important insight into the mind of the political class. The political elites found themselves needing God's favor to justify their existence, but also according to Faust inevitably falling short of the Glory of God. The shortfall created perpetual instability in Confederate identity due to the insistence of the religious establishment that the Confederacy reform its ways to live up to the rhetoric they had employed. This included a framing of the Southern

[47] C. C Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the American Civil War* (Macon, Ga: Mercer University Press, 1985), 11.

clergy as an instrument of social criticism, but uniquely as a force that implored personal improvement rather than universal social change through legal reforms. This effort at self-definition involved both the external definition of the south in opposition to the north, but also the introspective evaluation of southern life in light of biblical expectations. Faust combined the antebellum understanding of providence with the emergence of Confederate nationalism in a compelling and innovative way.[48]

Snay filled out Goen's thesis by arguing that the denominational churches had a much greater impact than simply sponsoring a schism parallel to the future sectional break. Snay argued that the churches provided the cultural imperative to highlight and exacerbate the sectional differences in the Antebellum period. The churches of the southern states helped very directly to develop southern identity as distinct feature of American life. Prior to the emergence of the southern churches as distinct institutions the South lacked a cohesive identity that would allow for the emergence of a nation during the war. Snay achieved this largely through the debate over slavery. The Southern churches reversed positions and began arguing the institution of slavery was in fact neither a moral evil nor a neutral institution. Southern ministers argued that slavery itself was a positive good. Focusing on slavery as a moral institution the ministers could then attack their northern brethren for their moral shortcomings exhibited in their vociferous attacks against slavery. Snay's argument not only advanced much farther than C.C. Goen was willing to push the cultural relationship between the churches and the coming of the

[48] Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 6–7, 22–25, 41–44.

Civil War, Snay offered a new paradigm through which to understand the culture of antebellum America.

At the same time Snay was constructing his masterful argument, British historian Richard Carwardine offered a unique interpretation of Antebellum American religious and political life. He suggested that the expression of religious sentiment closely mirrored the experience of political life. The ministers then provided a moral critique to the experience of daily political life in the South. All issues from the tariff to slavery were interpreted through a moral lens constructed to laude the Southern experience within the American state. The ability of the denominations to have tremendous influence with constituents combined with the explosive growth of the evangelical denominations approaching midcentury such that they found themselves compelled to reinterpret their experiences with the political state.[49]

Snay and Carwardine published nearly simultaneously, and together they managed to frame the emerging field of Southern religious history quite well. They demonstrated the intricate relationships between religious devotion and southern cultural life, and established that the study of denominational churches could offer insights into much larger discussions. This accomplishment cannot be overstated or ignored. These two historians managed to describe the general contours of southern cultural life that increasingly contributed to the growing sense of sectional animosity. Both, however, approached this task by looking at the larger picture of history. This limits the ability of

[49] Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America*, 2–10.

Snay and Carwardine to interpret the many variations that existed within the Southern religious life. Andrew Johnson, Edmund Sehon, and Samuel Baldwin each expressed their faith in distinctively individual ways that cannot be expressed within the bounds of the larger narratives constructed in these works. While each minister relates in part to the narratives of Southern religion they maintain their own distinctive relationship with the larger denominational structures, and national churches. Snay and Carwardine begin to explore the impact of southern Christianity, but leave, by necessity, ample room for further exploration.

Examination the end of the Civil War and the period of Reconstruction offer greater understanding of Confederate nationalism. Since Confederate nationalism had emerged rather organically from the fabric of Southern culture, as the war turned against the South and defeat loomed nationalist expressions would need to adapt accordingly. By the late 1890's, a number of scholars endeavored to explain the impact of the war's results on Confederate nationalism. Charles Regan Wilson penned the preeminent work examining this problem. In *Baptized in Blood,* Wilson looks at the creation of the Lost Cause myth as the end result of Confederate Nationalism.[50] Wilson in many ways sought to begin to outline the contours of the Lost Cause as it represented an emergence of American civic religion in the wake of the war. This civic religion served to identify a distinctive Southernness, akin to wartime Confederate nationalism, and to incorporate that identity back into the mainstream of American life as a part of reconciliation. Wilson

[50] Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980).

placed the ministerial class in the south at the center of this construction, and began to attach their understanding of religion to the broader reconciliation conceptions of race and class as they developed through the Gilded Age and early twentieth century. In many respects the greatest problem with Wilson's book is an incomplete description of the Antebellum political and religious connections as they served to divided the national church bodies. Though Richard Carwardine would not provide his description of this relationship for a decade after Wilson's examination of the Lost Cause this deficiency limits the impact of Wilson's conclusions. Many of the Churches of the South either never reunited with their northern counterparts, or did not reunite until substantially later than the end of World War I, where Wilson concluded his narrative.

This oversight was in part corrected by Snay and Carwardine's examinations of earlier periods, but a better corrective to Wilson's work was the publication of Daniel Stowell's examination of religious reconstruction. Stowell examines the policies of the war department as they approached the issue of readmission of Confederate states. The initial efforts to restore the unity of national churches as a part of the resolution of the Civil War developed into a protracted and disputed initial foray into the construction of the Lost Cause, and a post war Southern identity. This creation supported the growth of regionally specific denominational churches throughout the south. Race also served as a decidedly stark line of division throughout the south. With the retreat of reconstruction Stowell traced the retreat of the religious reorganization of the south, and the diminishing of the northern churches throughout the south. Stowell's book filled a glaring hole in the

historiographical landscape, and it managed to provide a more substantial foundation from which to explore further the impact of religion throughout this period.[51] Arthur Remillard recently reexamined the understanding of the religious reconstruction of the South. He describes the creation of civil religion in the South as a much less uniform phenomena that the process suggested by Stowell or Wilson. Moreover, a tool that could be used to describe both the Lost Cause and the New South as competing parts of the civil religion that grew in the post war south.[52]

Wilson's work set the stage for a fuller description of the problems that arose for southern identity during Reconstruction and in subsequent eras. Eugene Genovese continued this work.[53] He focuses on the economic and cultural structure of slavery as it was influenced by Christianity. The resulting work provides a highly economic discussion of the development of theological opinions of slavery. This analysis offers a unique view of the Southern Christian landscape. The southern planters defend slavery as a more moral form of resolving the conflict between capital and labor. This resolution derived from the combination of the interests of both. Genovese appropriately focuses on interpretations of slavery; while theological debates existed in America that increased divisions between churches and denominations outside of the slave issue, no topic offers anything close to the vitriol used to pursue the slave debate. Molly Oshatz' recently

[51] Daniel W Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion: The Religious Reconstruction of the South, 1863-1877* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
[52] Arthur Remillard, *Southern Civil Religions: Imagining the Good Society in the Post-Reconstruction Era* (University of Georgia Press, 2011).
[53] Eugene D Genovese, *A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South*, Mercer University Lamar Memorial Lectures (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998).

reinforced this point by studying the debates over slavery especially as these debates fought over the notion that slavery represented a de facto sin.[54] Genovese's unique and well thought out work did not offer clear guidance on the increasingly difficult relationship between the political world and the religious world in America. Though these entities clearly had a relationship Genovese did not expand on this relationship, and does not seek to define the debate on the slave question as being an important part of defining that relationship.

Genovese's contribution was not limited to a single volume. Eugene Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese published a seminal work attempting to understand the mind of white southern elites.[55] This massive tome provided a clear and voluminously detailed account of the southern cultural mindset. The authors offered an extended discussion of the role of Christianity in the development of the southern mind. This work maps the tendency of Southern elites to follow southern ministers in incorporating the discourse over slavery into the existing dialogue over sectional identity. As such Christianity played a decisive role in the development of sectional identity and sectional politics. The authors point out that many southern elites held religious view while maintaining a distant relationship with the churches. Additional the churches had a tendency to shape public opinion in ways that bled into existing political divisions, and accelerated the schisms within the denominations. With the advent of sectional denominations the south had the ability to redefine themselves as the defenders of

[54] Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin*, 12–14.
[55] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 417–420, 445–448, 530.

civilization, and by extension they lauded the south as the pinnacle of the civilized world. This, in point of fact, established a rather remarkable colonial discourse that helped the south relate to the rest of the world.

The closest attempts to examine the discourse between the Federal Government and the various churches over who had the authority to act as a moral arbiter come from Mark Noll's *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*, and its predecessor volume by Eugene Genovese.[56] Noll's offers an understanding of the conflict as representative of more than the status of slavery. Noll's most important contributions come in the middle of the work as Noll examines the difference between the "slavery question" and the "negro question". The initial question consumed the antebellum theologian in the work of offering biblical validation for the continuation, or eradication of slavery as an institution. This argument tangentially encountered the second question. Was the bible clear about the American form of racial slavery, and how should blacks be treated both while enslaved and free? These later questions provided the central point of the American "Negro question" and according to Noll went unanswered. Similarly, the role of the government as the arbiter of these debates is not remarked on by Noll.[57]

[56] Mark A Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Eugene D Genovese, *A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South*, Mercer University Lamar memorial lectures (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998).
[57] For discussion of the government's role in mediating between the civil rights of blacks and the abolition of slavery see Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*. Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men : The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War With a New Introductory Essay: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War With a New Introductory Essay* (Oxford University Press, 1995).

Several much more compelling efforts to integrate the religious history of the South into the larger narratives of the Civil War and Nationalism have emerged in the last few years. One of the most innovative of these efforts was the attempt by Anne Sarah Rubin to apply a post-colonial discourse to the reconstruction south. Rubin applied the ideas of Partha Chatterjee, the post-colonial historian, to the restoration of the South. Rubin explored Confederate identity not as a momentary event occurring and diminishing within the frame of the war, but rather as an identity created and redefined by the loss of the war. Throughout the South, the creation of specific cultural spaces separate from intrusions from the north allowed for the development of a persistent Southern identity. This process of creating inviolable spaces required political and social action. The difficulty within the Reconstruction South rested in that much of this work could not be engaged in directly by the former political leaders.[58] This argument in part helped to fuse Stowell's institutionally focused narrative to the larger discussions of southern identity. While women often served as the leaders of the preservation movement, and offered the strongest defense of the Lost Cause ministers had a unique position from which to resist Northern incursions into the south. Rather than pursuing political arguments ministers could pursue a policy of intransigence on ecclesiastical matters, particularly denominational reunion, and hold the north constantly at bay. By the late period of

[58] Exceptions to this general rule do exist. David Schenck, for instance, endeavored both to reassert his political authority through participation in the Klan and through the memorialization of the Revolutionary War battlefield of Gulliford Courthouse. These activities, however, were either illegal or required a degree of misdirection. While memorializing a Southern battle or the actions of the confederacy would be highly political, memorializing the Revolutionary war validated the South without direct political consequences. Rodney Steward, *David Schenck and the Contours of Confederate Identity*, 1st ed. (Univ Tennessee Press, 2012).

Reconstruction ministers had held off the northern church bodies, and the South had reconstructed a political identity that increasingly would allow for the emergence of Redemptionist politics. Rubin work provided the middle ground required to broaden the understanding of Confederate nationalism, and synthesis several studies of southern culture and nationalism into a larger framework for understanding the period and its consequences.

The proliferation of scholarly works that considered the religious characteristics of the Civil War steadily grew in its depth and breadth since the advent of social and cultural history. By the first decade of the twenty first century scholars began to envision a work of synthesis that would unite these disparate studies with the persistent discourses of Civil War scholarship. The first attempt at constructing a larger social and religious framework for the war came from Harry Stout.[59] Stout attempted to construct a moral history of the Civil War; seeking to determine the merits of the war through the application of Just War theory. This application allowed Stout to understand the war as a religious event without being dependent on an institutional history of the sectional churches. Nonetheless, Stout accepted the ultimate justness of the war despite the atrocities committed in its prosecution. Moreover, Stout traced the creation of a Northern version of civic religion comparable to its Southern counterpart. This civic religion became the center of American religious expression in the post war period, and eventually allowed for the incorporation of the Southern civic religion into the national

[59] Harry S Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the American Civil War* (New York: Viking, 2006).

consciousness. While religious sentiments play a substantial role in this work the institutional religious churches faded into the background. Stout preferred to focus his attention on the classic narratives of the war, and to reinterpret these discourses through a moral framework. This offered scholars an innovative means of interpreting the war, but failed to provide a narrative of the religious and identity implications of the war.

Another attempt to construct a general narrative of the Civil War's religious implications arrived in the form of George Rable's expansive work, *God's Almost Chosen People*. Rable attempted to construct a narrative history of the religious impact of the Civil War. He paid more attention to the institutional consequences of the than Stout had, and as a result constructed a detailed narrative of the religious consequences of the war. Rable managed to clearly describe the war's religious significance, and express to a degree the underlying complexity of the topic. Each soldier brought his own perspective to the conflict and as a result they each had a unique interpretation of the religious consequences of the conflict. This individuality acted as a natural extension of the trend to interpret providential experience in the nineteenth century. However, many of these interpretations seem to group themselves into sectional or denominational categories. This limits the anarchic nature of American Christianity. This interpretation often served to express their doubts in the war or their underlying faith in the cause for which the fought. These achievements mark Rable's book as a unique and valuable contribution to Civil War scholarship. At the same time Rable failed to establish a clear and coherent narrative of the course of the war as it related to changes within the religious

denomination. Several parts of his work seem to ramble as Rable struggled to cope with the potential enormity of the project. As a result, though Rable described the general contours of the religious conflict, he lacks a clear and pointed focus through the work providing a recap of existing historiography without developing any new theses or methods of inquiry. The failure to arrive at a new argument despite the incorporation of much of existing scholarship, and the rambling structure limits the utility of Rable's work outside of academic consumption.[60]

Over the course of the last fifty years, historians have attempted to define the contours of Southern identity and the impact of religion on the execution and progress of the Civil War. This effort has yielded some exceptional pieces of scholarship that have provided provocative and complementary conclusions. Scholars have demonstrated the enormous contributions of religious southerners in pushing the nation toward war, and in supporting that war effort once engaged. Moreover, historians have determined the utility of the religious discourse in preserving the Confederate identity as the Lost Cause through the reconstruction period. Most often, however scholars have examined these topics with a rather substantial disconnect between the periods. The ministers who pushed the south toward disunion have been treated historically as if they were not the same ministers who helped reconstruct the southern identity after the failure of the rebellion. This clearly could not be further from the reality of the situation, as the ministers consistently reinterpreted the will of God to meet the needs of their present

[60] Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*.

moment. This yielded a dynamic encounter wherein the ministers of the South emerged from the Second Great Awakening and pushed for the independence of the Southern churches and nation; became the same figures who introspectively reexamined the southern nation attempting to purge the unacceptable elements from society. They then interpreted the results of the war as God's ultimate chastisement for the failure of the south to reinvent itself during the war in accordance with God's will.

Examining southern ministers directly offers the opportunity to explore this dynamic relationship as it developed through the nineteenth century. Choosing a specific selection of ministers provides the greatest difficulty in advancing a study of this type. While ministers are rather common throughout the south, randomly sampling ministers from all sections of the south would require a generalization that seems contradictory to the purposes of this study. The ministers arrested by Andrew Johnson, however, provide a diverse range of experiences in the antebellum south while being tied together in a single moment.

The examination of Andrew Johnson and the ministers he arrested helps to merge the existing trends within the historiography of the Civil War and Confederate Nationalism. The use of Christianity as one of the animating factors of Southern and Confederate identity emerges as one of the most significant themes. Despite the recognized importance of Christianity in this discourse the average congregational ministers, has not emerged as a voice within the historiography. The ministers make full use of their theological training to interpret the details of their lives into the providential

will of God. Daniel Walker Howe describes the creation of millennial thought during the Second Great Awakening. [61] These ministers demonstrate the Southern context of the theological developments of the Awakening. In addition they tie the schisms of the major denominations to the national narrative.

They emerged from their arrests in many ways more radicalized from their experiences in prison. After prison, the ministers returned to the South either by engaging directly in the war effort, or by resuming their duties in their congregations. Either option brought the ministers into direct conflict with northern identity. Robert Howell and Samuel Baldwin challenged occupation and the emerging reconstruction policies of Andrew Johnson in Nashville directly. Meanwhile, Collins Elliott and Edmund Sehon directly engaged in supporting the continuing war effort by serving as a chaplain in the army or by raising funds for missionary work to the armies. These efforts to construct and preserve a Southern distinctiveness continued after the war, and ultimately helped to create a distinctive southern culture.

The arrest of these ministers serves as the entre point for an examination of the major themes that dominated mid-century Christianity in the American South. These themes include the schisms of the evangelical churches, the creation of sectional identity based on providential reasoning, and the rebuilding of southern exceptionalism after the defeat of the Confederacy. The ministers serve as a typical example of Southern religious leaders far more than a representative sampling. The arrested ministers were involved

[61] Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*.

with the same issues and concerns that dominated the lives of other southern divines. They busied themselves with the ordering of the South as a divinely favored people within the newly chosen American Israel. The ministers structured their lives and intellectual habits as many other Southern intellectuals. They sought stability within the communities they served, and endeavored to maintain the status quo. The status quo for these ministers required constant reaffirmation as it was regularly under attack by forces from outside their communities and region. This conflict forms the central theme of this dissertation. The ministers continually sought the intellectual grounds to affirm the righteousness of their section.

This effort began as an intellectual exercise predominated with the religious defense of slavery and development of an Ameri-centric millennialism. The debate over slavery trigged the most immediate consequences for the ministers, as it inspired the schism of American Christianity into Southern and Northern blocks. Several of the ministers Johnson eventually arrested directly involve themselves in the denominational struggles. This allowed Robert B.C. Howell to assume a place of far greater prominence in the sectional body than he might have otherwise achieved in a national Baptist church. For Edmund Sehon the schism of the Methodist church pushed him to move to the South and offer his preaching to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The schisms evolved directly from the slavery debate, and captured much of the political attentions of the ministers.

From a purely religious side, the ministers preached and seemed heavily invested in the idea of the quickly approaching millennium. The return of Christ was of imminent importance to these ministers. Samuel Baldwin stands out as first among equals in this respect. Baldwin gained national attention from his book *Armageddon*. This work explained, Baldwin's understanding of the imminent final battle of history. The United States would be required to lead the forces of democracy against the arch monarchists who would follow the Russians. This work also offered a divine validation to all aspects of the American system including the institution of slavery. Baldwin's treatise was consumed by a reasonably diverse population and would go through several reprints. He was by far the most extreme millennial voice among the ministers arrested, but his generalized millennial understanding was widely shared by the other ministers. This would help the ministers move increasingly to supporting of the Confederacy as an instrument of divine providence.

This definition of the millennium's relationship to the United States and more specifically the South, enabled these ministers to serve an important role in rearranging Southern identity into an independent Confederate nationalism. The ministers held a unique position within the South wherein they existed as a middle ground between the various competing interests of the Antebellum South. They held a position within the middle class, but their duties as ministers required them to engage both the impoverished and the elites in the South. Likewise, they ministered to both men and women though most congregations had more women than men as members. This position allowed the

ministers to be the site at which gender differences could be bridged. Ultimately, one of the most significant tasks of the ministers was in bridging racial divides in the Antebellum South. This task was necessitated by the conversions of many slaves to Christianity. The ministers would thus often be responsible for dual congregations, or other outreach and mission work amongst the slave populations. The message required an emphasis on those aspects of the Gospel that encouraged the subservience of the slaves. By the Civil War these ministers, in cooperation with other Southern intellectuals and pastors had taken on the responsibility of establishing the cultural norms required for a stable state. The task of creating this system required the negotiation of competing interests and the definition or redefinition of the identities of Southerners. These ministers' ability to serve this function changed dramatically with their imprisonment. They moved from being the symbols of Southern order to being the direct object of Northern aggression. This required a radicalization among the ministers that impacted the remainder of their activities during the war, and allowed them to help rebuild Southern identity after the war.

Christianity provided a critically important feature of both Union and Confederate nationalism. These ministers at times took exceptional steps to affirm their national affinity. Elliot and Sehon both attached themselves deeply to the military fortunes of the Confederacy. This attachment offered them the ability to directly link God's favor to the Confederate experiment. This attachment was not unique to the ministers who interacted with the army. Howell and Baldwin continued to fight with Johnson and other military

authorities charged with civil administration. Though Tennessee had gained statehood in 1796, it retained a frontier aspect through the first third or half of the nineteenth century. Nashville was not established as the state capitol until 1843, and as such the state retained a certain degree of flux through the early Antebellum period. Within this territorial frontier mindset, ministers, especially those who had experience with frontier areas, served as the cultural glue between diverse communities. Several of the ministers arrested by Johnson had begun their career as circuit riding ministers in the trans-Appalachian West. As such they understood the resonance of Christianity in the frontier world that had so recently experienced the Second Great Awakening. With the emergence of a more cosmopolitan society in Nashville toward the middle of the nineteenth century, these ministers took on new positions of great prominence in the social landscape of Tennessee society.

These positions of social importance made the ministers both clear purveyors of nationalist sentiment and offered a unique responsibility to the ministers in a highly patriarchic society. Neither of these roles was lost on Johnson as he targeted the ministers of Nashville. Johnson recognized the clear importance of ministers as they served as intermediaries between the non-dominate groups of Tennessee and the government itself. Particularly important was the role of these ministers as they engaged women. Johnson regularly targeted the ministers with having corrupted the women of Nashville, and as such had charged the ministers with both diminishing the natural Union nationalism of Tennessee and leading women astray. The ministers had also provided an important link

in maintaining the position of slavery within Tennessee society. Several ministers operated missions to slave communities; and through the auspices of these missions, schools for women, and other general church functions within the slave communities. The ministers created and maintained the social roles of women and slaves within Southern society. Johnson targeted the ministers as political enemies because they represented the clearest example of secessionism and Confederate nationalism.

CHAPTER II

A CONDENSED EXAMINATION OF NINETEENTHCENTURY THEOLOGY

Andrew Johnson and the ministers he arrested arrived at their moment of conflict with a number of assumptions about the appropriate role clergy within American society. The assumptions used by the participants in the arrest derived predominately from the religious experience of the nineteenth century. The general tends of American religious development need to be understood. The theological change in this period mirrored the shifts in political relations, national identity formation, and provides the context required to understand the political schism that precipitated the Civil War. Moreover, Christianity provided the most pervasive cultural context to the American nation. Despite this the development of American Christianity remains more assumed rather understood.[62]

A thorough understanding of the development of American Christianity offers a mirror to the development of American political consciousness. The same fights occurred in the church and in national politics, with similarly disastrous consequences.[63] Given the tendency of ministers to utilize providence, discussed in more detail below, as a means of

[62] Very naturally several works have considered the religious context of American history. The best examples are Mark Noll's, *America's God*, and *The Religious History of America*, by Edwin Gaustad and Leigh Schmidt. Robert R. Mathisen, *Critical Issues in American Religious History a Reader* (Baylor University Press, 2006), 26; Warren A. Nord, *Religion & American Education: Rethinking a National Dilemma* (UNC Press Books, 1995); Mark A Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Edwin S. Gaustad and Leigh Schmidt, *The Religious History of America: The Heart of the American Story from Colonial Times to Today*, Revised (Harper One, 2004).

[63] Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America*, xv–xvi.

interpreting contemporaneous events as intimately connected with the will of God all political affairs could be interpreted to have religious meaning. In the early nineteenth century the denominations of America struggled to come to terms with the rhetoric of republican individualism as they conflicted with discourses of both conservative paternalism and the earliest forms of social progressivism.

Another mirror between the churches and the national body emerged in the effort to root nineteenth century America in the ancient past. Some denominations, most notably the Baptists but also some Methodists and potentially the Mormons, made great efforts to describe and control a lineage of decent from the New Testament to a modern denomination shaped the messages of the churches. Similarly, in the Antebellum period scholars like Josiah Preist sought to establish an antiquarian past.[64] At the national civic level, this was done in part by interpreting Native American ruins throughout the Ohio Valley as evidence of the past existence of a great imperial nation. This provided an ancient legacy that could rival the ruins of Rome, and allowed Americans to challenge European elite's assumptions that America had no history.[65] This narrative developed,

[64] A significant amount of effort has gone into establishing the roots of American identity. These roots can be seen in almost all aspects of antebellum American life. Very similarly James Graves and others spent an enormous amount of time and effort demonstrating the purity, uniqueness, and supremacy of the American Christian identity. Graves, *The Great Iron Wheel, or, Republicanism Backwards and Christianity Reversed in a Series of Letters Addressed to J. Soule, Senior Bishop of the M.E. Church, South*; *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press, 1983); David Waldstreicher and Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Susan-Mary Grant, *North over South: Northern Nationalism and American Identity in the Antebellum Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000); Rogan Kersh, *Dreams of a More Perfect Union* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2001).

[65] A common criticism that emerged from European observers of the United States was that it was a nation without a history. One of the early efforts to create national identity then focused on imagining the ancient past of this new nation. Josiah Priest, *American Antiquities, and Discoveries in the West: Being an Exhibition of the Evidence That an Ancient Population Differing Entirely from the Present Indians, Peopled America Many Centuries Before Its Discovery by Columbus. And Inquiries Into Their Origin, with a Copious Description of Many of Their Stupendous Works Now in Ruins.* (Hoffman & White, 1833), 40;

and mixed with prevalent strains of millennialism to promote the concept of a new American Israel.[66] In other words, Americans moved toward believing that God ordained the nation to serve as his new kingdom on earth. Many evangelical churches sought to establish the legitimate church on earth, be that through the auspices of Methodism, or the Landmark Baptists. These Christians used phrases like true or legitimate church to describe an institution directly descended from the early church of the New Testament. This allowed these groups to claim an elevated piety from their pure connection with Christ, and that they alone possessed the ability to correctly interpret divine scripture.[67]

The adherence to national orthodoxy in the denominations challenged the seemingly more reasonable appeal of local autonomy for individual churches or communities. The ability to maintain a national orthodoxy could be coped with by different denominations more easily. The Baptists, for instance, had a very weak national structure, and as such groups of Baptists have regularly divided from regional and national bodies to follow local interpretations of the gospel and events. The Methodists had a far more organized ecclesiastical structure, and could maintain the national body

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Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America: And Two Essays on America*, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin, 2003), 16, 543.

[66] Samuel Davies Baldwin, *Armageddon: Or, The Overthrow of Romanism and Monarchy; the Existence of the United States Foretold in the Bible*, Rev. ed (Nashville, TN: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1878), 78; Priest, *American Antiquities, and Discoveries in the West*, 14, 83, 125.

[67] Graves, *The Great Iron Wheel, or, Republicanism Backwards and Christianity Reversed in a Series of Letters Addressed to J. Soule, Senior Bishop of the M.E. Church, South*, 63; Baldwin, *Armageddon*; Charles Hodge, *What Is Presbyterianism? An Address Delivered before the Presbyterian Historical Society at Their Anniversary Meeting in Philadelphia, on Tuesday Evening, May 1, 1855. By the Rev. Charles Hodge, D.D.*, Michigan Historical Reprint (Scholarly Publishing Office, University of Michigan Library, 2006), 7; William Crowell, *The Church Member's Manual, of Ecclesiastical Principles, Doctrine, and Discipline: Presenting a Systematic View of the Structure, Polity, Doctrines, and Practices of Christian Churches, as Taught in the Scriptures*, Michigan Historical Reprint (Scholarly Publishing Office, University of Michigan Library, 2005), 62.

through most topical disagreements. The exception to this, for the Methodists, of course was the debate over slavery.[68]

In the Early Republican period the separation of church and state remained a novel concept. As such the two institutions continued to closely mirror each other's development.[69] The Antebellum period saw the separation of the states and the denominational churches continue. Massachusetts ended the church tax in 1833, marking one of the final institutional hurdles toward secularism. As the division between the government and the institutional denominations grew the leaders of the churches and the government continued to plot a parallel and complimentary courses.[70] Neither existed in a vacuum; the interactions of these institutions through Antebellum American history demonstrated neither completely supported the separation.[71] Efforts to maintain a relationship between church and state opposed the deism and universalism made popular within parts of the revolutionary generation, and fed into the evangelical fervor of the Second Great Awakening that reached its zenith in the millennial fires of the Civil War.

The Second Great Awakening provided the single most important event in the shaping of American theology in the nineteenth century. The evangelical churches in America, particularly, the Methodist and Baptist churches, expanded rapidly. The expansion allowed for a proliferation of opinions over theological issues. Theologians and ministers composed countless guides to the understanding of the correct

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[68] Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation*, 1985; Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 180.
[69] Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, 335–338.
[70] Frank Lambert, *Religion in American Politics: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 43.
[71] *A Documentary History of Religion in America: To 1877*, 3rd ed (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub, 2003), 229, 246, 391–401.

interpretation of theological issues through the first half of the nineteenth century. Theologians composed some of these treatises, but many more were written by the average minister. The Second Great Awakening allowed ministers to publish freely their theological opinions, especially in the rapidly expanding western areas of the nation. Ministers published a wide range of theological opinions, covering topics from basic catechism to church governance. This trend spread across denominations and regions, but achieved its greatest prominence in the west where ecclesiastical hierarchies proved less dominant within the denominations.[72] These publications allowed the American denominations to develop as voluntary institutions that could regularly be divided and reformed over major and minor disputes.

While the Second Great Awakening was significantly more massive than any previous revival it was not without preceding movements. The revival emerged from the mix of emotional tent revivals of the First Great Awakening, and the perceived threat of ardent universalism and deism existent in the Revolutionary generation.[73] The First Great Awakening provided the general form of the revival. Much of the revivalism from both Awakenings took place outside of the official structure of the organized churches.[74] The revivals presented a moment of egalitarian religious expression. Itinerant ministers traveled from town to town delivering sermons and offering religious services to

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[72] Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, *Terms of Sacramental Communion* (American Baptist Publication Society, 1846); Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, *The Evils of Infant Baptism* (Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1852); Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, *The Early Baptists of Virginia* (The Bible and Publication Society, 1869); Hodge, *What Is Presbyterianism?*; Crowell, *The Church Member's Manual, of Ecclesiastical Principles, Doctrine, and Discipline*, 2005; Richard Thomas Hughes, *The American Quest for the Primitive Church* (University of Illinois Press, 1988).
[73] Gaustad and Schmidt, *The Religious History of America*, 139–140; Tetsuo S. Miyakawa, *Protestants and Pioneers: Individualism and Conformity on the American Frontier* (Univ.Pr., 1969).
[74] *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, 295–298.

communities otherwise isolated from the heart of the established East Coast churches. Frontier expansion and the resulting growth of European populations in America allowed for the expansion of religious services across the Appalachia. The organized coastal communities exerted only limited control over this phase of evangelism. Ministers, who at times could not have achieved positions in the coastal churches, achieved notoriety on the frontier; at times as a result of doctrinally questionable theology. The poorly educated ministers and the new Christian population allowed a distinctly American theological tradition to develop. The American tradition tended to support a less rigorously doctrinaire institution in favor of a broad based cultural acceptance of general Christianity.[75]

Despite the expansion of Christianity during the First Great Awakening, organized churches suffered an overall diminution through the Revolutionary period. The theological excesses of Calvinism, the condemnation of the unelected and the obsessive focus on the sinfulness of a fallen man, forced a counter reaction in the form of Universalism, Unitarianism, and Deism after the waning of the First Great Awakening.[76] The development of these open theologies shaped the Founding generation. Rather than focusing on the Trinitarian Christian God, the practitioners of these doctrines placed an emphasis on the goodness of God, the goodness of his creation, and the application of reason to the practice of faith. As a result, that figures such as William Ellery Channing proposed that God existed as a unitary entity.[77] Moreover, Congregationalist Charles Chauncy offered to his Boston area congregation that, "As the first cause of all things is

[75] Mathisen, *Critical Issues in American Religious History a Reader*, 267–270.
[76] *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, 252.
[77] Noll, *America's God*, 255.

infinitely benevolent, 'tis hard to conceive that he should bring mankind into existence, unless he intended to make them finally happy."[78] To the first generation of European reformers, doctrines such as these represented the worst possible outcome of ecclesiastical schism.

The importance of these shifts reached their logical conclusion in the efforts of the deists to apply reason to the practice of Christianity. The abandonment of Christianity seemed to some prominent voices in the early republic as a desirable outcome of the American experiment in the separation of church and state. Thomas Paine, for instance, argued against revelation, and though he did not deny that revelation from a divine creature to humanity could take place, he did deny that it ever had taken place.[79] Thomas Jefferson and John Adams went farther still in their correspondence. They questioned the nature of God and Christianity declaring that at the very best it would be impossible for mortals to understand the conceptions of the deity that created the universe. God offered himself as the source of reason, rather than the willing sacrifice of love. A new understanding of a more remote and rational God along these deistic lines threatened the core of American Protestantism, and necessitated a response. The influence of Universalism, Unitarianism, and Deism created the cause against which divines rallied during the Second Great Awakening.

The desire to reaffirm the existence and efforts of a personally relevant God provided the basis for the expansion of religious sentiment in this movement. The deists, in particular, provided evangelicals something to rally against. The Awakening, however,

[78] Ibid., 253.
[79] Ibid., 256.

focused on seven generalized principles that would combat the shortcomings of American life, and shape the expression of American Christianity in its wake. The most important principle was the acceptance of the Bible as the sole source of revelation, and the sole authority for Christians in determining correct action. The common acceptance of divine providence allowed for the construction of a narrative that supported both American patriotism and the evangelical's interpretation of history. The impact of these innovations resounded in the lives of the ministers arrested by Johnson. The importance of providence naturally led to the recognition that salvation took place through the individual conversion, or new birth into the Body of Christ. Further, the believer achieved new birth only through Christ's grace, and could not achieve it through any individual actions. The evangelicals reaffirmed the foundation of Protestantism, salvation by faith through grace. This allowed for the integration of republicanism into Christianity. As each newly born member of the church possessed a spirit coequal to all established members the church integrated an egalitarian republicanism into the institutions that had otherwise been instruments of hierarchy.[80] This dichotomy emerged with stark sectional consequences as the north tended to favor corporate salvation while the south focused on the redemption of individuals. The process of integration created a potentially contradictory polity in which the revivalist religion both supported the idea of individual and corporate salvation. Because evangelism became a mass movement; saved individuals looked to demonstrate and expand their new faith by redeeming society at large. This encouraged voluntary social movements like temperance, public schools, and abolition along with general efforts to ameliorate the hardships of modern life. All of

[80] Hodge, *What Is Presbyterianism?*, 15–16.

these looked to improve civil society with the aim of bringing about Christ's Kingdom on Earth. The emphasis on a millennial purpose provided the climax of the experience of the Second Great Awakening, and the context in which the Civil War proved theologically acceptable, if not imperative. These seven concurrent factors allowed for the promotion and expansion of religious fervor during the first half of the nineteenth century. The renewal of Christian sentiment shaped Christian identity throughout the antebellum republic.

The foundation of the Awakening came in asserting the supremacy of the Bible in offering guidance to moral living, and the revealed wisdom of God. The initial significance of biblical supremacy served to refute Deists and Universalists who claimed such revelation was, at best, unlikely. According to Thomas Paine, as a representative of the deists, the idea of a divinely revealed document (the bible) was ridiculous. Paine said:

> I have spoken also in the same work upon what is called *revelation*, and have shewn the absurd misapplication of that term to the books of the Old Testament and the New, for certainly revelation is out of the question in reciting anything of which man has been the actor or the witness.[81]

As church membership increased it became necessary to provide an American context in which to function. Particularly, churches needed to affirm their authority, and offer direction in determining behavior. William Crowell attempted to offer a solution to this issue for the Baptists by publishing a manual for church governance, partially written by Henry Ripley. In the introduction to this manual, Crowell asked the question: what is the

[81] In quotations the emphasis and spelling of the original authors have been preserved.
A Documentary History of Religion in America, 266.

church? His attempt to answer this question led him to the source of the church, ministerial authority, and a response to deism itself:

> The Rationalist is laboring to solve it – in his sense of the term – by the help of unassisted reason, if that can be called reason which runs riot from its maker; the papist by abjuring reason in his blind submission to what he calls "the church;" the Baptist by exalting reason to be the interpreter and reverent pupil of God's word. The first would set up human reason to judge the Bible and the church; the second allows "the church" to judge the Bible and impose on reason the most abject silence; the third maintains that the Bible, interpreted by reason, is to rule the church. The first defies, the second debases, the third exalts, reason to her true place. The Bible is the church's supreme law, reason is her court…If all Christians would go to the Bible for an answer to this first question, if they would accept none but that which the Bible gives, if they would abide by that – that only – union would soon take the place of discord."[82]

Placing the Bible in such a light allowed theologians and laity alike to seek a renewed basis for justifying old institutions. The expectation of Paine and Crowell (publishing 60 years apart) defined two separate sources of appropriate information on how to devise morally correct behavior. While Paine preferred some degree of unassisted reason Crowell denied such a source unless it proved subservient to divinely inspired scripture.

The greater significance of this assertion, for the ministers arrested by Johnson, rested in the compromise it allowed between republicanism and slavery; as well as the demands of the society against the claims of the individual. Effectively, the Bible served as the ultimate revelation of God's will, but the interpretation of the word could be left to

[82] Williams Crowell, *The Church Member's Manual, of Ecclesiastical Principles, Doctrine, and Discipline: Presenting a Systematic View of the Structure, Polity, Doctrines, and Practices of Christian Churches, as Taught in the Scriptures.*, Michigan Historical Reprint (Scholarly Publishing Office, University of Michigan Library, 2006), vi.

the individual. Hierarchy took a back seat to personal sovereignty, and though the gospel offered universal commands "common sense" theology provided the opportunity to defer direct responsibility when expeditious. This had particular significance to the slave holding section of the nation. While Alexis de Tocqueville expected that the rational ends of republicanism would eventually call for the abolition of slavery throughout the nation, though not necessarily equality between the races.[83] This formula for revision allowed the South to develop a series of intricate cultural and economic relationships that maintained the institution.

During the early period of the republic southern ministers and theologians began to adjust their position on slavery. At the time of the revolution southern churches expressed either a neutral or ill favored view of the institution. They preferred to allow politicians to dominate the debate. By the 1830's, however, the Second Great Awakening required southern theologians to revise their opinion of human bondage.[84] They increasingly codified a strong defense of the institution of slavery, reasoning that the institution must be acceptable if enacted along the standards set forth in the Old Testament.[85] Without the general acceptance of the Bible as the only guide to moral behavior, as advocated in the Second Great Awakening, the effort to standardize the argument in favor of slavery would have been meaningless.

American Christians gleaned guidance in a general form from the Bible their interpretations consistently failed arrive at a single meaning, this proved especially true

[83] Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 402.
[84] Chesebrough, *Clergy Dissent in the Old South, 1830-1865*, 6–8.
[85] The best description of the defense remains the William Jenkins work. Jenkins, William S. *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South*. Gloucester, Mass: P. Smith, 1960.

across the sections. Therefore, though the bible might cast doubt on antebellum institutions and practices it did not expressly outlaw questionable activities like slave holding, or clearly oppose new modes of social reasoning, like personal revelation from the Bible. Theologians, in the north and south, needed to explain how the world could be ordered in situations outside the knowledge of the Bible.

The promotion of divine providence provided the solution to biblical silence in regard to modern questions. This most self-interested theological doctrine became increasingly popular in the Second Great Awakening, and explained that God's will for the world became clear through the expression of providence. R. L. Stanton, an American minister, succinctly stated the idea behind providence, "God's works of providence are His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures; ordering them, and all their actions, to his own glory."[86] Nothing could happen if it opposed the will of the supreme deity; ergo the success of plantations and the American state proved that God's will intended for them to exist. While solving certain moral issues providence created dramatic new problems. Biblical interpretation varied widely north and south, but it was at least based on the same document. Under the provenance of providence religious practitioners needed to interpret the tea leaves of everyday life to divine the intentions of God. Stanton went on to describe the potential problems with the understanding of providence by examining the Southern interpretations of divine will as it supported secession and slavery, ultimately regarding these as misrepresentations of the divine. Of course Samuel Baldwin, Collins Elliott, and Robert Howell all believed the

[86] Stanton, *The Church and the Rebellion Against the Government of the United States; and the Agency of the Church, North and South, in Relation Thereto.*, 286.

will of God supported the Confederacy. Despite its problems interpreting the will of God based on the actions of man proved one of the most virulent of American theological traditions.[87] Fundamentally, interpreting circumstances as the will of the divine either striped mankind of free will, or left God devoid of rationality. Providence served, ironically, to incorporate a form of reason within American theology; this depended on the development of evidential Christianity.

The theory of evidential Christianity, or Providence, predated its employment by Americans in the Great Awakening. It derived from an expansion of Baconian philosophy.[88] That developed into natural theology; arguing that all science was founded on Biblical truth. Rather than being the distant deistic watchmaker, God had a personal investment in humanity. Because distinct parts of nature could be demonstrated to be working, independently of each other, toward mutually complimentary goals, the "initial cause" that created the universe must have created the system with the intellect and intent to have it work toward mutually acceptable ends. nineteenth century theologians and scientist expected that the exploration of the natural world would verify this design argument, and verify divine providential planning in the natural and human world.[89]

Providence could then be used during the Awakening to argue in favor of inspired ends for human events. What previously was described as a happenstance or human effort instead became manifestations of God's Will. The expansion of Anglo-Americans westward across the continent, the enslavement of Africans, the eradication of natives all

[87] Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, 8.
[88] E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 174.
[89] Ibid., 181.

fit, not into human plans, but served as evidence of divine planning. This extended to a narrative in which America represented a newly chosen Israel ordained to spread God's word and message in the world. So at the same time that awakening theologians affirmed the importance of Biblical scripture, they also used providence to augment the cannon of acceptable source material. This style of reasoning would support the expansion of Manifest Destiny. God would not allow the expansion of America if He preferred Native Americans.[90] Providence supported the understanding that the church relied on Christ's grace in the world. The traditional interpretation of the protestant reformation that salvation derived from the grace of Christ alone supported the understanding of an active God. Since God in Christ entered the world once to intervene and lead humanity toward righteousness, God's willingness to intervene in human affairs likely would not have faded over the intervening millennia.

Quite the opposite proved true to nineteenth century Americans. God intervened regularly both to protect and lead his chosen children and to chastise the wayward. Therefore, Ottoman invasions of Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries served as a chastisement of Catholic authorities, and protection and guidance for the early reformers. Likewise, the destruction of Native Americans from small pox and other plagues served as an indication that God favored the European experiment in settling America. This mode of perpetuation providence based on Christ's grace and intervention took the form of the Jeremiad. This form of preaching scolded the listeners for their falling short of the gift of grace, and presented the very real threat that without renewal God might choose to

[90] Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right*, 1st ed, A Critical Issue (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 40.

visit Old Testament judgments upon the violating brood. As it had been for Israel during the Babylonian captivity so could it be for America if its citizens descended into debauchery, cursing, violating the Sabbath, or (depending on the section) holding or freeing slaves.[91] The reasoning of the Jeremiad offered southern ministers a ready explanation for the defeat of a divine Confederacy. God willed their defeat not because they erred in slavery or succession, but because they failed to adhere to the strictest understanding of God's Law. To purify his people God scourged the Confederacy.

Providence and Christ's grace at times could be blended together by American converts. Through the grace of Christ (as antebellum Americans phrased the issue) by the eve of the Civil War evangelical churches deriving from the Second Awakening accounted for roughly 85% of all American Christians.[92] These churches universally accepted the protestant understanding that salvation, on a personal level, existed as an extension of the grace that Christ showed the world in his ultimately self-sacrificial redemptive death. The understanding that salvation derived from the grace of Christ was not an original idea by the early nineteenth century. This provided the foundation for understanding American Protestantism as a united movement.[93] Every contribution made to the burgeoning Second Great Awakening could be used to support division within the churches rather than unity with the singular exception that the grace of Christ being the means of salvation. This allowed for the semblance of a unified movement to be supported. The 'unity' of the Second Great Awakening, however, failed to offer more than a mirage. Particularly, as the churches struggled with understanding corporate

[91] Andrew R Murphy, *Prodigal Nation: Moral Decline and Divine Punishment from New England to 9/11* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 6–7.
[92] Noll, *America's God*, 170.
[93] Lambert, *Religion in American Politics*, 43–44.

salvation as opposed to individual salvation, the enlightenment theory of general human (white) equality, and the ultimate challenge of facing judgment through millennial theology.

American churches from their Congregationalist predecessors inherited an understanding that Christianity as a covenanting religion required some form of a conversion experience. The first Puritans to step foot on the continent expected that to truly be a full Christian a person needed to have a moment of conversion or awakening. The general expectation was that this moment would serve as a moment of rebirth into a new life as a Christian. For the arrested ministers of Tennessee this expectation lingered on, Samuel Baldwin expressed several times the importance of conversion in his biography of Sarah Norton. Likewise, Robert Howell expressed the importance of conversion in the face of Divine Judgment in his sermons.[94]

The conversion experience offered the penitent a number of useful allusions to baptism, and generally provided the chance for a reinterpretation of their current lives. This kind of dramatic break from non-believer to believer could be difficult to come by. Not everyone had the opportunity to be struck blind on the road to Damascus. Moreover, the church as an institution lacked the capacity to integrate the large number of potential converts. The camp meeting served as the ideal environment in which to experience such a life altering event, and a moment where the church had to only extend a temporary presence that locals could then perpetuate. Permanent missions with the associated expenses could not offer as compelling an experience as a circuit rider at a temporary

[94] Samuel Davies Baldwin, *Life of Mrs. Sarah Norton: An Illustration of Practical Piety* (J. B. M'Ferrin, agent, for the Methodist Episcopal church, South, 1858); Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "Prepare to Meet Thy God," in *Manuscript Notes of Sermons*, vol. 3 (Nashville, Tenn: Unpublished, n.d.), 29–40.

camp. The Rev. James Finley reported observing a number of dramatic conversion moments at the Cane Ridge, Kentucky revival of 1800. As Finley related one tale:

> A certain Dr. P., accompanied by a lady from Lexington, was induced, out of mere curiosity, to attend the meeting. As they had heard much about the involuntary jerkings and falling which attended the exercises, they entered into an agreement between themselves that, should either of them be thus strangely attacked or fall, the other was to stand by to the last. It was not long till the lady was brought down in all her pride, a poor sinner in the dust, before her God. The Doctor, agitated, came up and felt for her pulse; but alas! her pulse was gone. At this he turned pale, and, staggering a few paces, he fell beneath the power of the same invisible hand. After remaining for some time in this state, they both obtained pardon and peace and went rejoicing home. They both lived and died happy Christians. Thousands were affected in the same way. [95]

Such a story offers an interesting perspective. While the reported account lacks the ring of scientific truth, it provides a significant window into the cultural context of the Camp Revivals. A context, in which, participants seemed to be perfectly open to the experience of supernatural events, leading to life changing shifts in perspective.

Finley also commented on the potential for participants to exercise lawless and sinful habits. The ultimate moment of conversion however, always received the most prominent central place in the narrative. After all, the Holy Spirit called sinners to repentance. Other accounts similar to Finley's narrative surfaced as revivals gained in popularity, with the result that within the religious development of the young republic, an expectation advanced that it was up to the individual to determine the state of their religious devotion. Ironically, the revivals also gave birth to the movement of social

[95] James Bradley Finley, *Autobiography of Rev. James B. Finley: Or, Pioneer Life in the West* (Printed at the Methodist book concern, for the author, 1853), 365.

improvement. This occurred especially in the Burned over district in New York. The adherents of general social improvement advocated salvation of the individual depended on providing the correct ingredients within the overall society for individuals to have their own transformative religious experience. In this way northern converts of the Second Great Awakening worked for the improvement of overall society in order to save the individual. The south would not share the same zeal for creating the conditions to inspire conversion.

The Christian church in America would not exist as a central feature of the state, nor would the political authority of Catholicism in the early modern period be extended into America. Church revivals developed as a voluntary institution. Members joined or remained aloof of their own free will. Harriet Martineau complained, in her observations of the American state, of the instances that stood in opposition to this expected norm. The continuation of state taxes in support of particular denominational churches provided a particularly irksome example of the lingering influence of the old world that needed to change for American religion to truly develop as a republican institution.[96] What developed then in the course of the Second Great Awakening was a religious revival on the grounds of individual experience, and individual salvation.

Republicanism failed to offer an easy fit for devout Christians. The Puritan settlers of Massachusetts fell far short of democratic ideals. Though they participated in a form of representation, church membership requirements restricted suffrage and holding elected office to only a segment of society. Eugene Genovese described the development

[96] He also decried a lack of theological education among the religious, and a sense of false piety. He was, after all, British and had no problem criticizing the American state for its faults. Harriet Martineau, *Society in America*, vol. 2 (Saunders and Otley, 1837), 350–353.

of antagonism in the South at the advent of a democratic state in a decidedly non-democratic culture. The reconciliation of social claims and individual ones became the central piece of Southern Christianity, and the sticking point of American Christianity. Whereas preachers and converts of the Great Awakening advocated the supremacy of biblical revelation; republicanism advocated the voice of the people as the prime guide to society.[97] This resulted in a good deal of confusion as Americans failed to agree on the basic structures of the republic, let alone the meaning of the Bible. What developed as a compromise between these two social forces was the idea of "common sense morality".[98] Far from serving as a unifying element of the religious movement, common sense morality allowed for radically different interpretations of social issues to develop across various sections and classes of Americans. Common sense morality also allowed for the incorporation of providence. Elections offered participants the chance to divorce themselves from the reality of their decisions. Thus, the election of a president or the passage of a constitutional amendment offered a chance to see the intentions of the divine in the results of the ballot box. Whereas initially democracy and Christianity seemed contradictory, providence offered the chance to cushion the separation between the two, and to eventually blend the institutions together to such a degree that, in the American context, they became inseparable.[99]

Emerging social divisions placed an enormous amount of pressure on America's sectional unity, with the result that national consensus broke down in favor of sectional

[97] Eugene D Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), 20–25.
[98] Noll, *America's God*, 106–109.
[99] *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, 229; Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America*, 7.

solutions to the problems of American Christian. Whereas the South tended toward maintenance of the individual understanding of Christianity, Northern converts tended to expand their understanding of Christianity to advocate general improvement of social shortcomings. Northern organizations often supported the formation of temperance societies, urban relief, and even abolitionist groups.[100] The understanding promoted in the North supported the expansion of programs aimed at bettering civil society in order to advance the Kingdom of Christ of Earth. The Southern interpretation maintained that society itself was imperfect, and would always exist in such a corrupted state. The natural response then was to advocate efforts to maintain the best society possible, and encourage individuals to pursue their own free will in as publically charitable a way possible. Thus, the moral action was left in the hands of the individual. Northern converts of the Great Awakening tended to pursue a line of reasoning in which individuals were responsible for being open to conversion, but society as a whole was responsible for maintaining certain levels of morality. This meant that the north expressed republicanism as a corporate virtue while the south expressed republicanism as fundamentally an individual virtue. The Second Great Awakening then advocated both the individual and communal religion.

The development of contradictory forms of worship and theology though the Awakening seemingly promoted a highly diverse and localized movement. Much of the early republican period followed a similar trend. As the nation engaged in frontier wars and international conflicts, as debates over internal improvements drove congressional debate, and as the nation slowly divided over the issue of slavery, much of the nation's

[100] In regards to abolitionist societies, through much of the antebellum period abolitionists were popularly reviled in both sections. The general population had no love for the potential of emancipation, or the eventuality of racial equality. Fredrick Blue provides a good discussion of antebellum abolition in, *No Taint of Compromise: Crusaders in Antislavery Politics.*

experience that could have, and perhaps should have, encouraged unity instead deepened the sectional divides that existed within the national body. As American theologians engaged in a debate over the merits of individual vs. corporate sinfulness, they slowly estranged one section from the other until the bodies themselves could no longer maintain unity. From the foundations of Christ's grace, the American churches foundered as they contemplated the authenticity of various denominations, cultural sectionalism, and the issue of race and racialized slavery in America.

While American Christianity supported the individual interpretation of scripture and common sense theology, these efforts failed to yield a single interpretation of these materials. It seemed that American Christians could at least agree on God's grace, controversy arose in the American denominations nonetheless. The most bellicose example of this controversy developed between the Baptist and Methodist churches. It must be remembered that in the American context even denominations should not be referred to in monolithic terms. More appropriately, these entities could be referred to as the Landmarkist Baptists and various bodies of Methodism particularly the Methodist Episcopal Church South (MECS).

The debate between these two groups occurred in the 1850's just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War as tensions between the geographic sections were increasingly pushing cultural definitions of Americanism apart. In this context it was difficult or impossible to expect that the religious denominations would maintain sectional or catholic (universal Christianity) unity let alone denominationally unified churches. James Graves issued an inflammatory series of letters as a book under the title *The Great Iron*

Wheel; or, Republicanism Backwards and Christianity Reversed. In these letters Graves took it upon himself to examine the nature and merits of American Methodism. The method of analysis led Graves to write to specific figures in the Methodist church, attempting to have them answer for their theological errors. It should be noted that Graves lacked a sense of constructive politeness. He wrote to the head of the MECS, "What an awful thought for an aged minister about to die, that he has spent his long life and exhausted all his mighty power of mind and body in opposing the Kingdom of Christ, and diverting those seeking to enter it into a rival organization."[101] For Graves not only was the Methodist church poorly conceived it represented a challenge and threat to the continuation of the church of Christ in this world.

Graves' complaint was based on the understanding that the Methodists were possessed of an impure doctrine claiming themselves as legitimate heirs to the gospels when they did not exist prior to their founding by John Wesley. Graves further claimed that because the Methodist church was established by man it cannot be of divine origins, and moreover must necessarily defy the commands of Jesus. Graves' fiery speech was not restricted to the condemnation of the Methodists; his vitriol was ready to encompass all denominations outside the Baptist communion.

> The Romish Apostacy has accomplished much good, and the church of Luther in his day vastly more, yet the former is the Man of Sin, and the latter a manifest "harlot" – the fruitful mother of infidelity, and the curse and bane of religion in Germany. A man or society, propagating a wrong system or practice, always does inconceivably more evil than good.[102]

[101] Graves, *The Great Iron Wheel, or, Republicanism Backwards and Christianity Reversed in a Series of Letters Addressed to J. Soule, Senior Bishop of the M.E. Church, South*, 13.
[102] Ibid., 15.

Graves pulled no punches, and sought to promote his understanding of a pure church. This impulse was not restricted simply to Graves, but rather many other theologians, philosophers, politicians, or simple patriots had spent their share of American history attempting to justify the unique nature and special role of the American State. Graves was not the first or the last to attempt to define America as a pure entity, a new Israel, or Christ's own kingdom in this world. Graves also demonstrated the degree to which the Second Awakening adhered to the supremacy of the Bible and Christ's grace as a means to salvation. The argument put forth by Graves claimed that rather than the sincerity of belief being, at the heart of the issue, strict adherence to the supremacy of Christ's word as described in the Gospels determined the righteousness of proper belief.[103]

More interesting, in a later letter Graves demonstrated the unpatriotic and un-republican nature of Methodism. Graves criticized John Wesley himself for his public statements defaming the founding generation of America. The combination of a political argument with a religious one reveals the American compromise with protestant Christianity. In the American context it became necessary to integrate a republican church with a republican state. As such, Graves is able to defame Wesley and Methodism for ostensibly adhering to neither. Graves argues, "What does Mr. Wesley teach in the above, but that the overthrow of English despotism and the establishment of civil and religious liberty here, was the WORK OF DEVILS!"[104] Graves calls on the heritage of political action against despotism during the revolution, and the religious heritage of the

[103] Ibid., 16.
[104] Capitalization as it appears in Graves' text. Ibid., 155.

reformation against papal authority to attack any kind of rigidly structured church. Graves quoted a Methodist preacher named Cookman who described the structure of the Methodist church as a system of great wheels within wheels. An allusion to the description of what the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel saw descending in the sky. The source of movement for this system, Graves argued, is entirely in the outermost wheel: the wheel of the bishops. As such, it does more to resemble popery than a Christian church befitting a republican nation.[105]

Graves recognized the critique that he was tearing down a church without providing anything to take its place, and as such, end his work with, as he saw it, a description of the appropriate church organization. This body, according to Graves, must be founded only on the Gospel and preserve the primitive nature of the early churches. This tends to limit the church to a Baptist form with local authority being of paramount importance. Graves in fact denied the right of anybody to change the structure of the church or the rights of particular members without specific reference to scriptural justification. The church furthermore would be accountable only to Christ rather than any civil or ecclesiastical authority. The rights that Graves spells out are rather vague in reference to specific issues. Graves acknowledged the right of congregations to choose their teachers and conduct the business of their own church, but failed to provide a specific list of acceptable practices. Thus, Graves' writing can be used to defend or attack

[105] Ibid., 159–160.

slavery, racial hierarchy, or the social structure of the South. Graves only required the attackers to use scripture to defend the assault.[106]

Denominational attacks failed to engage much of the nineteenth century religious establishment, as such Graves' position was far from commonly accepted, and caused substantial counter reactions. Robert Boyte Crawford Howell would leave the presidency of the Southern Baptist Association to return to his church in Nashville (that Graves had taken over) and root out the landmarkists. Howell roundly engaged with the supports of Graves, and eventually had most of the landmarkists removed from First Baptist Church of Nashville. Howell remained the pastor of this congregation, despite his arrest by Johnson, until his death. The congregation forced out Graves, and he spent several years attempting to build rival organizations, but by 1868 his movement had lost most of its support within Baptist communities.[107]

In addition to being attacked from the Baptists, Graves found a number of opponents in the Methodist Church, particularly the preacher politician William G. Brownlow. Brownlow was crystal clear in his opinion of Graves. Brownlow described one potential exchange between the two, "This unwillingness of mine to bandy epithets with an inflated gasometer, whose brain I believe to be a mass of living, creeping, crawling, writhing, twisting, turning, lithesome vermin, he politely construed into a want of courage on my part to encounter the caitiff of the "Tennessee Baptist"."[108] Once beyond simple insults against Graves, Brownlow put forth an argument refuting Graves

[106] Ibid., 544–570.
[107] Robert Boyte Crawford Howell Collection, "The Trial of J. R. Graves , First Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee" (Nashville, Tennessee, n.d.), Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.
[108] Brownlow, *The Great Iron Wheel Examined; or, Its False Spokes Extracted, and an Exhibition of Elder Graves, Its Builder. In a Series of Chapters. By William G. Brownlow.*, 23–24.

at every point. Brownlow devotes an entire chapter to examining the lineage of the Baptist church, as well as several chapters justifying the founding of Methodism. These points in particular prove important in the American context of the theological debate. In the wake of Independence and the midst of the Great Awakening Americans sought a sense of authenticity in the political and cultural worlds. In this climate the writings of Europeans about the new American nation were devoured by the young nation, but moreover figures like Graves promoted the idea of being the sole authentic manifestation of the Christian church. Claiming the authentic lineage of the Christian church seems a minor issue in modern times, but to Brownlow Graves' claim represented a dangerous attack on Methodism and Christianity in general. This feeling could only be intensified by the increasing number of schisms in American denominations over the issue of slavery.[109] These sentiments came to a head in the seventeenth chapter of Brownlow's refutation. Brownlow took up the issue of the patriotism in the Methodist church. Naturally, Brownlow presents an argument for why the Methodist church was as patriotic as any other denomination. Brownlow managed to include both Howell and Graves in his criticism. He goes on to directly consider the question of slavery and the churches; using Graves' criticism of the Methodist divide over slavery as the launching point. Brownlow spends several pages examining the various divisions caused by slavery, and establishing that responsibility for the divisions rests at the feet of Northern Abolitionists. At this point Brownlow attacks Graves for what he omitted.

> And now, people of the South, why is it that Elder Graves can publish a book of 570 pages, north of Mason and Dixon's Line, WHERE HE WAS BORN, and discuss so many different subjects, some of them growing

[109] C. C Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation*.

> directly out of the slavery agitation, and never say one word AGAINST ABOLITIONISM, or one word in favor of SOUTHERN SLAVERY? [110]

Brownlow was not contented to make an indirect accusation about Graves' abolitionist sympathies. Instead, he continued on to cite rumors that before Graves moved to the South he had been an abolitionist. Brownlow concluded in the most racist of terms, "One thing is certain – he *keeps very dark* upon this grave question, and ought to be made to come out explicitly, if he concludes to take up permanent abode in the South!"[111] .Brownlow's accusation would continue to dog Graves for years to come. Robert Howell returned to Nashville in the wake of these works and publically expelled Graves from the First Baptist Church. Later, when Andrew Johnson arrested Howell, the reverend blamed this event on the ill will that still existed. Though he never directly accused Graves of having turned him into Johnson, Howell blamed his arrest on the lies of several local abolitionists who had previously been removed from membership at First Baptist.

The great trial of American Christianity, like the great trial of the American republic, was determining the role, righteousness, and continuation of the South's peculiar institution. For the South, the forty years prior to the Civil War offered the chance to fully develop its Biblical justification for racial plantation slavery.[112] The biblical defense that developed as a result set forth the model for what was to be expected from Southern slavery. Ironically, none of the contributors to the biblical defense were diluted enough to think that the Southern incarnation of slavery actually met the

[110] Brownlow, *The Great Iron Wheel Examined; or, Its False Spokes Extracted, and an Exhibition of Elder Graves, Its Builder. In a Series of Chapters. By William G. Brownlow.*, 285.
[111] Ibid.
[112] William Sumner Jenkins, *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South* (Gloucester, Mass: P. Smith, 1960).

standards they described. This however, demonstrated the importance of the division created during the Awakening. The expectation of the South, that salvation ultimately was an individual matter, meant that the institution itself should not be dissolved, changed, or impeded because of the actions of a few bad masters. God had instituted slavery, and as such an attack on the institution was an attack on God. Parallel to this effort was a continuation of the debate over the proper forum for discussing slavery. If slavery was primarily a political issue then politics would be required to find the solution. The biblical argument, however, repositioned the debate into a moral and religious question. The resulting shift meant that neither the churches nor the political government could solve the dilemma. Politically, slavery meant a shift in economic reality for the wealthiest portion of the nation and the potential dissolution of the nation. For the church the debate over slavery could have an impact reaching to the foundations of millennial belief.

The final aspect of the Second Great Awakening considered here explains what the nineteenth century divines thought was at stake in their actions. Millennialism can best be described as the expectation of the imminent arrival of Christ's earthly kingdom. This likely meant the end of time, but also would provide for the redemption of mankind from its sinful state. On a personal level it could then provoke fear or great anticipation. On a national level the concept of the approaching millennium helped to shape how Americans understood their role in the world. Throughout the nineteenth century the understanding of this role grew from the holdover of John Winthrop's "City on a Hill" into the image of America as the new Israel with the ultimate Destiny of redeeming the world. In other words, America very much served as the seat of millennial expectations.

Regardless of an American theologians' position on slavery, denomination, sacraments, or any other issue, all theologians had a very distinct vision of the approaching kingdom of God. Graves, Brownlow, and Howell all expected and allowed for the imminent apocalypse. Several theologians went so far as to predict when and where the conflagration would occur. Needless to say, their predictions failed to prove accurate, except in the most general of senses.[113] The sense of conflict between the forces of Good and Evil playing out within American history served to animate their understanding of the millennial role of the United States. The perpetrator of the various plots against the fulfillment of God's plan for America varied from Catholics and immigrants (if you consulted the Know Nothings) to Abolitionists or Slave Power depending on the section.[114] Brownlow's accusations of Graves' abolitionism gain a more sinister tint with the understanding of the approaching millennium.

Millennial aspirations meant that America had a specific and special role that it was destined to play in the triumph of Christ's temporal kingdom. This put an especial pressure on the American republic because it meant that the nation founded on enlightenment principles had become a nation intertwined with a religious destiny that was both tremendously compelling and horribly nondescript. Each preacher offered their own version of where, when, and how this destiny would be fulfilled; simultaneously each exhorted their listeners to remain pure until the final triumphant day arrived. Of course the meaning of purity varied, and the signs that pointed to the coming tribulation could hardly have been less clear. As millennial thought developed it became an

[113] Some divines would latter look at the Civil War as the answer to midcentury millennialism. Others offered such vague expectations that any conflict could appear to answer their expectations.
[114] James H Moorhead, *American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestants and the Civil War, 1860-1869* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 8.

expression of the political optimism and pessimism present in the day. While millennial aspirations often embraced the United States triumph in the West it also recognized the impending and increasing level of conflict over slavery. The Civil War then came to be a millennial conflict over the final destiny of the American nation.[115]

Ironically, though slavery would eventually rend the nation apart, the understanding of theological development relied least on the slave population to inform its debates. Abolitionists prove the exception, however as a mass movement abolitionists through this period had some difficulty conveying their viewpoints into the public consciousness. A select few like Charles Langston managed to gain notoriety within black communities for their early construction of religious and political ideas that would, in the fullness of time, develop into Black Nationalism and Liberation Theology. The full realization of these developments, however, remained a distant hope in the Antebellum period.[116] The development of Black theology within the slave system had a more pressing impact on the overall state of American Theology. The black church prior to the Civil War existed on two levels simultaneously. The first manifestation of Black Christianity arrived in the officially sanctioned form of open evangelism to slaves. This incorporated public preaching, and Black involvement in White and specifically slave congregations. The history of this church is well documented, and the response of Blacks to this organization was somewhat predictably divided.[117] The nature of slavery impacted

[115] Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 328; Gilbert Haven, *National Sermons. Sermons, Speeches and Letters on Slavery and Its War: From the Passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill to the Election of President Grant* (Boston, Lee and Shepard, 1869), 373–392, http://archive.org/details/nationalsermonss00have.
[116] Frederick J Blue, *No Taint of Compromise: Crusaders in Antislavery Politics*, Antislavery, Abolition, and the Atlantic World (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 65–89.
[117] Stephanie M. H Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 61; Albert J Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The*

the motives for missionary work among blacks. For white missionaries, their motives often were perceived by blacks to be representative of reinforcing the state of bondage.[118] This reinforcement could not fail to push many bonds people away from religious services. Several slaves would take the Sabbath as a rare chance to partake in communal enjoyments. The Rev. Peter Randolph, an emancipated slave who became a licensed Baptist minister, recorded, "But sometimes, while the preacher was exhorting to obedience, some of those outside [gathered at the windows of the church building due to limited seating for slaves] would be selling refreshments, cakes, candy and rum, and others would be horse-racing."[119] Rejecting the sanctioned Christianity of their masters became a means of resistance to the domination of slavery. For the Black, slave and freedman alike, an understanding of the grace of God and divine providence fell short of justifying their lot in life.

Just as a rejection of Christianity could represent a rebellion against their bondage, the acceptance of Christianity that pushed a slave to embrace clandestine religion became a potentially greater threat to the social understanding of the master. In its most extreme case the interpretation of the slave could yield a millennial vision, like that of Nat Turner, which could rival the most ardent white ministers, and could violently threaten the established social structure of Southern Society.[120] The potential for a violent

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"Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 213; Henry H Mitchell, *Black Church Beginnings: The Long-Hidden Realities of the First Years* (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub, 2004), 92–94.

[118] Janet Duitsman Cornelius, *Slave Missions and the Black Church in the Antebellum South* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 2–3; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 212.

[119] Rev Peter Randolph, *From Slave Cabin to the Pulpit: The Autobiography of REV. Peter Randolph, and Sketches of Slave Life (Dodo Press)* (Dodo Press, 2009), 196.

[120] Nat Turner and Thomas R. Gray, *The Confessions of Nat Turner, the Leader of the Late Insurrection in Southampton, Va., as Fully and Voluntarily Made to Thomas R. Gray, in the Prison Where He Was Confined, and Acknowledged by Him to Be Such, When Read before the Court of Southampton: With the*

outburst from unrestrained Black Christianity presented the most significant threat of religion not controlled by the masters. Belief at its most innocuous promised the captive eventual freedom and ultimate vindication, at least in the afterlife. The mind of the southern white Christian was captivated by the potential for a Nat Turner to rise up from the Black Church. Motivated by this belief, on the occasions where convenience seemed to dictate a black church separate from a white counterpart, exceptional measures were taken to ensure the message delivered by these organizations.[121] The black church then became invested with the same double consciousness that W.E.B. Dubois credited to the African American psyche.

In a very similar manner, though white Southerners in many ways feared the emergence of independent black institutions they also sought to encourage their growth, but not their flourishing. For Southern whites, the Black church represented an important justification for slavery. After all, part of the purpose of the institution was the elevation of blacks to a position as close to civilization as they could achieve. Christianity was integral to that development. The black church also offered one more means of controlling the black population. Many ministers in joint white and black churches, or even in the churches in the process of separating from white domination, preached a gospel supporting slavery and the loyalty of slave to master. Nonetheless, these churches represented the only organization in the South that allowed a degree of autonomy to bonds people.

Certificate, Under Seal of the Court Convened at Jerusalem, Nov. 5, 1831, for His Trial (T.R. Gray, 1832), 8–10.

[121] Mitchell, *Black Church Beginnings*, 46–49.

The experience of Christianity in Antebellum America provides at least one other significant alternative to the Protestant theological model. In the wake of the Irish Potato Famine and the Revolutionary year of 1848, several waves of predominately Catholic immigrants arrived in America. These new Americans provided the opportunity to reshape the public debate within America. Because the preconceptions of these immigrants developed in Europe, separated from basic American assumptions about theological doctrine, the increasing number of Catholics in antebellum America had the opportunity to present a new argument to the American public concerning the morality of the slave argument and the nature of Christianity. The exact nature of this argument fit well in some respects with overall American norms. The stance of the Catholic Church remained somewhat ambiguous through the 1850's. While Pope Gregory XVI issued the papal encyclical *In Supremo Apostoatus*, condemning the slave trade and seemingly the institution itself, in 1839 American priests tended to remain silent on the issue. By and large the American Catholic church lacked the desire of American Protestants to remedy the ills of society in order to perfect the world in accordance with God's will. The Catholics instead looked to promote the eternal gain of the enslaved. Slavery, like the oppression visited upon immigrants from the American party general public opinion, was an ill that simply had to be borne with what dignity and grace could be managed. The Catholic Church tended to have a stake in maintaining the stability of existing social structures. In significant portions of the world the Catholic Church represented the established standard, and the church found no benefit in causing division within Catholic ranks over slavery. Thus, Catholicism provided an opportunity to reinterpret the theological debate in a way that might have provided a middle ground. The American

propensity for persecuting and degrading the newest wave of immigrants precluded the adoption of this alternative by the Protestant public, who often seemed to view the Catholic Church as a form of spiritual slavery not far removed from Southern institution.[122]

Beyond providing a novel cultural approach to understanding antebellum society, a study of theological history provides a mirror to developments within Antebellum political and social relationships. The churches marched toward division more readily than the rest of the nation, and by reaching sectional division first, for some contemporaries, the churches played a critical part in the final act of disunion. More than helping along the dissolution of the nation, the life of antebellum churches and the theological disputes that they engendered offers a unique understanding of the differing opinions of the role of social institution within the lives of American citizens. These relationships regarded not only the discourse between the government and its people, but the church and its members as well as any social grouping and the public it sought to recruit or influence. These relationships had at their root the religious development of the second Great Awakening. It was during the course of revival that various revivals in different geographies took to answering the basic questions of theology in fundamentally separate ways. The ability to conceive and implement separate solutions not only encouraged, but supported the idea of divorcing the local unit from the larger body when differences arose. Though the Civil War was in itself not a religious war, the dispute arose within the context of theological schisms and religious discord that fueled and supported political secession.

[122] Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*, chap. 7.

Collins Elliott, Robert Howell, Reuben Ford, William Wharton, Edmund Sehon, William Sawrie, and Samuel Baldwin entered into their ministerial careers as a part of the Awakenings. Their careers followed a typical trajectory for ministers in Western American society during this period. Elliott diverged most dramatically from the other ministers; pursuing a career in education rather than a position as a minister in a congregation. Sawrie, Sehon, and Ford each began careers as itinerant ministers riding a circuit of small town congregations or leading tent revivals. William Wharton approached ministry as a second career he made a living as a pharmacist, but took a position as the leader of a Disciples of Christ congregation. The Disciples of Christ as a denomination emerged out of the revivals at Cane Ridge, Kentucky as well as a number of other revivals across the West. Robert Howell and Edmund Sehon both played roles in the sectional divisions of their denominations. Howell continued on to both led Southern Baptist Conference, and to fight against Landmarkism in Tennessee. Samuel Baldwin meanwhile made an enormous effort to connect millennial aspirations to the American state that included and defended the practice of slavery. Each minister expended enormous effort to establish their credentials as Southerners and Christians.

CHAPTER III

"THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST IS NOT OF THIS WORLD": THE MILLENNIALISM AND NATIONALISM OF ROBERT BOYTE CRAWFORD HOWELL

Howell managed to avoid Camp Chase due to severely troubled health so he found himself instead under house arrest. He continued many of his pastoral functions while detained, but he added to these the writing of a history of his own congregation the First Baptist Church from its founding to the time of his house arrest. This linked his personal history with that of the church both the local Nashville church and the sectional Southern Baptists. After several months of confinement the governor granted his parole, largely due to the intervention of influential friends. Howell spent the rest of the war trying to cope both with the slow collapse of the Confederate cause and the deterioration of his beloved First Baptist Church.[123]

The Civil War caused exceptional difficulties for both Howell and his congregation. Beyond the simple nature of the war creating increased difficulty in movement and driving a substantial portion of the population of Nashville from the city, the war challenged the entire world view of the South. Howell, and the church he served, met this challenge with consistency in their thought and actions. Howell's interpretation

[123] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 5, 1861-1862*, 5:517.

of Christianity, as established before the war, allowed initially for the creation of the Confederacy as the perfection of God's preferred institutions on earth. This same theological script allowed for adjustment to either victory or defeat. The combination of the jeremiad and millennial theology expounded by Howell before and during the war proved flexible enough to preserve Southern exceptionalism despite complete defeat.

With this in mind Robert Howell assumed a role in the life of the South that historians failed previously to grant to him or any of the ministerial class.[124] He acts as a critical player in the formation and continuation of Confederate identity. The theology that informed Howell's preaching and thus his influence roots itself in a millennial tradition of jeremiad. These ideas operated in to provide the necessary foundation from which to support secession with the expectation of victory and independence, and to reformulate identity in the wake of failure.

Examination of R. B. C. Howell captures clearly how the religious world view impacted the development of identity in the American South. Howell serves as a useful model for how the process of identity creation occurred. Through his career he spends most of his time in local parishes though in two of the most important southern cities; Nashville and Richmond. In this way he is typical of most southern ministers who typically consumed their careers laboring on a local level. Howell breaks from the norm, however, in that during the few years spent in Richmond, Howell served as the second president of the Southern Baptist Conference. Howell had also participated in the national

[124] This contradicts the assertions of Charles Reagan Wilson who argued that religious leaders of the south were not among the leaders in creating the tenants of Southern identity. Wilson argues that they served their purpose in supporting it, but they failed to contribute much to its original formulation. Here his conclusions reached too broadly, and Howell demonstrated this error. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 3-7

gathering of the Baptist church that split the congregations into two rival organizations forever sundering the national character of the Baptist church. Having both, local experience and a degree of regional, if not national, prominence Howell also contributed his voice to the emerging denominational publishing house in Nashville by publishing two volumes on the sacraments of the Baptist church.[125] Howell left a substantial quantity written records behind. The consistency of Howell's interpretation can be readily demonstrated due to the existence of several volumes of sermon notes from the span of Howell's career. Many of these sermons include dates from multiple Sundays, and the sermon notes also hold at times several layers of editing demonstrating the evolution of Howell's theology. These sermons seem to have been gathered together without any intentional order just before and during the Civil War. Howell's history of First Baptist Church (compiled while under house arrest) provides a narrative description of the evolution and impact of both his own thought, and the Civil War. This work represents Howell's most visceral reaction to the events of his imprisonment and the war itself. The minutes of church meetings during the war also yield an important source from which to view the circumstances of the war.[126]

Howell managed to make some appearances within the historiography of southern religion, but because he never assumed a truly national voice he remains an understudied figure of US religious history. Rufus Spain produced some of the most cited works on Howell's life. He examined a number of useful sources, and managed to remain evenhanded throughout his works. These however were limited in their depth to a series

[125] Howell, *Terms of Sacramental Communion*; Howell, *The Early Baptists of Virginia*; Howell, *The Evils of Infant Baptism*.
[126] Howell, "A Memorial of the First Baptist Church Nashville, Tennessee from 1820-1863."

of journal articles, and a Master's thesis. The work provided by Spain reaches farther into Howell's life than most the scholarship before or since. Despite the usefulness of this more complete picture of Howell Spain's works keep closely to the narrative of Howell's life, and provide very little help in understanding the world surrounding Howell. Spain also lacks a clear description of Howell's intellectual ideas. Without a thorough understanding of Howell's theology it is impossible to understand his place development of the Confederacy. The most common, and available, published biography of Howell appeared in 1976 by Joe Burton. This work focuses primarily on Howell's role in the schism within the Baptist church and the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention. The war time experiences of Howell and First Baptist serve only as the denouement in Burton's narrative. Linwood Horne and Charles Wren have both produced Th.D. dissertations examining the life of Howell. These both prove unsatisfactory, though for different reasons. Horne's work reached completion more than fifty years ago. Wren, however, has produced an eminently modern work, but its focus falls not on an examination of the historical issues of Howell's life, but rather on the theological issues that Howell spent his life examining and attempting to solve. In a history of the First Baptist Church, Lynn May delineates the entire history of the church. As such Howell features importantly, but in reality only as a means to advance the narrative of the church. May also brushes lightly over important issues including the interactions between the local church and the ideas and events taking place in the rest of the South.[127]

[127] Spain, Rufus B., "R.B.C. Howell, Tennessee Baptist, 1801-1868" (Thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1949); Spain, Rufus B., "R.B.C. Howell: "Nashville Baptist Leader in the Civil War Period."," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* XIV, no. 4 (December 1955): 323-340; Joe Wright Burton, *Road to Augusta: R. B. C. Howell and the Formation of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1976); Lynwood Tyler Horne, "A Study of the Life and Work of R.B.C. Howell" (Th.D., Southern Baptist

Howell seized on the religious fervor of the day, and in time became a renowned figure within the Southern Baptist Church. However, he grew up the second son of poor farmers from North Carolina. Born on March 10, 1801 he was not a member of a church until the autumn of 1820 when he presented himself for membership at the Baptist church in the city of Raleigh.[128] Chance allowed him to enroll at Columbian College in Washington DC in 1821, and left the school in 1826 to take a position preaching for a mission district in southeast Virginia. This job had been earned through the missionary board, and Howell gratefully accepted when offered in 1827 a parish in Norfolk, Virginia.[129] After serving this congregation for several years, Howell accepted a call to First Baptist Church Nashville, Tennessee and began that commission in January 1835. When he arrived the congregation had just finished its most recent schism, and needed to have a unifying influence at the helm. Howell provided that influence, and as a result First Baptist grew to a church of substantial size with several 'colored missions' which augmented its other activities.[130]

Howell and others like him sought a more contextual response to millennialism.[131] Unlike literalists, Howell argued that the millennium did not require universal conversions, nor a specific time table as the literal interpreters required. Instead, the

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Theological Seminary, 1958); Charles Michael Wren JR., "R.B.C. Howell and the Theological Foundation for Baptist Participation in the Benevolent Empire " (Dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007); Lynn E. May, *The First Baptist Church of Nashville, Tennessee, 1820-1970* (Nashville: First Baptist Church, 1970).

[128] Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "A Memorial of the First Baptist Church Nashville, Tennessee from 1820-1863 Vol. 1," Unpublished Manuscript (Nashville, Tenn, 1863), 81, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.

[129] Howell, Morton B., "Memoirs Morton B. Howell 1834-1909," Memoirs (Nashville, Tenn), 19-20, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.

[130] First Baptist Church, "Minutes and Records of the First Baptist Church Nashville, TN. 1830-1873" (Nashville, Tenn), Pub. 294, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.

[131] Charles Michael Wren JR., "R.B.C. Howell and the Theological Foundation for Baptist Participation in the Benevolent Empire ," 229.

evidence for the coming and in fact the current presence of the millennium existed all around any who would look and see. For Howell, the Great Awakenings that had spread across the US, and even American independence indicated the work of the Holy Spirit on earth.[132]

Three days after South Carolina voted to secede from the Union, and just four days after Senator Andrew Johnson concluded a two day speech opposing southern secession on the floor of the senate, Howell preached a sermon on the family to his congregation. This sermon established Howell's view that the institution of slavery included black slaves as a part of the Southern family structure. This affirmed the basic assumptions of the predominate patriarchy of the Black Belt South, and spoke directly to the political debates happening throughout his city, state, and country. Whereas many Southern preachers spent countless hours explaining the origins of slavery and its biblical orientation Howell offered a more limited commentary. Because the institution existed in all times and all nationalities, according to Howell, it was unlikely to change or disappear. For Howell, because there a clear racial structure existed, white enslavement of blacks elevated blacks from their natural state of barbarism. "The condition of African slaves in America is infinitely preferable to that of princes in their own dark land." [133] Howell left no doubt to his congregation that the peculiar institution improved the lot of the slave, and he felt no remorse or hidden guilt about its application or extension. Having assured his audience that the institution of slavery accorded an elevated position the captives throughout history, Howell proceeded to consider the position of the slave in the

[132] Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "The Millennium," in *Manuscript Notes of Sermons*, vol. 10 (Nashville, Tenn: Unpublished), 847-891; Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "Prepare to meet thy God," in *Manuscript Notes of Sermons*, vol. 3 (Nashville, Tenn: Unpublished), 29-40.
[133] Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "The Discourse," *The Nashville Daily Gazette*, January 13, 1861.

American South. The institution itself Howell found to be wholly biblical, and as such not open to attack. The practice of the individual might leave something to be desired, but Howell explained, "Men are imperfect. Consequently society is imperfect."[134] The issue for Howell was a matter of individual adherence to proper moral standards. Moreover, as long as slaves were treated reasonably well they served as a critical part of the divine family, and both the slave and the master profited from that relationship.

For Howell, and much of the South, the truly insidious threat in abolition was the forced termination of the master's right to hold their purchased slave as property. Howell believed abolition represented a much more dangerous idea than the maintenance of slavery. Howell had no problem with a person choosing not to own slaves, and he stated that he had no issue with the abolition of the institution by universal consent. His primary concern involved the deprivation of property rights. Howell's criticism landed only against this particular type of abolitionist. "But let him [the abolitionist] not deceive himself by supposing that he is on these accounts a better Christian than the slaveholder; that he is any more just, benevolent, or humane; nor especially that he is governed in his views on this subject by any truly enlightened scriptural principles." [135] After all, Howell argued that true religion called for the perpetuation of slavery as sanctified and governed by Jesus Christ. For Howell, God's Kingdom, as it was to appear on earth, should be populated by divinely inspired instruments, and slavery was one such instrument. Much more troubling than slavery were abolitionists. Their insistence on tearing down a divine institution represented not only a great deal of pretension, but also a dangerous usurpation

[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.

of God's ability to truly divide right from wrong. Howell sought rather than proposing man's judgment for the divine's that, "every man should be satisfied with the lot which God in his providence has assigned him." The providence of God took over the ability of the government or social custom to arrange the moral standing of any given institution. This could only be expected as Howell built the foundations of the millennial state in the South.[136]

Howell successfully employed a classic preaching technique in exhorting this world view. The jeremiad, as a style of preaching, represents an attempt to hearken back to the teachings of the prophets of the Old Testament who argue that judgment would be called down upon Israel unless the people of Israel to return to the covenant. Howell approached this tactic in several different manners by simultaneously exhorting his congregation to make amends for sins, and also to maintain themselves in a right state with God, This directly applied to the American state as Howell readily identified the United States as the new incarnation of Israel.[137] The message produced by the jeremiad resulted in sermons as blunt as the one titled "Prepare to meet thy God" or in a much more subtle manner as in the sermon "Government of the Heart." In the first Howell preached the message that God had proclaimed to all peoples that they must be prepared to meet their God. Howell left little room for doubt in this message:

> It is addressed to every human being that lives upon the face of the whole earth. To the shivering inhabitants of frozen Lakeland, and the wandering child of the burning sun who lives the sands of Africa, the

[136] Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "The Danger of the Moralist," in *Manuscript Notes of Sermons*, vol. 9 (Nashville, Tenn: Unpublished, 1852), 953; Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "Presumption of Men," in *Manuscript Notes of Sermons*, vol. 3 (Nashville, Tenn: Unpublished), 511

[137] Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "The Law," in *Manuscript Notes of Sermons*, vol. 3 (Nashville, Tenn: Unpublished), 68.

> admonition is addressed -- 'Prepare to meet thy God.' To the voluptuous Asiatic, and the scowling Indian, who traverses the deep forests of our western wilderness, Jehovah says -- 'Prepare to meet thy God.' To the polished sons of favoured Europe, and still more favoured America, he who is constituted the final Judge of all men, addresses the call -- 'Prepare to meet thy God.'[138]

This quote demonstrates many important features of Howell's theology. For Howell and his parishioners, very real and distinct differences existed between the races, and these formed the foundation of the world view in this statement. The divisions in the races not only placed whites in a position to hold blacks as property, but also placed Americans in a superior position in comparison to Europe. This eventually extended to pit South in a more divine arena than North. It is with this message of preparation that Howell pushes his congregation to pursue the kingdom of God while they can and for the glory of their favored nation. The message in "Government of the Heart" presented a calmer exhortation. Here Howell reminds his congregation that in order to keep heart and avoid slipping into evil requires the utmost diligence and continual effort.[139] These sermons intended to develop the idea that the South existed as a nation chosen for a higher purpose, but in order to live up to the standard required for the advent of Christ's kingdom the South had to exist as a nation centered on their religious duty.

Howell played an instrumental role in the division of the Baptist church, and approached the issue of schism in the same manner that he later approached secession. Any governing body that required its members to act in a manner contrary to God's

[138] Howell, "Prepare to meet thy God," 33.
[139] Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "Government of the Heart," in *Manuscript Notes of Sermons*, vol. 8 (Nashville, Tenn: Unpublished), 145-154.

established law had to be unequivocally resisted.[140] This allowed Howell to support division from northern churches as they advocated the abolition of slavery, and also drew Howell into a position where he left Nashville to serve as the president of the Southern Baptist Convention. However, when strife and schism again faced First Baptist Church Howell returned to Nashville to resolve the dispute.

The issue at hand was that of "old landmarkism."[141] This formation of Baptist theology determined that only true churches could act legitimately on behalf of Christ. This meant that not only were others excluded from the true church, but since 'true churches' tended to be local in nature it also meant religious societies, and mission organizations could be dismissed. In large part this effectively excluded much of the evangelical efforts of the larger church since the Second Great Awakening. Further, by dismissing the missionary societies this stood to threaten the millennial theology (with its evangelical impetus) that Howell supported, and that mixed with Southern identity to form a powerful imagined community contrary to the North and the federal government. It also had the effect of threatening Baptist cohesion, and church authority. Howell firmly opposed landmarkism, and by returning to Nashville he set out to root it from the church. This process consumed the last few years before the outbreak of the war, and continued almost until the fall of Nashville. As late as September of 1861 the church in Nashville still has not resolved the landmarkist controversy.[142] The resolution eventually required

[140] "The Law"; "The relations between Baptist principles and political liberty"; "Connection between religion and civil government".
[141] Graves, *The Great Iron Wheel, or, Republicanism Backwards and Christianity Reversed in a Series of Letters Addressed to J. Soule, Senior Bishop of the M.E. Church, South*.
[142] First Baptist Church, "Minutes and Records of the First Baptist Church Nashville, TN. 1830-1873" (Nashville, Tenn), Pub. 294, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.

the trial of J.R. Graves (the leader of the landmarkists), and the expulsion of him and his followers from First Baptist Nashville.[143]

Thus, at the opening of the Civil War, the First Baptist Church stood greatly divided, having spent almost its entire existence in continual disquiet. In spite of this, the congregation had grown to an impressive size, had a comfortable financial situation, and had even opened two missions among the black communities. In fact these organizations had achieved substantial growth, and one of the missions had obtained its own building for worship services.[144] The Graves controversy had caused trouble for the congregation, but it had not wounded it too severely.

In addition, through the opening months and year of the war little could be seen of the wars impact on the congregation from the church records that survived.[145] The first time the war receives any mention in the minutes of the congregation is upon the occasion of the death of a member in battle, and in this instance the congregation addresses the death in rather an ostentatious manner. They not only eulogize the fallen brother in a resolution passed by the congregation, but they also assemble a list of all members currently in the southern army, and issue a letter to each informing them of the loss.[146] This sort of a gesture, while heartfelt and genuine, clearly demonstrates the

[143] Landmarkism continued on well into the post war era, and for a while flourished. Thus, the resolution of the controversy refers to the controversy at First Baptist Church not with in the national community. That said many scholars do attribute Howell with having kept landmarkism a regional issue instead of elevating it to the national stage.
[144] They owned a building for worship, but they had not yet paid for the building. At the opening of the war they still owed a little over $1000.00 on the property, and they needed help from the First Baptist parent congregation in order to keep up with the mortgage.
[145] First Baptist Church, "Minutes and Records of the First Baptist Church Nashville, TN. 1830-1873" (Nashville, Tenn), Pub. 294, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.
[146] ibid.

congregation's fortunate status as relatively untouched by the first year of the war, and most unfortunately this effort was not to be repeated as the war progressed.

The pastor's book begins to tell a different story of the congregation during 1861. The number of people admitted to membership in the congregation had begun to fall off. In 1858 the list of new members stretched on for several pages in Howell's record. 1861 saw only a hand full on new members, and those numbers would drop even more following the conquest of Nashville by the Union forces.[147] By 1864 only five members entered First Baptist, and of those five only two survived beyond June of 1865.[148] The capture of Nashville exacerbated a difficult situation.

On February 25th, 1862 General Don Carlos Buell took control of the city and guaranteed its safety and protection from violence. In response to this the Mayor of Nashville ordered the resumption of all normal business activities that had been suspended pending the outcome of the occupation.[149] Howell noted that the initial occupation had gone so smoothly that he felt pleased with his decision to remain in the city and tend to his family and congregation.[150]

If Howell's initial opinions had been positive and accommodating toward the occupation, that changed with the imposition of military rule under the auspices of

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[147] Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "Pastor's Book First Baptist Church Nashville, Tennessee. In Morton Boyte Howell Family Papers 1799-1960" (Nashville, TN, 1863), IV-E-5; VII-D-2v, Tennessee State Library and Archives

[148] The pastor's book provides several causes for death, and all seem to be due to natural causes.

[149] "eHistory at OSU | Online Books | The Official Records of the Civil War," Vol. 7 p.424, http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/sources/records/; Walter T Durham, *Nashville, the Occupied City: The First Seventeen months, February 16, 1862 to June 30, 1863* (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, 1985), 49-50.

[150] Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "A Memorial of the First Baptist Church Nashville, Tennessee from 1820-1863 Vol. 2," 370.

Andrew Johnson. Johnson received the appointment to be Military Governor of Tennessee, with the power to create tribunals and suspend Habeas Corpus, "until the loyal inhabitants of that state shall organize a civil government in conformity with the Constitution of the United States."[151]

Despite his humility on entering the city, Johnson's reception lacked hospitality. Howell commented after his captivity that Johnson's arrival had signaled instant change for the city. "Instantly the whole scene was changed; General Buell's 'Order'[152] was denounced as 'giving aid and comfort to the rebellion;' and the 'Reign of Terror' commenced, which has ever since reveled in the miseries and suffering and spoliation of the people."[153] Johnson began wielding a loyalty oath to separate out those in positions of influence in the city who would be opposed to his administration, and the reestablishment of Tennessee into the Union. This created a constant stream of political prisoners through the Nashville prisons all eventually flowing south beyond Union lines, or north to Union prisoner of war camps.

Howell now saw an increasingly dangerous situation developing in Nashville. Most businessmen failed to be able to renew their licenses, and thus went out of business, usurped by loyalists and 'Yankees.' Furthermore, several members of First Baptist Church lost property, slaves, valuables, and according to Howell "in a few cases have been murdered in cold blood, in the presence of their wives and children."[154] This claim proves to have more to do with Howell's perceptions than it does the reality of Union

[151] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 5, 1861-1862*, 177,195-197.
[152] The order refers to Gen. Buell's guarantee of the safety of the citizens and property of Nashville.
[153] Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "A Memorial of the First Baptist Church Nashville, Tennessee from 1820-1863 Vol. 2", 371.
[154] ibid. 374.

occupation. The typical result of the occupation of a portion of the South during the war was the creation of an artificial borderland between Union and Confederate lines. The occupation of Nashville occurred in a similar fashion; in fact being so early in the war it set the trend for later occupations. This meant while lawlessness increased outside the city in the zone between the combatants within the city order was reestablish quickly after the occupation occurred. Once reestablished the only thing that would upset the order of the city tended to be the recapture of a city by the opposing side.[155] Thus, Howell's narrative proves a stirring account, but ultimately more illustrative of Howell than of the state of Nashville. It is clear from this account that Howell interpreted events through the prism of millennialism mixed with Southern identity. In this situation the invading North would naturally represent a force bent on the destruction of the South, and by extension the destruction of God's kingdom in the South. Effectively, Howell is writing a part for the North that fits his grasp of the theological implications of the situation. It is also worth noting that Howell composed this tale of Union depredations while imprisoned by Northern forces. He was prone to overstating his case.

Prior to his arrest Howell left detailed instructions for the deacons of First Baptist Church to continue with the full range of activities currently engaged in by the congregation. They were not to stop worshiping, offering Sunday school, or any other function of the church. Howell intended to preserve as much of the church as could survive the war intact. Howell also held suspicions about why the governor chooses him to stand with the other ministers who would end up arrested. "...he knew that most of

[155] Stephen V Ash, *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed, 1860-1870: War And peace in the Upper South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988); Ash, *When the Yankees Came*; Peter Maslowski, *Treason Must Be Made Odious: Military Occupation and Wartime Reconstruction in Nashville, Tennessee, 1862-65*, KTO studies in American history (Millwood, N.Y: KTO Press, 1978)

those Abolitionists who were expelled from the church with Mr. Graves, and a few others, had the ear of the Governor, and they would if possible," have Howell arrested as a form of retribution for his victory within the church.[156] This is a bit paranoid of Howell, especially since he proved a rather recognizable figure without the help of disgruntled former parishioners. It also strikes a discordant note with the historiography. The histories of Southern abolitionists have generally been so scarce as to be the exceptions that prove the rule. By and large it would be difficult or impossible to find a Southern man or woman willing to advocate for abolition. This would be especially true in Nashville. As a county, Davidson had as many slaves as most areas within the cotton belt.[157] This statement proves important not because of its accuracy, but rather because of its confirmation of Howell's outlook on events. As Howell saw it, with the complicity of Graves and the other Landmarkists the fall of Nashville represented a righteous defeat of the Confederacy because of the continuing sins of its disloyal members. Likewise, 'Abolitionists' within Nashville represented a blight against the South. These men had abandoned the truth of God's law, and for their lack of faith the Confederacy received punishments in the form of defeat.

For Johnson's part, he needed to clearly establish the supremacy of the Federal government no matter what the merits or nature of those in opposition. Howell and the rest of these ministers presented a unique avenue to demonstrate this. While the public supported and attempted offer aid and comfort to the ministers while they were housed locally in the state penitentiary; Johnson sought to pressure the ministers into signing the

[156] This is the same Mr. Graves who had been responsible for instigating the Landmarkist controversy within the Tennessee Baptist Church. Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "A Memorial of the First Baptist Church Nashville, Tennessee from 1820-1863 Vol. 2,", 398
[157] Ash, *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed, 1860-1870*, 36

loyalty oath. He cut the access of the public to their cells, and sent orders to the prison that the ministers should confined away from the other prisoners. The ministers represented such a threat to Johnson that he required them to be held in an isolated state not extended to any of the other military or political prisoners in the penitentiary. The congregants of Howell and the other arrested ministers protested the imprisonment, such that Johnson publically admonished the in his Fourth of July Speech.

Despite Johnson's disapproval, the guards at the prison sympathized with the detained clergy, and began to allow them leeway in their daily routine. The guards most loyal to Johnson reportedly began to advise him that the only way they would cajole the prisoners into taking the oath would be to hang one of them.[158] Johnson, however, chose to restructure their sentences and issued orders for the pastors to be shipped to prison camps in the North. Howell, however, proved too sick to be transported.[159] After roughly two months in the penitentiary with increasingly failing health several friends of Howell (described as Knights Templar) interceded on his behalf with the Governor. This proved enough of a motive to win Howell a day to day parole that he held for the remainder of the war, and allowed him to return to his pastoral duties.[160]

Howell understood a very important lesson from his release. His congregation continued to meet in his absence, and pray fervently for his release. To Howell this proved to be the explanation for why he received parole while the other prisoners labored on in northern prisoner of war camps.

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[158] Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "A Memorial of the First Baptist Church Nashville, Tennessee from 1820-1863 Vol. 2", 407.
[159] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 5, 1861-1862*, 578.
[160] Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "A Memorial of the First Baptist Church", 414-415.

> The First Baptist Church, was the only church of any denomination in the city, whose pastor had been removed, that met together without a minister regularly, and perseveringly, to pray for his release, and restoration. Its pastor was the only one that was released and restored. Who can doubt that God conferred this boon in answer to the prayers of his people?[161]

Howell also derived from his experience that when circumstances permit civil authorities to depart from the rule of law and order any measure, no matter how "revolting" will be utilized to dispatch with any perceived threat to its authority. Howell continued on to accuse Lincoln and the 'Federal Union' with the destruction of liberty in the same way that the Roman Republic fell before the might of Empire. Importantly, Howell did not stop at blaming the northern political leadership with the sins of the war, but he extended the guilt to all who resided in the north and in his words said to Lincoln:

> This rebellion must be crushed, and speedily; to this end do what you please; exercise any power you may deem desirable; it is a military necessity; the people by their representatives in Congress will sustain you; they will absolve you from all blame. Mr. Lincoln and his Cabinet and his Military Commanders were but too ready to do their bidding. Thus the people abdicated all rule; the government has no longer any laws capable of being executed; and we who are under the dominion of the United States, have no rights; we are a herd of abject slaves.[162]

In this statement Howell's millennialism approaches its zenith. Previously Howell had preached several sermons concerning the relationship between Christians and their governments. In these works Howell established a general rule that every Christian had the duty to obey and support their established government in so far as that regime did not

[161] ibid. 415.
[162] ibid. 419.

require its citizens to break from the word of God.[163] Within this statement Howell begins to approach the understanding that, "still more favoured America," had fallen into the pitiless fate long predicted in so many jeremiads. This, however, seems to contradict the millennial approach to Christian faith. The millennialism preached by Howell before the war tended to have an optimistic understanding of the world, and its advancement toward instituting God's kingdom. The description above demonstrates the failure of this kingdom to be established on earth due to human sin and short comings. However, Howell's millennialism never rested on a firm foundation of literal interpretation. Instead, Howell approaches this moment as a partial fulfillment of the scripture and a validation that Christ's Kingdom is not of this world.

Howell for several years had been revisiting his sermons and adjusting them, or adding amendments to them. In the early 1850's Howell preached a dramatic and moving sermon titled, "The Kingdom of Christ is not of this World."[164] In this discourse Howell established the church on earth as the current Kingdom of Christ, but this kingdom served not as a state or nation rather it acted as a spiritual kingdom. The understanding and misinterpretation of this rule had led to some of the, "most lamentable evils." Within this sermon though rests the interpretation of millennialism separate from the tribulations of this world. Howell effectively prepared the severance of the link between America and God's Kingdom. By doing this he ensured that millennial theology would continue to

[163] Howell, "The Law"; Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "Duty of Christians with Regard to Peace," in *Manuscript Notes of Sermons*, vol. 8 (Nashville, Tenn: Unpublished), 31-41; Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "The Primary and Most Important Obligation of all Christians is to Seek the Glory and Advancement of the Kingdom of our Redeemer ," in *Manuscript Notes of Sermons*, vol. 8 (Nashville, Tenn: Unpublished), 537-547

[164]Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "The Kingdom of Christ is not of this World," in *Manuscript Notes of Sermons*, vol. 8 (Nashville, Tenn: Unpublished), 714-732

inform Southern beliefs even if it meant for the postwar South to redeem America rather than survive as a separate Confederacy. This separation allows for defeat without the fundamental destruction of the underlying world view. Howell's conception of the spiritual kingdom existed before the war, but reached its final form at some point during or after the conflict. On the title page of this particular sermon Howell scribbled in a note either to himself or to others who might later read his sermon. "This subject as here discussed, is in several respects, not truly represented. It must be revised and corrected. I understand it now, better than I did when these notes were prepared."[165] The reader is left to guess when the note was composed, but it seems likely that this was in effect a reaction to his war time experience.

First Baptist Church, despite surviving the arrest of its pastor, received notice from the military commanders in Nashville, early in 1863 just after Howell's release, that they now would be deprived of their building. The military, as it did with many southern church buildings, planned to use the space as a hospital facility. This presented a new range of issues for the congregation. Not only would they need a new space for their worship, but their space for worship would be filled with bleeding, and dying in a manner that would likely cause permanent damage to the facility. Once again there was little that could be done to change the minds of those who had made the decision, and the church had no means for challenging the seizure. Remarkably the congregation found a space available for worshiping at the Young Men's Christian Association building. In this moment of continuing change and adaptation Howell ends his narrative of the First Baptist Church with a telling conclusion. "There they assemble at their wonted periods. A

[165]ibid. 714

small remnant of a numerous body, and occupying an unsightly private room, the church is now very nearly what it was thirty years ago."[166]

Howell's assessment of the situation of the church presents a bleak picture of its state of affairs. The complete image of the church as described in the minutes of the church demonstrated a very different reality. The "colored missions" the church had long ago established experienced a steady and continual growth throughout the war. They submitted their regular reports to the church board with an almost perceptible glee at their ever increasing attendance. In addition they suffered neither the arrest of their pastor nor the seizure of their building. Instead as the black populations of Nashville gained additional liberties so the missions grew and established an ever increasing independence and strength.[167] By the end of the war the black mission had doubled in size to almost 500 members, and shortly after the conclusion of the war it petitioned for independence from First Baptist Church along with a transfer of their place of worship to the sole control.[168] The black church experienced a vastly different Civil War than their white counterparts, but the white church needed nothing more to verify the world had turned upside down.

In the midst of occupation, Howell insisted that by 1863 all the work he had achieved for his church, over the span of his career had been undone. Howell saw a congregation without a place to worship and lacking the means to support itself. He failed to look at the African American missions that had been initiated by the church. This indicates that Howell never took the African American Missions to be truly part of the

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[166] Robert Boyte Crawford Howell, "A Memorial of the First Baptist Church Nashville, Tennessee from 1820-1863 Vol. 2", 433.
[167] First Baptist Church, "Minutes and Records of the First Baptist Church Nashville, TN. 1830-1873" (Nashville, Tenn), Pub. 294, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.
[168] May, *The First Baptist Church of Nashville, Tennessee, 1820-1970*, 110-111.

work achieved by First Baptist Church. This maintains the understanding of Howell and most white southerners that Blacks represented something that could not be included as a part of the real church. Despite this exclusion, the black church that had been initiated by First Baptist grew rapidly throughout the war as Nashville was filled by slaves fleeing the countryside looking for work, or security from the shifting lines of the war. The black church, also, demonstrated the peculiarities of Union military rule. Property often ended up confiscated by the army when military necessity required it, but the occupation forces preferred to seize the property of those who proved their disloyalty.[169] This military policy indicates not only a war to defeat the Confederacy in battle, but also to break their cultural hold in the south. The war aimed to punish Confederates. Howell as a staunch Confederate national bore his share of that punishment.

At the midpoint of the war, the First Baptist Church of Nashville had lost it pastor, temporarily, and its building for the remainder of the war. The records of the church become increasingly spotty as the members scatter, and worship as well as meetings became more difficult to hold with regularity. These records show a continuation of the difficulties exhibited in the first years of war. The membership continued to fall off, and the irregularity in a meeting place caused a great deal of disruption. Despite these difficulties the church managed to survive these lean years without a suspension of activities. That yielded little consolation for the church, and if the war had continued longer the church may have bent to the pressures of the conflict.

[169]Several historians have examined the role and nature of hard war policies. For the most part their arguments are distinct and separate form this, but they are useful in attempting to determine if the Union policies aimed at attacking the cultural foundations of the Confederacy. Stephen V Ash, *When the Yankees Came: Conflict and Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865*, Civil War America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)

Shortly after the cessation of open violence, in the spring of 1865 the situation of the church began to change. The government restored the church building to the congregation. In addition the congregation asked for and received payment for the damage inflicted upon the building. Though the church minutes clearly state the payment fell several thousand dollars short of the costs to repair the war damage to the building itself. Any payment at all to the church seems almost an apology by the Union for the damage done in the war, or perhaps an indication that the initial motives contained no malice or intentionality in their implementation. The motive seems more to be an act of reunion and reconciliation. After the defeat of the Confederacy as a military threat the cultural survival of that entity lost some of its significance in comparison to the benefit of magnanimity in victory. The full recovery of First Baptist Church took several years. The attendance at church and the entrance of new members to the congregation recovered quickly.[170]

Howell, unlike his congregation, failed to every completely recover from the war. He helped to rebuild the church in the immediate aftermath of the war and continued as pastor of the congregation. In early 1867 he suffered paralysis on the left side. He noted in his pastor's book that he had expected it to kill him as he had seen similar symptoms kill several of his friends. Instead he survived just over a year more surviving in declining health until April 7th 1868.

Robert Boyte Crawford Howell spent his life as a pastor and a loyal Southerner. Maintaining both loyalties at the same time required a significant amount of blending the

[170]First Baptist Church, "Minutes and Records of the First Baptist Church Nashville, TN. 1830-1873"; Howell, "Pastor's Book First Baptist Church Nashville, Tennessee. In Morton Boyte Howell Family Papers 1799-1960."

two together. As a result, Howell preached a Millennial Confederacy. In his efforts the early victories of the war represented the pouring out of God's providence upon his chosen nation. This, however, turned by the end of the war into a different understanding of how God's kingdom operated. That the South lost the Civil War did not unseat Howell's beliefs, but rather it caused Howell to reposition the knowledge he already had obtained in order to support the new conclusions required by Confederate defeat. Calling the intellectual efforts undertaken during the war an effort at reconstructing southern identity seems misleading.

Clearly the traumatic events of the war shaped how white Southern experienced their national and regional identity, but beyond this those events did not fundamentally change the identity of white southerners. Because of the flexible nature of millennial theology the Confederate imagination and identity could shift as quickly as victory could turn to defeat. This allowed for the strengthening of the Lost Cause myth after the war as commonalities in myth making and religion between the sections proved more unifying than race could prove dividing. Howell intellectually represented one of many foundational characters who could have aided the development of this identity, but what made Howell important are simultaneously his eloquence and his stubborn adherence to the causes that shaped Southern exceptionalism despite their failure to maintain a nation.

The demise of the Confederacy pushed Howell not to abandon public life, but rather to maintain his involvement in the church to the breaking of his health. It would be easy to laud a man for so ardently defending his beliefs, but that would also abdicate responsibility for those beliefs and the implications. Howell helped to perpetuate an

identity based on some of the most destructive forces known to the past two centuries. Racism and religion mixed to cause the strong, but tragically misguided Lost Cause to overwhelm other interpretations of the Civil War. Howell serves in very real ways as a metaphor for the South. Before, during, and after the war the application of his ideas shaped how he viewed his world, and tended to skew it in a single direction. Despite this, he managed to maintain a clear consciousness, and continue to pursue a re-imagined identity. This he managed successfully, just as the South managed the same re-invention.

CHAPTER IV

SEHON AND SAWRIE: CIRCUIT RIDERS AND MORAL SUASION

Both Edmund Sehon and William Sawrie began their careers as ministers spreading the gospel on the frontiers of the trans-Appalachian west. In antebellum America choosing a career as a minister offered a unique range of future opportunities. It meant the potential of further advancement both in wealth and social prestige.[171] These advances came with a substantial cost depending on denominational affiliation. The most socially acceptable denomination required a higher degree of education before ordination, and thus required a greater degree of wealth from the outset. Southern society granted the greatest pride of place to the Episcopalian tradition. Episcopalians also looked for a greater educational background than the Baptist or Methodist churches. Likewise, the better established and wealthier congregations in cities required greater credentials of their ministers. The evangelical denominations, generally, required less education, but also frequently placed young ministers on the frontier as circuit riders and itinerant ministers. As with many of the itinerate ministers, of this period they left an insubstantial imprint on the historical record. However, their imprint on the Methodist denomination when combined with their fellow circuit riders was more substantial than historians have

[171] An increase in wealth depended in large part on where the ministerial candidate started. If the new pastor emerged from a wealthy family he would likely earn less than his siblings. However, from a family of modest or nonexistent resources the ministry could offer a clear path into the middle class.

previously credited.[172] This impact included a significant voice in shaping the policy of the church of Slavery, and the mid-century schisms.

Sehon and Sawrie, however, represent much of what was typical for the itinerant minister. However, they had several distinct differences in upbringing, but in the course of their ministry they proved fairly typical of the Methodist traveling minister. That being said, they left a smaller record of their work than many or perhaps most settled ministers. This might be due to the nature of their work. The regular travels left a fragmented record, and limited the potential of an archive to preserve their papers. For a minister serving in a primarily sedentary denominational archives, and congregational records could easily be gathered. The itinerant minister, however, made only passing impressions in the record of the denominational organization. This offers an explanation for the dearth of materials, but not the lack of historical inquiry. These two ministers shared the same job description, and on occasion crossed paths, but they also represented much of the diversity present in ministerial ranks. While Sehon emerged from a family with means; Sawrie could not easily afford higher education. Through much of their careers the two spoke to different audiences, and yet arrived at similar conclusions.

The ministers offer a tantalizing glimpse at the role of circuit riders in antebellum society. They do not, however, offer a clear narrative that weaves their lives together. It is not clear that they knew each other until just before the outbreak of war at which point they were both serving the Methodist community in Nashville.

[172] Itinerant missionaries and circuit riders were in many cases the figures responsible for organizing, conducting, and building churches out of revivals. They played an enormous role that has not been recognized in it appropriate historical context. Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation*, 1985; Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America*; Noll, *America's God*; Mitchell Snay, *Gospel of Disunion: Religion and Separatism in the Antebellum South* (New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

William David Franklin Sawrie was the younger of the two born in North Carolina in 1812. His family then moved to middle Tennessee north of Nashville. Here he professed his faith as a youth and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. Late in 1830 he was licensed to preach by the MEC, and within a few years he began to be assigned to various circuits through western and middle Tennessee and northern Alabama. He met his wife, Idelia Hewlett while preaching in Alabama. The 1850 census listed Sawrie and his wife as residents of Macon county Alabama with four children. The oldest child was seven years old which placed his birth in the first year and a half of Sawrie's marriage. The census does not record the value of any family property, but the second of the Sawrie's three sons was born in Tennessee and was only 3 years old. This indicated that, despite the acquisition of a family, Sawrie continued to be highly mobile in his employment. By 1856 he had again returned to Nashville; this time as the Presiding Elder of the District. It is not clear if he held this same position until the Civil War, but he nonetheless seems to have remained in Nashville. He was appointed to the Board of the Nashville Female Academy, and appears to have established a good relationship with Collins Elliott. Sawrie also gained ownership of at least one slave. The ownership of slaves by ministers, let alone ministers employed as circuit riders, had been at the center of the Methodist Schism. No more is known of Sawrie's slaves except that one of them died in Nashville, in 1857. She was named Elizabeth, eight years old, and buried in the African American cemetery.[173]

[173] "1850 Census," accessed July 17, 2012, http://files.usgwarchives.org/al/madison/census/1850/pg0425a.txt; *Annals of Southern Methodism for 1856 : Methodist Episcopal Church, South : Free Download & Streaming : Internet Archive*, accessed October 20, 2011, http://www.archive.org/details/annalsofsouthern00meth; "MADISON COUNTY

The reason that Sawrie was included among the ministers questioned by Johnson is not clear. He was paroled along with most of the ministers in late October of 1862. Sawrie seems to disappear until the end of the war when he emerged again in Nashville as the head of Methodist city missions, a post he maintained for the next three years until he accepted a more permanent position at the Claiborne Chapel in 1869. He remained in this post until he resumed his position of presiding elder in Nashville. He continued in this capacity from 1877 to 1881. The last years of his life were spent in parish ministry. Up to the week of his death, he continued to preside over services; one of his obituaries credited Sawrie with presiding over three services the Sunday before he died.[174]

Sawrie's obituaries offered a number of general statements about his character that, in part make him more difficult to decipher as a historical figure. Immediately after Sawrie's death, the Methodist ministers of Nashville gathered to offer remembrances, and provide testimonies of his life. This resulted in a resolution in Sawrie's honor, and a newspaper article recording the remembrances of the local ministers. They all agreed that Sawrie had been a remarkable minister, and had in point of fact converted some of the attending ministers to Christianity and Methodism. Collins Elliott offered, "That Dr. Sawrie was a great lover of peace; that he was prudent, and would not antagonize persons

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ALABAMA MARRIAGE LICENSES," accessed July 17, 2012, http://madisoncountyal.gov/mcrc/search.php; "Nashville City Cemetery Association, Inc. - African-American Interments," accessed July 17, 2012, http://www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org/aa-I.htm; Collins D. Elliott, "Nashville Female Academy" (Nashville, TN, May 22, 1866), THS 37, Tennessee State Library and Archives; "The M.E. Church South: Meeting of the District Confrences," *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Nashville Tennesseean*, May 3, 1881; "Religious Intelligence," *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Nashville Tennesseean*, March 19, 1881; *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the Year 1884* (Nashville, TN: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1886), 36–37.

[174] "A Good Man Gone: Death of Rev. W. D. F. Sawrie-- A Veteran in the Methodist Ministry," *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Nashville Tennesseean*, November 28, 1884; "Sawrie.pdf," n.d.

and things unnecessarily or so as to create a disturbance."[175] This is not exactly the description of an ardent rebel arrested for his political proclivities. The obituary that appeared the next year in the conference report of Tennessee described Sawrie as "eminently a revivalist." It is then possible or even likely that Sawrie found his way into Camp Chase as an accident of his acquaintance with the other ministers rather than as a result of any actions he personally undertook. The obituaries also seem to demonstrate the common practice of not speaking ill of the dead. The reviews are glowing and consistent to the point that they undoubtedly are not a fiction contrived by friends. The observations were not always confirmed. During the Civil War, a note appeared in the Nashville Daily Union that condemned Sawrie and the other arrested ministers. The unknown author of this blurb reported that the ministers had been sent to the Jeffersonville, Indiana prison camp. It bid the ministers good riddance and warned the, "Cilis in coelum redeatis! Though the fires of Purgatory will have a great deal of purification to do before you ever get there!"[176] To be publishing after Johnson's appointment as military governor meant that the Nashville Daily Union supported the Northern war effort. That perhaps accounts for the venom contained in the condemnation of Sawrie. Nonetheless the newspaper found Sawrie a reasonable target for such a condemning attack.

Edmund Sehon left a larger impact on the historical record. As with Sawrie, obituaries best describe many of the details of his life. He was born in 1808 in Virginia to

[175] "Rev. W. D. F.: Resolution Adopted by the Methodist Preachers of Nashville," *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Nashville Tennesseean*, November 29, 1884, 4.
[176] "Rev. W. D. F.: Resolution Adopted by the Methodist Preachers of Nashville"; "The Nashville Daily Union. (Nashville, Tenn.) 1862-1866, August 01, 1862, Image 3" no. 1862/08/01 (August 1, 1862), http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83025718/1862-08-01/ed-1/seq-3/; *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the Year 1884*, 36–37.

a family with some means. His father served as the Chancery Clerk of the Western judicial district of Virginia. Sehon was therefore able to secure an education, and enrolled in, "the University of the State of Ohio, at Athens."[177] He graduated at 18 with distinction; his father at this point intended Sehon to enter the field of law. Sehon, however found himself drawn to religion after he had visited a camp revival during a school break. He converted to Methodism, and determined to become a preacher of the gospel. This rather upset his father. The obituary printed in the Louisville Conference report of 1876 stated, "He [Sehon's father] had no objections to his son's being religious; and yet, with his aristocratic notions, he would much have preferred that his religion should have been less demonstrative, and that he should have united with a more fashionable church— more in agreement with the social status of the family."[178]

While the circuit rider played an important role in the development of American denominations they were not viewed to have the same social status of a minister tending to a long established East Coast congregation. After his conversion, Sehon returned to school, and began to preach. His graduation saw him hired to preach as a circuit rider in Western Pennsylvania. This would eventually allow Sehon to move farther west in the Youngstown area of Ohio. He continued to preach in this circuit until his ordination at which point he was transferred to Cincinnati; then to Missouri where he met and married his wife, Caroline McLane, in 1833. Through the remainder of the 1830's Sehon continued to wander at the direction of the Methodist church. He returned to Ohio,

[177] *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the Year 1876* (Nashville, TN: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1883), 38–40.
[178] "Sehon.pdf," n.d., 39.

serving in Columbus and again in Cincinnati. During this period he also took on a role as agent for Augusta College, and as the General Agent of the American Bible Society.[179]

By 1844, he had achieved enough prominence within his conference that they choose to send Sehon as a delegate to the General Conference of the Methodist Church in New York. This was the year the Methodist church split over slavery during their general meeting. The schism revolved around the issue of missionary's ability to hold their positions and hold slaves. Sehon sided publically with the Southern delegates. He made a speech in defense of their opinion, and presented a resolution to uphold the Southern position. Sehon joined the Tennessee Conference of the Southern Church. They quickly returned him to the border between the Northern and Southern churches. Through most of the 1850's Sehon preached and worked in Northern Kentucky and Southern Ohio. He received a position in Tennessee by the eruption of the Civil War, and would be a rather recognizable figure to local religious leaders given his stance in the schism of the Methodist Church.[180] Sehon was paroled in October, and seems to have spent the remainder of the war traveling the South to raise funds for the relief of the refugees created by federal occupation. It is known that in June of 1863 Sehon arrived in Charleston with this purpose.[181]

While most ministers settled down the longer their careers lasted, Sehon remained in itinerant positions to the very end of his career. If Sehon spent four years in a single

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[179] Albert Henry Redford, *Western Cavaliers* (Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1876), 397–399; Albert Henry Redford, *Life & Times of H. H. Kavanaugh D.D.: One of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church South* (n. pub., 1884), 201–205; *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the Year 1876*, 38–40.
[180] Luther Lee, E. Smith, and Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America, *The Debates of the General Conference of the M. E. Church, May 1844* (O. Scott for the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America, 1845); "Sehon.pdf."
[181] "Untitled," *The Charleston Mercury*, June 25, 1863.

location, it was a remarkably long period of sedentary life. After the Civil War, Sehon continued to fill positions in as a traveling minister, as well as positions with the Missionary Society of the MECS. Sehon suffered from a condition of the heart that left him bedridden and paralyzed on the left side without capacity of speech for the last months of his life. He died in June 1876.

While Sehon worked as an itinerant preacher, just as Sawrie did, records of several speeches he made survived.[182] The most prominent of these were the 1844 speech at the Methodist General Conference regarding the issues of slavery and schism, and a speech on temperance before a Cincinnati temperance organization. Both were published and disseminated.[183] These works provide the opportunity to describe Sehon's view of the political and religious world as he understood it. Temperance and Abolition were related issues in antebellum America. By Reconstruction Collins Elliott would be charging the northern churches with attempting to force temperance as a moral issue the same way that they had forced abolition through political means and the circumstances of the Civil War. For antebellum America the temperance movement organized along many

[182] Sehon has made a small impact on the historiography of the denomination in which he preached, and the regions in which he worked. He never achieved enough notoriety to merit an individual biography, and he has not left his papers in an archive, but several histories have at least noticed his existence. (This is a least a slightly greater legacy than what was left by Sawrie.) Much of this record revolved around his decision to side with the South in the Methodist schism. A brief biography appeared in with in the larger biography of H. H. Kavanaugh, by Albert Redford. Redford also made mention of Sehon in an earlier work on missionaries on the Kentucky frontier. This, along with several obituaries however, represents the entire historiographical impact of Sehon. Given his unique approach to the Methodist schism, and his war time experience this clearly is not enough of a narrative. Redford, *Life & Times of H. H. Kavanaugh D.D.: One of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church South*, 201–205; Redford, *Western Cavaliers*; James Monroe Buckley, *A History of Methodists in the United States* (C. Scribner's Sons, 1907), 432, 446, 620; *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the Year 1876*, 38–40; "Death of Rev. Dr. E. W. Sehon," *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Nashville Tennesseean*, June 9, 1876.

[183] It is difficult to know how widely these speeches were available at the time they were made. They likely were consumed by fairly small numbers of people. Sehon was not prominent enough to receive a wider audience for his opinions.

of the same organizational lines as the abolition movement. Local societies advocated for restrictions against alcohol, and attempted to determine the correct role of compulsion through legal action and individual moral suasion. These issues plagued the abolition movement and hindered a unified approach to abolition. The basic features of the debate for religious authorities rested on the divide between collective and individual action. Sehon offered varied opinions depending on the topic at hand.

In 1831 Sehon delivered an address to the Cincinnati Temperance Society. It is not surprising that he was in favor of temperance. The ardent description he provided in attacking the evils caused by intemperance might be mildly surprising. Though considering his job the surprise can only be muted. Sehon's condemnation of intemperance proved important mostly in the severe nature of his rebuke. Sehon claimed that intemperance provided the root of four-fifths of all violent crime in America, cost the nation more each year that the entire federal budget, and should be regarded in and of itself as a crime against neighbors, family, God, and the republic. Sehon summarized his position, "Oh! Intemperance what hast thou not effected? By thee the fountains and avenues of the human heart have been corrupted; reason dethroned, and Heaven's mercies abused."[184] While this type of language seems unremarkable when compared to the temperance crusaders like Lyman Beecher in New England for Cincinnati and a minister speaking to an audience that at the least is Southern sympathizing the comments proved difficult to accept.

[184] Sehon, Edmund W, *An Address Delivered before the Cincinnati Temperance Society, No. 1 at Their Semi-Annual Meeting in January 1831 by the Rev. Edmund W. Sehon.* (Cincinnati: Williamson & Wood, Printers, 1831), 7–9.

Sehon utilized a unique phrasing as he approached his discourse on temperance. His method of introducing the topic was rather instructive. "For time past, the benevolent and humane have witnessed with unavailing regret, the wide spread march and dominion of a vice, under whose influence, and at whose touch, peace has every where departed; while the sanctity of the social contract has been broken, and the benevolent affections themselves destroyed."[185] Sehon was speaking of intemperance, but many abolitionists through the 1830's and 1840's could have used the same phrasing to condemn slavery. As Sehon then continued to explicate the moral pitfalls of drinking, the language required only a revision to apply rather eloquently to the issue of slavery. This was naturally not what Sehon intended, but it demonstrates a larger problem within the spread of denominations as a result of the Second Great Awakening, and the continual expansion of frontier revivalism. Though preachers spread their denominations across the nation, they did not create uniformity within these denominations. This resulted in churches with enormous geographic variations of opinion, and left the better established churches to attempt to enforce more orthodox doctrine and institutional structures on the advancing church. This, however, would not be accomplished within the nineteenth century, and sowed the seeds of schism.[186]

Sehon used most of his speech to extoll the evils of drinking, but three quarters of the way through, he began to address the specific measures that should be taken to remedy the excesses of alcohol. He appraised historical approaches to encouraging temperance. This provided one entertaining and instructive example. Sehon referenced

[185] Ibid., 1.
[186] Blue, *No Taint of Compromise*, 46; Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation*, 1985.

the Lacedemonians who allegedly encouraged temperance among their children by showing the children the slaves owned by the family in a state of intoxication, and then heaping contempt and derision on the inebriated. Greece, he claimed, forbade anyone guilty of debaucheries to take part in its political system. Likewise, the Roman republic attempted to restrict the availability of luxuries, according to Sehon. These dubious historical examples offered Sehon a means of addressing contemporary approaches to temperance without supporting or denouncing them.

Sehon then put forth his proposal for advancing the cause of Temperance, and also sought to define the cause of the problem: "Custom, the mighty lever of mind and body, hath rolled these evils upon us. She must react upon herself, and cause this mighty and desirable change throughout the mass of our population."[187] Sehon stated that the Temperance movement must change the culture of the nation at large in order to bring about the positive ends it sought. This policy falls in line with the traditional argument that the best way to achieve a social change is through the use of moral suasion. It also blended comfortably with the less provocative ministers of the Second Great Awakening in the North. Northern ministers were typically more inclined to support reform movements than their southern counterparts, but they also tended to have reservations about forced moral change. The fight for a moral cause must be fought one person at a time whether the cause was temperance or abolition. This position stood in line with many Southern religious and political authorities. On a practical level, advocating moral

[187] Sehon, Edmund W, *An Address Delivered before the Cincinnati Temperance Society, No. 1 at Their Semi-Annual Meeting in January 1831 by the Rev. Edmund W. Sehon.*, 15.

suasion as the only acceptable means of creating social change meant that slavery could only be abolished one owner at a time, and could not be legislated out of existence.

Moral suasion could be seen as more of a hindrance than a protection on other issues, and that is the position that Sehon took as he approached temperance. He argued that after moral suasion had converted the large majority of citizens to the cause of temperance it would then be appropriate to take further measures to eliminate the remainder of the scourge. "When reflection shall be thus awakened, individual exertion aroused and blended; then we may reasonably hope for an enactment, which many philanthropists and Christians would now wish; declaring ardent spirits, an unlawful article of trade."[188] Sehon was in fact calling for the enactment of a prohibition on the production or sale of alcohol. This declaration is exactly the opposite of the doctrine of moral suasion. The impact of such a move could only be seen to have radical implications. Not only would it cede to government the role of acting as moral arbiter for the nation, but it would also encourage moral change by compulsion. This represented a significant change in the role of government, and would be understood as radical across sectional lines. The audience Sehon addressed recognized this radical proposal. The sentence after Sehon proposed the outlawing of alcohol, he instructed, "Let not my audience start!"[189] The radical nature of his proposal was not lost on Sehon. Sehon took the position that individual moral suasion must cover most of the ground in promoting temperance, and governmental authority could be used to complete the task.

[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid.

By the 1844 General Conference of the Methodist Church Sehon developed a detailed and intricate appraisal of the issue of slavery. He had a long relationship with attempts to answer the slave question. His family possessed significant wealth, which in antebellum Virginia meant they also owned slaves. Sehon described himself at that assembly as a practical abolitionist, and cited his own emancipation of the slaves he inherited from his father as evidence of this. He, however, doubted that he had improved the situation of the slaves he freed.[190] His public opinion had not developed overnight, and he did not begin to speak out on the issue of slavery in 1844 as early as 1835 he served on The Committee on Abolition and Colonization for the Ohio Conference. This committee issued its report in the Western Christian Advocate, and they were very clear on what they recommended;

> And your committee are of the opinion that neither our civil relations as citizens of a free state, nor our duties as Christian ministers, require us to interfere with the political and domestic regulations of other states, in order to hasten, prematurely, what requires much time and sober wisdom to accomplish, i.e. the abolition of slavery. Nor does the example of Christ and his apostles in reference to such matters, authorize us to aid in getting up any political excitement on the subject of slavery, to loosen the bands of civil and domestic government; and this we understand to be the doctrine of our church.[191]

The committee's report continued to declare strong support for gradual emancipation, Christianization and colonization of slaves. The committee regarded this solution to the question of slavery and abolition so well established in church doctrine and practice that it required no further description than to state its existence. The efforts of immediate abolitionists appeared as a very new phenomenon to the committee, and they spent much

[190] Buckley, *A History of Methodists in the United States*, 201.
[191] T. A. Morris, L. L. Hamline, and E. W. Sehon, "Ohio Annual Conference: Report of the Committee on Abolition and Colonization," *Western Christian Advocate*, September 11, 1835, 1.

of their report describing the efforts and results of the immediate abolitionist movement. They found many problems with the idea of immediate abolition. The first was the idea that it would encourage slaves, "to remain among and commingle with the white population."[192] The fear mongering of miscegenation remained a regular theme of anti-abolitionists and anti-Civil Rights efforts for another century and a half. Equally troubling to the committee were the acts of violence that meet ardent immediate abolitionists. The committee did not, however, blame the crowds for their actions against the abolitionists; rather the problem, according to the Methodist committee, was that the abolitionists were upsetting local order. They questioned why the abolitionists were making common citizens attack the abolitionists. This method of structuring the debate over slavery proved persuasive among many anti-abolitionists. The committee elaborated on their argument that the immediate abolition of slavery was primarily encouraged by foreign agents attempting to bring down the US government, but further that the agencies supporting abolition, "They destroy confidence, engender strife, and cause the reins of domestic government, in slave districts, to be drawn with more severity, to keep the slaves in subjection."[193] Despite the effort to claim abolitionists by their actions were causing harsher measures to be enacted by slave masters, Sehon managed to express nuanced position on the issue of slavery.

The growth of the Methodist church was far more important to Sehon and the committee than slavery. Moreover, they asserted the ability of slavery to increase the denomination among the enslaved, that when they achieve freedom they would have a

[192] Morris, Hamline, and Sehon, "Ohio Annual Conference: Report of the Committee on Abolition and Colonization."
[193] Ibid.

moral foundation from which to enjoy their status. The position arrived at was not so much in favor of slavery, but rather it supported the gradual emancipation of slavery, and efforts to convert those who were held in bondage.

By 1844, circumstances required the Methodist church to define its position on slavery in clearer terms. Colonization had largely been discredited as a solution to the question of slavery. It remained a popular solution to the problems of emancipation, but with several million slaves in America shipping them all to a foreign territory for emancipation required enormous financial resources. These requirements would only be exacerbated by the insistence of slave owners to be compensated for their property; and the entire proposition demanded that the public be willing to endure substantial loss of life in the journey.[194] Efforts at colonization might still be advanced, but the issue of slavery required clearer and more immediate answers. Agitation had built with in the American consciousness; in addition groups within the Methodist church had begun questioning the institutions stand on the issue. For many years the national church supported the idea of colonization, but abolitionist agitation had removed this compromise solution. The year 1844 hosted a presidential election focused on expansionism and the role of slavery in expanding. The General Conference of the Methodist church could not avoid a discussion of slavery. The particular issue at stake was whether Bishop Andrew could hold his ecclesiastic office and own slaves at the same

[194] Practicalities arose rapidly for anyone who wanted to implement a colonization plan. Despite, these very real and insurmountable obstacles colonization itself remained a very popular plan that occupied the middle ground of the slavery debate. Most politicians and church leaders found this the most palatable method of offering some small statement against slavery while also avoiding taking genuine action against the institution.

time. The debate was wide ranging, and highlighted for the southern delegates the problems they would increasingly face in political life as the 1860's approached.[195]

Edmund Sehon first went to the General Conference of the Methodist Church in 1844. From his earlier local conference activities he had some preparation for the conflagration that was about to overtake the church. A group of Northern delegates submitted a resolution to the General Conference that initiated the dispute. This proposed the expulsion of Bishop Andrew from ecclesiastical fellowship until such a time as he emancipated his slaves. With the introduction of this resolution the assembly predictably split along the lines of Free and Slave States. There were a few notable exceptions from the states bordering the divide. Delegates from Ohio, Indiana, and New Jersey argued along with the Slave states against this resolution. Sehon was notably among those delegates arguing in favor of the Southern position.

Sehon's argument had less to do with the morality of slavery or emancipation, than with the larger picture of maintaining the churches health and unity in the face of this issue. The focus Sehon chose for his speech offered the path of least resistance. To engage in a debate on the merits of slavery or abolition would have angered whichever side he fought against. Sehon waited until fairly late in the proceedings to address the assembled delegates. By the time Sehon rose to speak, the Northern factions had amended their original resolution with a less inflammatory preamble. This amendment looked as if it would secure a majority of delegates in favor of the resolution when the

[195] John Nelson Norwood, *The Schism in the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1844 : a Study of Slavery and Ecclesiastical Politics* (Alfred, N.Y. : Alfred University, 1923), 58–81, http://archive.org/details/schisminmethodis00norw; Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation*, 1985.

final vote was taken. In this context, Sehon broke his silence and addressed the assembled delegates:

> Now after a lapse of many days, and when much has been said on both sides, I feel it my imperative duty to state the reasons which will govern me in the vote I am about to give. And here let me say, sir, that I may not be misunderstood – in the very commencement of my remarks—that I am opposed to the substitution now under consideration; yea, to the original preamble and resolution altogether.[196]

Sehon continued to explain his position. He avoided outright support of slavery, and instead attempted to base his argument in the maintenance of church systems. He opposed the forced resignation by resolution of Bishop Andrew firstly, because it denied Andrew the chance of an ecclesiastic trial to prove or disprove the allegations against him. Sehon argued that the resolution mis-targeted Andrew because the slaves were in point of fact the property of his wife, and that to force her to divest herself of these slaves due to her husband's job was immoral.

More importantly for Sehon, the issue at stake was not about the rightness or wrongness of slavery, or of Bishop Andrew and his wife's actions. Far more consequential was the strength and unity of the church. Sehon asked, "The passage of this resolution would undoubtedly injure the Church in the south, if not prove her dismemberment—why should we press it?"[197] Sehon found the church to be a far more important issue than the resolution of slavery. This, however, seemed at odds with the role of the church in maintaining a moral fortitude amongst the temptations of the world.

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[196] *Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Held in the City of New York, 1844* (New York: G. Lane & C.B. Tippett, 1844), 153.
[197] Ibid.

If slavery was sinful then how can the church reasonably look the other direction as its leaders promote, through ownership, a moral evil?

Sehon answered this question with one of his own questions: "Why has the union of the Methodist church continued so long?"[198] To this question he answered tellingly, the united Methodist church has been perpetuated, "Because, by her action, she has *never* interfered with the civil institutions and regulations of any section of our common country."[199] Though the church had always condemned the institution of slavery as an evil, it had not taken actions to exclude from membership or censure those who owned slaves where it was legal to do so. Effectively, Sehon argued that the church had no jurisdiction in this matter, beyond a condemnation. It was not the place of the Methodist Church to advocate civil laws or policy. This claim offers two points for consideration. The first is its contrast with his earlier temperance speech. During that speech he understood it to be an appropriate role for himself, as a Methodist minister, to advocate, in the final resolution of the temperance issue, a law forbidding trafficking of alcoholic substances. There is a contradiction here, where in the first instance he advocated legal steps to remove a moral vice in the second he denied the churches jurisdiction to advocate against another social evil. The second issue in this statement regards the positioning of who justifiably can adjust slavery's legality. Sehon positioned slavery to be primarily a political rather than a moral issue. This meant that the church had only a secondary role in promoting, by moral suasion, individuals to by choice dispose of their

[198] Ibid.
[199] Ibid.

slaves, either through emancipation, colonization, or by otherwise ensuring the moral status of the slaves before final emancipation.

Sehon's position highlighted one of the fundamental difficulties of the slave debate for the Methodist church, and by extension for the entire nation. A significant portion of the debate considered who had jurisdiction to finally resolve the issue of slavery. Politicians, regularly claimed slavery as an institution sanctioned by God, and therefore not to be tinkered with by the government. Politicians employing this gambit had support from minor theologians like Samuel Baldwin who happily defined slavery as divinely sanctioned. Meanwhile, many within the established churches could perceive the danger of the slave debate and preferred like Sehon to define slavery as a fundamentally political problem that, while it might have moral implications, required a political and constitutional solution. This debate effectively balanced the Bible and the Constitution in opposition and left statesmen and theologians in a position of limbo where they could not reach any kind of amicable resolution to the issues at the heart of the matter. Ultimately this abdication of authority had cataclysmic consequences for the nation, and the denominations.

Sehon's final attack against the resolution before the General Commission attacked the understanding that abolition was a moral course of action. For this attack Sehon referenced his own experience. "I am no friend to slavery, and practically became an abolitionist, proving my faith by my works, by emancipating perhaps as many slaves as any brother upon the floor of the conference. But I *now* have my serious

doubts…whether I have truly improved their condition."[200] Sehon explained that since emancipation the father and head of the household had fled his family and left the remaining family members dependent on the charity of the community for survival. Sehon further theorized that because the father of this slave family had never been required to support them previously he did not realize the obligations that would accompany his emancipation. Sehon freely acknowledged this type of difficulty as he considered immediate abolition. If abolition resulted in impoverished freed slaves relying on the community for support their situation could hardly be said to have improved over what was experienced while in bondage.

Despite Sehon's emphatic declarations that the Conference was acting in haste, by improper procedures, and to achieve dubious ends the resolution passed with the revised preamble and without exceptional difficulty. Its passage initiated a severe rupture in the ecclesiastic body; that was codified by the introduction of, "The Protest of the Minority in the Case of Bishop Andrew."[201] The protest followed much of the logic put forth by Sehon. It began by contesting the form by which the Conference issued its reprimand to Bishop Andrew, and continued by declaring the lack of ground for this body to interfere with civic institutions. The minority continued by complaining about the nature of the majority's complaint. The minority complained, "The act of the majority was ostensibly resorted to because, as alleged, the Church in the middle and northern conferences will not submit to any, the slightest connection with slavery. But if connection with slavery is

[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid., 203–212.

ruinous to the Church in the north, that ruin is already wrought."[202] The minority argued the nature of the Church was built on the brotherhood of all members if the existence of slavery in one part of the church tainted the whole; that had long since been achieved through the efforts of the church to expand across sections during the Second Great Awakening. It seemed disingenuous for the north to now argue that the south was irretrievably corrupted when the connection had historically been seen as acceptable if not ideal. The protest of the minority concluded by declaring that a unified church no longer seemed tenable because of the action of the northern delegates in the General Conference. They declared, "And it is believed that, approaching the subject in this way, it will now be found practicable to devise and adopt such measures and arrangements, present and prospective, as will secure an amicable division of the Church upon the broad principles of right and equity, and destined to result in the common good of the great body of ministers and members found on either *side the line of separation*."[203]

The separation of the church was far from completed at this juncture, but the lines of separation had been defined ideologically. The practical matters would linger on for decades to come. During the Civil War the results of this schism again appeared in the debates of the Methodist church. The MECN attempted to use the upheaval of the war to reassert control or influence of some areas of the south. This resulted in the McKendree Chapel affair, and other instances of northern ministers attempting to assume control over southern institutions. For Sehon, the schism required a choice between sections. In siding with the southern delegates, Sehon abandoned his ministerial home in Ohio. The MECS

[202] Ibid., 208.
[203] Ibid., 211.

would soon see the value in determining a geographic line of division to match the already established ideological boundary. Sehon proved useful to the church by accepting a new appointment on the geographic border of the churches. This was both a region the Sehon was familiar with. Moreover, as much of Southern Ohio shared more in common with the South than the North Sehon found a welcoming field of mission throughout northern Kentucky and Southern Ohio. The debates that the Methodist church could not surmount created a cultural rift in the church and its membership. This resulted in very real political and social consequences, removed moral standing from the sectional churches as they viewed each other, and left a divisive issue intractable. The churches would not be able to overcome their differences of moral opinion until the 20th century presented vastly new challenges to the sectional entities.

Sehon and Sawrie's careers took them in a distinct trajectory away from their initial employment as itinerant ministers. That experience allowed each to embrace their roles in creating the sectional church. It also enabled them, through the course of the Civil War, to continue their evangelism and promotion of their denomination. In their own way, the requirements of itinerant ministry meant that these men were able to express ideas that were generally a part of the mainstream of thought. This ability let the ministers to successfully pursue their careers, and resurrect them after the conclusion of the war. The development of these ministers' careers also tracks the institutionalization of the Second Great Awakening. Sehon and Sawrie began on the frontiers of society and the churches, and by their deaths they had moved decidedly into positions of influence within their denomination.

At the time of their arrest Sawrie and Sehon were fairly typical southern evangelical ministers. They provided comfort to their congregations, and worked for the expansion of their denominations. Their arrest demonstrated how important their seemingly innocuous positions were within American society. They proceeded to more vigorously support the cause of the Confederacy after their arrest. These two approached the circumstances of their arrest with the mind to consistently apply the lessons they had learned in their careers as ministers. They sought aid for the war effort by traveling and preaching in the unoccupied Confederacy. The arrest if anything pushed the ministers to rededicate themselves to the South. Subsequently, defeat required the ministers to adjust again their relationship to the political entity under which they lived, but their responses to Reconstruction were to continue their ministry by means more appropriate to the new circumstances. They engaged in helping to organize the black churches of the south, and tended to pursue a rather itinerate life.

CHAPTER V:

COLLINS D. ELLIOTT: A SOUTHERN EDUCATOR

Courtesy of the Tennessee State Library and Archives

Collins Elliott[204] spent his life prior to 1861 operating the Nashville Female Academy, and as a function of his role as principle he had been afforded the opportunity to define the bounds of the South in a way that the other ministers of Nashville could not. Elliott arrived at a definition of "Southerness" through the education of young women from Tennessee and the rest of the South rather than through ministry to a specific congregation. This offered Elliott a different vision of the South, and allowed him to phrase his connection with the South differently.

[204] Carl C Giers, *Collins D. Elliott*, Photograph, Unknown, Collins D. Elliott Papers, Box 5, Folder 4, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

Collins Elliott was born in 1810 the son of an Ohio Methodist minister. The role of minister's son was typically not glamorous; especially considering the Methodists lacked the gravitas in American society that would come from their rapid expansion during the twenty years following Elliott's birth. The young Collins demonstrated a proclivity for education, and his father determined that he should have the opportunity to be schooled and become a minister himself. Collins attended school in Cincinnati, and upon graduation determined that his calling was not in pastoral ministry, but rather in education. He managed to appease his father by registering with the Methodists as a preacher, but he soon traveled to Alabama to begin his teaching career. On the way to Le Grange College Elliott stopped in Nashville where he met Elizabeth Porterfield. She would be the primary reason he returned to Nashville whenever his schedule allowed. The two would marry and by 1860 they would host a growing family of five children.[205] Elliott permanently relocated to Nashville, after the marriage to Elizabeth. It seems that he initially traveled to the city without a guarantee of a job upon his arrival, but he was quickly hired as a teacher at the Nashville Female Academy. A few years later he would assume the presidency of the institution, and remained in that post until the disruption of the Civil War. After his arrest and imprisonment Elliott determined his only course forward was to join the Confederate army. He served as a chaplain until the end of the war, and with defeat returned to Nashville to attempt to restore his fortunes. He sought to reopen the Nashville Female Academy, but the effort failed as he faced law suits from members of the board of trustees. Elliott spent the remainder of his days as an advocate

[205] "Ancestry.com. 1860 United States Federal Census [Database On-line]," *Ancestry.com.* accessed June 12, 2012.

of the Lost Cause, and as an opponent to extensions of federal authority into the realm of state affairs. He published many editorials, as well as a lauding description of the Scotch-Irish heritage of Tennessee. He was known to take on some temporary appointments, but seems to have never filled a permanent posting after the conclusion of the Civil War. Near the end of his life the most prominent of these positions was offered by the Tennessee Legislature. Elliott thus, served a term as the chaplain of the same penitentiary at which he had once been a prisoner.[206]

At the end of his life he was a notable enough figure to have received obituaries across the south, and to have inspired several accounts of his life. The earliest of these accounts came in the form of reminiscences from old friends and comrades. Among the earliest of these recollections, published after his death, was an account by William Hale and Dixon Merritt in A History of Tennessee and Tennesseans. In many ways they followed the normal description that appeared in Elliott's obituary. This placed the importance of Elliott as an educator as the first and foremost fact of Elliott's life. If anything this account of Elliott offers the image of a saint in the place of the man. The brief biography offered Elliott's experience fighting for the Lost Cause during his last years as among the best in his life. Difficult arguments aside the article also presents clear distortions and misrepresentations of Elliott's life. A modest improvement was made by J. H. McNeilly in the Confederate Veteran of June 1922. McNeilly remembered the figure of Elliott after the war pacing the streets of Nashville in at times audible self-discourse. Despite these later eccentricities Elliott according to McNeilly, remained one

[206] "Dr. C.D. Elliott Passes Away: Was Formerly President of Old Nashville Female Academy for Young Ladies," *The Nashville American*, July 29, 1899.

of the foremost educators of the South. McNeilly, however focused far more on Elliott's experiences during reconstruction, when the two were acquainted. McNeilly offered the best description of Elliott's experience in the 1880 as chaplain of the state penitentiary. The Depiction remained fairly generous, but was devoid of clear factual errors. The most comprehensive, and apparently final, work on Elliott's life was an article for the Tennessee Historical Magazine by J. E. Windrow appearing in 1935. This article offered a substantial record of Elliott's life and work, and made substantial use of the Elliott papers collected by the Tennessee Historical Society. Windrow's focus remained on Elliott's work as Principle of the Nashville Female Academy, but provided a relatively complete account of Elliott's life after the end of the war. This account also offers a critique of Elliott's unyielding opposition to the implementation of a system of public education. While Windrow's account undoubtedly represents the most complete and detailed examination of Elliott's life and work it also fails to acknowledge the importance of Elliott in developing the conceptual framework of Southern national identity. Windrow cannot be criticized for this as the terminology of that discourse would not develop until several generations of historians later, but this lack demonstrates the need for a new appraisal and consideration of a figure that held a fair amount of local prestige. [207]

Early in his career, Collins Elliott established his reputation throughout the South as a prominent educator. He began his career at Le Grange College in Alabama. He was a very accessible and active professor who built strong relationships with his students. He

[207] J. H. McNeilly. "A Great Old-Time Schoolmaster." Confederate Veteran, 1922. William T. Hale, and Dixon L. Merritt. A History of Tennessee and Tennesseans: The Leaders and Representative Men in Commerce, Industry and Modern Activity. Vol. 7. Chicago and New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1913. Windrow, John. "Collins D. Elliott and the Nashville Female Academy." Tennessee Historical Magazine, 1932.

returned to Nashville to procure a post at the Nashville Female Academy first as professor, and later as principle. The later position offered Elliott the chance to gain regional renown. When he received the promotion to principle of the Female Academy the contract he was given allowed him to take as a salary all revenues of the school save the teachers' salaries and a ten percent reserve would be awarded as compensation to Elliott as headmaster.[208] This encouraged Elliot to expand the size of the institution, which he regularly did in the years preceding the Civil War.

Though Nashville was a growing city there were in reality only so many families that could afford the education of their daughters at Elliott's school, and thus expansion derived typically through the addition of boarding students. This offered Elliott a twofold gain, as he reaped the benefit of increased tuition, and he exclusively operated the Boarding house for these students providing a profit from room and board. The sum total of this allowed Elliott to both gain a name among prominent Southern Families, but also to amass a personal fortune of $143,000 by 1860.[209] Thus, while Elliott never produced the published works of Samuel Baldwin, or rose to the institutional prominence of Robert Howell he achieved success that allowed him to gain significant regional prominence.

Elliott used this acclaim to advance his vision of the South throughout his life. This interpretation of the essential nature of southerners held a few key characteristics. Elliott placed a significant emphasis on education, Christianity, and the distinctiveness of southern lineage, as has already been noted. Elliott also made a never ending effort to define the Civil War as a just conflict that rose to the level of a holy crusade against the

[208] For the first several years as principle Elliott shared the position and compensation with R. A. Lapsely as co-headmasters. This situation resolved with Lapsely's resignation in 1844. Windrow, 78-79.
[209] Ancestry.com. 1860 United States Federal Census [Database On-line].

North. This required a revision of the results of the Civil War from an outright defeat to a continuing struggle by means other than military resistance. In addition it required the solidification of Southern identity as the antithesis of the North. Elliott spent the second half of his life developing this argument in such a way that it came to resemble in many ways the nationalist narratives that emerged from the decolonization struggle in the 20th century. This tendency of thought, rather than making Elliott unique, made Elliott distinctively typical of the elite white members of his generation.[210]

Elliott's career reached its zenith, according to his biographers, with his labors at the Nashville Female Academy. This position offered Elliott acclaim across the south, and an outlet for his intellectual musings. Elliott, despite his future career as an administrator, began his work in Nashville, as he had years previously at Le Grange College in Alabama, as a professor of languages. He served at various points in his career as a professor of languages as well as professor of mathematics, natural philosophy, and as the head of various preparatory departments. Elliot confessed in an early lecture that he found Greek and Latin his preferred subject. In explanation, he described the lyrical flow of the languages, and their pleasing tones to his ears. He also painted a vision of lost civilizations as they appealed to him from the pages of antiquity.

> We ask nothing more deeply interesting than to go back and rebuild [and] repeople their famous cities, erect and adorn their gorgeous temples and triumphant arches, to bid the curling smoke again arise from countless altars. To see those wild and fanciful cities that [sported] on the suny banks of every chrystal stream, or bathed in its pure limpid waters: to hover over their roofless theaters and catch the thunder of applause, that rivals the storm lashed ocean, to see their armies proudly marching to the conquest of a trembling world. In a word to trace those great and striking

[210] Among many works describing this, Rodney Steward does a good job of explaining a similar intellectual framing by David Schenck. Steward, *David Schenck and the Contours of Confederate Identity*.

> outlines of morals and of mind, nowhere else but here seen in their proper and most imposing attitude. Such are the deepest feelings of my heart and beguiled away many a lonely midnight hour.[211]

Elliott offered a romantic and longing vision of this long since lost world as his introduction to an essay on mathematics. In a rather metaphorical way Elliott's time spent at the Nashville Female Academy offered the prologue to his future endeavors to promote the cult of the Lost Cause. Elliott was not without his note of caution. Before he arrived at the math lecture he promised his students, he reminded them that his depiction of the wonders of his time spent with his old Greek and Latin texts were, "Mingling with the things of by-gone years, to which fancy lends her brightest colorings."[212] This caution did not reach into the recollections of Elliott's later years.

Throughout Elliott's school papers he seemed to be constructing a world view that suited the Southern identity that grew steadily stronger over the course of his life. As these ideas developed while he was teaching at and leading the female academy, the purposes of the Nashville Female Academy cannot be separated from the narrative that Elliott was constructing. In its articles of incorporation the Nashville Female Academy's goal was simply to provide for the education of women.[213] This seemed in the early days of the institution a straight forward proposition to the trustees of the school. They established a course of study to be followed that would teach the basics of reading, writing, arithmetic, history, philosophy, "and the ornamental branches."[214] The ornamental branches seem to include painting, music, needle point, and other similar

[211] Collins D. Elliott, "Lecture First. Pure Mathematics." (Nashville, TN, Unknown), 2, THS 37, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
[212] Ibid.
[213] "An Act to Incorporate the President, Trustees, and Co. of the Nashville Female Academy." (Nashville, TN, September 3, 1817), 1, THS 37, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
[214] John Windrow, "Collins D. Elliott and the Nashville Female Academy," 9.

skills. If the school began as a nonpolitical means of improving the daughters of Nashville's better families, it began changing with Elliott's entry to the school. Elliott did not make any immediate revisions of curriculum. Instead, he slowly expanded and defined the purpose of the school's incorporation.

By 1861 Elliott had so expanded the school that it included a total of five hundred students enrolled in various studies. He had also further defined the world that the academy was preparing women for. "As an institution our success depends on the opinion parents and friends may form of our pupils, as they may be seen in the private relations of home, which we in the South, regard as woman's only sphere."[215] This barb seems to be aimed at the women of the north who had been participating in abolitionist societies, and other public advocacy groups. Clearly the southern woman had gained a political value by remaining in her proper homebound position.

Though Elliott had reached this position by the beginning of the secession crisis, his opinion of what women should be taught evolved regularly through the late 1840's and 1850's. The moment of greatest controversy in determining the educational content of the Nashville Female Academy came in the controversy over dancing. The exact reason for the Academy teaching dancing varies from one source to another; either dancing was taught out of a need for southern women to be able to cultivate their natural grace and elegance, or because the parents of the boarding students wanted their children to learn how to dance. In the latter case Elliott chose teaching dancing at the academy as

[215] Collins D. Elliott, "Nashville Female Academy: Graduation of Senior Class," April 1861, THS 37, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

a preferable alternative to having the female students attending private lessons throughout Nashville at the behest of their parents.[216]

Some of the religious establishment around Nashville disagreed with Elliott's decision that providing dance lessons at his school represented the lesser of evils. The initial complaint came from J.B. McFerrin the editor of the Nashville Christian Advocate. He argued that dancing was immoral, and as such he could not give his papers recommendation to a school that taught dancing. Elliott responded by explaining the separation between the boarding house that hosted the lessons and the day school that had nothing to do with the lessons. He finished by describing dancing as the lesser of two evils. The kerfuffle that followed the initial editorial and response from Elliott found a modest resolution at the annual convention of the Methodist church of Tennessee. Elliott apologized for any injury done to McFerrin in what he had said publically. Presumably Elliott, who was a gifted orator, had lambasted McFerrin in at least one public address; though clear evidence of what was said does not exist the apology itself is proof enough. The issue disappeared for several years until a New Orleans' paper picked up the story of a Methodist Dancing school, and again Elliott was asked to abandon his effort to teach Southern girls to dance. The request to end the dancing lessons came from among others Samuel D. Baldwin and McFerrin. Elliott responded with a public bulletin that labeled McFerrin and the other critical ministers as bigots who sought to suppress the truth. The issue required final resolution, and the Methodist church needed to intervene. Elliott was allowed to voluntarily withdraw as a minister of the Methodist church in 1858. When he

[216] John Windrow, "Collins D. Elliott and the Nashville Female Academy," 83; Unknown, "N.F.A. for Miss A. Allison" (Nashville, TN, Unkown), 5, THS 37, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

did he lost the right to preach in Methodist churches and administer the sacrament.[217] This came as a heavy blow to Elliott, but it also must be considered that the Nashville Female Academy maintained itself as a nondenominational institution. The school itself never adhered to Methodist doctrine, and through this controversy the only criticism that could be launched was toward Elliott and his status as an ordained Methodist.

Elliott found it difficult to reconcile the churches position with the mission of his school. Church doctrine frowned or forbade dancing in most Christian denominations; while the polishing of a woman's place within southern society through 'ornamental' refinements seemed a wholly appropriate task for a female academy. In addition despite the official condemnation of dancing from many churches the practice of dancing continued across the South, and certainly has not dimmed over time. Rather, the alternative explanation offered that dancing was a means of promoting Southern women's natural grace and elegance seems to be a later reinterpretation of the practice of teaching dancing. It, likely, was a revision offered by Elliott's youngest daughter, and most ardent defender Elizabeth (Lizzie) Elliott.[218] Lizzie was born in November of 1860, and by the time she reached maturity dancing had become far more acceptable in the mainstream than it had been during the antebellum years. The reinterpretation of this old

[217] John Windrow, "Collins D. Elliott and the Nashville Female Academy," 84–86.
[218] "N.F.A. for Miss A. Allison" is unsigned, but seems most likely to have been written by Lizzie Elliott. Early in the piece the author states, "I never went back there after I was seven years of age…" This aligns with the final closure of the Academy as a result of court cases filed against Elliot in 1867. From the Elliott papers it also seems that Lizzie Elliott took over her father's position in attempting to shape understanding of Tennessee history. Lizzie Elliott wrote a school textbook on the history of Tennessee in the early 20th century. Thus, this piece seems to be a brief recollection and history composed by Lizzie in response to the no longer preserved request of Miss A. Allison.

controversy allowed Lizzie to present her father as ahead of his time in defining and promoting the ideal of a Southern woman.[219]

Collins Elliott voluntarily withdrew from Methodist ordination in 1858. He took a brief sabbatical in 1860, returning to the school in early 1861 when some sort of sectional conflict had become inevitable. The sabbatical was described to parents and patrons of the academy as being triggered by an expanding student population that Elliott did not feel he could give appropriate supervision. In his letter explaining his decision Elliott was careful to make clear several features of the academy. He reminded patrons of the health of the school, and its elegant buildings that he had helped to construct. He also emphasized the nondenominational character of the school. This was perhaps a statement to the Methodists who had forced his withdrawal from the church, as a reminder that the institution he worked for was in fact not a part of their church. He concluded by taking the opportunity to introduce his successor the Rev. G.M. Everhart. Everhart was an Episcopalian who had run another female school in Alabama, and clearly seemed up to the task of assuming leadership of the Nashville Female Academy.[220]Elliott did not set a time frame for his absence, and by the letter issued introducing his successor it appeared his absence would be a permanent resignation. After six months he resumed his position without any explanation beyond having received the rest that was needed. [221]

Elliott's return appears to have had something to do with the outbreak of the secession crisis. The July circular that Elliott composed to advertise the academy

[219] *Elliott Family Bible*, n.d.; Unknown, "N.F.A. for Miss A. Allison."
[220] Collins D. Elliott, "Nashville Female Academy: To Its Patrons," April 2, 1860, THS 37, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
[221] Collins D. Elliott, "Nashville Female Academy, Founded 1816.," December 1860, THS 37, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

provided a unique definition of the school's role in the impending conflict. Elliott could hardly fail to recognize the impending tumult of war even as the first battles had only just begun. As such he needed to assure parents that their children would be safely housed, securely evacuated, and taught appropriately for the children of prominent southern families. The circular began by assuring parents that the faculty was comprised entirely of Southerners, and that the school would as a gesture of patriotism accept, "Confederate bonds, cotton, rice tobacco or sugar" in payment of debts. This act could be interpreted as a means of boosting enrollment during years that would inevitably be trying for the south, and all southern institutions.

Elliott, however, left no doubt about his intentions in the following paragraph: "We desire to let you know that the Academy accepts no middle ground between the North and the South. We recognize the existence of war between the North and South, and we are with the South."[222] This proclamation was not required for Elliott to continue to operate the academy, and considering the uncertainty of the border regions during the war the declaration that the academy was resolutely with the South in its affinities might not have been the wisest long term strategy for the institution. Elliott, however, was not satisfied to simply take side in the conflict. Elliott continued on to declare that, "We hope to inspire all our pupils not only with proper sympathy for their own country, but also with a strong antipathy for the North."[223]

This declaration could not be missed by any Union sympathizers remaining in Nashville. Further, it demonstrated Elliott's attitude toward the sectional crisis. The move

[222] Collins D. Elliott, "Nashville Female Academy - To Our Friends" (Nashville, TN, July 23, 1861), 1–2, THS 37, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
[223] Collins D. Elliott, "Nashville Female Academy - To Our Friends."

for southern independence did not stem from mere political machinations, but for Elliott the effort represented the defense of the gospel and the up keeping of the best aspects of democracy. Elliott declared that this required the nationalization of children through the colleges and academies of the south that these pupils might be baptized, "in Southern Fire."[224] Far from being an institutional association Elliott concluded his missive to parents by describing his own upbringing; mentioning his birth in Ohio and the early thereafter move of his family to Kentucky. He incorporated his own heritage into his argument on behalf of his school as he claimed that his claim to "Southernism" derived from his blood rather than by his adoption of the section, and as such he could exert a profound influence on the students of the academy through his consistency as a Southern man. The claim of a long southern lineage also provided Elliott with the pedigree to make an earnest and full-throated defense of the Confederacy.

Elliott and the academy followed these words with actions. In June 1861 as both sections were formally organizing armies that would advance their conflict, and Elliott wrote to the parents of his students about the Southern nature of his school. In addition, the senior class of the Nashville Female Academy reached out to the First Regiment of Tennessee Volunteers. The senior class presented this regiment with their regimental flags as they had done for the First Tennessee Volunteers at the outset of the Mexican American War. At the ceremony when the newly crafted flag was presented to the regiment Elliott offered a brief address to the assembled soldiers. He instructed the regiment that the flag was given as the token of those they left at home, and that these loved ones felt they had more reason to exit the Union than the Colonies had to withdraw

[224] Ibid.

from the crown. Moreover Elliott sought to place blame for the conflict very squarely on his personal northern counterparts:

> But these brave men [northern soldiers] have much bad company—enough to materially weaken them and damage their cause before the world. The presence of negroes and the vile sweepings of their large cities is not as much deprecated by these noble and patriotic men of the north as the presence of their ministers of the gospel. With Henry Clay, these men see that this unnatural war has been brought about by these fanatics. Hence though they have obeyed the call of their country to arms, and are in the field against you, still the presence of these agents who brought our country to its present deplorable condition, must disgust them. Ministers of the gospel are with you too. They command your companies, are in your ranks, are with you as chaplains; but O, how welcome! Because in all the length and breadth of this Southern Land, there is not a minister who, in his pulpit or in his prayers, in any way, directly or indirectly, irritated the public mind in regard to the questions now rending this nation. For this reason how welcome are the ministers of the gospel, and how surely does this fact indicate that the God of the Bible is with us![225]

Elliott's interpretation of the mind of southern ministers could not be farther from reality. Even within Nashville, ministers had spoken openly for and against secession, and southern ministers had advanced the disputes that forced the schisms within the major American denominations. This statement is significant not for its factual value, but for its conception of the sectional conflict. Elliott does not present a political battle. This statement does not rest on the authority of the Constitution, or the right of states to exercise their own jurisdiction. Instead Elliott's description of the cause for the war and the reason the South would inevitably win were the gospel and the actions of those whose job it was to proclaim that message. The war was, according, to Elliott a religious rather than a political conflict. As such, he played an important role in shaping and supporting the Confederate cause.

[225] Collins D. Elliott, "The Flag of the First Regiment, 1861," *Nashville Union and American*, June 4, 1861.

This role became an all-consuming imperative for Elliott. He turned several of the Nashville Female Academy's buildings over to Confederate authorities to be used as barracks or as hospital facilities. In addition the students at the academy played host to the Confederate troops passing through Nashville.[226] The support of troops behind the lines of battle was the role accepted by Elliott prior to the capture of Nashville. When the city was captured, Elliott immediately evacuated the remaining students at the academy, and closed the institution on a temporary basis.[227] Elliott's thoughts in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Nashville have not been preserved. He had accepted such a public role as a rebel minister, despite having withdrawn from the Methodist church, that he could not be overlooked by Andrew Johnson as he looked to solidify Union sentiment.

Elliott's position in prison was slightly different from that of the other ministers. Whereas most had few contacts outside of the prison Elliott managed to get several letters back to his family. The first of the letters passed through the hands of Elliott's brother who had settled in Ohio rather than in Tennessee. Elliott's Brother would eventually join the Union Army and rise to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. These letters were on the whole concerned with fairly mundane matters. The first sentence Elliott seems to have written to his wife while in prison was a reminder that she must get coal for the winter.[228] He did not rail against his captors, or exhort his relations to continue resistance. Instead he reported back his current condition, and gave advice about the typical goings on of running a house and caring for his family. Mixed in with these reassurances and

[226] Samuel R. Watkins, *Company Aytch* (Plume, 1999).
[227] Lizzie Elliott, "War Record of Reverend Collins D. Elliott, Compiled From Papers and Letters in My Possession Now" (Nashville, TN, September 10, 1921), THS 37, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
[228] Collins D. Elliott, "Mrs. E. Elliott, Jeffersonville Indian State Prision," unknown, Collins D. Elliott Papers, Box 4, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

instructions were occasional mentions of the other ministers arrested with Elliott. Always the letters instructed Elizabeth Elliott that Collins was in good health and good spirits. In these letters Elliott continued his typical style of referring to slaves hired by him as servants. The genteel nature of these comments indicates that Elliott continued to view his world through the antebellum lenses that had helped him support the rebellion. Elliott offered only a few complaints in the course of these letters. The grousing focused on the uncertainty of his current position. There were on occasion a few comments about the injury done to him, but these complaints were always limited, and vague. This could be a means of protecting the deliverer or the recipient by not offering too much information in the letter, but more likely the goal of the letters was to reassure Elliott's nervous spouse still in Nashville. Reassurance rarely comes out of a letter filled with complaints about the conditions and circumstances that one must live in.

Elliott traced his travel from Tennessee to prison in Ohio in his letters to his wife. Elliott opened all his letters with his current location in the Indiana State Prison. He traced his voyage to the prison in Indiana through the Union prison in Louisville. At times his letters were written with such a vague chronology that it is not clear that he wrote the letter while in Indiana.[229] While being sent to Indiana Elliott was separated from several of the other ministers. In a letter dated July 31st Elliott indicated he is anxious to hear about the state of several of the other ministers. At this point he seemed

[229] It is possible that Elliott wrote the letters elsewhere, but did not address them until he arrived in Louisville. It also was not uncommon for prisoners and soldiers to lose track of their locations. Some of the ministers did eventually reach Indiana. There is also evidence that Andrew Johnson had sought a permanent location to house the ministers in Indiana. He asked Oliver Morton, the governor of Indiana, to allow him to send two of, "about a half dozen rabid secession preachers" to Indiana. Similar requests were sent to the Governor of Ohio and the commandant of the prison at Louisville, Kentucky. Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 5, 1861-1862*, 5:567.

to still be at the same prison as Samuel Baldwin who was called upon to discuss his "prophecies" with a few locals.[230] In one of the last letters Elliott wrote from prison his location had changed to Louisville. Despite this at several points Elliott remarked on how many friends he had throughout the country. In his early letters the Chaplain at his prison was an old classmate, and in the latter letters Elliott's brother George appeared regularly.[231]

Elliott composed a letter to his eldest daughter May, as one of the last notes he wrote from prison.[232] Much of this letter introduced her to the idea that her uncle George would be appearing in Nashville in a federal uniform. Elliott described his brother as a true man and bound to his duty. By virtue of his uniform Elliott hoped his brother would pass safely to Nashville, and bring news of his fellow prisoners to their families. It was an interesting moment, while Elliott clearly disagreed with George's enlistment in the federal ranks this letter made it clear that the true problem Elliott had was not with any of the northern soldiers specifically let alone his own brother. Elliott's effort to justify the actions of the northern soldiers built the foundation for reunion after southern defeat. Elliott proved more interested in defining the true perpetrators of the conflict. He established his understanding that blame rested with the political and religious leaders of the North who had deluded the Northern population into supporting a war that defied the

[230] Collins D. Elliott, "To Elizabeth Elliott," July 31, 1862, Collins D. Elliott Papers, Box 4, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
[231] Collins D. Elliott, "To Elizabeth Elliott, Military Prison Louisville, KY," August 25, 1862, Collins D. Elliott Papers, Box 4, Tennessee State Library and Archives; Collins D. Elliott, "To M. M. Elliott," August 14, 1862, Collins D. Elliott Papers, Box 4, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
[232] Collins D. Elliott, "To M. M. Elliott."

Bible and the Constitution, in a speech before the First Tennessee Volunteers.[233] Thus, the individual soldiers could be lauded for their patriotism while the misguided leadership of politicians and ministers in the North bore the blame for the conflict. This intellectual conception would serve as the foundation for Elliott's worldview after the conclusion of the conflict.[234]

Elliott spent roughly six months in various prisons through 1862 waiting for an exchange to be arranged on his behalf to end his imprisonment. It is unclear how actively Elliott could pursue an exchange while in prison, but federal policy through 1862 sought to empty the Northern prison camps. In mid-November the quartermaster at Camp Chase received orders from the War department and confirmation from Johnson that Elliott could be granted parole. The parole was granted in exchange for Elliott signing an oath, not to be loyal to the United States, but that he would not intentionally take up arms

[233] Elliott would of course have been expected to lay the blame for the war at the feet of Union leaders while talking to the Tennessee Volunteers. Anything short of that would have seemed remarkably unpatriotic. Likewise he knew or expected that his daughter would have inherited his opinion of the Union, and could not help but to send words to temper her reaction to his own brother. The situation, however, would be repeated with more formality after the era of reconstruction among many Civil War veterans. Not the least reason for this would be efforts to reconstruct divided families after the conclusion of the conflict. It seems likely, however, that Elliott genuinely held a kind attitude toward Union soldiers as individuals. It had been Union officials who imprisoned him, but it had been soldiers who disregarded the harshest of Andrew Johnson's orders to hold the ministers in solitary confinement. Likewise after the war's conclusion Elliott needed to construct the Union such that the people of the nation could be redeemed if they could break free from the leaders who had misrepresented the previous conflict. This attitude in many ways mimicked the early efforts of Lincoln and his cabinet to put forth the idea that most of the South still supported the Union and they had been led astray by the misguided politics of the secessionists. Collins D. Elliott, "The Flag of the First Regiment, 1861"; Amy Murrell Taylor, *The Divided Family in Civil War America*, Civil War America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

[234] Much has recently been written about the divided family in the midst of the Civil War. The most thorough examination of this phenomenon comes from Ann Murrill Taylor. Her work attempted to contextualize the divisive nature of the war and place those familial divisions within the context of post war reunification. Taylor offers her most profound observation by describing the imagined reality that emerged in national culture after the conclusion of the conflict. "Even today, Americans continue to invoke family divisions almost as a source of pride." This historical memory points to the reality that white families who had divided during the war would be able to interpret the soldiers from either side as loyal patriots while blaming the elite members of either section as the true perpetrators of the conflict. Taylor, *The Divided Family in Civil War America*, 211.

against the government or attempt to materially harm the United States until such a time as he had been officially exchanged. Elliott managed to secure an official exchange just a month after his initial parole was extended. The exchange was affected between Braxton Bragg and William Rosecrans with the approval of Andrew Johnson in mid-December.[235]

The later actions of Elliott inevitably depended on his radicalization during his prison experience. Elliott entered the war as a Confederate advocate, and held those beliefs prior to much of the rest of Tennessee. While he supported the Confederate effort, and sought to provide moral and morale support to the Confederate army his duties remained in the operation of his academy. Only after his imprisonment and the closure of his school would Elliott feel the need and have the willingness to enlist in Confederate ranks.

Freed by the end of 1862, Elliott had the chance to determine his own course in the war. He had previously sought to support the Confederate war effort from his position in Nashville, but at this point a return to the city would not be possible. Elliott would not have been allowed to remain in Nashville after his exchange. After all Johnson had already arrested him once. His family, however, continued to reside in the city. Elliott did not go far immediately after his parole. He made an appearance with Confederate troops at the Battle of Murfreesboro just two weeks after his parole. It seems that Elliott then travelled to Vicksburg and remained there until the fall of the City again acting as a chaplain. It is not clear how, but Elliott managed to escape the fall of Vicksburg; it is possible that he only very temporarily visited the instillation at Vicksburg, and was not

[235] "Elliot, Collins D. (1810-1899) Papers 1816-1932," Collection (Tennessee State Library and Archives, n.d.), Box 4, THS 37, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

present for the surrender of the city. By March it seems that Elliott was again in Tennessee, and he later in the year participated in Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge. He would not receive an official enlistment from Richmond until November of 1863. The enlistment certificate assigned Elliott to be the Chaplain of Brigadier General George Maney's brigade. He was assigned to a hospital at Griffin, Georgia, where he remained until September of 1864. At which point he spent several months on leave working to raise funds for the Tennessee Relief Association that would provide money and supplies for the support of troops. Several letters seem to date from this period, and describe regular difficulties in Elliott connecting with other agents on his travels. Whatever the result of his months spent attempting to raise funds, Elliott was again attached to Braxton Bragg's army as it entered Tennessee for the battles of Franklin and Nashville.[236]

Though Elliott held substantial wealth prior to the war the disruption of military occupation in Tennessee upset the flow of goods in and out of Nashville. Elliott's wealth was not always helpful or disposable; Elliott's wealth depended on real estate and slave holdings or Confederate currency and bonds. For Elliott's wife and daughters who remained in Nashville, for the duration of the war, this would eventually become a problem.[237] In addition the city of Nashville was cut off from its normal routes of supply that in the antebellum period typically originated south of the city; acquiring needed supplies often meant crossing federal lines. Additionally, the Union denied responsibility

[236] Lizzie Elliott, "War Record of Reverend Collins D. Elliott, Compiled From Papers and Letters in My Possession Now," 1–2.

[237] The position of Elliott's family was not particularly unique for Southern women who lived in occupied regions. Many men of the south spent endless hours considering the circumstances of the women they had been separated from. Elliott seems to have fit into this mold. Elliott expressed to his wife and daughters that they should not accept any oath of loyalty to the Union. Many Southern men who had joined the army made similar requests of the women they left at home. Stephen William Berry, *All That Makes a Man: Love and Ambition in the Civil War South* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 193–196.

for feeding, clothing, or otherwise tending to the needs of Nashville's civilian population. The responsibility of upkeep for many Nashville families, including the Elliotts, required passage across military lines. This passage necessitated many passes, from both Confederate and Union authorities; they were routinely granted to the Elliotts. This habit of crossing lines, however, had some dangerous implications for the Elliott women as Andrew Johnson was not the only Union official to see danger in the civil population of Central Tennessee.

Elliott's family increasingly found their ability to gain passes across enemy lines in doubt because of Collins' participation in the Confederate army. General Rosecrans issued General Order No. 43 from Murfreesboro on March 11, 1863. This order classified a specific segment of the population that posed a threat to military operations in Tennessee. Rosecrans highlighted all those whose "natural supporters" were in Confederate service, and those who would not give assurances of their intentions to conduct themselves as peaceable citizens. This order would require the Elliott household to be ready to evacuate south, or ascribe to a loyalty oath. Elliott's older daughters triggered a confrontation in May 1863. The two oldest daughters Mary[238] and Susan obtained a pass to cross Union Lines from their Uncle who had facilitated mail deliveries from Collins while he was in prison. The girls used these passes to leave Nashville and visit their father and brother. On their return to Nashville they were searched, found to be in possession of mail to be delivered to many Nashville families, and were arrested. There seems to have been no immediate action taken despite the warnings of the Chief of

[238] The 1860 census lists Mary as May. The most commonly used name is Mary. "Ancestry.com. 1860 United States Federal Census [Database On-line]."

Military police. The provost marshal sent a warning that the Elliott family should be ready to move south, though the warning was in compliance with General Orders No. 43 the provost's note did not specify a time by which Susan and Mary needed to evacuate the city. Regardless the women were still present in Nashville in July when Collins Elliott's wife and two Eldest daughters signed loyalty oaths to the United States of America. The subscription of these oaths allowed the women to remain in Nashville. This took place despite the assertion by Elliott that none of his family would take an oath or give a parole to the United States Government.[239]

Despite hardships and separation the Elliott family reached the end of the war. Collins Elliott at the end of the war looked to resume his antebellum life insofar as it was possible. The first step in restoring his former life was to reopen the Nashville Female Academy. On its surface this seemed to be a fairly simple prospect. The Academy was evacuated just before the capture of Nashville. The buildings had been used by the Confederates, and then the Federal occupation forces. They would require renovation which would require the board to raise funds for that purpose. At the close of the war as the Federal government was returning property seized for war purposes Sgt. A H Wills summarized the status of the academy in a letter. This did little more than indicate who served on the board of trustees, and that Elliott was the principle of the school. In a continued recognition of the war just completed Wills noted next to the names of three board members that they were rebels. This also seems to indicate that fissures exist amongst board members. These divisions would plague efforts to reopen the academy.

[239] John Windrow, "Collins D. Elliott and the Nashville Female Academy," 97–99; "Elliot, Collins D. (1810-1899) Papers 1816-1932," Box 2 Folder 5.

Shortly after Elliott began working on this prospect a group of the Board of Trustees and stockholders of the school filed a law suit against Elliott. The suit charged that the board and Elliott had illegally entered into their agreement regarding the president's compensation prior to the war.[240] The difficulty in reopening the academy was compounded by another section of the Board desiring to move the school to a new location. This would require the sale of all current property and the reconstruction of the school at another location. Only Elliott himself and his friend and board member Robert B.C. Howell believed the best course of action would be to rebuild on the current site of the academy. The continued disagreement over reconstituting the academy delayed efforts to reopen the school. By May of 1866 Elliott had publically relented to the pressure of the board and the pending litigation. He issued a circular in which he purposed to submit to the board and aid them in whatever they deemed most appropriate for the Academy. Elliott explained his decision by saying, "I have learned how to accept the logic of facts, and to be content therewith."[241] This level of contrition is atypical for Elliott, but descriptive of where the war left Elliott. At least in the immediate aftermath of the conflict Elliott had little interest in picking fights he could not win. Despite his note of contrition several court cases against Elliott, and they eventually resulted in the forced sale of his home "Boscobel" and the final closure of the Nashville Female Academy.

Elliott was thus required by circumstances to abandon the practical reality of both the Confederacy and the school that he had worked to build over his lifetime. The collapse of his efforts did not require the abandoning of his intellectual conception of the

[240] Bass et al v. Elliott (Chancery Court Tennessee 1872).
[241] Collins D. Elliott, "Nashville Female Academy."

world. Rather, Elliott approached the 1870's and 80's with the self-appointed task of serving as Nashville's preeminent guardian of the Lost Cause. Elliott could not help but to be informed by his past as he engaged with this endeavor. This allowed Elliott to conceive of the Southern project as something very different than other promoters of the Lost Cause.[242] For Elliott, every aspect of society speaks to the larger issue of a beaten Confederacy, and the South as a subject people. His worldview expected every topic of public debate to be imbued with political relevance. Elliott also understood the balance of power in this relationship to be an unequal one; with many of the actions he viewed as errors being dictated from the North onto an unwilling South.[243] It is also useful to recognize the difficulty present in such an analysis. While Elliott spoke to his own time period with little thought to how his efforts would be utilized by future generations Elliott's rhetoric holds significant political resonance into the modern era.

Though Elliott likely held his political views throughout the period of Reconstruction, he was fairly quiet in his political activities. This seems to indicate an inability rather than an unwillingness to engage in the political discourse. Elliott after all fought several court cases that lingered through the period of Tennessee's Reconstruction, and Tennessee elected a Redemptionist government earlier than any other Confederate state.[244] When Elliott reemerged into the political word he did so as a

[242] Elliott defended the South in terms that most resemble Edward Said's reconception of Middle Eastern history through the lens of Orientalism. Several ideas must be taken from Orientalism to fully explain Elliott's defense of a lost nation.
[243] Edward W Said, *Orientalism*, 1st ed (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 10–15.
[244] Several explanations could be offered for Elliott's silence, though there is no evidence for his personal motives. The most likely reasoning seems to be that Elliott was distracted, but Anne Sarah Rubin offers another alternative for the general phenomenon of Southern male silence immediately following the war. Rubin posits that women take on the role of advocate because the men of the South are no longer afforded the luxury of expressing a political opinion in a moment where dissent and treason can be so closely linked.

champion of the righteousness of the white South and the Southern Cause. This reemergence was, however, not in the form of politics proper, nor necessarily in the role of a minister. Elliott most often used Newspaper editorial columns as his means of addressing issues of importance. On occasion speeches were given to Confederate reunions, and efforts would be made publically to erect monuments and other memorials to the bygone war effort. The most ardent defense of Southern institutions came in the form of a small booklet published in 1886.[245]

This booklet described the emerging debate in 1880's Tennessee over the nature of education within the life of the state. Elliott defined three possible systems of education wherein the family, the state, or the priesthood were responsible for providing citizens with their basic education. Elliott offered little consideration of the third system since it does not represent a dominant model with in America, and is present across sectional boundaries. Elliott focused on the larger conflict between the promotion of the state system and the family system. The state system, according to Elliott, exists predominantly as a feature of Northern public education, and represented a significant intrusion on the rights of the family and the individual states of the south who were being

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Several other historians have offered similar appraisals of Southern women's roles in reconstruction especially as women are made responsible for the memorialization of the conflict. At this moment women took over the role of Southern social critic. This explanation is compelling when describing the South as a whole, but Elliott never accepted a role for women in the south that would have allowed this sort of social inversion. In addition Elliott will publish several editorials condemning women who do act in a political manner. Rubin, *A Shattered Nation*, 230; William Alan Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914*, Civil War America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause*, Civil War America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

[245] Collins D Elliott, *Family-craft, or, The Scotch-Irish in Education in Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee, from 1780 to 1880.* (Nashville: George B. Staddan, 1880).

pressured to accept this northern model. The traditional model of Southern education emerged from the Scotch Irish family craft education.

It is fairly understandable that Elliott, a former educator, would be invested in educational policy; however Elliott clearly phrased his argument not as the concerns of an expert in the debated field, but rather as a challenge to the maintenance of the memory of the dead. "Would you not be as guilty of wronging your dead, your State, were you to turn over your military history, your civil history, to those whose personal interests and good name would be enhanced by depreciating Tennessee in these regards, as you are by turning over to such you educational history."[246] The proper explanation of all aspects of Southern history held intense political meaning for Elliott, and this required an appropriate Southern perspective rather than the abdication of the historical narrative to the "carpet-baggers." The maintenance of a Southern history of education offered the ground on which to challenge the Northern vision of what constituted American history, and American development.

This challenge to a southern narrative presented a fundamental identity crisis for Elliott and the remaining adherents of the Confederacy. To offer a counter narrative required Elliott to define exactly what it was to be Southern, even though Southern Nationalism had already been defeated in war. In order to create a nationalist narrative Elliott needed to establish what the South was not, as much as what it was.[247] The simplest definition would be that the South was not the North, but this could not provide

[246] Ibid., 5.
[247] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 86–89; Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton Studies in Culture/power/history (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1993), 3–6.

a satisfactory counter narrative. Thus, Elliott sought to describe the essential quality of both North and South. In this respect he fell back on his old emphasis on the quality of the lineage of either section. Therefore, while the North stemmed from puritan English immigrants the South combined the best parts of the Scotch and Irish peoples. This established a useful parallel for Elliott wherein the English had historically, he would say, oppressed Scotland and Ireland just as the North was currently engaged in oppressing the South by advancing New England's educational policies on an unwilling Southern people.[248] More than this Elliott traced the interactions of the subject nations of England and the Puritans as they interacted, and at each turn found the English Puritans to be wanting while the Scotch-Irish remained most blessed of these people. Elliott went so far as to deride the advocates of free public schools as being ungodly fanatical communists.[249]

Elliott concluded by highlighting the two threats that most clearly, he thought, were presented by the 'state craft' system of education. First, it represented a moral degradation of the South. "Greece and Rome—all ages, all nations—tell us there can be no permanent happiness in human society where God is not profoundly revered…. This end, and all other ends of education are best secured by the Family craft system."[250] The second imperative of resisting state sponsored public education was that it would promote a New England style, "strong-minded mannishness of mind and soul in women."[251] The struggle Elliott described over education reached into every Southern home in the shape

[248] Collins D Elliott, *Family-craft, or, The Scotch-Irish in Education in Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee, from 1780 to 1880.*, 9–12.
[249] Ibid., 14.
[250] Ibid., 30–31.
[251] Ibid., 31.

of changing at their most fundamental the nature of Southern women. It is not surprising that Elliott would find this threat imminent since he had spent his career operating a women's school, but it is significant that Elliott singled out the role of women to be one of the ultimate battlefields for the soul of the South in the post reconstruction era.[252]

It is not clear how wide an audience was reached by Elliott's tirade about public education.[253] The overall impact of this specific work however matters less than the project that it was a part of. Elliott devoted substantial time to the support of the Lost Cause, and that effort took place among the efforts of hundreds or thousands of others who found themselves qualified to speak on behalf of the Southern people. More widely consumed were the many editorial columns and speeches Elliott composed. The themes remained ostensibly to defend the Confederacy and the respectability of the Lost Cause and no doubt himself. This at times took the form of placing women in their appropriate station by condemning proponents of women's rights.[254] It often took the form of a historical remembrance of the antebellum south, or the life of the Confederacy.[255] Elliott

[252] This resembles Partha Chatterjee's thesis that Bengal sought independence by separating a sacred and secular space. The Sacred space would be protected and kept out of the reach of the colonial power thus elevating the influence and importance of the subject nation. Elliott's separation of women in this instance elevated the status of women in the Lost Cause to a position of sacred importance to the South. Elliott was far from alone in the effort to elevate women to a "sacred" position within Southern culture; the role of gender in the Lost Cause would serve as one of the most unifying aspects of Civil War remembrance. Further, the elevation of women offered the clearest space for common ground available after the war no matter what Elliott intended. Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 6–7, 116–117; Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 95–96.

[253] Windrow noted that it was unfortunate that Elliott refused to incorporate a more modern approach to education into his belief structure. This at least indicates that Elliott's view of education failed to be persuasive over the long run even with an otherwise favorable biographer.

[254] Collins D Elliott, "Crowing Hens," *Unknown*, Unknown, THS 37, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

[255] Collins D Elliott, "Nashville Female Academy Again," *Republican Banner*, May 2, 1875; Collins D Elliott, "The Confederate Cause," *The Nashville American*, January 23, 1890; Collins D Elliott, "The Nashville Female Academy: Civil War, 1861," *The Nashville American*, May 1, 1897; Collins D. Elliott, "The Nashville Female Academy: Something About the Past History of a Venerable Institution.,"

would freely provide his opinions on education and social issues.[256] This often took the form of the preacher chiding a wayward flock. In one editorial Elliott condemned the modern in an effort to support the antebellum virtue he perceived as having been lost. Elliott commanded the reader to, "Let their children know that these Confederates stood, primarily, for the separateness of Church and State; the Church North seeking to use the State to destroy the sin of slavery, as their imitators in our day are seeking to destroy other sins, by the same agency, instead of the spiritual power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."[257] This statement represented an evolution in Elliott's interpretation of the war. Prior to the war the conflict was a wholly religious battle wherein God favored the South. Now Elliott claimed the South had fought to maintain the correct position of the church within the state. It also represented his continued conviction that the North committed not only unconstitutional oppression of the South, but also supported a heretical interpretation of the gospels.

From his position as a minister and an educator, Elliott had the ability to articulate the meaning of Southern identity as it changed and shifted through the middle of the nineteenth century. This position allowed him to comment publically as a part of a highly pro-Confederate historical narrative of his own life. In this way, he meshed with other southern intellectuals very well. He accepted the proslavery argument of his peers; though he never recounted those arguments in his own words. He also seemed to demonstrate an exceptional comfort in the intellectual solitude of the antebellum South.

Republican Banner, April 25, 1875; Collins D Elliott, "Who Were Our Tennessee Fathers?," *Daily American*, October 1, 1891.

[256] Collins D Elliott, "The Blair Bill" (Nashville, TN, Unknown), THS 37, Tennessee State Library and Archives; Collins D Elliott, "The Confederate Cause"; Collins D Elliott, "The Sam Jones Excitement," *The Nashville Banner*, Unknown, THS 37, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

[257] Collins D Elliott, "The Confederate Cause."

His writings lauded intellectual development in a society that did not place great value on intellectualism. This in part helped explain the vitriolic attack that Elliott made on the extension of public education in the post-bellum South. Elliott was satisfied for the educated few to pursue intellectual endeavors, but for the great mass of society these activities would prove unnecessary. This anti-intellectualism only appeared after the loss of the war, and only in response to efforts of the national government to promote education throughout the South. Elliott's experience in the antebellum period proved typical of the southern educated elite in that he promoted the creation of an educated class to guide the South in their efforts to preserve their peculiar people from the corrupting influences of Northern business, politics, and culture.[258]

Several reoccurring themes appear in the writings, lectures, and sermons of Elliott. Distinctively these works never focused directly on slavery. While this topic appeared prominently in the writings and addresses of almost every other minister or politician from the South; Elliott avoided the topic to the extent that he only rarely used the term slave. In his correspondence to his wife or other family members Elliott consistently used the term "servants" to refer the slaves employed by his family and academy. This utilization of a euphemism to refer to slaves indicates the degree to which Elliott participated in southern culture. He represented a figure that was typical of the South.[259]

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[258] Drew Gilpin Faust, *A Sacred Circle: The Dilemma of the Intellectual in the Old South, 1840-1860* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), x–xii, 87, 112.

[259] Several historians have commented on the occurrence of the word servants taking the place of slaves. Eugene Genovese, in particular, sighted southern ministers as a driving force both in defending the institution of slavery and in reforming the institution so that it would adhere to a biblical standard. This adherence required slave masters to treat their slaves kindly and avoid excessive abuse, or inhumane treatment. A feature of this often could be found in renaming those in the midst of the institution as

The lineage of Tennesseans, themselves, was much more important to Elliott. He took enormous pains to trace the lineage of the settlers of Tennessee to the Scotch-Irish, and to emphasize their propensity to encourage education, and protestant Christianity. From the definition of lineage, Elliott builds a narrative in which the other distinctive aspects of the South, education and Christianity serving as the two most important features of southern life, arrive at their truest form in the American South, and could not otherwise be expressed except through the unique disposition of Southerners.

The narrative that Elliott builds provides a glimpse into the construction of a unified vision of Southern identity as it emerged in the antebellum period, catalyzed during the Civil War, and found its most stable expression in the Redemptionist South. Elliott's narrative of southern exceptionalism does not mention the institution of slavery directly; rather Elliott tends to veil his critique of slavery and race relations in the guise of concern for property and servants before the war, and overextension of federal authority during reconstruction. When this is compared to the works of Samuel Baldwin or even Andrew Johnson who directly considered the institution as it existed in the life of the South, the absence of a clearer discussion of the institution from Elliott seems an omission.

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servants. The slave would, as a servant, participate more fully in the southern patriarchal hierarchy. Creating this space for slaves within the family structure of the South allowed ministers like Elliott to consider their application of the institution of slavery to adhere with biblical standards. James McPherson demonstrated a similar tendency among the soldiers of the Confederacy to substitute the word slave for phrases like property. This helped to confirm the Southern cause in the war by focusing soldiers on the defense of the home front. With this in mind Elliott provides a useful example of a common trend within the creation of Southern identity. Genovese, *A Consuming Fire*, 5–10, 38–40; James M McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 19–22.

In the place of any discussion of slavery or race in terms of a black white issue Elliott offers many prolonged explanations of the uniqueness of the southern character as influenced and created by the presences of the Scotch-Irish; particularly in Tennessee. Elliott it would seem had little interest in the antebellum issue of slavery. Moreover since he was not a parish minister he did not find himself involved with the instruction of slaves in the tenants of Christianity; nor in safeguarding his congregants against the worst moral abuses of the slave system. This insulation seems to have allowed Elliott to pass through the antebellum era without so much as leaving a written record of using the word slave. Elliott instead often referred to the servants that were in the employ of his school.[260] After the conclusion of the war Elliott in contrast seems very willing to discuss the institution. He cites it in his defense of the Confederacy in editorials after the conclusion of the conflict as evidence of the flawed morality of the North that, according to Elliott's logic, started the war.[261]

[260] This presents a unique historiographical conundrum. A significant number of southern historians have made efforts to present the antebellum south as having some sort of guilt over the injustice of the institution of slavery. Elliott's actions would seem to at one level lend credence to this supposition. Rather than the full throated and unyielding defenses of slavery provided, by the other ministers, Elliott takes a very passive tone toward slavery. It seems, however, more likely to stem from simply his not feeling the need to preach to the converted. Many of the women attending his school by the 1850's derived from wealthy Southern families, and would already believe in the institution from their upbringing. Further, Elliott would later defend his school as being thoroughly Southern in its affiliation, as such slavery could be assumed. By the time Elliott might have a need to defend the institution circumstances had already removed it from the American legal system. Instead Elliott seems to have maintained a position throughout the remainder of his life that reinforced the idea of a hierarchy of class and race to the extent that he would in later days defend the institution despite its abolition. This clearly would have fit in with the slave system, but Elliott did not have the need to fully explain it until after the end of the Civil War, and the institution of the 13th amendment. Gaines M. Foster. "Guilt Over Slavery: A Historiographical Analysis." The Journal of Southern History 56, no. 4 (November 1990): 665–694.

[261] Collins D. Elliott, "The Confederate Cause," Sermon (Nashville, TN, unknown), 1, THS 37, Tennessee State Library and Archives; Collins D. Elliott, "Buried Alive" (Nashville, TN, unknown), 1–4, THS 37, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

Of far more importance to Elliott was a Scotch-Irish ancestry.[262] This provided the key identifying feature of Elliott's South. Moreover, Elliott regularly juxtaposed his and Tennessee's Scotch-Irish ancestry with that of the Anglo-puritans of New England. This positioning indicates that Elliott's prime focus was, in fact, not to laud his own heritage so much as to condemn the misconceptions of the interloping North. This emerged as a common feature within Elliott's writings throughout his career as an educator, a chaplain, and ultimately an outspoken advocate of the Lost Cause. The goal then was not only to demonstrate the correctness of his arguments on any number of topics from educational policy to women's rights; but to simultaneously use each of these disparate topics to shape the understanding of what it meant to be the South.

Elliott, more than any of the other Nashville ministers, offers a compelling picture of the conservative revolutionary. He sought to maintain the status quo as it was threatened in the Antebellum world, and accepted revolutionary change only insofar as it acted to rebuke the "fanaticism" of the North. After defeat, Elliott continued to proclaim the conservative narrative of the war effort, and advocate for the maintenance of the Antebellum standard of the South as a means of confronting what was in his view an oppressive Northern presence in Southern politics. This allowed Elliott to proclaim a

[262] This is not a particularly unusual means of building identity as a result of the Civil War. It became necessary for many groups to find reasons why the North had so thoroughly differentiated itself from the South. Elliott like many others traced the differences in sections to existing divisions within the lands they immigrated from. These explanations often emerge as a means of defining the South as a unique separate nation. Similar differentiation can be found in a number of sources from the antebellum period. Augustus Baldwin Longstreet among others wrote many accounts of the eccentricities of Southern life. Grady McWhiney, *Cracker Culture: Celtic Ways in the Old South* (University, Ala: University of Alabama Press, 1988), 30,35; Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, *Augustus Baldwin Longstreet's Georgia Scenes Completed: a Scholarly Text* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 19–33, 32–47; Berthoff, Rowland, McDonald, Forrest, and McWhiney, Grady, "Celtic Mist over the South," *Journal of Southern History* 52, no. 4 (November 1986): 523–546.

colonial discourse from the outset of the construction of the Lost Cause. This discourse would later be adopted and included as an acceptable and even laudable part of Americana, thus disarming its effectiveness as a means of colonial resistance. Instead, the Lost Cause became the foundation for understanding much of the condemnation of the Reconstruction Era as an overreach of federal authority.

CHAPTER VI

WILLIAM WHARTON, REUBEN FORD AND COMMON MINISTRY

Loyalty and duty were not topics that could easily be discerned by the ministers that Johnson arrested. As the 1850's drew to a close the governor of Tennessee appointed William Wharton chaplain of the state penitentiary, and remained in this role during secession and the conquest of the city by the Union. When Johnson called the original group of ministers to his office for their first interview he did not include Wharton. When the ministers provided their response to Johnson ten days later, Wharton was however, present. He did not participate in the response given to Johnson, and he was not immediately arrested. Instead, Wharton had a private interview with Johnson. The conversation took place just after Johnson ordered the arrest of the Howell, Sehon, Sawrie, Ford, Baldwin, and Elliott.[263] Johnson began by bluntly telling Wharton that the government needed to know who its friends and enemies were. This might have meant that Johnson needed to identify his own friends and supporters. Wharton declared that he expected to be loyal to the current government, that he was primarily loyal to the states of Tennessee and in the end would go whatever way Tennessee went. He then offered another claim of allegiance that transcended state and national boundaries. Wharton

[263] Only five of the ministers were present at the second meeting, but Johnson ordered the arrest of all six after Howell delivered the negative response.

declared, "I am a citizen of Heaven!"[264] It seems from the transcripts that made their way into the newspapers the next morning that Johnson had been ready for this argument. Johnson replied, "There are men in Nashville professing that citizenship who are responsible for the blood of more of our country men, than the soldiers who have bayonets in their hands."[265] Johnson presented Wharton with a report he issued to the Confederate governor Harris. This chaplain's report from the state penitentiary recommended the release of all prisoners who would join the Confederate army. Johnson saw this as a clear attack on decency as it would constitute the arming of thieves and murderers to commit the crime of treason.[266]

At this point, the conversation took a decidedly theological turn, both Johnson and Wharton attempted to argue the theological merits of their position. It is likely that the entire conversation was truncated in publishing, because it gave Johnson credit for the more eloquent points and gave the last word to Johnson. Nonetheless, the position argued by Wharton was fairly typical for Southern ministers in general. Wharton argued that his actions were in self-defense against the invasion of Tennessee by the northern states. Moreover, the only justifiable warfare was in self-defense, and the correct course for a citizen was to follow the fates of their state. Johnson replied to these arguments by questioning the defensive nature of Tennessee's invasion of Kentucky, and that Wharton's position was fundamentally non-biblical. Johnson rebuked Wharton saying, "But you could urge the release of felons to aid in murdering loyal men, Do you pretend that your gospel is confined to the limits of your Southern Confederacy? I always thought

[264] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 5, 1861-1862*, 5:518.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Ibid.

its precepts of love and charity were co-extensive with the world. You cannot justify your conduct before man or God."[267]

Johnson ended the interview by calling Wharton a traitor in the most dramatic way possible. He compared Wharton to Judas, "Yes if he [Jesus] were on earth again there are some among his professed teachers who would sell him for less than thirty pieces of silver."[268] Wharton's bad health kept him out of prison for a few days, but Johnson had him arrested and sent him to Louisville and then Camp Chase.

It is worth remembering that shortly before this conversation with Wharton, Johnson had ordered the arrest of the other Nashville ministers. The conversation would be published in a supportive newspaper. The vitriolic and unyielding qualities Johnson exhibited in the conversation were an attempt to justify the arrest to the public. Just as likely, Johnson genuinely perceived these ministers as a threat to his own position and the success of the Union. Johnson's 4th of July speech in 1862 made it clear that public opinion did not support arresting ministers, and Johnson might have had an understanding of how controversial this act would become. These ministers, as such, were a threat to Johnson's position as military governor, and a threat to the continuation of the Union through their preaching.

William Wharton and Reuben Ford serve as unique examples of the opportunities presented to antebellum southern white men who were not born into the lower classes of southern society. They both emerged from wealthy Virginia families who expanded as the nation expanded. Their course to Nashville and the Civil War deviated from each

[267] Ibid.
[268] Ibid., 5:518–519.

other in many ways, but they ultimately converged in a rather illuminating way. Both figures have been overlooked by historians.[269] They present several issues on interest to the historiography of the antebellum South. First, their career trajectories while emanating from elite families drew both men toward professions rather than toward attempting to enter into the planter class. This did not occur out of a complete lack of opportunity, but rather through the decisions of both men to aim for professional skill. They thus, help to build the middle class of the South as it existed in the antebellum period, and as a result received livable wages and social notability. The mechanics of the social contract clearly did not motivate either man to pursue his ultimate career. Ford entered into ministry in the Baptist church, and apparently never looked back. It is reasonable to describe this choice as being motivated by devotion to his personal faith. Wharton entered the ministry in a supremely round about fashion; by way of medicine and a pharmacy business. Wharton offers a unique understanding of how a middle class antebellum southern businessman encountered and experienced Christianity. Ford provides another view of the social importance of middle class ministers in the South.

Reuben Ford left only a modest impact on the historical record. His career began in Virginia where he spent most of his adult life. He was among the youngest of the

[269] Ford made almost no impact on the historical narrative. A single source describes the course of his career in the Baptist church. This appears in a collection of biographies of Baptist ministers from Virginia put together by George Taylor in 1912. The un-footnoted work seems to draw on some records of the Baptist church along with some newspaper articles. Taylor at least once draws upon a news article form the 1880's to blame Ford's death on his Northern imprisonment. Wharton left more of a record, though much of that record survived because of the efforts of the women of his family in preserving letters, and the works of the entire Wharton family. Ironically Wharton's son was the subject of an article appearing in the Tennessee Historical Quarterly; while Wharton himself remained the subject of an archived collection of letters, and some scant newspaper clippings. "Yeatman-Polk Collection," Archival Collection (Tennessee State Library and Archives, n.d.), Tennesee State Library and Archives; Frederick Jonas Dreyfus, "The Life and Works of George Michael Wharton, MD, (Psuedonym 'Stahl'), 1825-1853," *Tennessee Historical Quaterly* (1947); George Braxton Taylor, *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (J. P. Bell Company, Inc., 1912).

ministers having been born in 1816. He was a Baptist minister, though the exact sect of Baptist is not entirely clear. He was nonetheless able to secure a temporary home for his Nashville congregation at a Primitive Baptist Church, while the congregation demolished their old building to make way for a new facility. This cannot be understood to be sure, however, as his predecessor had been none other than J.R. Graves, the minister who would assume control of R.B.C. Howell's congregation when he assumed the presidency of the Southern Baptist Conference. All of this of course occurred in the late 1850's when Ford had finally made his way to Tennessee. Prior to his move west, Ford seemed to be particularly effective at building up small congregations, having achieved success in building young congregations twice in Virginia during the early 1850's. His work in Virginia included hosting several revivals, otherwise refered to as "protracted meetings," and he managed to successfully raise several thousand dollars for the rebuilding of his parish's building.[270]

Observers describe Ford as an indomitable force, and he seems to have managed to bring the Cherry Street Baptist Church back from the brink of closure almost single handedly. In the process as the city of Nashville expanded so did Ford's congregation and the initial expansion that doubled the size of their worship space could no longer house the assembled peoples. At this point Ford attempted the complete reconstruction of the church's property. The congregation doubted the prudence of this effort as it would leave them in considerable debt. Ford guaranteed the congregation that he personally would go on a fundraising trip throughout Tennessee and Virginia if necessary to raise the funds to pay off the expansion. They also had help from First Baptist Church under the resumed

[270] Taylor, *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, 54.

leadership of R.B.C. Howell. The ladies groups of these two congregations threw regular "Strawberry Soirees" to raise funds for Ford's congregation.[271] Construction began, and by 1859 the basement had been completed. Ford also petitioned the Legislature to change the name of the church to Central Baptist Church on the congregation's document of incorporation.[272]

The narrative of antebellum Christianity can most easily be described in terms of its larger themes, but for the average pastor's day-to-day life had more to do with fundraising, and strawberry socials than it did with public disputations over slavery. Ford represented the average experience of ministers around the nation in his efforts to build up his church. His efforts also tied him to the lingering impact of the Second Great Awakening. Once converts had joined a denomination, or experienced a conversion, these men and women needed institutions to support and shape their experience of Christianity. As the fervor of the Awakening ebbed toward midcentury much of the effort of the denominations who had benefited from the explosion of devotion shifted into building congregations and societies to promote the goals of the church. This effort progressed despite the increasing national tensions between sections from within and without the churches.

The Civil War derailed Ford's efforts to secure the future of his congregation. In the rush to form home guards and other militia units at the outset of the war Ford

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[271] "The Baptist Soirees," *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Nashville Tennesseean*, May 28, 1858.
[272] "Central Baptist Church: An Accurate Sketch of Its Past History," *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Nashville Tennesseean*, September 28, 1873; "The Baptists: A Purely Democratic Religious Denomination," *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Nashville Tennesseean*, April 3, 1887; "The Central Baptist Church," *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Nashville Tennesseean*, July 31, 1882; Taylor, *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, 55; William Ronald Cocke, *Hanover County Chancery Wills and Notes* (Genealogical Publishing Com, 1978), 56.

received a recommended for a position in the Tennessee Home Guard. It is not clear if he ever entered into this position, but having been nominated, and having that nomination published in the Nashville papers would likely not have gone unnoticed by the unionists who would remain until the city was conquered, or who returned with Andrew Johnson. This certainly would be enough to require an oath of loyalty from Ford. He was arrested with the other ministers, and paroled Oct, 9th 1862, along with Samuel Baldwin, William Wharton, and William Sawrie. Ford's parole took a little longer to reach Camp Chase. The prison system during the war can, at best, be described as an ad hoc system. Ford's parole was sent to Johnson's Island outside Sandusky, Ohio rather than to Ford in Camp Chase, Columbus, Ohio. Nonetheless, the parole returned Ford to Nashville and civilian life. His return was the least eventful of any of the arrested ministers.

He does not seem to have done anything of particular note until he died in early 1864. One article concerning the history of his church described the death as a side effect of his imprisonment, but this cannot be verified. Ford seems if nothing else to be a remarkably good example of the civic minded minister who got swept into the tumult of the war. He never found his way clear of the complex and difficult relationships caused by the war. The African American portion of Central Baptist Church officially separated from the congregation in 1865 in order to build their own congregation. Central Baptist meanwhile emerged from the war having had their building used as a military hospital, the congregation had in fact never been able to occupy a completed building. In addition they emerged with a substantial debt and no means to pay off their obligations. The debt

would eventually be foreclosed on, and the building purchased by a Presbyterian congregation.[273]

These experiences proved fairly common for the occupied regions of the South during the Civil War. No study has yet established an intentional effort among Union military authorities to target white pro-Confederate congregations' buildings for seizure, but it happened with regularity. Meanwhile the black congregations of the South tended to express, often for the first time, an independence from both white congregations and military authorities. For Ford and his congregation the Civil War would require years of rebuilding destroyed institutions. This effort to rebuild required an intellectual restructuring of the South as well as the physical restoration of institutions. Many of the institutions built during the Antebellum period would not survive this effort to reconstitute. Ford's church fell into this category along with Collins Elliot's school.

Ford's career offered a telling portrait of the social status of Southern ministers. He had access to far greater wealth, through his family, which the vast majority of Southerners could not access, but by occupation he existed in the economic and cultural middle ground of the South. His connections allowed him to boldly advocate expansion to his congregations; meanwhile he certainly could back up his planned course through his connections with the elite portions of the South. He, however, operated both within the elite social sphere, and ministered to the poor, indigent, slave, and free black. Ford's position of minister gave him access to all levels of Southern society, and he used this

[273] "Home Guards," *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Nashville Tennesseean*, May 24, 1861; Taylor, *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, 56; "The Central Baptist Church"; "Central Baptist Church: An Accurate Sketch of Its Past History"; Andrew Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 6, 1862-1863*, vol. 6 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 21–22.

access to promote the interests of his congregational charges. By virtue of being a Baptist, Ford traveled far less than his Methodist counterparts who were subject to their denomination's rules against long term appointments. Ford's career placed him as an intermediary between itinerant preacher on the frontier of society and the established ministers of elder congregations. Ford certainly held revivals, but these seem to be out of an effort to build individual congregations rather than efforts to promote a denomination.

William Wharton led a far different life than Reuben Ford. He descended from a family of means. His ancestors had been English gentry, and moved to Culpepper County, Virginia prior to the Revolution. They established their roots there, and in doing so spawned several generations of professionals. Much of the family focused on practicing medicine, and William Wharton chose this field as his profession. He attended the University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia, and on graduating he moved to the recently founded village of Tuscumbia, Alabama. Here he met and married one of the original inhabitants of the settlement, Priscilla Jane Dickson, in 1823. The young couple quickly produced seven children with the oldest going to Philadelphia to study medicine. Wharton spent the next several years running his medical practice as well as a pharmacy in Tuscumbia, and Huntsville.[274]

The pattern of Wharton's life changed in 1841 when he was asked to take over as pastor of "the Christian Church" in Nashville. He moved his family to the city, and they managed well for the next several years until 1847. August of this year brought the death

[274] Frederick Jonas Dreyfus, "The Life and Works of George Michael Wharton, MD, (Psuedonym 'Stahl'), 1825-1853," 316–319; "Death of William H. Wharton," *Republican Banner*, May 9, 1871; T.G. Wharton, "Letter of Judge T.G. Wharton of Miss. to Mrs. Mary W. Bass, Nashville Tenn.," June 27, 1895, Yeatman-Polk Collection, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

of Wharton's wife from tuberculosis. This death was followed by several others. His three year old daughter , and his daughter in law died the next July. His eldest son, George, left Nashshville to pursue his fortunes farther South. This eventually led him to New Orleans just in time for the yellow fever outbreak of 1853. George attempted with the other doctors of the city to stem the tide of the outbreak until he was called away, in August, to tend to his younger brother. Before George arrived home his brother Algernon had died. George had not left soon enough, and would succumb to yellow fever later that month. For Wharton this chain of events meant the death of five immediate family members in as many years. [275]

Despite the personal hardship, he continued to operate his pharmacy and to conduct his ministry in Nashville. The "Christian Church" that Wharton assumed leadership of belonged to the nascent Disciples of Christ. This body had only begun to form on a national level. The denomination emerged in part as an extension of the revivalism of the Second Great Awakening; though it would not develop a clear national structure for a long time to come. The movement itself emerged as a mixture of several revivalist branches with some substantial Baptist influences, as late as 1849 the various groups were still attempting to develop a national structure to unify their efforts. Wharton would play a role in this development in the state of Tennessee. He seems to have done so from a position of ecumenicalism rather than an ardent doctrinal stance. This approach was no doubt facilitated by the lack of organizational structure at the national level. It also helped him to advise his family members who had moved away, or lived at a

[275] Frederick Jonas Dreyfus, "The Life and Works of George Michael Wharton, MD, (Psuedonym 'Stahl'), 1825-1853," 320–321; "Died," *Republican Banner*, August 10, 1853; "Death of William H. Wharton"; T.G. Wharton, "Letter of Judge T.G. Wharton of Miss. to Mrs. Mary W. Bass, Nashville Tenn."

distance or in locations that his young national church might not be able to reach.[276] The limited reach of the Disciples of Christ helped Wharton to avoid any particular concern with denominational rivalries. He wrote to one of his daughters, at some point after his wife's death to advise her, "You do as your cousin Susie wants about joining the Episcopal Church—if you can become as good a Christian as she is I know you will both meet your dear mother again in the 'shinning above.'"[277]

Through the 1850's, Wharton seemed to be preoccupied with the development of his church and denomination. He continued through this period to offer his name to articles and calls for more unity in the denomination to Christian publications in Nashville and throughout Tennessee. It was ironically the very lack of national structure that allowed Wharton to accept a position as a minister in the first place. When Wharton took his place as the head of his church (which happened to be on Cherry Street Seemingly just down the road from Reuben Ford's congregation) there were as yet no permanent full time ministers of the Disciples of Christ in the state of Tennessee. Wharton was of course only a part time minister as he continued to operate his pharmacy and medical practice.[278]

He remarried after the death of his first wife, and fortunately, his family seems to have remained in good health after the abysmal morbidity of the early part of the decade. He maintained correspondence with his family in Virginia, and his sisters and daughters who traveled to visit the Virginia branch of the family. These letters expressed loneliness,

[276] Herman Albert Norton, *Tennessee Christians; a History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Tennessee* (Nashville: Reed and Co, 1971), 55,61,64–65; Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*.
[277] William Wharton, "Dear Mary," Unknown, Yeatman-Polk Collection, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
[278] Norton, *Tennessee Christians; a History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Tennessee*, 74–78.

and conveyed the goings on in Nashville. He also made note of his efforts to recover from the earlier deaths. He told his sister that not only had he attended a party at their cousins, but he had, "a great deal of pleasure there among the ladies, dancing twice once with cousin Jennie and the other with Miss Sophia Gibson…You see I am coming out."[279] He conveyed the goings on of local churches as well by describing the effort of some of his congregation to swell the ranks of a neighboring congregation. This action was occurring in an effort to oust a minister who had offended the members of Wharton's congregation with a recently published book. The effort to move to the new church was the first step in trying to remove and expel this minister from the locality. This minor action of local church politics failed to rate much more of a reaction from Wharton than a modest mention. He failed to cite specific theological complaints, or to endorse or denounce the actions of the transferring members. This brief example, however, highlights the volatility of the volatility of antebellum churches.[280]

After Wharton's heated conversation with Johnson he was arrested, and sent to prison camps in the North. Like the other ministers, Wharton was paroled in October; he then returned to Nashville where he remained for the rest of the war. He continued to make a living as a doctor and preacher, and even returned to Johnson in 1864 to ask for

[279] It is interesting to note the different views on dancing between the ministers. Samuel Baldwin soundly condemned Collins Elliott for tolerating dancing at the Nashville Female Academy. For his part Elliott portrayed his position as one of toleration rather than encouragement. Meanwhile Wharton was attending parties, and dancing with multiple women in the process. He seems to have not only approved of dancing, but embraced it. This range of opinion is able to be found on most issues, and is thus not particularly stunning. For the most controversial topics, however, building a range of opinion requires sampling ministers from several regions rather than examining ministers from a single city. Slavery is a good example of the latter instance. Much of the divide in the more controversial issues stems lees from doctrinal or theological foundations; instead it emerges from significant sectional political differences. For a full discussion of the interactions of politics and the evangelical movement, reference Richard Carwardine's marvelous book. William Wharton, "Dear Annie," February 10, 1855, 2, Yeatman-Polk Collection, Tennessee State Library and Archives; Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America*.
[280] William Wharton, "Dear Annie," 2–3.

an extension of his parole so he could travel through the lines to perform a family wedding elsewhere in Tennessee. Johnson apparently was willing to offer the extension with certain provisions attached. Wharton was unwilling to accept the added restrictions and chose to remain in the city instead.[281]

Wharton remained in Nashville after the war's end. He continued to operate his pharmacy, though he had taken on partners by the end of the war. As Tennessee quickly emerged from reconstruction, Wharton was able to secure the position of state librarian from the General Assembly of Tennessee the year before he died. Wharton remained in this post until his death from a lingering illness. An attempt was made to gather all of Wharton's family to Nashville for the funeral, but due to the illness of one of his daughters it is not clear that this was possible. Of Wharton's descendants several of his daughters survived the remainder of the century, but all of his sons died without transmitting the family name to future generations.[282]

In 1858, Wharton wrote a long letter to his son on a Sunday afternoon. Wharton had been inspired to compose this missive while preaching at the prison in the morning on the thirteenth chapter of Acts. Much of the letter, as a result, outlined Wharton's understanding of Christianity. It was within this chapter of Acts that Wharton found the core of the evangelism of Paul, and by extension the means of continued evangelism. Wharton sought a more primitive interpretation of the bible. "A person taught only the

[281] William Wharton, "Wharton to Johnson" (Nashville, TN, July 27, 1864), Johnson Papers, Library of Congress.
[282] T.G. Wharton, "Letter of Judge T.G. Wharton of Miss. to Mrs. Mary W. Bass, Nashville Tenn.," 2; "Death of William H. Wharton"; Will Wharton, "My Darling Sister," May 8, 1871, Yeatman-Polk Collection, Tennessee State Library and Archives; "Classified Ads 2 -- No Title," *Republican Banner*, January 26, 1867; Norton, *Tennessee Christians; a History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Tennessee*, 75–77.

scripture cannot understand many modern phrases which greatly perplex persons and misleads them when seeking to be religious—"the new birth" "change of heart."" [283] For Wharton the gospel presented a much simpler message to those who would accept it. Moreover, entering into belief required only the simple sacrament of baptism rather than a strict conversion experience. Wharton found his own examination of the scripture to be enlivening and insightful, but it was fairly common for Southern ministers and in its generalities for all American evangelicals of the period. His letter advocated the forgiveness of all sins by the merit of Christ's life and sacrifice. This is a classic Protestant position, and hardly new in this kind of general expression this theological doctrine allowed for the expansion of denominations without a clear unified understanding of the implication of practical problems not resolved by theology and doctrine; for antebellum America this meant the lack of a unified stance on the issue of slavery.[284]

Slavery was not on Wharton's mind as he wrote this letter; he was concerned with extolling the virtues of Christianity. His larger issue was the conduct of evangelism, and on this topic he followed closer to the most ardent revivalists. He chastised those who heard the gospel, accept the veracity of Christ, and confess their belief without implementing these truths by their own good works in visiting the poor, sick, and widows to minister to their needs. Wharton's critique extended to the phrases employed by antebellum Christianity. He criticized the use of "hope" as something that one could receive in the present. He stated that instead hope resided in the future, that it could not

[283] William Wharton, "My Dear Son," April 18, 1858, Yeatman-Polk Collection, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
[284] Ibid.

reside in the past or present, and that it required action in the present to achieve hope in the future. Wharton's critique of the antebellum practice of Christianity emerged from fear over the fate of his son, who had seemingly begun to doubt the veracity of the gospels. Despite this, Wharton urged faith on him, and to commit himself to action in that faith. Wharton argued that the truly telling examples of the spirit in action did not come from the parables of Jesus, or the words of comfort in the Psalms, but instead from the genuine examples of the actions of the spirit recorded in the bible. These records provided the template for Christian living, and evangelism.

This message was far from unique. In and of itself the message of Wharton to his son was the same message that had fueled many revivals and expansions of the antebellum Christian community. Revivalists would often offer criticisms and critiques of the dominant practice of Christianity as a means of convincing their audience that this alone was not the only means of finding Jesus. The practice of self-criticism encouraged a revision of terminology with in the evangelical church of the early nineteenth century. This revised terminology in turn was critiqued by Wharton. While he gladly challenged the terminology currently used by the church, he did not present a definition of Christianity or of faith that stepped out of the mainstream of protestant theology. This allowed the same techniques to be used to repeatedly to change the sound of the evangelical message without changing the content of the message.

CHAPTER VII

SAMUEL BALDWIN:

THE APOCALYPTIC PROPHET OF CIVIL WAR NASHVILLE

Samuel Baldwin provides an image both of the arch Confederate, and the reconstructed citizen. By October of 1861 Isham G. Harris had not only won reelection as the governor of Tennessee, but had also won the secessionist debate within the state. He had retained the unity of Tennessee's three sections, and spent much of his time organizing the defense of the state. When it came time to inaugurate Harris for his second term the affair lacked ceremony. The oath of office was taken before the assembled legislature, and Harris offered a single sentence as his inaugural address. Before the installation was completed a local Methodist minister offered a prayer for the success of the governor. Of the Reverend Samuel Baldwin's prayer only the first line is recorded. Baldwin prayed, "We thank thee, O Lord, for having inaugurated this Revolution."[285] Though this prayer alone did not lead to the arrest and imprisonment of Baldwin it offers a strong glimpse into the Southern Christian mindset that he vociferously advocated. Samuel Baldwin's war time experiences highlight a dual and seemingly contradictory story. On the one hand, Baldwin endured imprisonment to affirm his conception of the nature and role of the Southern states as the chosen of God. Later in the war, Baldwin

[285] William Gannaway Brownlow, *Sketches of the Rise, Progress, and Decline of Secession: With a Narrative of Personal Adventures Among the Rebels* (Philadelphia : Cincinnati: G. W. Childs ; Applegate & Co, 1862), 178.

professed his loyalty to challenge the government's seizure of his congregation's building and subsequent installation of a northern minister. In this dual role of rebel and citizen Baldwin exemplified the methods that would be used to adapt to the circumstances of war by the rest of the Confederacy.

Like several of the other ministers arrested by Johnson, Samuel Baldwin was a border Confederate. He had been born in Ohio, and ordained in Kentucky. Through the 1850 he had served as the president of Soule College in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, founded as a branch of First Methodist Church to educate local women. Having spanned the western portions of the nation from Ohio to Tennessee, Baldwin had ample justification to side with either section of the Civil War. He would choose the Confederacy as a result of his philosophy regarding slavery. Nonetheless, he existed in a highly unsettled portion of the nation. Likewise, Edmund Sehon, and Collins Elliott had connections with the North particularly in Ohio. While these connections did not prevail in determining the ministers' loyalty it did provide them a significant opportunity to develop and articulate their reasons for siding with one sections over the other.

During Baldwin's time in middle Tennessee he composed the books that would gain him some substantial notice. These works included *Armageddon: Or, The Overthrow of Romanism and Monarchy; the Existence of the United States Foretold in the Bible, Life of Mrs. Sarah Norton: an illustration of practical piety*, and *Dominion or the unity and trinity of the human race; with the divine political constitution of the world, and the divine rights of Shem, Ham, and Japheth*. Baldwin's early career is fairly sketchy. He was born in Ohio, but entered the ministry in Kentucky, and eventually found work in Tennessee as a minister and the president of Soule Female College. While serving in this

position Baldwin published *Armageddon*. He served as the president of Soule Female College for a few years in the mid 1850's, but then accepted a position at a congregation in Nashville. It was in this role that Baldwin saw the opening of the Civil War, and seemingly adjusted his interpretations of the end times.[286]

At the moment of Confederate birth the apocalyptic vision of American destiny looked fundamentally imperiled. Clearly, the nation chosen by God could not destroy themselves; it is in this crisis that Baldwin's description of Gods ordered world interacted with the broader national narrative most forcefully. The Confederacy survived as the heir of the promise, and the North took on the role of the corrupted peoples. The maintenance of divine mandate in accordance with race, and governance matched Baldwin's theological image of the role of the United States writ large. If the US was the millennial nation, a North that would stomach electing an 'anti-slavery' republican must have lost its way.

From the period of the war, few documents survive that describe Baldwin's opinions, or attitudes regarding succession. Two accounts seem to indicate Baldwin being strongly pro-Confederate. The first indication arose in Brownlow's account of Baldwin's prayer at the inauguration of the Confederate governor. This account suggests a positive feeling toward the succession movement, but also proves somewhat problematic. The primary issue with this account involved Tennessee's departure from the Union. The state itself did not remove itself from the Union by means of a Succession convention, but

[286] James Wood Davidson, *The Living Writers of the South* (Carleton, 1869), 30; Will Thomas Hale and Dixon Lanier Merritt, *A History of Tennessee and Tennesseans*, vol. 2 (The Lewis publishing company, 1913), 461–464; Carlton C Sims, *A History of Rutherford County* (Murfreesboro, Tenn, 1947), 128, 153–154; Andrew Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 1, 1822-1851*, ed. LeRoy P Graf and Ralph W Haskins, vol. 1 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1967), 516–517.

rather through the passage of a plebiscite, and acceptance of the Confederate constitution. This had the effect of keeping Tennessee's elected officials in place, included in this number was the Governor Isham G. Harris. A more likely description of the prayer offered by Baldwin was that it preceded the day's business in which the legislature affirmed Harris as the continuing governor of Tennessee. At most this prayer preceded the speech of Harris to the State Legislature after it had approved his recommended course of action in pursuing succession. Though not an act of loyalty; this alone does not confirm Baldwin as a Confederate.[287]

The similarities between Baldwin's views and Harris' approach to the election of Lincoln were more telling. Harris placed a similar distinction between the races in his argument in favor of succession. In his speech to the Tennessee legislature in January advocating a referendum regarding a succession convention Harris innumerate the violations of Southern rights by Northern states that encouraged the succession of the South. Harris capped this list by stating, "It [the Northern states] has, in the person of the President elect, asserted the equality of the black with the white race."[288] Baldwin meanwhile had blamed the mixing of races for the fall of empires throughout history, and clearly interpreted the early chapters of Genesis to indicate a perpetual inequity between racial classes as a divinely inspired situation.[289] The extant similarities in social outlook were far from unique, and likely did not develop through mutual discussion. Moreover,

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[287] "Isham G. Harris | Entries | Tennessee Encyclopedia," accessed September 7, 2011, http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=608; Sam Davis Elliott, *Isham G. Harris of Tennessee: Confederate Governor and United States Senator* (LSU Press, 2010), 71–73; Brownlow, *Sketches of the Rise, Progress, and Decline of Secession*, 178.
[288] "Governor Isham G. Harris - Message to the Tennessee Assembly," accessed December 21, 2011, http://www2.volstate.edu/geades/FinalDocs/Civil%20War%20&%20Reconstruction/harrisonsec.htm.
[289] Samuel Davies Baldwin, *Dominion* (Printed by E. Stevenson and F.A. Owen, 1857), 132.

the racial perceptions of the United States had far more in common across sections than either side of the Civil War wanted to acknowledge.

Far more telling of Baldwin's approach to the outbreak of hostilities derived from a different circumstantial report of his actions. Col. D. R. Hundley recorded in his 1874 account of his war time experiences that Baldwin had in 1862 stood before occupying Northern troops and preached prophetically on the 38th and 39th chapters of Ezekiel. These chapters of Ezekiel tell the tale of the invasion of Israel by the nations of Gog and Magog. The invasion is described in ample detail with the author of Ezekiel.

> Thus says the Lord God: On that day thoughts will come into your mind, and you will devise an evil scheme. You will say, 'I will go up against the land of unwalled villages; I will fall upon the quiet people who live in safety, all of them living without walls, and having no bars or gates'; to seize spoil and carry off plunder; to assail the waste places that are now inhabited, and the people who were gathered from the nations, who are acquiring cattle and goods, who live at the centre of the earth. (Ezekiel 38:10-12)

The destruction aimed at Israel could not be clearer. The penalty to be visited upon the invaders matches the intensity of their attack against Israel.

> I will summon the sword against Gog in all my mountains, says the Lord God; the swords of all will be against their comrades. With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him; and I will pour down torrential rains and hailstones, fire and sulfur, upon him and his troops and the many peoples that are with him. So I will display my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the Lord. (Ezekiel 38:21-23)

This message could not fail to be inflammatory. Baldwin allegedly stood before occupying troops, accused them of pillaging and plundering innocents, and proclaimed their eventual death and dismemberment at the hands of the Almighty. While the previous accounts could offer an inferred transgression by Baldwin this incident clearly

established his Confederate sympathies, and provides a much more satisfactory explanation for his arrest.

It seems that like many residents of Nashville, Baldwin fled the city as it was captured by Union troops. He likely returned temporarily to Murfreesboro (the location of Soule College), but returned to Nashville in response to his wife falling ill. Upon returning to Nashville, Baldwin likely preached his sermon on Ezekiel, and joined the other ministers in their dispute with Andrew Johnson. It is clear however that Baldwin did not return to Nashville until after the initial interview of clergy by Johnson on June 18th. At the end of that interview the ministers agreed to meet Johnson again in one week to deliver their answer to the oath. Their response, however, was offered ten days later. It would be reasonable to infer that in the days after the initial interview Baldwin returned to the city and preached to Federal troops of their coming destruction. This undoubtedly would have forced Johnson to demand the ministers' response. Once the ministers refused the oath Johnson could not have allowed their freedom, and clearly also rethought his threat to exile the reverends to the Confederacy.[290]

Parole was not difficult for Baldwin, and by early October Baldwin had been freed from the Federal Prison camp at Columbus, Ohio. He returned to Nashville, and seemingly resisted preaching against Federal occupation. Baldwin seems to have remained in the background of Nashville society until the end of 1863. It was late in 1863 that members of the Methodist Episcopal Church(MEC), North began considering the disposal of the property of the Southern Church. The Methodist Schism, that had

[290] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 1, 1822-1851*, 1:487–490, 516–517; Howell, "A Memorial of the First Baptist Church Nashville, Tennessee from 1820-1863."

occurred 1845 over the issue of church ministers and bishops owning slaves, offered the opportunity for the Northern wing of the church to renter Southern society. The northern conference began investigating the potential to appoint Northern ministers to Southern churches. The most influential Bishop of the Northern Methodist Church, Matthew Simpson, happened to serve as a confidant of Abraham Lincoln. Using his connections in the Lincoln cabinet Simpson managed to obtain an order from Edwin Stanton authorizing the seizure of any MEC South churches that lacked a loyal pastor in the pulpit. The order itself proved quite telling of the intentions behind the transfer of ownership. "It is a matter of great importance to the government in its effort to restore tranquillity to the community and peace to the Nation, that Christian Ministers, should by example and precept, support and foster loyal sentiment of the people."[291] This appeared in a letter from Stanton dated November 30, 1863, and clearly described the aim of religiously reconstructing the south. It would be followed by a series of lower level orders from local commanders aimed at supporting the missionary efforts of the Northern churches in the conquered regions of the South.

These orders triggered a wave of occupied church buildings throughout the occupied South. Significantly it also allowed the transfer of the McKendree Church to the Northern Methodists. This church had been conscripted into use as a barracks by federal

[291] Edward McPherson, *The Political History of the United States of America, During the Great Rebellion: Including a Classified Summary of the Legislation of the Second Session of the Thirty-sixth Congress, the Three Sessions of the Thirty-seventh Congress, the First Session of the Thirty-eighth Congress, with the Votes Thereon, and the Important Executive, Judicial, and Politico-military Facts of That Eventful Period; Together with the Organization, Legislation, and General Proceedings of the Rebel Administration; and an Appendix Containing the Principal Political Facts of the Campaign of 1864, a Chapter on the Church and the Rebellion, and the Proceedings of the Second Session of the Thirty-eighth Congress* (J.J. Chapman, 1882), 521; William Warren Sweet, *The Methodist Episcopal Church and the Civil War* (Methodist Book Concern Press, 1912), 98–99.

troops, and thus had no minster in place. Baldwin entered the picture by seeking the churches return to its congregation with himself at their head. The War Department informed Baldwin that he could obtain the church by demonstrating his loyalty to the union.[292] This potentially became the crux of the issue for Baldwin. Though it makes a good deal of sense that he adhered to a staunch pro-Confederate ideology early in the war his action now in the latter portion of the war indicate either a change of heart, or a certain degree of duplicity on his part. He had clearly been less than supportive of the Union occupation, and had been arrested and imprisoned for it; at this juncture Baldwin needed to prove his loyalty and did so by referencing the oath that he took to establish that loyalty.

Baldwin began his effort to recover McKendree Church by appealing to the local military channels. This effort yielded no substantial results, and cost almost half a year of effort. Instead the church being restored to the MECS it reopened its doors under the leadership of Rev. M. J. Cramer of the Northern MEC, after having used the first half of the year to clear the signs of military occupation from the building.[293] Though Baldwin had succeeded in convincing Generals Granger and Rosecrans of the legitimacy of his claim the building itself was still occupied by the MECN; Baldwin chose to appeal directly to Andrew Johnson, in the hope that he could affect the change in disposition that the other generals could not. Baldwin wrote to Johnson,

I urge my claim on the following grounds -

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[292] Walter T. Durham, *Reluctant Partners* (Tennessee Historical Society, 1987), 137–139; James E. Kirby, "The Mckendree Chapel Affair," *Tennessee Historical Quaterly* 25 (1966): 362; John Abernathy Smith, *Cross and Flame* (Commission on Archives and History of the Tennessee Conference, United Methodist Church, 1984), 151.
[293] Durham, *Reluctant Partners*, 138.

> First: having taken the oath of Amnesty, I am entitled to hold my church by my guaranteed rights as a citizen – rights pledged by the President since the issuance of the Stanton order, and having precedence over it.
>
> Second: The claims of Cramer are invalid, even under the Stanton order, which confiscates no church "in which a loyal minister, appointed by a loyal Bishop, officiates." I am loyally and morally loyal – the loyalty of my Bishop (Soule) has never been impaired, or questioned by the government."[294]

It is interesting that Baldwin appealed to the same figure who imprisoned him for disloyalty by proclaiming his loyalty. Either, Baldwin had a genuine change of heart, or he sought to achieve his own ends, maintaining the MECS while it labored under the occupation of the federals. Baldwin's motivations and feelings were never brought fully to light. Baldwin's actions seem to be in line with a meeting held in Louisville earlier in the year, where Bishop Soule and many other members of the MECS decided the most prudent course of action would be to take an oath of loyalty, and thus be better able to preserve their positions.[295]

Baldwin rose to the forefront in this effort, and in this pursuit he found a favorable hearing with Johnson. The MECS had, however, also appealed to President Lincoln himself who now found himself in the situation of trying to not offend the occupied Tennesseans, and to not make enemies out of the MECN in the course of an election year. Lincoln stalled as long as he could in issuing a decision, and while the issue rested on Lincoln's desk Johnson (by now the Vice presidential nominee) let the issue rest as well. By late August the matter could be delayed no longer, and Lincoln wrote to Johnson that

[294] Samuel D. Baldwin, "Matthew Simpson Scrapbooks," 1864, 2127-5-4:23, General Commission on Archives and History of the united Methodist Church.
[295] Kirby, "The Mckendree Chapel Affair," 365.

he should decide the matter. Johnson, however, delayed a final decision until after the election had been won, and he was preparing to move to Washington. On the 31st of December Johnson issued his decision that the McKendree Church should be restored to its Southern trustees.[296]

This could have been the end of the issue except that the Northern trustees wrote immediately to Bishop Simpson, and seemingly he contacted Lincoln. Johnson again stated his position late in January, and Baldwin wrote to Johnson thanking him for his decision a few weeks later.[297] Lincoln, however, soon telegrammed Johnson to pause any turnover of property until they had met. Lincoln postponed this meeting until after the inauguration, and invited Bishop Simpson to be present. It did not go as Lincoln had hoped, and resulted in more tension between the involved parties. Lincoln's assassination intervened, and offered Baldwin the chance to push matters further. The outcome had become inevitable, and though the MECN dragged its feet the church was returned to military authorities in late August 1865. [298]

The MECS had won the fight, but the lasting legacy proved far more significant. Baldwin died within a year of the McKendree church being returned to Southern officials, but the memory of the dispute lingered in the relations between the rival ecclesiastic bodies for another ¾ of a century. With the conclusion of the Civil War and the political resolution of the Slave issue it seemed likely and prudent that the sectional churches should reunify into national bodies. With the lingering issue of McKendree and

[296] Ibid., 366; Andrew Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson*, vol. 7 (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1986), 369 –370.
[297] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson*, 7:427–428, 483–484.
[298] Kirby, "The Mckendree Chapel Affair," 367–8.

other buildings taken by the Northern church, these propositions yielded no results. The MECS offered a statement to the MECN in 1865 stating their opposition to reunification due to, "the conduct of certain Northern Methodist bishops and preachers, in taking advantage of the confusion incident to a state of war to intrude themselves into several of our houses of worship, and in continuing to hold these places against the wishes and protests of the congregations and rightful owners."[299] The finial reunion of the Methodists would, consequently, not happen until 1939, and even then it would involve a fracture with in the newly formed body. Some of the more hardline congregations maintain a separate Southern Methodist Church to this day.

Baldwin's larger legacy rested on his written works. The first of these works, and the book that gained the widest notice, was titled *Armageddon*. For the remainder of Baldwin's life he would be attached to this work. Upon his death the book had circulated widely enough that the New York Times published an obituary of Baldwin. The paper informed readers that they should know of Baldwin as the author of this book.[300] In *Armageddon,* Baldwin attempted to use multiple sources from the bible to predict the coming apocalypse, and the United States' specially appointed role as champion of Christ in the approaching battle of good and evil. The second work, *Dominion*, offered a substantial biblical defense of the form of racial slavery practiced by the Southern United States. The final published work of Baldwin attempted to describe the ideal of a Christian

[299] *The American Annual Cyclopedia and Register of Important Events: Embracing Political, Civil, Military, and Social Affairs: Public Documents; Biography, Statistics, Commerce, Finance, Literature, Science, Agriculture, and Mechanical Industry* (D. Appleton & Co., 1869), 553.
[300] "Deaths in Nashville. - View Article - The New York Times," http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf.

life, by offering a biography of Mrs. Sarah Norton.[301] These works combined provide a detailed explanation of the theological mind of Baldwin. Baldwin provides a good example of the typical boarder state Confederate supporter. He expressed a religious outlook that allowed for a sacred disunion based on biblical interpretation.

By 1861 Baldwin had taken over as the pastor of the McKendree Chapel in Nashville, though either he or his family seems to have maintained a residence outside the city. According to Robert Howell Baldwin, had just returned "from the country" when Andrew Johnson had the ministers arrested for noncompliance with the loyalty oath.[302] By October Baldwin apparently yielded to the pressure to take the loyalty oath and issue a bond against his freedom. He returned to Nashville with the intention to resume his ministry at McKendree. This resumption of duties became a contentious issue as the war department began to engage in an effort to religiously reconstruct the South.[303] Baldwin's church was chosen by the Northern Methodists as a likely mission site, and with the blessing of the war department it was taken over by the Southern Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Baldwin fought this take over with remarkable success until his death of cholera in 1866.[304]

Theology in its most fundamental form represents a theoretical framework from which to build the relationships of society. Construction from a theological root allows

[301] It is interesting that Baldwin chose a woman as the subject of this biography. The choice of Norton allowed Baldwin to laude a good Christian. It also reinforced conceptions of antebellum patriarchy. Southern gender roles required women to be the more devoutly religious. To substitute a man in place of Norton would almost certainly require a biography of a minister rather than a member of the laity. This adjustment would likely diminish the evangelical reach of the book. After all, it is the job of a minister to be good and upright; it is the choice of a woman.
[302] Howell, "A Memorial of the First Baptist Church Nashville, Tennessee from 1820-1863," 396.
[303] Kirby, "The Mckendree Chapel Affair."
[304] "Deaths in Nashville. - View Article - The New York Times."

cultural frames to possess the depth to weather the most tumultuous moments in history, and the flexibility to respond to bend to minor adjustments required by contemporary events. As such a small collection of verses from Genesis can have monumental importance to one generation, but be nearly entirely ignored by another. For Baldwin and the generation of ministers who grew out of the Second Great Awakening this process of creating a social theology would become the overriding effort of the antebellum years.

The fullest explanation of Baldwin's social theology begins by analyzing the book he published last. In the process of telling the story of Sarah Norton, Baldwin described the mind of the Southern Christian with exceptional detail.[305] The society described by Baldwin has in part been described by other historians, but never as a theological approach to the Southern world view. Much of the theological reality presented by Baldwin makes sense as an outcropping of the Southern flank of the Second Great Awakening. In this work Baldwin established a consistent framework for choosing action. For Mrs. Sarah Norton, Baldwin argued, correct action could only spring from correct though or faith. It was thus that visible works appear as direct evidence of Christian faith.[306]

This dichotomy appears in most features of Baldwin's biography. The visible action in the world is paired with an appropriate private and personal devotion. Mrs. Norton's insistence on three daily prayers or devotions uninterrupted by anyone served as

[305] Baldwin, *Life of Mrs. Sarah Norton*.
[306] Ibid., 55–56.

the personal backdrop to which her actions, writing, and public worship served as witness.[307]

> [S]o she felt it to be her Christian Duty to partake the memorials of the death of the Lamb of God and her deliverance from the destroying angel by his blood. No silly whim, no foolish caprice, no frivolous excuse satisfied her mind that God would excuse a public neglect of solemnly acknowledging her savior, and of showing a precious memory of his sufferings until his return: she partook of the elements as at the last supper on earth, and as hastening to the supper of the Lamb in heaven.[308]

Baldwin established the importance of going to church and devoutly practicing the sacraments through his praise of Mrs. Norton. Moreover, he expounds the basic virtues expected within a southern Christian society. The Southern Christian should not only believe and fervently pray, but must attend worship and carry out the functions of charity required by membership in a denominational organization.

The specific denomination matter far less to Baldwin (and Sarah Norton) than the common Christianity expressed. Baldwin argues, "A Christian is known by his catholic spirit; a bigot by his exclusiveness."[309] The meaning of the word bigotry here does not indicate a racial progressivism, but rather it offered an ecumenical toleration toward Baptists, Presbyterians, and other Christian denominations. Baldwin likely had some familiarity with the J. R. Graves controversy over Landmark Baptists that had erupted in Nashville with the publication of *The Great Iron Wheel* in 1855. Graves contended that Landmark Baptists represented the only true Christian church, and particularly targeted the Methodist Church as a source detracting from true Christianity. Graves' message

[307] Ibid., 38–39.
[308] Ibid., 25.
[309] Ibid., 69.

received a number of detractors from both the Methodist and Baptist church, and within light of this controversy the message of Baldwin through the words of Mrs. Norton seem the more pointed. "It is not to any sect I have been awakened, but to God; though gratitude compels me to acknowledge the Methodists as the means a *second time* of my being uncommonly stirred up to my religious duty."[310]

Beyond the visible ecumenicalism a decided preference or bias toward the forms of Methodism appeared in the biography of Norton. There existed a distinct attachment to the forms of the Second Great Awakening, and Norton's religious experience mimics this by advocating the emotional experience of worship. Norton described another woman she was in correspondence with as being struck by doubt suddenly as if by lightning, and experiencing regular recurrences of this experience throughout her life. The experience was dramatic and extreme, and allowed for a conversation of the real pain felt by separation from the divine and the wholeness experienced upon reunion and forgiveness.[311] This emotionally exhaustive experience of the divine can readily be seen in a number of accounts of revivals from the Second Great Awakening. More than affirming the most dramatic experiences of Methodism (which after all had grown enormously through the Awakening) Norton's experience is intended to instruct the common church goer on the proper practices of membership. This included instructions on proper hymn singing; as well as establishing the norms for giving and charity.[312] The instruction on proper worship and behavior served to define and affirm the appropriate

[310] Ibid., 108.
[311] Ibid., 94–99.
[312] Ibid., 51–54.

roles of members of the church, and how their proper private beliefs could be demonstrated through public action.

Not only were the roles of church members defined by Baldwin, but the roles of members of larger society all found their place within this narrative of an ideal Christian life. The role of women was particularly well defined. Norton regularly argued for the education of women so that they might be the intellectual equals of men. This argument was a delicate discussion of gender roles within Southern patriarchal society. Norton commented, "I cannot believe the enlargement of our minds would make us masculine in our manners."[313] Rather the argument presented was that women should be educated so that they might better entertain in "intellectual intercourse" the opposite sex, and the denial of this education in fact degraded women.

Despite this progressive argument, Norton remained an ardent defender of the position of women in overall Southern society. In the same passage where she ardently defended the education of women she continued by admitting, "It is true, melancholy as true, that many gifted female writers have injured our cause by forgetting the real dignity and modesty of our sex."[314] This vague allusion to the women rights movement as it existed in antebellum America offers at its most basic level a critique of reformers like the Grimke sisters. Beyond the initial slight Norton affirms that the fundamental role of women in society should not change despite increased access to education. This separation of intellectual advance from social opportunities will be repeated in the context of church governance only a few pages later. Baldwin quotes Norton, "It may be

[313] Ibid., 137.
[314] Ibid.

prejudice or *English* stupidity again, but I love my church as I do my friends, and cannot bear to think it has any faults. This you will say is weakness; but I grant I am a very woman, and of course the weaker vessel; and St. Paul, who *knew* our sex, has prohibited or *exempted* us from Church government affairs; and I am glad of it."[315] Baldwin and Sarah Norton have no interest in changing the structure of Southern in its most fundamental forms. Rather, it seems self-interest by Baldwin may have guided the inclusion of the passages advocating the education of women. Baldwin had after all served as the president of Soule College in Murfreesboro from 1853-1856, and the college's stated purpose was the education of women.[316] Regardless of any personal interest, the message remained very clear that each member of Southern society had their specific role and place that they ought to fulfill.

Baldwin dealt with the explanation of the proper structure of society in the work he published the year before his biography of Norton. In 1857 Baldwin undertook the publication of a biblical defense of slavery.[317] Baldwin based his defense of slavery almost entirely on the curse of Noah as recorded in the book of Genesis chapters 9-11. These chapters record the results of the flood on the earth, the curse of Noah against Ham, and the repopulation of the earth. For Baldwin, the bible offered three "dispensations of Divine Law" to those who read and believed these words to be scripture. Somewhat conveniently the first two dispensations were issued in the first nine

[315] Ibid., 145. Italics and capitalization are preserved from the original text. The refernece to "English" refers to denominational fractures between Americanized Methodists and those who remained theologically in line with the teachings of Francis Asbury. Asbury was born in England and moved to the United States as a bishop of the Methodist church. He represented an older school of Methodism than the Americanized variation that gained enormous popularity through the Second Great Awakening.
[316] Sims, *A History of Rutherford County*, 128; John Abernathy Smith, *Cross and Flame*, 147.
[317] Baldwin, *Dominion*.

chapters of Genesis. Both Adam and Noah received these issuances from God in the form of covenants. The final dispensation came from Jesus as he taught the apostles, and eventually was handed down as the New Testament. Baldwin makes the most use of the first two dispensation labeling the message of Christ as a purely spiritual message; whereas the commands to Adam and Noah involved the operations of the entire world, and were thus of a political nature. Baldwin utilized God's commands to Adam to till the soil, multiply, and have dominion over the earth, as the foundation upon which a racial hierarchy can be constructed. He offers, "This law is against all idleness, whether of individuals or of races. It ignores barbarism and is violated by a savage life. The penalty for violation is annihilation or *compulsory obedience*."[318] Baldwin does not mince words with the implications of the violation of the supposed commandment of God against laziness.

For Baldwin, the order of God to Adam provide only the context for a defense of Southern slavery, not the specific substance. The defense of slavery rests on the curse of Ham by Noah. The curse follows an incident recorded at the end of the ninth chapter of Genesis. The writer explained that after Noah passed out naked and drunk in his tent his son Ham entered, found him in this state at which point he left, and told his brothers. His brothers heard of their fathers embarrassing situation and covered him, being careful not to see him naked. After Noah awoke he cursed Ham saying:

> Cursed be Canaan;
> Lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers.
> He also said,
> Blessed by the lord my God be Shem;
> And let Canaan be his slave.

[318] Ibid., 39.

May God make space for Japheth,
And let him live in the tents of Shem;
And let Canaan be his slave.[319]

This seems a bit of an overreaction on the part of Noah; and yet generations after relied on this curse to impose servitude on their choice of the descendants of Ham. The weight of the curse justified Baldwin's insistence that the curse intended the perpetual servitude of all the descendants of Ham. Traditional interpretations of these early chapters of Genesis have presented Noah's descendants with the dual role of individuals and founders of nations. This allowed for the expansion of the curse from a chastisement of an individual to the condemnation of entire nations. In addition the curse grew to not only condemn an individual at a singular moment, but an entire group in perpetuity.

Biblical and Hebraic scholars have regularly attempted to explain the meaning of the original text as compared with the interpreted meanings that clearly developed over time. While this is illuminating to the reader of Genesis it does not change that nineteenth century Southern theologians read this text as a justification of slavery.[320] The level of correctness matters less, in a historical context, than the overall structure of the interpretation which served to justify not only slavery, but the entire hierarchical structure of Southern society. To Samuel Baldwin the explanation of God's plan described in the early chapters of Genesis established the divinity of the US South.

Whereas the curse on Adam condemned all mankind to toil in the earth, the curse of Noah established a hierarchy where in some men found relief from the original curse. Thus, the descendants of Shem and Japheth stopped being wholly subject to the curse of

[319] ELCA Youth Ministry, *Lutheran Study Bible Paperback* (Augsburg Fortress, 2009), 60.
[320] Haynes, *Noah's Curse*, 6–8; Stephen R. Haynes, "Original Dishonor: Noah's Curse and the Southern Defense of Slavery," *Journal of Southern Religion* 3 (2000).

toil. This theological construction exhibits an essential flaw. Noah proclaimed the curse against Ham. Simply put the curse against Ham derived from human rather than divine origins. Baldwin fails to address this simple observation. It seems likely that Baldwin's silence has less to do with a recognized and insurmountable obstacle than it does with Baldwin's lack of recognition that the problem exists in the first place. For Baldwin, the American South has developed the correct and divinely inspired social government. This point is made expressly clear in the first chapter of *Dominion*, where Baldwin states:

> From the summit of history, where all ages lie at our feet in diminished perspective, we may observe a system of political empire continuously and sharply defined, and recognize its supreme director in God alone. The globe, lessened to miniature in its continents and waters, in its arrangements and creatures, enables us to recognize in all, the apparently artificial subdivisions of a well-ordered plantation.[321]

This not only established the supremacy of the plantation system as the ideal form of government on earth, and the most in line with God's plan for humanity before the ultimate redemption of the next life. It also established a relationship between God and the plantation owner. As God stands at the summit of history, the white male owner stood at the summit of the plantation. Likewise, Noah stood at the head of the post-diluvium human race, well positioned to structure human society in a divine order where previous generations had failed. Ergo, the curse of Noah was the curse of God. Moreover, the blessings and curses of Noah represented a divine government that must remain in place until God established his own kingdom on earth.[322]

[321] Baldwin, *Dominion*, 10–11.
[322] Ibid., 50.

Baldwin advocated the inequality of racial relations in this world, and insisted that these inequities must be maintained as part of God's plan for the earth. Moreover, Baldwin targeted any who opposed this structure as individuals standing between God and the realization of the millennial kingdom. Baldwin attempted to prove the reality of the separation and inequality by examining not only the biblical text, but by exploring an observational survey of the world. After tracing the lineages of Noah's children to their homelands Baldwin launched into a racial categorizing of the world that approached a kind of scientific racism. Baldwin described the division of the world into primordial groups of peoples discernible by their distinctive physical characteristics that included hair color and texture, skin tone, even skull size.[323] The differences of the races encompassed more than mere physical differentiation; as the races demonstrated their own preference for differing religious traditions clear cultural differences emerged that seem to be as relevant as the physical differences for Baldwin. "The Greeks are said to have derived their religion and literature from Egypt, but not from the brown or black races…The priests of Egypt were brown or fair, and were the literary depositories of their age. From these Greece may have derived her letters, and not the Hamites."[324] Clearly the fair skinned and superior races that Baldwin described could not be culturally influenced by their 'inferior' neighbors. Not only were cultural influences from the lower races to the higher denied, but using ahistorical narrative devices it became clear that any "amalgamation of the races" had been forbidden. Baldwin claimed that as soon as

[323] Ibid., 276.
[324] Ibid., 274.

empires had reached the size and scope required for the fusion of races they were promptly demolished.

This argument can only be seen as a warping of the historical narrative into an enormously popular legend in the South. It had the benefit of being related enough to the course of human history that the narrative offered a compelling explanation for racial makeup and world view of the South. Not only did slavery appear justified as the natural and correct relationship between a superior and a corrupted race, but Baldwin also laid the ground for either a continuation of slavery or the separation of races. This kind of rhetorical devise appealed to the nativist mindset deeply entrenched in the American party, and the debilitated colonization movement. Moreover, this reasoning supported the segregation of the post reconstruction period that developed to heal the cultural division that had originated in the days of the Civil War.

Through these two works Baldwin's primary concern was to describe the preferred state of the world until Christ's return to earth. This return would consist of the redemption of the nations and the creation of Christ's perfect kingdom. It must be noted that the examination of this return was the first task Baldwin set to publishing. As such, his description of the coming Armageddon provided several passages that resemble his later works. The primary concern of Baldwin's apocalyptic gospel was to proclaim the coming millennium, and explain the role of America in that fast approaching confrontation. It is this work that offered the fusion of the political and religious state that Baldwin conceived of.

This entire proposition began with the assertion that the United States of America represented the new and correct form of God's chosen nation. The US literally

represented the fulfillment of God covenant with the "nation of Israel." The positioning of the United States as the modern incarnation of America can be seen throughout Baldwin's works, and was a popular concept among other theologians of the day.[325] The supposition served Baldwin well; it allowed for a combination and separation of the political and religious aspects of life. While the creation of the United States as the new form of Israel required a fusion of religious doctrine into political life the means of accessing the divinity of America came through individual experience of the land itself.

> The early days of Miss Low, after she was capable of intelligent apprehension of truth, were spent amid the wilds of Lycoming, and the animated grandeur and beauty along the Susquehanna. Here her rambles were prolonged and numerous. Threading streamlets to their fountains; scaling mountain-sides and clambering over rocks; from dizzy heights surveying landscapes swimming in sublimity; and traversing the country or at school among the sequestered shades, she developed a passion for the works of nature so strong as to imbue her character with an abiding poetry. Her relish for the beautiful was manifest in the grounds around her residence, adorned with trees and shrubbery planted by her hands, and nourished by her untiring care. She recognized God in the trees and flowers, and she loved them for suggesting his nearness and his love.[326]

This passage from the biography of Sarah Norton exemplified the relationship between the American Israel and its divine creator. Though America had been chosen for a special divine purpose, the presence of the divine could be accessed by all citizens throughout the nation. The accessibility of the divine presence in the very environment meant that when Civil War finally came it did not mean the loss of God's favor to America as his chosen, but rather a new level of refinement.

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[325] Conrad Cherry, *God's New Israel; Religious Interpretations of American Destiny* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1971); Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation; the Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); Rubin, *A Shattered Nation*, 35–42.
[326] Baldwin, *Life of Mrs. Sarah Norton*, 13.

Simply positing that America had been chosen by God to be the seat of his new Kingdom on earth, provided a provocative but not compelling argument. Baldwin needed to prove his supposition. The achievement of this task required the description of political systems preferred by Biblical texts. It does not take long for Baldwin to conclude that God's preferred form of government is a theocratic democracy. This form of governance requires that all people exist on a common ground, and that God himself is the only being with the right or ability to exercise kingship.[327] Human monarchy places a mortal between man and God; therefore it directs worship and reverence away from God. This logic was supported with the histories contained in the Old Testament. Baldwin points particularly to the "Hebrew republic" as an ideal moment in the histories of the bible. More importantly Baldwin looked for the overthrow of monarchies as a sign of the final victory of Christ. America could not help, but to seem a chosen nation within this global outlook. The US threw off the British monarchy, and established a republic within which the series of Great Awakenings demonstrated the population's commitment to the gospel. "In the progress of Christianity, in America, it has formed a great bible democratic constitution, which stands in belligerent attitude to all monarchy, and will strike for its oppressed brethren everywhere, and carry the great war to its bitter end."[328]

A tangential understanding that America had ascended to the chosen stature that the now fallen Israelites had once occupied, could not justify the cultural imperialism that was deeply rooted in the theology of Baldwin, and the South in general. Deeper religious significance needed to be attributed to the United States. This required an effort to

[327] Baldwin, *Armageddon*, 26.
[328] Ibid., 28–29.

demonstrate that America meet the expectations of God, and was unique within the global experience. The racialized understanding that Europeans (and by extension Americans) had descended from the most favored race of Japheth served as an immediate distinguishing characteristic. This would of course not be enough to prove the elevation of the United States. The ultimate elevation of the United States to an exalted position required the demonstration that God loved republics.

In this preference Baldwin demonstrated the downfall of the Israelites, who most foolishly elevated a human to the kingly position fit only for God himself; and the elevation of the United States as the nation fit to lead humanity toward the creation of God's direct rule on earth having never allowed the creation of a monarchy.[329] Baldwin continued this parallel a step farther by enumerating 18 points where the Israelites and Americans acted similarly, or benefited from similar circumstance.[330] Baldwin's interpretation yields the fundamental argument that the restoration and leadership of Israel, called for in apocalyptic biblical literature, should not be understood to require the literal creation of an Israel. Rather, the US stood as the modern creation of Israel and the legitimate heir to the biblical covenants.

It was not simple cultural chauvinism, but a vision of the world to come that led Baldwin to unify biblical prophecy with United States history. This union matched the revealed chronology, and a series of coincidences that lent credence to the proposition, according to Baldwin. The initial conflicts arose in the separation of the colonies from Britain during the revolution, and would be ultimately resolved by the unification of

[329] Ibid., 27–29.
[330] Ibid., 44–49.

Monarchists bent on the destruction of God's Chosen.[331] This would require several developments, including the mass movement of people into the Americas to stand with the Chosen. However, for the final conflict to take place the enemies of the republic would also have to arrive in the North American continent. The need for other nations to participate in America to realize the millennial vision of the nation offered a rich interpretive frame on the eve of the Civil War.

As the war approached, Baldwin described a vision of America as a mixture of spiritual and political triumphs for the divine plan. The established churches flourished without the intervention of the state, and the nation grew in power, wealth, and prominence year after year. The races that existed within the American state did so in (what Baldwin would call) the proper relations. Moreover, the peoples of Europe left their monarchical shackles and flew to the coast of the new Israel. Baldwin viewed America as the realization of biblical prophecy, but he understood that this had not been fully realized in the War of Independence. A further conflict was required, and by following the same manner of dating that allowed Baldwin to see July 4th, 1776 as the conclusion the churches exile in the wilderness Baldwin could approximate that the final battle would occur in 1865 at the earliest.[332] In the wider public Baldwin's message seemed remarkably accurate as tensions increased and finally broke into bloody conflagration. Baldwin was thus able to articulate many of the sentiments that existed within Southern society. At each step Baldwin managed the dual accomplishment of describing the South, and justifying it as the ultimate will of God. Slavery was clearly

[331] Ibid., 316–320.
[332] Ibid., 331.

justified according to, Baldwin, and where all else fail the fundamental iniquities could be deemed just by attributing the inequality to the unfathomable nature of God's plan for earthly mortals. Placing this much emphasis on the plans of the divine carried a commensurate risk; that if the perceived plans went askew at any point the entire fabric of society stood at risk of unraveling. To a degree this seems to inform the decisions that shaped Baldwin's life.

CHAPTER VIII

ANDREW JOHNSON

Andrew Johnson's intentions in his approach to the religious world of Civil War America remain an enigma. He gloried in the defeat of the Confederacy, "Thank[ing] God that we have lived through this trial, and that, looking in your intelligent faces here today, I can announce to you the great fact that Petersburg, the outpost to the strong citadel, has been occupied by our brave and gallant officers and our untiring, invincible soldiers."[333] Most interpretations would declare these thanks of God a colloquialism rather than a heartfelt devotion. Historians have spent very little time considering the religious sentiments of Johnson, who at any rate wrote little on the subject.[334] From the writings he did compose, Johnson clearly articulated his view that linked God or the divine inextricably with his understanding of and devotion to the United States as a democratic society. This union presented Johnson with a unique, but understandable theological outlook in the antebellum South. Johnson devoted himself to patriotism as a function of Christianity. This forced Johnson to confront the divisive

[333] Andrew Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 7, 1864 - 1865*, ed. LeRoy P Graf, vol. 7 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986), 544.

[334] Nothing has been written on this topic. The most recent biography of Andrew Johnson recognizes the arrest of the ministers, but offers no indication of Johnson's religious sentiment. The classic biographies of Johnson do no better in dealing with his faith. Bergeron, *Andrew Johnson's Civil War and Reconstruction*; Winston, *Andrew Johnson: Plebeian and Patriot*; Maslowski, *Treason Must Be Made Odious*.

issues of the Antebellum republic, and allowed him the chance to construct a middle ground where nothing remained ultimately sacred save the maintenance of the Union.

An extensive historiography has developed to examine the issues surrounding Johnson. The initial efforts to describe Johnson's legacy endeavored to recover his character from the attacks of the late period of Reconstruction. These efforts proved reasonably successful, and for several generations Johnson emerged as a hero of the republic who helped guide the nation through a tumultuous time. The Civil Rights movement in the 1960's brought fresh condemnation of Johnson as ineffective and racist. Regardless, of the merits of these arguments historians who have approached Johnson have failed to examine his religious sentiments despite the overwhelming evidence of the importance of Christianity to the society surrounding Johnson.

In this running debate over the meaning of Johnson's legacy, beyond describing the man as a hero or a scoundrel, a quasi-teleology dominates the historical narrative. Johnson's life points inexorably at Reconstruction. Beginning life as a runaway apprentice followed by his entry into politics, Johnson lives in the historical narrative only to take his seat as the beneficiary of an assassin's bullet. These are the chronological facts of Johnson's life, but historians inevitably have devoted the largest percentage of their work on Johnson covering only the eight years from the beginning of the Civil War to the end of his presidency. Within this time period the insular questions remain largely the same. Was Johnson a racist? Could Johnson have pursued a more productive path through reconstruction? Why did Johnson act as irascibly stubborn as he did, and what consequences did Johnson's behavior cause for the nation? While these are useful questions they have been directed primarily at understanding the rational that supported

Johnson's political decision. Historians have largely neglected to look for the cultural underpinnings that made Johnson. Particularly, historians have neglected to examine the religious makeup of this critically important figure.

The earliest biographies of Johnson tend to be the most flattering; focusing on his humble origins and the difficulty of the tasks he faced in office rather than focusing on his obstructionist efforts during Reconstruction. This, perhaps, best described Robert Winston's 1928 biography. Winston depicts Johnson as the vision of the American dream. He rose from being a fatherless and penniless apprentice bound to a North Carolina tailor to the President of the United States. He faced challenges and adversity along the way, ultimately stuck to his principles, and reaped the reward of a respected life. Winston provided a kind interpretation of Johnson's legacy, and few historians were willing to reopen the Reconstruction era to challenge that interpretation. George Milton added to the interpretation of Johnson in the 1930's with a work that continued the generally positive interpretation of Johnson while being less overtly apologetic.[335]

Both of these works considered the poor choices of Johnson as he was inaugurated Vice President. Johnson reported feeling ill, and a bottle of whiskey was procured by the outgoing Vice president Hannibal Hamlin. The result was a very drunk Johnson giving an extemporaneous inaugural address; no doubt an embarrassing scene for many. This singular moment offers the chance to describe the greatest difference in the earliest histories of Johnson, in that they offer a differing tone in how they handle the subject matter. Winston offered an excuse for the incident and attempted to clear

[335] George Fort Milton, *The Age of Hate; Andrew Johnson and the Radicals* (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1965); Winston, *Andrew Johnson: Plebeian and Patriot*.

Johnson's name. Milton does not offer a defense of Johnson; rather he expounds for several pages on the reactions, and the intrigues that surrounded the event. Milton's account offered a much greater degree of face saving to Lincoln and Hamlin than to Johnson.[336]

Any hesitancy concerning critique of Johnson or the Reconstruction era disappeared in the wake of the Civil Rights movement. The reinterpretation was led by Eric McKitrick, and in many ways seems to be partially a result of reconstruction's failures again achieving prominence in the national discourse. McKitrick offered an attempt at an honest reappraisal of Johnson which portrayed him as a man in over his head with ideas unequaled to the task of reconstruction, and an intellectual framework that stood out of touch with reality. Moreover the efforts of Johnson to resist the Freedmen's Bureau, the Civil Rights Act, and the 14th Amendment placed him in a position of at least looking like a racist. Other historians, partially building on McKitrick, directly accused Johnson of racist intent while in the presidency. This argument has substantial backing, and placed Johnson squarely in the mainstream of Tennessean social perspectives.[337]

With the publication of the 16 volumes of Johnson's papers a new effort to describe Johnson's legacy has emerged. This had most recently appeared in a solid reinterpretation of Johnson by Paul Bergeron, Andrew Johnson's Civil War and Reconstruction. Bergeron is well aware of the historiographical precedents, and does not look to redeem or offer apologies for Johnson's racial outlook, or mule-like negotiating

[336] Milton, *The Age of Hate; Andrew Johnson and the Radicals*, 158–160.
[337] Eric L McKitrick, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

style. Instead, Bergeron usefully attempted to position Johnson in a historical frame where his actions appear far more coherent and consistent than they have in other histories. Johnson's faults are on display, but his experiences in the Civil War have shaped his actions in Reconstruction. This argument is thoroughly compelling as Johnson's service in the war centered on reconstructing his home state of Tennessee. While Bergeron offers a useful adjustment of Johnson he failed to provide an overall cultural context for Johnson's actions. With a larger context in mind it becomes possible to see the moments where Johnson did, in fact, deviate from the established tendencies of middle Tennessee, and piece together parallels with other figures who changed radically over the same eight years in which Johnson concerned himself primarily almost exclusively to preserving the Union.[338]

Traditional interpretation holds that religion simply was not important to Johnson. The acceptance of this passive answer denies the importance of religious devotion to Johnson and those around him. The religious feelings of Abraham Lincoln have received treatment repeatedly including efforts by historians and theologians to draw out the religious contexts of individual speeches.[339] Moreover, it is difficult to see that avoiding the issue of Christianity and providence could possibly be a reasonable stance when it comes to interpreting Johnson's war years. He regularly encountered religious factionalism and disputes. In addition, following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, Johnson received weeks of correspondence with writers regularly citing the unfortunate

[338] Bergeron, *Andrew Johnson's Civil War and Reconstruction*.
[339] Ronald C. White, "Lincoln's Sermon on the Mount: The Second Inaugural," in *Religion and the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 208–225; A. E Elmore, *Lincoln's Gettysburg Address: Echoes of the Bible and Book of Common Prayer* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2009); William Eleazar Barton, *The Soul of Abraham Lincoln* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2005).

death as a function of divine providence. Lincoln probably would have handled reconstruction in a generous a manner. These sentiments seeped their way into the speeches of Johnson as he received various delegations from around the country. Johnson remarked to the delegation from Illinois that met with him three days after the assassination, "In the dealings of an inscrutable Providence, and by the operations of the Constitution, I have been thrown unexpectedly into this position."[340] While Johnson was uncomfortable claiming his ascendency to be the will of God, he nonetheless accepted to a degree the interpretation that existed in the minds of those writing to him.

The religious devotion of any historical subject inevitably will influence the actions of the figure in question. Scholars must begin to examine the religious attitudes of the subjects they describe. Andrew Johnson has had roughly two pages written on his religious understanding. This appeared in an encyclopedia of Johnson's life, and referenced the longest exposition of Johnson on the subject matter.[341] The article established Johnson's Christianity and belief in God generally, but concluded nothing can be determined of Johnson's opinions on the nature of God. This determination will offer the clearest link between Johnson's religious belief and his actions during the Civil War and Reconstruction. Johnson's understanding of God and his will on earth provide a philosophical underpinning without which Johnson appears to be little more than a obstinate roadblock in governing the nation during Reconstruction.

Though the details of Johnson's early life have for the most part not survived in the historical record, many of his early experiences clearly informed his worldview and

[340] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 7, 1864 - 1865*, 7:584.
[341] Glenna R Schroeder-Lein and ABC-Clio Information Services, *Andrew Johnson a Biographical Companion*, ABC-CLIO Biographical Companions (Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2001), 242–244.

his religious expectations. Johnson's early life helped to form his general world view. His father died shortly after his birth, in western North Carolina. This left his mother penniless, at age ten Andrew was apprenticed to a local tailor. After running away from his apprenticeship Johnson gathered his family and moved them across the Appalachian Mountains to Greeneville, Tennessee. Johnson seems to have learned the basics of a very rudimentary literacy by the time of his move to Tennessee. He arrived in Greeneville, and met the woman he would eventually marry, Eliza McCardle. She was raised a Methodist, lost her father at a young age, and had the ability to attend school in Greenville.[342] Marrying Eliza, seems to have helped refine Johnson's rudimentary grasp of the written word. The early biographies of Johnson recorded these experiences in; however, no documents exist within the published papers of Johnson to verify the veracity of these tales.[343]

The modest origins of Johnson helped him craft the motives for his future political career. Johnson soon began his career as an alderman for Greeneville. By the 1840's Johnson entered state government and his written records provide a fuller picture of his life. Despite the increase in the written record, few letters exist recording the relationship of Eliza and Andrew. Eliza, having a Methodist upbringing, likely influenced Johnson's religious world view. It would also be rather typical for an antebellum Southern woman to have a prominent voice in the practice of family religion.[344] Johnson,

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[342] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 1, 1822-1851*, 1:4; Jean Choate, *Eliza Johnson: Unknown First Lady* (Nova Science Pub Inc, 2004), 3–4, 8–9.
[343] Clifton Rumery Hall, *Andrew Johnson, Military Governor of Tennessee* (Princeton: Princeton university press; [etc., etc.], 1916); Winston, *Andrew Johnson: Plebeian and Patriot*.
[344] Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, 8; Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South Inthe American Civil War*, Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 180; *Battle Scars: Gender and Sexuality in the American*

however, did not seem to have corresponded with his wife much while he was serving in either state or national office.[345] Johnson's most common familial correspondents were his children, particularly Mary and Robert.[346] In one letter to Robert just before returning from Nashville in 1854 Johnson chided Robert and his older brother Charles stating, "Solomon's remarks on the conduct of the sluggard and that lethargy which hangs about too many young men like the night mare, should be read by all young men at least once a week."[347] It seemed difficult for Johnson, who had been born into poverty, to think of his sons as having not taken full advantages of his own success to pursue industrious fortunes. This chiding was not all that Johnson had in mind. He pushed farther than simply critiquing his sons seeming laziness. Johnson commended to them to, "Let the foundation of your moral standard be, Justice, prudence, temperance, virtue, self reliance and fortitude; which is the foundation of all genuine religions; a religion that does not

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CivilWar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 42–43; Thomas, *The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience*, 19–22; Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, 78; Silber, *The Romance of Reunion*, 7; Jean E Friedman, *The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South, 1830-1900*, Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 3–4.

[345] It is possible that the two corresponded regularly without the evidence being included in publicly available sources. Be that as it may the correspondence has not survived to be currently available. What is known of Eliza generally derives from early biographers, and letters between Johnson and others wherein he mentions Eliza. The most recent biography of Eliza was offered in Jean Choate's, *Eliza Johnson: The Unknown First Lady*. It is unfortunately lacking in primary material, and often relies on circumstantial reasoning rather than documentary material to create its picture of Eliza Johnson.

[346] Johnson had five children. Robert his youngest son seemed to be the favorite correspondent. His eldest son, Charles, was an alcoholic, who had famously gone on a binge at the 1860 democratic convention in Charleston. Charles died from falling off his horse during the Civil War. His death triggered a relapse into alcoholism by Robert who eventually died of a self-induced overdose. Johnson's youngest son, born in 1852, came of age during the war only to die of a combination of tuberculosis and alcohol in 1869 as Johnson was in the midst of attempting to rebuild a political career. Johnson's two daughters were less colorful, or at least less depressing. They married and remained Johnson's most faithful familial correspondents. Schroeder-Lein and ABC-Clio Information Services, *Andrew Johnson a Biographical Companion*, 163–170.

[347] Andrew Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 2, 1852-1857*, ed. LeRoy P Graf and Ralph W Haskins, vol. 2 (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1970), 230.

embrace these as its leading elements is not of divine origins, and has no connexion with the only true and living divinity, the great source and centre of all good --"[348]

Johnson's anxiety over the prospects of his sons may have motivated these exhortations, but they also illuminate the virtues that Johnson, at very least, attempted to follow. From his early years struggling to support himself he learned to respect industry and personal ambition. It was the desire for improved prospects that pushed Johnson out of an apprenticeship that he eventually ran away from; to relocating himself and his family to the Tennessee frontier. Johnson's biographers also agree that he did not lack for industrious effort while running his tailor shop in Greeneville. Johnson clearly favored virtue to be present in his sons, and was consistently disappointed.

Johnson maintained this desire to promote virtuous self-regulation and industry in his public life. Throughout his political career Johnson advocated and dreamed of the enactment of a Homestead act. From the moment Johnson entered national politics he advocated the passage of provisions to allow the transfer of government land to the poor of the nation. Johnson used a number of arguments to advance the bill. By 1859 Johnson had reached the Senate, and continued his efforts both by pointing to the fiscal soundness of the proposal, and by advocating the fortifying nature of the proposal. This he argued would elevate the poor of the nation who lived in dire straits not because they had sinned, but by a function of birth.

> Suppose are poor; they have got muscles and bone and will, and by this measure we say to every man: "Notwithstanding that you have not got $200, go and take your one hundred and sixty acres of land; take care of your wife and children; educate your boys; build up your school-houses; have your stock about you, and become a free and independent man."…

[348] Ibid.

> He is a better citizen; he is a more elevated man, better calculated to perform all the duties of a sovereign.[349]

Through his advocating of the Homestead Act, as a nineteenth century means of welfare, Johnson used himself as the model of how the state should relate to its citizens. The state should offer citizens who would work and promote themselves through honest labor the means of doing so. The advancement placement of citizens as the appropriate focus of government fit not with the mainstream of antebellum politics, but rather meshed well with Johnson's theological understanding of government.

By 1845, Johnson had formed his theological perspective fully enough to articulate his vision to his constituents. Johnson had built a thriving tailor's shop in Greensville, Tennessee, and subsequently began pursuing elected office. He was elected to the leadership of Greensville, and the statehouse of Tennessee prior to being elected US Congressman in 1842; taking the seat in 1843. When Johnson stood for reelection in 1844 the campaign evidently lacked in politeness. Johnson's political enemies (apparently led by William G. Brownlow) accused him of a number of indiscretions, in the catalogue of crimes Johnson was charged with being an "Avowed Infidel", and having said such slanderous things as, "that Jesus Christ was a bastard, and his mother a strumpet."[350] Despite the vitriol contained in these accusations Johnson felt compelled to respond to them, and after having won the election he began work on his response. This was eventually disseminated within his congressional district in late 1845 or early 1846. Johnson managed to lambast his enemies, and at the same time establish his own theological understanding of the world.

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[349] Ibid., 2:541.
[350] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 1, 1822-1851*, 1:221.

Through most of the book length pamphlet "To the Freemen of the First Congressional District of Tennessee" Johnson countered his enemies' attacks from the previous election campaign. These counterattacks were at times scathing and intensely personal, and thus thoroughly entertaining but irrelevant to the present purpose. Johnson, amidst the political haranguing, addressed the charges of unbelief laid at his feet. Johnson countered the attack from two angles. First, he quoted the Constitutions' provision that, "no religious test shall be required as a qualification to any office of public trust…"[351] He continued on to state in no uncertain terms his emphatic affirmation of faith.

> I think proper to repeat what I have again and again said on previous occasions, THAT THE CHARGE OF INFIDELITY, AS PREFFERED AGAINST ME IN THE LATE CANVASS, IS UTTERLY AND ABSOLUTELY FALSE FROM BEGINNING TO END; AND THAT, SO FAR AS THE DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE ARE CONCERNED, OR THE GREAT SCHEME OF SAVLATION, AS FOUNDED, TAUGHT, AND PRACTISED BY JESUS CHIRST HIMSELF, I NEVER DID ENTERTAIN A SOLITARY DOUBT.[352]

The emphasis was Johnson's own, and he clearly desired to put the issue of disbelief behind him. At the same time simply denying the charge will convince only a limited number of people. Therefore, Johnson sought both to discredit his opponents and to define clearly his interpretation of Christ's message.

The discretization of Johnson's political opponents seemed fairly easily executed. Johnson for the most part turned their attacks against themselves, and leveled many of the same charges against his adversaries. William Brownlow was an easy target. Johnson attacked an old liable suit, and the many anti-ecumenical statements that had emerged from Brownlow's political life to dispose of him as the ring leader of his opposition. The

[351] Ibid., 1:238.
[352] Ibid., 1:240.

attack was fairly brutal (Johnson after all had no reason to mince words). At one point Johnson questioned Brownlow's writings in the Whig newspaper he edited, "Could a sluice of such malignity have emanated from anything short of an imp of the infernal regions itself."[353] Johnson accused another of his political enemies, William Dickson, of leaving his church because the congregation removed the paid reserved seats, and installed pews open to all. Johnson further offered a rhetorical question to Dickson: "And further, were you not in favor of having erected a splendid Episcopalian church in this place, where the rich and the proud could assemble and worship *their* God (which is Mammon) without being annoyed by the plebeians?"[354] Johnson's vitriol does not seem out of place for bitter political rivals, but the overarching religious nature of the slurs thrown at his foes demonstrates one of two possible conclusions about Johnson's religious character. Either Johnson genuinely took offence the perception that elites perverted what he believed should be an egalitarian faith; or Johnson had enough familiarity with the religious language of the time that he could present himself as wounded. A conspiracy involving Johnson elaborately crafting his message to present himself as devout does not seem to hold true, since Johnson's description of his own beliefs fall in line with the first outcome.

Johnson presented his understanding of God in a way that corresponded with the theology of Baldwin, Howell, and generally the other ministers of the time. That being said Johnson emphasized the divine function of the state far more than the ministers he would later arrest. To Johnson Christianity held distinct practical applications in the

[353] Ibid., 1:243.
[354] Ibid., 1:263.

present moment, and though some reality of an afterlife existed. Johnson seemed to take that as a theological afterthought worthy of only minor consideration. In all practicality the importance of religion laid in its relationship with democracy. "A belief in the pure and unadulterated principles of Democracy, is a belief in the religion of our Savior, as laid down while here on earth himself – rewarding the virtuous and meritorious without any regard to station, to wealth, or distinction of birth."[355] For Johnson, God linked inextricably to his conception of the nation. "My religious creed first," he stated, "my democracy next; they are one and inseparably connected. God and my country first – God and my country last."[356] It is from this vantage point that Johnson viewed secession and reconstruction as well as the antebellum issues of slavery, the Homestead Act, the tariff, and the Mexican war cessations. All features of Johnson's life link to this interpretation of a unified nation and divine theology.

This link between politics and theology should not be surprising. That a relationship existed was clear to any who had observed the antebellum slave debate. More than the church having an interest in impacting political policy, however, Johnson and many nineteenth century Americans seem to have viewed a wholly different role for the church in the life of the state. The church in fact justified the existence of the United States in its contemporary form. Samuel Baldwin offered a clear justification of this idea in his description of the role the US had to play in the coming Armageddon, but many other American theologians commented on the justified mirroring of the state and the

[355] Ibid., 1:240.
[356] Ibid.

church.[357] Many authors accepted the basic foundation of the state and church in democratic terms. There were significant variations in the meaning of this democratic foundation, but most protestant American churches enshrined in their foundational structure the understanding that the members of the church at the congregational level were appropriate vehicles for the conveyance of God's will for the church, and should have democratic control over some of the basic instruments of the church.[358] Similarly, Robert B.C. Howell argued that the state government should be view similarly to the Baptist Churches' governing structure, and from that point of view ardently supported secession.[359]

With this in mind, Johnson's ardor for democratic institutions does not present itself as a particularly surprising feature of his makeup. However, his interpretation of the meaning of that union is rather unique. To Johnson, Christian faith and democracy required an equality of opportunity. For Johnson, democracy offered no special status for any individual and Christianity required a uniform salvation for all.[360] Status and wealth did not earn an individual a spot in salvation or the government. Johnson sought to advance the promise that white equality could be attained; though Johnson sought an equality of opportunity he did not fasten himself to a pollyanna vision of the state of the world. Johnson fervently accepted racial slavery, and expected some citizens to fail to

[357] Baldwin, *Armageddon*, 93–95.
[358] Abel Stevens, *The History of the Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century, Called Methodism,*, Michigan Historical Reprint (Scholarly Publishing Office, University of Michigan Library, 2005), 73–74; Crowell, *The Church Member's Manual, of Ecclesiastical Principles, Doctrine, and Discipline*, 2005, 197–202; Brownlow, *The Great Iron Wheel Examined; or, Its False Spokes Extracted, and an Exhibition of Elder Graves, Its Builder. In a Series of Chapters. By William G. Brownlow.*, 278–286; Hodge, *What Is Presbyterianism?*, 29–32; *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, 271.
[359] Howell, "A Memorial of the First Baptist Church Nashville, Tennessee from 1820-1863," 307–311.
[360] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 1, 1822-1851*, 1:241.

achieve the success he had built in his life. With this realism in mind, Johnson expressed a decided distaste for the elites within southern society, and a continuing bitterness toward business and political rivals. In January of 1847 Johnson wrote to his closest confidant in Greenville, TN regarding his feelings toward his rivals especially over a recently purchased piece of land that slipped through Johnson's fingers:

> I never want to own another foot of dirt in the *damned* town while I live – the *God* damned "Murrel" gang may take it, and make a perfect "pandemoniam" of it, and headquarters for all the infernal Spirets that are now out of hell, for I know of no place more suitable – If I should happen to die among the damned Spirits that infest Greenville, my last request before death would be for some friend (if I had no friend which is highly probably) I would bequeath the last dollar to Some negro as pay to take my dirty, Stinking carcass after death, out on some mountain peak and there leave it to be devoured by the vultures and wolves or make a fire Sufficen[t]ly large to consume the Smallest particle that it might pass off in Smoke and ride upon the wind in triumph over the *god for* saken and hell deserving mony loving, hypocritical, back bighting, sundy praying scondrels of the town of Greeneville.[361]

He went on to express his current standing with the Democratic Party, by declaring that the party had gone "to hell no mistake."[362]Johnson held no expectation that the world ought to operate in any kind of neutral way.

Johnson's religious attitudes merged with and deviated from, the accepted norms of the South in several significant ways. This can best be seen through the public comments of Johnson on several of the more noticeable topics of his career. The most telling rhetoric emerges in the course of the debate over slavery. For the arrested ministers and many other religious Southerners the question of slavery was a question of faith. Slavery was an institution protected by divine sanction, and outside the realm of

[361] Ibid., 369–270. The "Murrel gang" seems to refer to John A. Murrell a notorious brigand and thief. The misspellings and emphasis are Johnson's own.
[362] Ibid., 1:370.

political consideration. This separation was not possible for Johnson for two reasons. It would be impossible for a politician to seek office in the antebellum South without a clear opinion on the institution. Secondly, Johnson's understanding of Christianity and democracy as intrinsically linked required that all issues existed both in a religious and political light. This seems at first glance to be diametrically opposed to the separation of the church and the state that Johnson advocated so strongly in 1845. Johnson's opinions never required a delineation of separate spheres for the church and the state. The combination of church and state required a parallel trajectory in their responsibilities, and Johnson clearly set out the manner in which this relationship operated.

In October of 1853 as Johnson was first inaugurated Governor of Tennessee, he took the time in his address to speak to this relationship.[363] As with many political issues, Johnson aimed himself directly at the wealthier members of society. Of particular interest were the young educated elite of Tennessee who Johnson accused of feeling, "…that the great mass of mankind was intended by their creator to be 'Hewers of wood and drawers of water'" [364] Throughout his political career Johnson often targeted wealthier members of society for particular scorn if he felt they assumed more power than anyone else as a feature of their wealth. He continued by describing democracy as being inherent to the nature of man. The same impulse that lends itself to democratic government lent itself to self-control, and moral decision making. The democratic impulse then could develop

[363] Johnson's First Inaugural as governor of Tennessee took place at the McKendree Church in Nashville. This same church would latter provide the sight for dispute over the religious reconstruction of the South between Samuel Baldwin and the war department. Johnson's highly religious tones in this inaugural do not seem to have any correlation to the latter incident as that dispute began entirely outside the auspices of Johnson's position as military governor. Schroeder-Lein and ABC-Clio Information Services, *Andrew Johnson a Biographical Companion*, 119.
[364] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 2, 1852-1857*, 2:175.

over time in such a way as to lead to an increase in the "Divinity of Man." It was thus, up to the democratic state to undertake the, "*political redemption of man*." Johnson continued, "In the political world, it [democracy] corresponds to that of Christianity in the moral. They are going along, not in divergents, not in parallels, but in converging lines—the one purifying and elevating man religiously, the other politically."[365] The realization of this political development would in time yield the triumphant Godly state. This vision of Johnson was not far removed from the apocalyptic theories of Samuel Baldwin. The democratic state thus offered a chance for self-development and appropriate advancement according to the measure of an individual.

This vision of the benefits of democracy and the United States' special role in the world offered the elevation of men to an improved status. Johnson also argued that the institution of slavery elevated blacks to a higher level of being than they otherwise would be able to achieve. Johnson regularly defended the institution of slavery against its opponents. The defense came not in the rhetoric of a firebrand trumpeting the ideological defense of the institution, but more often than not it came as a feature of reasoned arguments. Johnson was not prone to grandiose statements on the nature of the slave system rather he tended to accept the reality of slavery and looked primarily to its practical defense. In a 1850 speech to congress he stated, "I believe, Mr. Chairman, that slavery itself has its foundation, and will find its perpetuity, in the Union, and the Union in its continuance by a noninterference with the institution of slavery."[366] This initial

[365] Ibid., 2:176.
[366] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 1, 1822-1851*, 1:552.

position was one of practicality, and in a sense that pragmatic mindset made Johnson an able contributor to the debates over the Compromise of 1850.

The lack of a clearly dogmatic approach to public policy fit Johnson's religious attitude. Because the state existed as a coequally important branch of divinity in the world to the church Johnson could accept and promote compromise over issues of politics that otherwise might have been rigidly doctrinal issues of faith. From the same speech over the Compromise of 1850 Johnson asserted:

> We all belong to the same great American family; we all profess to be attached to the Constitution of the country, that Constitution which has been established by our forefathers. Then, in the spirit of the provisions of that instrument, we ought all to come forward and cooperate in erecting an altar to our common country, upon which each of us, whether from the North, the South, the East, or the West, may sacrifice something to preserve the harmony that has heretofore existed between the extremes of this Union.[367]

At first glance, this looks almost like an offer to renegotiate the condition of slavery in the union, but by his explanation later in the speech that the salvation of the Union is to be found through the perpetuation of the institution of slavery Johnson seems to indicate here that the true sacrifice of the South would be over a smaller issue.

Slavery remained an inviolable part of the federal Union to Johnson and however polite the remonstrance of Johnson before the House of Representatives the courtesy diminished when he spoke directly to his constituency. In referencing the plan to abolish slavery within Washington D.C., Johnson stated unequivocally to a crowd gathered at Evan's Crossroads in Green county Tennessee: "My position is that Congress has no power to interfere with the subject of slavery, that it is an institution local in its character

[367] Ibid., 1:540.

and peculiar to the States where it exists and no other power has the right to control it."[368] This statement defended the classical political argument of the South in regards to slavery. Johnson's argued the federal government had neither the authority nor the impetus to diminish the significance of slavery. Johnson recognized the danger of the slavery issue to the nation and blamed congress and the North for interjecting itself into a Southern issue. Johnson almost pleadingly stated his case for the continuance of the union,

> Is there one in this large assembly today, who hears me—is their one through the length and breadth of this broad confederacy, while standing in full view of the grand arch of human liberty, so beautiful and gracefully composed of thirty sovereign States, reared by the toils of our fathers and cemented with their blood, so lost to patriotism, so vile in his nature, so diabolical in spirit, as to lay impious hands upon the magnificent structure and topple it to the ground crushing all beneath, and the only hope and last experiment of man's capability for self-government, buried amid its crumbling ruins.[369]

Johnson's patriotic language is entirely to be expected. He granted much of his success to the nature of the democratic state in which he had been reared. The religious overtones, however, offer a further indication of the sacred level to which he elevated the United States. For Johnson, the task of undoing the Union's bonds required "impious hands." The Union itself served as the paramount feature of Johnson political and religious reality.

This served Johnson well, in terms of national politics, as the nation entered the Civil War. With the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation after Antietam, Johnson had to reconcile his proslavery Southern position with the reality of Union

[368] Ibid., 1:500.
[369] Ibid., 1:506.

requiring abolition. This task would have been impossible without first having a clearly defined hierarchy of ideology. Because Johnson structured his belief with the continuation of the United States serving in a coequal position to the Christian church he could adjust his own views according to the circumstances presented; no doubt a useful intellectual framework for a political figure. It is significant that the Union throughout all of Johnson's public life served as the pinnacle of his intellectual construct. Johnson's conversion to emancipation had been completed by the summer of 1863. He gave a speech at Franklin where he entered into a fiery discussion of a compromise to resolve the war. Johnson lambasted the idea. He argued that the efforts he had made through the 1850's had yielded only a refusal to compromise when such a measure could have been achieved. By late in 1863 Johnson now argued that the South would have to accept the consequences of secession. "If in this recoil slavery must go, I say, let it go! I am for my Government with or without slavery; but if either the Government or slavery must perish, I say give me the Government and let the negroes go."[370]

Johnson did not hold simply to expressing the supremacy of the government he also dabbled with ideas of the racial underpinnings of Southern society. At this point, Johnson advocated the belief that if slaves were set free they would within ten years be far more productive. Johnson also lauded the northern system of labor. This indeed was something he had at other points gone out of his way to condemn, but in the midst of the war Johnson looked to Ohio and Indiana as models for Tennessee. In a speech at Franklin Tennessee in August of 1863 Johnson said, "Look at Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, how far ahead they are of us. Here, if a man goes to farming it takes $1000 to buy a negro, and

[370] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 6, 1862-1863*, 6:337.

then the negro's hand must be directed by the supervision of a white man. In Ohio, or Indiana, the man himself goes to work, his $1000 is invested in something productive, which will not run away, and the whole republic moves onward."[371] Johnson prior to the war had taken pains in the House and Senate to condemn Northern labor as a degradation of the value of labor. The war it seems allowed Johnson the intellectual space to consider throwing off the last of the political dogmatism of the antebellum South. This could be managed because rather than the ministers, Johnson attached the institutions of the South to the State rather than to the church. This simple difference allowed Johnson to adhere to the Union.

One of the largest crises to face Johnson was the sundering the Union. Considering Johnson's statements in favor of maintaining the nation, the crisis offered not only a political, but a moral obstacle. Johnson approached the impending crisis late in 1860 chastising those who threatened and desired secession. On December 18 and 19, 1860, Andrew Johnson spoke to the Senate arguing that South Carolina and the other states threatening secession were fighting from the wrong perspective. Johnson argued that the best place to mediate the dispute between the slaveholding states and the rest of the nation was within the bounds of the constitution. In making his case for working within the constitution Johnson hearkens to the nationalist pantheon the blood of the revolutionary generation who instituted the constitution in the first place. More than simply appealing to those threatening secession Johnson took pains over the course of the two days he spoke to detail the illegality of secession as it had heretofore been proposed by Southern states. Johnson argued that for severance of a state from the Union to be

[371] Ibid.

legal it required the approval of the given state, and the rest of the Union's legal acceptance. A standard Johnson no doubt felt could not be met by South Carolina. He continued this critique of secession to consider the merits of any state being able to simply withdraw from the Union. The conclusion he arrived at was that the measure would be at best illogical.[372]

Johnson continued this attack throughout the entirety of his speech at times also criticizing the South for seeming to prefer rule by a slave owning oligarchy to the more egalitarian forms of democracy. This attack was not out of place for Johnson because he had long criticized the dominance of slave holders, and their seeming attempts to gain a disproportionate influence compared to their real numbers in the South.[373] Johnson ended his prolonged recitation with both a statement of faith and a threat.

> I have an abiding faith, I have an unshakable confidence in man's capability to govern himself. I will not give up this Government that is now called an experiment, which some are prepared to abandon for a constitutional monarchy. No; I intend to stand by it, and entreat every man throughout the nation who is a patriot, and who has seen, and is compelled to admit, the success of this great experiment, to come forward, not in haste, not in precipitancy, but in deliberation, in full view of all that is before us, in the spirit of brotherly love and fraternal affection, and rally around the altar of our common country, and lay the Constitution upon it as our last libation, and swear by our God, and all that is sacred and holy, that the Constitution shall be saved, and the Union preserved.[374]

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[372] Andrew Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 4, 1860-1861*, ed. LeRoy P Graf and Ralph W Haskins, vol. 4 (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 5,6–7,24–25.

[373] This critique had come largely in criticizing attempts to reapportion the representation of the state of Tennessee to include the 3/5 clause in determining population. Johnson coming from the mountains of East Tennessee, an area with few slaves strongly condemned the idea as a means of diminishing the voice of the common man. The measure would have balanced Tennessee's representation much more toward Central and West Tennessee, areas that produced more cotton, held more slaves, and generally supported measures that had less benefit for the agriculturally and culturally distinct regions of Appalachia. The opposition of Johnson to this reapportionment led his political rivals, particularly William Brownlow, to attack Johnson as an abolitionist. Their attacks were overstated. Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 1, 1822-1851*, 1:101–104.

[374] Johnson, *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: Volume 4, 1860-1861*, 4:44.

Johnson's last thought was to the impending conflict if secession persisted. He wanted the government to have the power not to force action from the states, or compel specific behavior; but instead to enforce the law with in the states. Short of this, Johnson saw civil conflict on the horizon and pledged to secessionists, in the words of an Irish patriot addressing the British, "I will dispute every inch of ground; I will burn every blade of grass; and the last intrenchment of freedom shall be my grave."[375] The representation of the cause of the Union is imperative in these quotes. Johnson is utilizing rhetoric that sounds closer to the pro-secessionist argument. Rather than accepting the grounds that the South acts to protect their rights Johnson points out and argues in this speech that the best means of protecting the rights of the South is to maintain the constitution as a document that inherently accepts the Southern opinion on slavery. The use of freedom as a trope provided Johnson the opportunity to intellectually and rhetorically claim patriotism, the favor of God, and the high ground. This trope would not be lost on the burgeoning Confederate nationalists; they used the same language to assert the validity and correctness of their actions. Johnson had made his decision regarding secession, and he would not have to wait long to discover the attitudes of the South toward his decision.

South Carolina passed an ordinance of secession the next day. Johnson, however, received praise for his speech from Tennesseans, and correspondents across the nation into the New Year. The speech itself also gained enormous popularity, and was reprinted in large numbers for distribution across the north and in certain areas mostly in the upper South. The response was clearly not to be universal or long lasting. Johnson's effigy was burned in Memphis and Nashville; when a disunionist group attempted the same in the

[375] Ibid., 4:45–46.

East Tennessee city of Knoxville Johnson's old enemy William Brownlow came to his defense. Secession made strange bedfellows.[376] The deluge of mail that Johnson received after his speech, and responsibilities in the senate seem to have kept him from sending many replies. By mid-January Johnson began writing to his family, friends, and other unionists to advance his argument further. Johnson condemned secession for the first time using the phrase 'political heresy, and argued that the act of leaving the Union did more to advance the boarder of Canada than to protect the institution of slavery.[377]

The Senate continued to meet through February of 1860, as more states join South Carolina in its withdrawal from the Union. Tennessee scheduled a plebiscite to determine whether a convention should be held to consider secession for February 9th, Johnson detained in Washington, could do no more than send letters to his allies and his former opponents; took the opportunity to demonstrate the lessons he had learned in December. His first speech against secession having gained substantial notoriety Johnson delivered another extensive address just in time for it to be transmitted and distributed before the plebiscite. His themes were similar to the previous address; however, he offered a more descriptive explanation of the religious character of secession. "I look upon it as the prolific mother of political sin; as a fundamental error; as a heresy that is intolerable in contrast with the existence of the Government itself. I look upon it as being productive of anarchy; and anarchy is the next step to despotism."[378] It was again a statement of Johnson's conviction that the institutions of the democratic state arose to the level of the earthly church. Where heresy could be committed against the dogma of the Christian

[376] Ibid., 4:147–149.
[377] Ibid., 4:160–164.
[378] Ibid., 4:205.

church Johnson now argued that heresy was in progress against the United States. This speech continued on longer than his original discourse, and attacked the states and individuals who had thus far perpetrated the secessionist movement. Johnson's performance seems to have improved during this second speech as the record indicates several moments where he was interrupted by applause or laughter. The speech again concluded with a proclamation of Johnson's willingness to oppose secession at all possible costs.[379]

The costs for Johnson would be considerable in the immediate moment. Though Tennessee rejected the immediate effort to withdraw from the Union after the fall of Ft. Sumter, Isham Harris successfully led the state into disunion. After Tennessee joined the Confederacy Harris and others Confederate nationalists took aim on Johnson's family who eventually managed to flee the state. Other loyalists were subjected to oaths, and imprisonment the same treatment Johnson later offered to Confederates remaining in the occupied regions of Tennessee. This for Johnson was fair retribution. Whereas secession stemmed from the illegal and irreligious, defense of the Union and Constitution provided a justification for the use of all means necessary to preserve these instruments. Despite the plasticity of Johnson on the issue of slavery with the consideration of secession Johnson offers an ardently consistent image of his political and religious attitudes. All things could be sacrificed upon the altar of the nation, and compared to the cost of disunity the nation deserves nothing less, according to Johnson, than the willingness to cast aside any institution for the preservation of the state. This was a common sentiment

[379] Ibid., 4:254.

for unionists across the south.[380] Once the state had been preserved Johnson's radical political theology again supported the Jacksonian vision of a limited federal authority that had predominated Johnson's antebellum outlook.

Johnson's arrest of the ministers represented not only the arrest of political prisoners in the midst of the exceptional circumstances of war, but also a personal act of faith. Johnson's vision of a Christian world required a democratic state to realize the virtues of scriptural freedom. Johnson's arrested the ministers as a political expedient, and as a means of punishing their heresy against the newly created democratic incarnation of Israel. Johnson accepted many of the propositions of the minister's theology, and adjusted them to fit his own experience of the world. This, however, did not extend to freedom across races, but much as the ministers re-conceptualized their narrative of God's providential designs during Reconstruction Johnson adjusted his understanding of the cosmic importance of the American state at the outset of the secession crisis.

[380] Jonathan Dean Sarris, *A Separate Civil War: Communities in Conflict in the Mountain South* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 66.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

THE SOUL OF THE SOUTH AND THE NATION

This largely overlooked incident offers a window onto nineteenth century American religious experience. This is clearly not the only means of approaching this topic, but it allows a concise expression of the predominant mainstream trends within American Christianity. The methodology, however, helps bring into focus the nature of midcentury conflict in America. The ministers themselves were not revolutionary. They did not express theology in particularly new or extraordinary ways, and they did not captivate and lead the South themselves. They were six among many ministers throughout the South. They along with their brethren tended to reach across denominational lines in preference a regional theology rather than adhering to sectarian divides. The ministers untied in support of their region, and by doing so helped to create a new national identity that they would continue to support even after the political potential of the Confederacy had been eradicated.

By pursuing a close reading of the arrest of these ministers it is possible to see an image of Southern religion that expressed itself in many ways, but acted in service to the regions identity. As this identity grew into genuine national revolution, religious authorities promoted their inspired interpretation of the Southern nationalist narrative as

being consistent and the best realization of God's revelation to man. Rather ironically this expression of religious rhetoric was itself a reinterpretation of the theology that helped promote US nationalism in the early republic.

Perhaps the greatest factor in driving the narrative of nineteenth century America is the Second Great Awakening. Both the form that the Awakening took, and the impact the Awakening had on American culture, define the general features of the American experience through the antebellum period. The emphasis on expansion over doctrinal unity permitted an immediate expression of national unity through religious devotion, but ultimately fertilized the fields of sectional strife. As the national state moved away from the common identity of the Revolutionary period and the Era of Good Feelings, regional identity similar to the colonial period reemerged and helped promote sectional discord. This erupted in the very visible schism of the sectional churches, but had existed in smaller doctrinal disputes that plagued American Christianity since the revolution. All identifying Christians saw devotion to God as an important feature of their lives and of the nation itself, but the features of how this devotion expressed divided denominations, and created ongoing rifts in American churches that lacked a means of enforcing denominational uniformity. The ultimate expression of this emerged in the debate over slavery.

It was in this religious environment where the evangelical churches were viewed popularly as a beacon of civility in a population that was at times prone to indulgent excesses. One need only look to America's long relationship with intoxicating beverages to perceive the ground on which nineteenth century ministers called out the excesses of the common man's America. The same culture produced the ministers who would

eventually be arrested by Andrew Johnson. The ministers were all born in the United States, and all came of age during the long continuing Awakening of the early republic. The environment of this period politically, culturally, and economically created these men, and they flourished in it. The expansion of the republic created the room for them to rise quickly through the ranks of their denominations.

Howell made a remarkable ascent rising to the point that he led the Southern Baptist Convention in the years preceding the Civil War. He had helped pursue the initial split among the Baptists, and then used his position in Nashville as a means of entering higher church office. His congregation also provides an example of the typical hardships encountered by Southern society while occupied by Union forces during the war.

Edmund Sehon provides a similar view of the Methodist schism, though he never rose in the ranks of Southern Methodism as Howell did in the Baptist church. Sehon also articulated well the common position, especially in the south, that the only appropriate means of promoting social morality was through moral suasion. Changing social customs to reflect expected social standards required individual choice. Thus, slavery could not be eliminated without convincing all slaveholders that the practice was wrong. Likewise, alcohol could not be eliminated without convincing everyone that they should stop drinking it. Sehon was an anomaly among southern ministers. While most accepted and promoted the biblical sanction of slavery, Sehon called himself a practical abolitionist. Regardless, his stance on moral suasion allowed him to side with the South in the Methodist schism, and to remain in good standing with Southern society.

In stark contrast to Sehon, Samuel Baldwin viewed slavery as a divinely inspired and ordained institution. As such, the removal of the institution would do more to remove

God's favor from the United States than any amount of drinking or debauchery. Baldwin also offered the best expression of the millennial view of God's purpose for the United States. He argued that the United States was specially chosen to led the world as it promoted the spread of democracy; democracy being God's preferred form of government. This ideology built into the religious world view that emerged popularly in the wake of the Awakening. For the South it would be a simple task of converting this American theology into a Southern theology; the only adjustment required was to define the north as corrupted from the original purpose of the nation by the unconstitutional and unchristian actions of the abolitionist movement.

These ministers of the South were uniquely positioned to accomplish this transition. Most social classes held ministers in a certain amount of esteem, and as a result they acted as the mediators of social disputes. This position allowed them to achieve significant social prominence. At times this could be interpreted into political and commercial capital. Sehon traveled during the war to raise money for Tennessee refugees, Ford sought to raise money for his congregation's building efforts, Elliott's religious connections helped advertise his school, and several other examples could also apply. It was understood both in the North and the South that for better or worse that the ministers present in these regions possessed and expressed significant power in the shaping and focusing of public opinion and in creating policy. This occurred despite the almost overwhelming diversity present in American Christianity. Even among these six ministers disputes were common. Wharton danced with women at parties; Elliott allowed dancing to be taught; Baldwin condemned Elliott for his permissiveness.

Andrew Johnson provides a distinctly different understanding of Christianity. Johnson, in many ways, agreed with Baldwin's millennial vision of the United States. While Johnson never promoted the idea of an imminent apocalyptic war, he did describe the US as a divinely inspired government, and clearly the most favored government on the planet. Jingoist though this interpretation was, it helps to explain Johnson's harsh approach to war time reconstruction in Tennessee. Johnson adopted the attitude that those who would oppose God and the government must be stopped.

There were significant practical differences between the ministers, and this variety extended to the lay members of Southern society. It would be easy at this point to blame Christianity for the sectional tensions of the antebellum republic. Reason would diminish the completeness of this explanation so that Christianity might provide only a portion of the causal factors that inspired civil strife. This, however, grossly misstates the nature of mid-century America. Christianity, and in some ways the other social factors that are blamed for the outbreak of the Civil War might better be described as symptoms rather than the disease. The problems faced by the United States in the antebellum period had more to do with the rapid expansion of the republic and its institutions than with any one issue. Of course, had the churches not schismed, and had slavery not exacerbated sectional relations the nation might have coped with its problems. Attitudes became increasingly entrenched until they could no longer be amended. The ministers of Nashville, and Johnson himself each exhibited this inability to compromise at various points. This could cause further schisms in the churches, and moreover eventually in the political life of the nation. The cost of the rapid expansion of the churches during the Second Great Awakening was the eventual dissolution of the national denominations,

because the expanded without clear expectations of a unified identity. Likewise, the political expansion of the United States failed to inspire a unified national identity; instead it promoted regional identities. Thus, rather than provide a unifying force, Christianity served to further the divides inspired by uncontrolled expansion.

The arrest of the ministers, moreover, challenges existing assumptions about the Civil War. While the traditional explanation of the conflict focuses on the political confrontations precipitating secession a substantial cultural gulf emerged and grew within antebellum America. Many of these divisions started in relatively small ways. For instance, the different focus that emerged in the Second Great Awakening between creating the correct social conditions for redemption by improving legal moral standards generally in the North, as compared to the South's focuses on individual redemption to achieve societal improvement. The rather esoteric arguments over how to save the maximum possible number of souls merged with the political conversations of the time period, and increasingly pushed the nation into competing understandings of what represented mainstream. As this erupted into violence during the Civil War, the latent divisions hardened. Union and Confederate both sought the complete destruction of the other side not just in terms of political independence or union, but as a feature of achieving the millennial expectations they had imbued into the American nation.

The expectation that America represented the nearest realization of God's millennial nation pushed the interpretation of the war into a religious and moral framework for its participants. This inevitably impacted the methods used to prosecute the war effort. Harsh treatment of prisoners of war by one side encouraged reprisals by the other. The seizure of Southern churches for northern denominations forestalled the

reunification of the denominations. The arrest of political prisoners encouraged seizures of property and other acts of oppression by the other side. In the end the providential war ended in the only way possible, without a decisive victor. Lincoln correctly stated in his second inaugural address, "The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully."[381] While the Union won a military victory over the Confederacy, the War Department lost its bid to restore denominational unity. The ministers who returned to their congregations with former soldiers did so with a more intense animosity toward the innovations of the increasingly industrial north. The south experienced several years of soul searching during Reconstruction, but the conclusion that emerged allowed for reunification without admitting slavery existed in the antebellum period as an inherently immoral institution. The South could continue to define itself as the guardian of American freedom, while the nation as a whole maintained its self-identity as an exceptional nation.

Tennessee served as one of the key incubators for Reconstruction. Johnson's experience in Tennessee then served as an instructive and cautionary experience. The ministers of Tennessee could not be easily cowed, and as Johnson increased the pressure on these ministers they and their families became increasingly intransigent. Meanwhile, the constituencies most clearly benefiting from the upsetting of social order flourished while they had the protection of the US military. Johnson, however, could not locate the tipping point at which the reconstruction of Tennessee became an accomplished reality. Despite his efforts throughout the war, the moment never arrived for the full reintegration

[381] *The Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents: From George Washington to George W. Bush*, Rev. and updated (New York: Gramercy Books, 2003), 200.

of Tennessee. The task of restoring the state to the Union fell to Johnson's successor William G. Brownlow. Through, his tremendously unpopular tenure as governor, Brownlow pushed an increasingly revisionist agenda. He grew to support civil rights, and equal suffrage. This occurred as much out of political expediency. As the ability to exclude Confederates from participation in the governance of Tennessee diminished, Brownlow looked to the newly liberated populations to shore up his support. Over time this became an impossible task.

Thus, the ministers arrested by Johnson provide a useful means of examining the conduct and resolution of the Civil War. They, however, do not offer any simple conclusions about the relationship between Christianity and American politics. To some degree these topics regularly intertwine themselves. It would be appealing to conclude that they ought not reside so closely together. Likewise, it would be satisfying to declare that the imposition of moral agendas on other people against their will presented a clear violation of the Constitution, and ultimately failed to achieve the desired goals. Everyone involved with this incident attempted to impose their attitudes on society around them. Johnson attempted to compel loyalty to a cause the ministers disagreed with. The ministers sought to compel subjection to the existing social hierarchy of the south, including its attachment to forced labor. Johnson did not mind slavery, but objected to the imposition of this hierarchy on the poor whites of the south, as such he sought to remove the existing elites from power to impose his egalitarian vision of white America. Neither the ministers nor Johnson succeeded in fully imposing their moral compass on society. Johnson sought to diminish the elites to preserve democracy. With the abolition of slavery this was achieved, but it did not result in the creation of an egalitarian nation.

Johnson's vision of an all-white egalitarian state more closely matched the Jim Crow south as it replaced slavery. The ministers meanwhile lost in their effort to preserve the status quo of southern society, but recreated a hierarchy defended by segregation that enforced social standard nearly as well as slavery had. Clearly the imposition of moral agendas failed to achieve full results, but it did nonetheless end the institution of slavery. The arrest of these ministers cannot point to a sweeping conclusion. Instead, their arrest reinforces the need to foster communicative dialogue. Johnson did not achieve his desired ends through the arrest, and the ministers did not achieve their ends through their war time radicalization. Instead both sides used the other as a tool of self-identification. They used each other to proclaim their identity, and in doing so hardened their opponent's contradictory positions.

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