‘TIS GOD THAT AFFLICTS YOU:

THE ROOTS OF THE RELIGION OF THE LOST CAUSE AMONG CHARLESTON BAPTISTS, 1847-1861

by

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Preface

The saying goes that Rome wasn't built in a day—neither is a dissertation. This work is a testimony of that adage. It is the culmination of hours upon hours of reading, some by me, much more by others. I owe so much to many people, who have allowed me to bring this project from "dissertation phase" to conclusion. First, I would like to thank my dissertation committee, Dr. Steven Woodworth, Dr. Todd Kerstetter, Dr. Gene Smith, and Dr. Ken Stevens. My major professor Dr. Woodworth has shown particular patience with me throughout the entire process of this six-year-long dissertation quest. I also would like to thank Dana Summers in the Graduate History Department for helping me with various logistical issues over the course of the last several years. In addition, monies from the Boller-Worcester Travel Grant at TCU allowed me to track down some important leads in the Southern archives at Duke University and the University of North Carolina.

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I would like to also thank members of my family. My in-laws, Glen and Jeannette Ladewig, have always encouraged and supported me, even when I took their daughter off to Wheaton for two years, and over the years I have had the chance to trade

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My final word of thanks goes to my wife, Kristin, and our baby girl, Chloe, whose presence has been quite a challenge—not because of the distractions that she may bring, but rather the drive her presence instills in me to do my best so that she is proud to call me her father. Thank you, Chloe, for giving me that challenge. Kristin, this work is dedicated to you. Thank you for being my incredible wife, my fun-loving companion, my staunchest advocate, my fiercest editor, and my best friend. Thank you for helping me complete this work. *Soli Deo Gloria*

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Introduction

The Roots of the Religion of the Lost Cause

Pulling out his pen and paper, Baptist minister Edwin T. Winkler found it necessary to respond to "denunciations" carried in a northern newspaper, the *Philadelphia Chronicle*. The *Southern Baptist*, a weekly publication produced in Charleston, South Carolina, decided "without hesitation" to reprint the letter for its readers since it stood as a "full and forcible" yet "mild and courteous" answer to the northern critics. At the end of his lengthy reply, Winkler closed with these words:

> You cannot convince us, that loyalty to our Country is apostasy to Christianity. We hold on the contrary that our Patriotism is a demand of our Religion.—Our Religion teaches us to desire the prosperity of that Land, which is our country, and our home. Our Religion teaches us to pray, that its rights may be secured and maintained.—And our Religion demands, that if they are withheld, we shall hold ourselves ready to bless or to accompany those, who go forth to battle for their vindication. It is not the sentiment of statesmen alone, that the present cause of the South is identically the same as that, for which our fathers fought the battles of the Revolution:—we all look upon it as the cause of Political Conservatism, and National Independence—as a cause whose policy will secure to the South a prominence and a power, which she has never possessed before; and whose righteousness will secure in its behalf the favoring Providence of God.[1]

Such a statement was not uncommon for white southern religious leaders during the Civil War. In fact, historians such as C. C. Goen, James W. Silver, Drew Gilpin Faust, Richard Carwardine, and most recently George C. Rable have pointed out that many southern clergy stood at the forefront of the charge into secession and war after the election of Abraham Lincoln in November of 1860. Following the war, the white clergy remained ready at their post to defend the South, even in its defeat, and, as Charles Reagan Wilson

[1] "The South and Slavery," *Southern Baptist* 4 September 1850, 1. Subsequent reference to the *Southern Baptist* in footnotes will be listed as "*SB*." At the time that Winkler wrote these words, he was serving as a minister in Georgia and also as the assistant editor of the Georgia Baptist newspaper, the *Christian Index*. He moved to Charleston in 1852 and became the editor of the *Southern Baptist* and eventually pastor of First Baptist Charleston. Winkler's background is discussed in chapter one.

has discussed, proclaimed the favor of Almighty God upon the South who saw fit to baptize the nation in blood in order to make them a holy people. Winkler's words contain all of the elements of this "religion of the lost cause"—a civil religion that upheld a belief in the righteousness of the southern cause, a willingness to raise arms in defense of that cause, and a reliance upon the providential designs of God to make their desire a reality. In short, it exhibits the marriage of southern nationalism and evangelical providentialism that the southern white clergy used to explain the Confederate cause as well as the Confederate defeat.

Winkler, however, did not write his letter during the war or after the war. He did not even write the letter in the initial days after Lincoln's election. Instead, he wrote it in July of 1850, over ten years before secession became a reality and nearly eleven before the first major battle of the Civil War was fought. His letter, therefore, indicates that the marriage that produced the religion of the lost cause actually took place much earlier than is typically described.

Historians focusing on the role of southern white religion during the Civil War have spent volumes on various connections between the pulpit and the battle field. One of the earliest serious studies came from James W. Silver and his work, *Confederate Morale and Church Propaganda*.[2] Published in 1957, Silver successfully added a layer to the story of secession, pointing out the role that evangelical clergy and religious publications played in the process. Silver's research picks up the story after Lincoln's election, drawing the earliest examples from sermons preached in November of 1860 and spending most of his time during the midst of the war itself. Drew Gilpin Faust's 1988

[2] James W. Silver, *Confederate Morale and Church Propaganda* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1957).

work, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, has also provided a description of the connection between religion and the Civil War. She sees southern religion as playing a central role in the formation of the Confederacy and specifically in what she referred to as "Confederate nationalism."[3] Like Silver, Faust's research overlooks the decade leading up to the war and only explores the role of the clergy after Lincoln's election. C. C. Goen's work, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation*, reaches further back to the 1840s and the denominational schisms of the Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists. Goen suggests that the breaking of national fellowship among the churches demonstrated "irreversible steps along the nation's course to violence."[4] Unfortunately, his work remains focused only on the separation of the evangelical denominations themselves and not the underlying southern nationalism that crept into the churches. He pays scant attention to the 1850s and only describes the churches as significant in providing examples of successful secession for southern leaders to draw upon, as well as historical examples of failed leadership that caused secession in the first place.

The 1998 work *Religion and the American Civil War* provides various descriptions of the interplay between religion and the war.[5] The collection of essays sheds light on a variety of subjects, including the use of the Bible in defense of both slavery and abolitionism prior to the war, the impact of religious literature in the military camps, and the role and experiences of women, both North and South, during and after

[3] Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 51.

[4] C. C. Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denomination Schisms and the Coming of the Civil War* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985), 6

[5] Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson, eds., *Religion and the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

the war. As a whole, however, the research only picks up the story after the first shots at Fort Sumter were fired and Lincoln called up the troops. Any background from the 1850s is absent. In addition, George Rable's 2010 book *God's Almost Chosen People* also does not provide any substantial discussion of the years that preceded the war.[6] Although Rable does give a chapter detailing how the slavery debate impacted the churches in the decades prior to the war, the work's focus is squarely on the events that followed the beginning of the war. Thus, readers are unable to grasp any sense of the groundwork that enabled the religious communities to understand the conflict or articulate their thoughts concerning God's hand in the midst of the destruction and defeat.

In addition to the discussion of religion during the Civil War, several historians have focused on the role of religion in the days of Reconstruction and the beginning of the New South. Perhaps the most influential volume in this vein came in 1980 with Charles Reagan Wilson's work, *Baptized in Blood*, which details the ways in which members of the clergy provided an explanation for Confederate defeat and a defense of evangelical providentialism. According to Wilson, the religion of the lost cause proclaimed that the South had never been abandoned by God. Instead, God used the war to refine the South through the trial of death and destruction in order to make them into a holy nation. Subsequent authors, such as Gaines M. Foster in *Ghosts of the Confederacy* (1985), Paul Harvey in *Redeeming the South* (1997), David W. Blight in *Race and Reunion* (2001), and Caroline Janney in *Burying the Dead but Not the Past* (2008), have all discussed the role of memory, religion, and memorial associations in helping the

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

South to understand its defeat and its mission for the future.[7] These works focus on the post-war South and give very little, if any, attention to the background of religious belief that developed during the antebellum period. In general, these historians place all their emphasis on the rhetoric during the midst of the war itself and neglect to see the very same rhetoric during the antebellum era. To gain a full perspective of white southern evangelical belief, and, in turn, how this belief impacted their discussion of the war and at times the war itself, it is necessary to explore their thoughts prior to the war.

Mitchell Snay's *Gospel of Disunion* has come closest to providing such an understanding of the development of religious thought prior to the war.[8] He discusses the beginnings of southern sectionalism and its impact on religion and religion's impact on it. Beginning with the American Antislavery Society's abolitionist tract campaign of 1835, Snay describes how the southern clergy stood in fierce opposition to the efforts of the northern abolitionists. In turn, an aggressive defense of slavery began in the churches, one which highlighted the sanctity of slavery and the atheism of the abolitionists. The result was a unified white southern clergy who dealt swiftly with perceived abolitionism in any form, particularly when it entered the denominations. Snay carries his narrative through the 1840s as evangelical denominations divided along sectional lines while utilizing sermons, newspapers, personal letters, and archives from both the North and the South. He limits his study, however, by not dealing extensively with the decade

[7] Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Paul Harvey, *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities among Southern Baptists, 1865-1925* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); and Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

[8] Mitchell Snay, *Gospel of Disunion: Religion and Separatism in the Antebellum South* (New

immediately prior to the war. In addition, his focus remained purely on the issues of political separatism and secessionism, thus excluding a significant element of the religion of the lost cause—namely evangelical providentialism.

This study will attempt to fill in the historical gap by concentrating on a microcosm of white southern evangelicals—white Baptists in Charleston during the years 1846-1861. In the decade prior to the Civil War, Charleston maintained a population of over 20,000 whites and 15,000 slaves, not to mention a small free black population of around 3,500.[9] While its standard population was not large, its transient population was, as many wealthy plantation owners split their time between the expanse of their country homes and the hustle and bustle of the city. Therefore, Charleston remained a wealthy city. This wealth allowed it to possess a healthy printing industry, distributing newspapers, tracts, pamphlets, and books throughout the South. In so doing, it stood as one of the intellectual centers of the South, the "capital of Southern Civilization,"[10] or as historians Michael O'Brien and David Moltke-Hansen suggest, an "ideological entrepôt, rather like New York in the 1920s."[11]

Likewise, Charleston Baptists held an especially high place among Baptists in the South. First Baptist Charleston was known as the mother of all southern Baptist churches. Founded in 1682, its most famous pastor, Richard Furman, helped to organize

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York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[9] Charleston (S.C.), and Frederick A. Ford, *Census of the City of Charleston, South Carolina, for the Year 1861 Illustrated by Statistical Tables,* (Chapel Hill, N.C.): Academic Affairs Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2000 <http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/census/menu.html>.

[10] David Moltke-Hansen, "The Expansion of Intellectual Life: A Perspectus," in *Intellectual Life in Antebellum Charleston*, edited by Michael O'Brien and David Moltke-Hansen (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986), 42.

[11] "Preface," in Michael O'Brien and David Moltke-Hansen, eds. *Intellectual Life in Antebellum Charleston* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986), xii.

the first convention of all American Baptists, and in the 1840s, the church helped to lead the charge to disband this group in order to form the Southern Baptist Convention.[12] Well-known Baptist leaders such as Edwin T. Winkler, Basil Manly, Sr., and James Boyce, as well as Richard Furman's son, James Furman, all called Charleston home at one stage of their ministry.

Of particular significance was the publication of the *Southern Baptist*, a weekly newspaper produced in Charleston. Newspapers, whether weekly or daily, stood as the main source of information during the nineteenth century. Throughout the colonial period and even into the early stages of the 1800s, the northern states outweighed their southern brethren in numbers of printers, and in turn, the number of weekly and daily publications. This disparity proved especially true among the number of religious publications in both the North and the South. Prior to the 1830s, only three religious newspapers existed in all of the southern states, one of which was the *Charleston Observer*, begun in 1827 by the Charleston Presbyterian Church. From 1830 to 1850, a plethora of new publications came along from a wide-range of religious groups, ranging from Catholics to Christodelphians, and every flavor in between. During the 1850s, Charleston was also the publishing city for newspaper from each of the three major evangelical denominations—the Presbyterians *Southern Presbyterian*, the Methodist *Southern Christian Advocate*, and the Baptist *Southern Baptist*.[13]

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[12] Beyond his work in helping to organize Baptist ministry in Charleston and elsewhere, Richard Furman's vigorous defense of slavery (Richard Furman, *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Coloured Population in the United States* (Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1823)) became a standard text among ministers in the South and grew in popularity as abolitionism rose in the North.

[13] Henry Smith Stroupe, *The Religious Press in the South Atlantic States, 1802-1865* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1956). This is a very useful compilation of all of the religious periodicals published along the Atlantic coast of the South prior to the end of the Civil War.

The *Southern Baptist* provided a wide-range of information and instruction for its readers, which included adherents in Charleston and throughout South Carolina, even into the surrounding states. The paper was founded in 1839 and published weekly, typically on Tuesdays, maintaining a consistent circulation through December of 1860. In 1849, Subscribers numbered some 679 individuals.[14] By 1859, that number had grown to 1,399 paying subscribers, although the number was likely higher due to a number of individuals who received the paper yet failed to keep up with their payments and those individuals who paid for multiple subscriptions.[15]

Begun as a private venture under T. W. Haynes, the paper transferred ownership in 1846 to a committee of members from First Baptist Church in Charleston and Wentworth Street Baptist Church, which at the time were the only two Baptist churches in the city.[16] The editorship of the newspaper fluctuated over the remaining years between an unnamed "committee" and various individual editors, such as James P. Boyce, B. C. Pressley, E. T. Winkler, J. P. Tustin,[17] and W. B. Carson. As would be

[14] Subscription numbers taken from list provided by the *Southern Baptist* in the following issues: 3 January 1849, 10 January 1849, 24 January 1849, 21 February 1849, 21 March 1849, 9 May 1849, 16 May 1849, 30 May 1849, 27 June 1849, 11 July 1849, 25 July 1849, 8 August 1849, 22 August 1849, 3 October 1849, 24 October 1849, 14 November 1849, 21 November 1849, 28 November 1849, 5 December 1849, and 26 December 1849.

[15] Subscription numbers taken from list provided by the *Southern Baptist* in the following issues:11 January 1859, 18 January 1859, 25 January 1859, 1 February 1859, 8 February 1859, 15 February 1859, 22 February 1859, 1 March 1859, 8 March 1859, 15 March 1859, 22 March 1859, 29 March 1859, 5 April 1859, 12 April 1859, 19 April 1859, 26 April 1859, 3 May 1859, 10 May 1859, 17 May 1859, 24 May 1859, 31 May 1859, 7 June 1859, 14 June 1859, 28 June 1859, 12 July 1859, 19 July 1859, 26 July 1859, 9 August 1859, 23 August 1859, 30 August 1859, 13 September 1859, 27 September 1859, 4 October 1859, 18 October 1859, 1 November 1859, 8 November 1859, 19 November 1859, 26 November 1859, 3 December 1859, 10 December 1859, 17 December 1859, 24 December 1859, 7 January 1860, and 14 January 1860. See Appendix A for list of subscriber names.

[16] "The Editor's Farewell," *SB*, 20 October 1847, 2; "The Southern Baptist," *SB*, 20 October 1847, 2. The original committee from the two churches included James Kendrick (pastor of First Baptist Charleston) and James H. Cuthbert (pastor of Wentworth Street Baptist Church), along with B. C. Pressley and James Tupper.

[17] J. P. Tustin presents a very interesting side note in the history of Charleston Baptists. Tustin

expected with any religious publication, the *Southern Baptist* often carried denominational information, such as the meetings of conferences or committees, as well as occurrences at area churches. It also provided a large amount of religious instruction, in addition to providing news concerning the activities of other Christians in the United States and around the world. In addition, the paper ran various non-religious news items, ranging from political debates in Washington to wars in Europe. According to an 1860 editorial that ran in the paper, religious newspapers like the *Southern Baptist* held similar influence, if not greater, to the pastor, religious tract, or even the Bible. As the author

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arrived in Charleston in 1854 and was named editor of the *Southern Baptist*, a role he maintained until January of 1859 ("To the Readers of the Southern Baptist," *SB*, 13 December 1854). He had previously been a pastor in Warren, Rhode Island (Josiah P. Tustin, *Discourse Delivered at the Dedication of the New Church Edifice of the Baptist Church and Society in Warren, RI, May 8, 1845*, (Providence, RI: H.H. Brown, 1845)).

While in Charleston, he was an active member of First Baptist Church and served as the Corresponding Secretary for the Southern Baptist Publication Society. He also gave the occasional sermon, such as the funeral discourse provided for Edwin T. Winkler's wife, Abby, when she passed away in 1858 (J. P. Tustin, *A Discourse, at the Funeral of Mrs. Abby T. Winkler, who died, July 6th, 1858. Delivered in the First Baptist Church, Charleston, S.C., July 7th, 1858*. Charleston: A. J. Burke, 1858), as well as producing a special booklet on the issue of the salvation of infants (J. P. Tustin, *Salvation of Infants; or, Children in the Kingdom of Heaven* (Charleston: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1858).

In 1859, he apparently left Charleston under cordial circumstances, but that quickly changed. It was soon discovered that Tustin had applied with the Rhode Island Bishop to be a minister of the Episcopal Church upon his departure, a discovery that brought about deep anger from the Southern Baptists, especially the editors of the *South Western Baptist* (Alabama) and the *Southern Baptist*. Both felt betrayed because Tustin maintained an unwavering support of Baptist principles both in public and private conversation, yet after his departure, he went almost as far as he could against those principles, nearly becoming Roman Catholic ("Mr. Tustin's Secession," *SB*, 7 June 1859, 2; and "Mr. Tustin Once More," *SB*, 21 June 1859, 2).

Tustin's appointment as an Episcopal priest was granted, and he eventually became the rector of St. Mark's Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and upon Lincoln's death, the members of the church published his fast day sermon honoring Lincoln (Josiah P. Tustin, *Fast Day Sermon on the Death of President Lincoln: Delivered in St. Mark's Church, Grand Rapids* (Grand Rapids, MI: Daily Eagle Office, 1865)). In 1870, he was appointed by the Continental Improvement Company to travel to Sweden and encourage Swedes to immigrate to the United States and settle in Michigan. He did this while still maintaining his role as a minister, and in the years that followed, many Swedes came to Michigan and settled in the town of New Bleking, which was later renamed Tustin in his honor. (For Tustin's connection to the settlement in Tustin, Michigan, see *Michigan Genealogy and Resources* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publication Company, 2005), 20. For Tustin's connection to Sweden, see Tustin, J. P. *Communication from J.P. Tustin to the Joint Committee of the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States on Ecclesiastical Relations and Religious Reform: The Church of Sweden*. Ecclesiastical relations and religious reform, 2. (Brooklyn: [s.n.], 1876)).

stated,

> The religious paper goes regularly into thousands of families; and helps to form the opinion of tens of thousands of church members. It constitutes an important paper in the religious training of the young. It furnishes religious reading to hundreds who scarcely open their Bibles, or, look into a religious book. It is almost the only source of information, which is accessible to multitudes; upon the progress of Christ's kingdom to the world, and in the particular denomination, which it represents. The church has called into existence, such a potent means of influence in her midst. How unspeakably important to her interests that the conductors of her newspaper press should be thoroughly imbued with the Spirit of Christ.[18]

While the range of influence may have been overstated in this editorial, the impact of the *Southern Baptist* on the thoughts and actions of Baptists in Charleston was nonetheless significant.

Although the editors always maintained control over their content, they provided for their readers information that the readers wanted to know. After all, no publication could survive without subscribers, and the longevity of this publication as well as their range of circulation demonstrated a growing number of subscribers who connected with the content in the paper. In addition, the editors of the paper often held positions of prominence in the denomination, such Edwin T. Winkler, pastor of First Baptist Church of Charleston; James Boyce, professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; Basil Manly, Sr., pastor of two churches in Charleston and president of the University of Alabama; and B. C. Pressley, president of the Charleston Baptist Association, a leader of the Southern Baptist Publication Society, and a sub-treasurer of the United States.[19] It is useful, then, to see this newspaper as a means to understand the minds of religious

[18] "Pray for your Editors," *SB*, 1 September 1860, 2.

[19] Henry Smith Stroupe, *The Religious Press in the South Atlantic States, 1802-1865*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1956. Stroupe's work is a very useful compilation of all of the religious periodicals published along the Atlantic coast of the South prior to the end of the Civil War.

adherents prior to the war and to see the content of the paper as in some way representing the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of individual Baptists.

By studying the *Southern Baptist* during the years prior to the Civil War, the groundwork for the religion of the Lost Cause can be seen. The *Southern Baptist* both reflected and directed the thoughts of white Baptists in Charleston and throughout South Carolina and helped them to understand the world around them as the war approached.[20] In particular, the newspaper served as a platform for the concept of southern nationalism while at the same time asserting that in all things—whether in sickness or in health, in

[20] This study will intentionally focus on the life and thought of Anglo Baptists in Charleston. As will be noted in chapter one of this study, a large number of black slaves populated the Baptist ranks in Charleston, perhaps as many as five to one black to white. However, as is unfortunately the case with many issues in African-American history, the documentary record of their thoughts is scarce due to the actions of their white masters. There are moments in church records where the names and actions of individual slaves appear, but this is usually in relation to some matter of church discipline, not in a way that helps to explain the thoughts of slaves on various theological issues. Several studies in recent years have shed light on the religious plight of these slave populations, such as Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), and David W. Blight, *A Slave No More: Two Men Who Escaped to Freedom, Including Their Own Narratives of Emancipation* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Inc., 2007). Although an older volume, Donald G. Mathews' *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977) is also a good overview of Christianity among the African slaves. These studies and others help to bring a voice to population who had remained silent throughout history for far too long. The purpose of this study, however, is not to add to that field of scholarship. Instead, the purpose is to help explain why the Anglo population believed and behaved the way in which they did, and because of this, the sources will be entirely drawn from an Anglo perspective. Even when the issue of slavery appears or slaves are quoted, they are quoted from Anglo sources, thus tainting in many ways the actual thoughts of the slaves which are depicted. Yet these moments demonstrate how the southern whites viewed themselves in relation to their slaves.

The voices of women are also notably scarce in this study also due to a lack of resources. This is not an intentional omission. Great attempts were made to secure diaries, journals, or other documentary evidence from Baptist women in Charleston during this time period, all to no avail. Women's thoughts do make an appearance in the chapters covering death and southern nationalism, but these tend to come from secondary sources and are not Baptist in belief. The *Southern Baptist* newspaper, however, does provide an interesting window to attempt to determine the thoughts of these invisible women. The paper was far more inclusive in nature, and while a male editor or a male editorial committee made the final decisions as to what was printed, letters or poems by women and stories about women appear in the pages. These no doubt have some level of influence from the male leaders of the paper, but perhaps it does provide some insight into their thoughts. In addition, women appeared regularly on the subscription rolls of the newspaper, meaning that several women read the paper weekly and perhaps shared it with their friends and family. The *Southern Baptist*, then, could be seen in some ways as instructional material for women and men alike and the continuation of the paper, lasting for twenty-one years, indicates that many found value in its instructions, including women (see Appendix A).

war or in peace—God's providential hand remained at the plow, directing the activities of the world according to his will.

In order to demonstrate how this newspaper exemplified the marriage of southern nationalism and evangelical providentialism prior to the war, a study will be made of the articles, commentaries, and news reports contained in the *Southern Baptist* from May of 1847 through December of 1860.[21] While the *Southern Baptist* remains the main source of the study, the writings and sermons of other Baptist leaders in Charleston will also be examined, beginning in 1847. Because more resources present themselves for this group, the closing window for this study will be January of 1861, which provides a brief glimpse of how Baptists saw the coming war following South Carolina's declaration of secession and seizure of the forts in Charleston, minus Sumter. Chapter one of the study will provide an overview of Baptist life and thought during the decade prior to the war. Special attention will be given to the Baptist churches of Charleston, as well as their pastors. In addition, analysis will be made of the core theological text used by Baptists during this time, James L. Dagg's *Manual of Theology*, as well as two major hymnals used by Baptists in Charleston, one produced by Basil Manly, Sr., who served two pastorates in Charleston, and Edwin T. Winkler, who served for many years as pastor of First Baptist Charleston, as well as editing the *Southern Baptist* a brief period of time. This chapter will discuss the prominence of evangelical providentialism that characterized the general mindset of Baptists in Charleston.

[21] The *Southern Baptist*'s first appeared in 1839 and was renumbered in 1846. Unfortunately, the first seven years of the paper's print are no longer available, and the earliest publication that could be secured was the first issue of its second volume, which began in May of 1847. The *Southern Baptist* printed its last issue on December 15, 1860, due to lack of funding. (See William L. King, *The Newspaper Press of Charleston, S.C.: A Chronological and Biographical History, Embracing a Period of One Hundred and Forty Years* (Charleston, S. C.: Edward Perry, 1872), 175-77).

Chapters two through four comprise the major study of the *Southern Baptist* itself. Chapter two details the development of southern nationalism as seen in the paper, characterized by anger against perceived northern agitators, a strong defense of slavery, and a sense of southern victimization. In chapters three and four, the attention will turn to the teaching of evangelical providentialism. Chapter three addresses the issues of war and pestilence as seen in the paper. Chapter four discusses the issue of death and its rampant appearance throughout the pages of the *Southern Baptist*. Each demonstrates an understanding that God's providential hand brought about death, war, or disease for his eternal purpose. In chapters two through four, care is taken to avoid utilizing any sources that appeared in direct connection to Lincoln's election or the subsequent secession movement in order to provide a clean sample of sources that illustrate the mindset of southern Baptists before the actual crisis occurred. Therefore, the Democratic Convention in April of 1860 will serve as a cut-off point for these chapters. Chapter five will carry the story forward from April of 1860, through Lincoln's election, and on to the southern seizure of Fort Moultrie, Fort Johnson, and Castle Pinckney, highlighting the thoughts of Baptists on the eve of war, while also demonstrating a consistency of rhetoric during this time with the period of the 1850s.

It should be noted that the focus on Baptists in this study is not meant to suggest that Baptists in Charleston held any exclusive view concerning southern nationalism or evangelical providentialism. In fact, it is altogether likely that many of the trends in the 1850s concerning these two elements also appeared in the writings of Presbyterians and Methodists in Charleston, as well as religious communities throughout the South. Throughout the work, brief attention will be given to demonstrate how these other groups

shared similar thoughts with the Baptists. The narrowing of study to Baptists, therefore, is meant to provide a case study that helps point to a larger issue that occurred among southern evangelicals during the 1850s.

In the end, it is hoped this work will demonstrate that any discussion of religion during the Civil War or after the war needs to also carefully analyze southern religion leading up to the war. The rhetoric of evangelicals both during and after the Civil War stood in nearly perfect harmony with their rhetoric prior to the war. Very little, if anything, actually changed as the God of their fathers consistently remained their God, even in defeat.

Chapter One

Baptist Life and Thought in Charleston during the 1850s

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, white southern religion in the United States was characterized by nominal Anglican commitment, a growing Unitarian focus, and a small scattering of evangelical believers.[1] By the mid-point of the century, the religious landscape had changed completely. As described by Donald Mathews and John Boles, the evangelical brand of Protestant Christianity, as seen specifically in the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist churches, took off like wildfire during a series of revivals in the early 1800s.[2] Over the course of the next fifty years, evangelicalism became the dominant religion in the South, with its focus on strict adherence to the Bible, faithful commitment to the community of believers, and daily reliance upon the provisions of God. In the process, southern evangelicalism also left its mark on the rest of southern society as the movement sought to shape the South in the image of God.[3]

By the 1850s, the city of Charleston, the jewel of the Palmetto State, stood tall among evangelical cities. Irishman Thomas Smyth had become a leader among southern Presbyterians as the pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church of Charleston for 39 years. The town also produced the *Southern Presbyterian*, a newspaper for Presbyterians in South Carolina and beyond, as well as the *Southern Baptist*. Methodists also enjoyed a

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[1] Clement Eaton, *Freedom of Thought in the Old South* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951), 297-300.

[2] See John B. Boles, *The Great Revival: Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1972) and Donald G. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

[3] See Anne C. Loveland, *Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) and Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Press, 1997).

strong presence in Charleston, albeit one with early tragedies. Throughout the early nineteenth century, many Methodist ministers in Charleston succumbed to yellow fever and cholera, refusing to leave the city when the seasonal diseases struck.[4] By the 1850s, though, the town supported five congregations and was the publishing home to the *Southern Christian* Advocate, a newspaper produced by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.[5]

Anglo Baptists living in Charleston in the 1850s had their choice of four churches and numbered their spiritual family only around 500 souls, some 2,500 if they counted the black souls in their churches (see Table 2.1).[6] In a city with the population of over 20,000 whites and 15,000 slaves, along with a small free black population of around 3,500, this relatively small group of believers would appear to have commanded little attention.[7] Much like the city, Charleston Baptists considered themselves the center of the southern world. Charleston was the residence of the mother of all southern Baptist churches, First Baptist Charleston, the home to influential pastors, and the center for Southern Baptist publications.

First Baptist Church of Charleston held the reputation of being the largest and most influential congregation in the city. Establishing the church in 1682 in Kittery,

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[4] F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston: A Narrative of the Chief Events Relating to the Rise and Progress of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C., with Brief Notices of the Early Ministers Who Labored in That City* (Nashville, TN: Published by E. Stevenson and J.E. Evans, for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1856), 163-167.

[5] Charles F. Deems, *Annals of Southern Methodism* (Nashville, TN: Stevenson and Owen, 1856), 47.

[6] Please see note #19 on page ten of the introduction concerning the lack of discussion in this study on the religious viewpoints of the African slaves.

[7] Charleston (S.C.), and Frederick A. Ford, *Census of the City of Charleston, South Carolina, for the Year 1861 Illustrated by Statistical Tables,* (Chapel Hill, N.C.): Academic Affairs Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2000 <http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/census/menu.html>.

Maine, William Screven and 28 of other members migrated to Charleston and became the First Baptist Church of Charleston. Perhaps the church's most famous former pastor was Richard Furman, who helped found the Triennial Convention as well as the South Carolina Baptist Convention and whose small volume on slavery, *Exposition of the Views of Baptists Relative to the Colored Population of the United States* (1822), helped to establish southern Baptist views on slavery for decades.[8] Furman remained in the First Baptist pulpit for 38 years until his death in 1825. The following year, the church called a young preacher named Basil Manly, Sr., to assume the role of leadership in this famous church, where he remained until the University of Alabama offered him its presidency. During the decade of the 1850s, two pastors led First Baptist—James Ryland Kendrick (1847-1854) and Edwin Theodore Winkler (1854-1868). The congregation during this time boasted a membership roll of some 1,800, of which around 80% were classified as colored members. The slaves in the church outnumbered the white population nearly five to one.[9]

Wentworth Street Baptist Church served as another option in Charleston. In

[8] Baptist historian Walter Shurden has called Furman's *Exposition of the Views of Baptists Relative to the Colored Population of the United States* "perhaps the classic statement from any Baptist of the South in the nineteenth century" in regard to slavery. It was originally delivered to the governor of South Carolina on December 24, 1822, and was subsequently reprinted several times (James A. Rogers, Richard Furman: Life and Legacy (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2001), xxxiv).

[9] For a more thorough look at the history of First Baptist Charleston, see Robert A. Baker and Paul J. Craven, *Adventure in Faith: The First 300 Years of First Baptist Church, Charleston, South Carolina* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1982). In regard to the ratio of black slave to white members of First Baptist Church, Erskine Clarke deals with this common occurrence in Charleston. For example, he states that in 1845, the Trinity Methodist Church in Charleston identified 293 white members in good standing with the congregation, compared to 1806 African slaves. Likewise, the Cumberland Methodist Church registered 179 whites compared to 1157 blacks, and the Bethel Methodist Church showed a congregation of 164 whites to 1152 blacks. That same year, First Baptist had a ratio of 293 whites to 1543 blacks, Wentworth Baptist Church was 178 whites to 392 blacks, and Morris Street Baptist Church was 33 whites to 56 blacks. Clarke also addresses some of the reasons why black slaves were drawn to the various congregations, beyond just the attendance of their masters. (Thomas Erskine Clarke, *Wrestlin' Jacob: A Portrait of Religion in the Old South* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), 114-115.)

November 1840, several long-standing members of First Baptist Church feared what they perceived to be a growing progressive movement in the church, highlighted by the fellowship's allowance of women to vote in church matters. The group argued that such activity not only stood outside of the clear instruction of Scripture, but also went against the bylaws of the church itself. Furthermore, they asserted that the group in favor of women's suffrage had attempted to stack the church vote by bringing in members to vote who were not, according to the protestors, in faithful standing with the church. The ballots of unfaithful church members were invalid and, in turn they argued, so too was the result of the vote in which they were cast. Rather than continuing their protests within the church, the dissatisfied members left First Baptist and formed their own congregation with the blessing of then First Baptist pastor, W. T. Brantly.[10] Shortly after their departure, they called James C. Furman, son of Richard Furman, to be the Wentworth Street pastor.[11] Furman eventually departed to serve as a professor at the Furman College in Greenville, and for the first part of the 1850s, James Hazzard Cuthbert served as their pastor.[12] In 1855, these former members of First Baptist called on their former pastor Basil Manly, Sr., to return to Charleston as pastor of Wentworth Street. Manly continued in that role for three years until he returned to Alabama in 1858.[13] Following Manly's departure, the church was unable to locate a new permanent pastor,

[10] *Protest Against the Proceedings of the Corporation of the Baptist Church in Charleston, and Letter of Dismission,Granted to Those Who Went Out to Form the Second Baptist Church in Charleston* (Charleston: Hayden & Burke Printers, 1841).

[11] *Rules or By-Laws of the Wentworth Street Baptist Church, in Charleston, S. C., for the Government of Its Outward and Temporal Concerns. Adopted by the White Male Communicants of Full Age, at a Meeting Held on the 3d of January, 1842* (Charleston: B. B. Hussey, 1842), 13.

[12] See Charleston Baptist Association Minutes, 1847-1853.

[13] A. James Fuller, *Chaplain to the Confederacy: Basil Manly and Baptist Life in the Old South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 268-286.

and during the war, those members who remained in the city joined fellow Baptists at the Citadel Square Baptist Church location as First Baptist Church pastor Edwin Winkler delivered the weekly message. At the conclusion of the war, Winkler returned to First Baptist and Citadel Square called a new pastor, but Wentworth Street ceased to exist as a separate congregation.[14] On average during the 1850s, Wentworth Street maintained a membership of 423, over half of which were colored members (see Table 2.1).

A third Baptist church formed sometime between 1848-1849 and became known as Morris Street Baptist Church. In his history of First Baptist Charleston, Robert A. Baker identifies this church as a mission church to the slave community.[15] Unfortunately, the statistics available concerning the church indicate that this was a small white church located in the city on Morris Street. Little more is known about this congregation except

[14] See Charleston Baptist Association Minutes, 18559-1860 and David Marshall Ramsey, *History of Citadel Square Baptist Church: On Occasion of 40th Anniversary of the Church, Delivered December 6, 1896* (S.1: s.n., 1896), 2-3.

[15] Baker and Craven, *Adventure in Faith*, 297-8. It appears that a black congregation began to meet at Morris Street Baptist Church sometime in the 1860s as an independent congregation but still maintaining ties to First Baptist Church. In his history of First Baptist Church, Baker makes an assumption that this church began in the 1850s as the Third Baptist Church and then as Morris Street Baptist Church. Unfortunately, a study of the membership statistics as seen in the yearly minutes of the Charleston Baptist Association (see Table 2.1) indicate that this congregation was not a mission church to colored members in the community. The initial membership in 1849 numbered 23 white members and no black members (*Minutes of the Charleston Baptist Association at Its Ninety-Eighth Anniversary, Held with the Swift Creek Church, Sumter District, Nov. 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th, 1849* (Charleston: A.J. Burke, 1849)). As the years progressed, the black membership grew, but never to the percentage as seen at First Baptist Charleston, indicating that this church had little particular focus on black members. In fact, the 1849 Charleston Baptist Association minutes describe the body admitting to their membership a "third Baptist Church of Charleston," represented by Rev. A. D. Cohen, but no mention is made to suggest that this was more than a new meeting house in Charleston, not a special ministry to colored members in the area. What is more likely is that this group of Baptists met for a short period of time in a lecture hall of some sort in Charleston, but they never grew to a significant number. When Citadel Square Baptist Church, along with the famous Rev. Kendrick, arrived in the area, some members of Morris Street opted to join Citadel Square and left their building, while others joined Wentworth. The building, however, remained in use and possibly was owned by Citadel Square, as during the war the remaining Baptists in town met at this smaller, less prominent location in order to avoid the bombardment of the Union warships. At the conclusion of the war, many black Baptists gathered together to form the independent congregation of Morris Street, with the blessing of First Baptist Church, according to Baker (Baker, *Adventure in Faith*, 297-8). The proximity in origination date and the lack of original church records is perhaps why Baker assumes incorrectly the origins of Morris Street Church.

that it averaged only 100 members over its six-year span until it was folded into the newly formed Citadel Square Baptist Church in 1854. In the final year of its existence, Morris Street listed a membership of 238, of which 194 were "colored" members (see Table 2.1).

In 1854, several members of First Baptist Church thought it wise to begin a mission church in the growing upper wards of the city. In the midst of revival meetings, several families from First Baptist and another family from Wentworth Street, asked for letters of dismissal in order to form this new congregation, which would be located just beyond Calhoun Street. On May 29, they officially organized to form a church, and two days later, they held a special ceremony as James P. Boyce, then theological professor at Furman College and eventual co-founder of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, provided the sermon, and First Baptist pastor James Kendrick gave the blessing. Following this meeting, the group asked Kendrick to join them as their pastor, and Kendrick accepted the invitation, leaving First Baptist after seven years of service. Although at first known as the Fourth Baptist Church in Charleston, the congregation soon took the name Citadel Square Baptist Church and averaged around 285 members in the final years of the decade. In 1856, the church dedicated its new building, complete with a towering steeple that stood near at what had become the center of the expanding city. At this dedication ceremony presided three of the prominent Baptists in Charleston in the 1850s, the pastor of Citadel Square, James Kendrick; the pastor of Wentworth Street, Basil Manly, Sr.; and the pastor of First Baptist, Edwin T. Winkler.[16]

[16] Ramsey, *History of Citadel Square Baptist* Church, 1.

Major Baptist Personalities in Charleston

Kendrick, Manly, and Winkler helped to shape many aspects of Baptist life in Charleston throughout the 1850s. These three individuals perfectly embodied the characteristics of E. Brooks Holifield's "Gentlemen Theologians."[17] They were professional pastors, college trained and complete with strong intellectual capabilities and finely tuned oratory skills. Of these three gentlemen, Kendrick was perhaps the most unlikely of people to wield such influence in this, the most "southern" of cities.

Born on April 21, 1821, in Poultney, Vermont, Kendrick studied in New York prior to attending Brown University in Rhode Island. Upon graduating Brown in 1840, Kendrick left for Georgia to serve as a teacher until 1842 when he was ordained as a Baptist minister and became pastor the following year in Macon, Georgia. In 1847 at the age of twenty-six, Kendrick left Georgia to assume the role of pastor at First Baptist Church of Charleston, a post he maintained for seven years until becoming the pastor of the new Citadel Square Baptist Church in 1854. While in Charleston, Kendrick became a popular speaker, delivering various discourses and sermons with the eloquence and intellect of someone who painfully considered every word he would utter.[18]

At the outbreak of the war in 1861, the situation changed for Kendrick in

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[17] E. Brooks Holifield, *The Gentleman Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture, 1795-1860* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1978).

[18] For example: James R. Kendrick, *The True Orator: An Address Delivered before the Adelphian Society of the Furman Institution, at the Commencement, on Monday, June 17, 1850* (Charleston: A.J. Burke, 1850); James R. Kendrick, *A Good Name: A Discourse, Delivered in the First Baptist Church, Charleston, before the Graduating Class of the Medical College of South-Carolina, February 23d, 1851* (Charleston: J. B. Nixon, 1851); James R. Kendrick, *The Strong Staff and Beautiful Rod Broken: A Discourse Delivered in the First Baptist Church, Charleston, on Lord's day, November 28th, 1852, Occasioned by the Death of Dr. M. T. Mendenhall*. (Charleston: Walker and James, 1852); and James R. Kendrick, *Reason and Faith. Or, A Caution against Trusting the Human Understanding: A Discourse, Delivered in the Wentworth Street Baptist Church, Charleston, on Lord's Day Evening, Nov. 18, 1855, before the Graduating Class of the Citadel Academy* (Charleston: A.J. Burke, 1855).

Charleston. Although a Yankee by birth, Kendrick grew to love his new southern home. He had spent nearly half of his life in the South and even became an owner of a slave through marriage. Despite his northern birth, members of his congregation maintained a fond place in their hearts for Kendrick, and he to them, having once said at the outbreak of the Civil War, "May reason totter on her throne and memory fail to function before I forget the Green Mountains of Vermont, but with all my heart and strength, brethren, I am with you in this terrible struggle."[19] With the shelling of Charleston by Union forces in 1862, the need to stand along with his congregation dissipated as many, including Kendrick, fled the city. Returning to Georgia, Kendrick served as a pastor in Madison until 1866, when he returned to the North, accepting the pastorate of Tabernacle Baptist Church in New York City. Seven years later, he became pastor of First Baptist Church of Poughkeepsie, New York, and while there, Kendrick served on the board of trustees of Vassar College, even filling the role of acting president for several months.[20] Looking back upon his time in the South, Kendrick said that he had great fondness for the hospitality of southerners and the quaintness and ease of southern life, although he stated that he never understood why southerners allowed themselves to become "the slaves of slavery."[21]

Another Baptist stalwart in Charleston was Basil Manly, Sr., a southerner through and through. Born in North Carolina in 1798, Manly became a Christian at the age of

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[19] Ramsey, *History of Citadel Square*, 2.

[20] *Ibid*., 2; "The Reverend J. R. Kendrick, D.D.," Folder 1.1, James Ryland and Georgia Avery Kendrick Papers, Vassar College.

[21] James R. Kendrick, "Thoughts on the Old South," Folder 1.2, James Ryland and Georgia Avery Kendrick Papers, Vassar College; Grant to Georgia Kendrick, 14 November 1890, Folder 3.6, James Ryland and Georgia Avery Kendrick Papers, Vassar College.

sixteen through the witness of a local slave. According to Manly, as he traveled along the road one day, he contemplated his future and found himself in spiritual distress. At that moment, he heard a voice—that of an old black slave—praying that the Lord would speak to "Mas Baz." When Manly heard the prayer, he fell to his knees, and the old slave helped him to pray. Other slaves joined him, as did members of a white family with whom Manly had been staying. They all witnessed God's redemption of Manly, aseemingly the perfect southern salvation—white masters and black slaves, seeking spiritual freedom as one large family.[22]

In 1819, Manly was admitted as a junior to South Carolina College in Columbia, where he studied under the guidance of Jonathan Maxcy, a Baptist of Calvinist leanings who had previously served as president of both Brown University and South Carolina College. Two years later, he graduated as valedictorian of the school, garnering a reputation not only for his intellectual skills, but also for his ability to fight.[23]

After college, Manly spent a summer preaching in the Edgefield District of South Carolina, where he quickly became associated with a revival that broke out in this rural area. In 1824, he was invited to deliver a sermon to the annual gathering of the Georgia State Baptist Convention, and two years later, at the age of twenty-eight, First Baptist Church of Charleston called him to fill the pulpit left vacant by the passing of Richard

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[22] A. James Fuller, *Chaplain of the Confederacy: Basil Manly and Baptist Life in the Old South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 2000), 11-2.

[23] In his biography of Manly, Fuller describes a fight that took place between Manly, the valedictorian, and another student who was a rival of his. Following the commencement exercises, this unnamed assailant began an argument with Manly, but when Manly refused to argue back, he lept at him with a knife. Manly, in turn, avoided the attack and proceeded to launch into the man, thrusting him to the ground and nearly choking him to death. At the conclusion of the fight, all of Manly's friends claimed he was justified in the violent response, and one was quoted as saying that "it was the best fight they had ever seen a Baptist preacher make." (Fuller, *Chaplain*, 26-7.)

Furman.[24] After eleven years in Charleston, he left for Alabama to assume the role of president of the University of Alabama. For eighteen years, he remained there as president, turning down many requests to return to the pulpit. According to Hollifield, Manly had grown frustrated with the demands of the urban congregation, claiming it was "a prodigious slavery to be a Pastor of a city church in these days."[25] He found the demand to work unreasonable and the pay for the work unacceptable. How could one "maintain the style of a gentleman, and the generosity of a Christian" on a salary of $1,500?[26] He changed his mind, though, when Wentworth Street Baptist Church asked him to return to Charleston and be their pastor in 1855. At the age of fifty-six, Manly was twenty years the elder of the other two Baptist pastors in town, Kendrick and Winkler. Former members of First Baptist Church filled Wentworth Street, no doubt with fond memories of Manly's time as their pastor. Among the items that perhaps changed his mind was Manly's own conviction of being "called of God to preach," in addition to a salary of $2,500.[27]

Manly remained in the Wentworth Street pulpit for only three years. He left during the yellow fever epidemic of 1858, claiming that the absence of members during the summer, the fear of disease every fall, and the distractions of business every winter left little reason for him to remain their pastor and accept a salary, which by that time had grown to $3,000.[28] He returned to Alabama with his family and in 1860 accepted the

[24] Fuller, *Chaplain*, 53-5.

[25] Hollifield, *Gentleman Theologians*, 22.

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] Fuller, *Chaplain*, 269-70.

[28] *Ibid.*, 286.

pastorate of First Baptist Church in Montgomery. An owner of slaves and vocal critic of the abolitionist movement, Manly attempted unsuccessfully to gain a seat in the Alabama secession convention. Following the creation of the Confederate States of America, Manly attended the inauguration of President Jefferson Davis, even providing the opening prayer and asking God to "[l]et all [Davis's] acts be done in thy fear, under thy guidance, with a single eye to thy glory; and crown them all with thy approbation and blessing." He continued, "[God,] put thy good spirit into our whole people,—that they may faithfully do all thy fatherly pleasure. Let the administration of this government be the origin of truth and peace; let righteousness, which exalteth a nation, be the stability of our time."[29] This call for a blessing on the South turned to a constant defense of the South throughout and after the war. In 1863, Manly went so far as to declare during the Southern Baptist Convention in Georgia that he only desired to see his northern Baptist brethren again in heaven, once they had been properly cleansed of all of their sins.[30] Manly died in 1868.

The third of the major personalities in Charleston maintained the longest tenure, even if he did not leave the most colorful of biographies. Edwin Theodore Winkler was born in 1823 in Savannah, Georgia, and passed away three days shy of his sixtieth birthday in Marion, Alabama, in 1883. He attended Brown University and later spent two years at Newton Theological Institute in Boston.[31] In 1845, he took over as assistant editor of the Georgia Baptist paper, the *Christian Index*, and remained in that role for

[29] *Ibid.*, 295.

[30] *Ibid.*, 297.

[31] Hugh C. Davis, "Edwin T. Winkler: Baptist Bayard," *The Alabama Review* vol. 17, no. 1 (January 1964): 33.

only one year.[32] After serving as a pastor of churches in Georgia, he travelled to Charleston to assume the role as corresponding secretary of the Southern Baptist Publication Society and editor of the *Southern Baptist* in 1852, becoming a member of First Baptist Charleston. In 1854 at the age of thirty-one, he accepted the call to fill the pulpit of First Baptist, which had been vacated due to Kendrick's departure to Citadel Square. While in Charleston, he wrote several articles, pamphlets, and sermons, including a popular instructional text entitled *Notes and Questions for the Oral Instruction of Colored People*.[33] In addition, he was asked by the Southern Baptist Publication Society to produce an abridged collection of popular hymns called *The Sacred Lute*.

Winkler remained a part of Charleston for nearly 20 years. He abandoned the city and fled to New York for a short time during the yellow fever epidemic in 1858, but not before the fever took his wife, Abby.[34] Throughout the Civil War, though, he remained at his post, serving as the sole Baptist minister among the three churches. As Union shells fell on the city toward the end of the war, Winkler and his flock left the confines of First Baptist and instead held services further up the neck of Charleston at Citadel Square until a shell forced them to retreat to the older Morris Street Baptist Church building. As legend tells it, Winkler had just completed a "most impressive" sermon, and the congregation left for their homes. After departing, a shell came through the roof of the church and exploded near Winkler's pew. He decided at that point to change venues for

[32] Baker, *Adventures*, 288-89; Ramsey, *History of Citadel Square*, 4.

[33] In this work, Winkler gave no indication as to his thoughts on the ban on teaching slaves to read and in fact never even addressed any reason why the instruction should be oral in nature rather than written.

[34] Baker, *Adventures*, 291-92; *Minutes of the First Baptist Church of Charleston*, 3 October 1858.

future services, "not that he was afraid of a Yankee shell, but he claimed the monopoly of sending shells from the pulpit to the pews…" and therefore "flatly refused to enter into such rude competition."[35]

Following the war, members came back into the city, forcing Winkler to decide which congregation to lead. For a short time, he continued his role as pastor of First Baptist and even served as president of the South Carolina Baptist Convention from 1865-1867. In 1868, he left First Baptist to pastor the combined churches of Wentworth Street and Citadel Square, which met at the Citadel Square location. For four years, he maintained that role until he left to pastor Siloam Church in Marion, Alabama, due to health and financial reasons.[36] While in Marion, he served as editor of the *Alabama Baptist* for seven years and also as president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board from 1872-1881.[37]

Religious Instruction for Charleston Baptists

In addition to the instructions that Charleston Baptists received in these churches and from these pastors, Baptists in Charleston gained their theological understanding through books and hymnals produced by the Southern Baptist Publication Society, which originated as a result of the split between northern Baptists and southern Baptists in 1845. Driven apart by years of conflict over the issue of slavery, southern Baptists formed their own convention in 1845 and, in turn, began their own seminary, missions agency, and

[35] Ramsey, *History of Citadel Square*, 3.

[36] Letter from E. T. Winkler to the Deacons of Citadel Square Baptist Church, dated 29 June 1872. Southern Baptist Historical Archives.

[37] Davis, "Edwin T. Winkler," 34.

publication organization.[38] Formed in 1847, the Southern Baptist Publication Society produced pamphlets, books, and hymnals, all from a decidedly southern Baptist perspective. With offices located on King Street in Charleston, the society enlisted dozens of pastors and professors to write pamphlets and books on a variety of topics. In fact, Winkler's *Notes and Questions on the Oral Instruction of Colored People* was published by the society. Other popular titles included *Evils of Infant Baptism* by R. B. C. Howell; *Progress of Baptist Principles in the Last Hundred Years* by T. F. Curtis; *Bowen's Central Africa: Adventures and Missionary Labors in Several Countries in the Interior of Africa from 1849-1856* by T. J. Bowen; *A Baptist Church, the Christian Home* by Robert T. Middleditch; *Evidences of Christianity* by J. P. Tustin; *Poetry and Prose for the Young* by Caroline Howard; *Baptism and Terms of Communion* by Richard Fuller; and a series of pamphlets entitled *Tracts on Important Subjects*, which featured topics covering the Bible, human depravity, missions, infant baptism, and other items concerning Baptist doctrine and practice, by authors such as Kendrick, Winkler, and John L. Dagg.[39] The Society also produced three important works that profoundly shaped the life and thought of Baptists: *Manual of Theology* by John L. Dagg, *Baptist Psalmody* by Basil Manly, Sr. and Basil Manly, Jr., and *The Sacred Lute* by E. T. Winkler.

John L. Dagg was the first systematic theologian for southern Baptists. Born in Virginia in 1794, Dagg claimed a conversion experience at the age of 15 and joined the Presbyterian church, a membership that he shared with his parents. He immediately began to study theology and concentrated on the teaching of infant baptism in the church.

[38] Robert A. Baker, *The Story of the Sunday School Board* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1966), 10-11.

[39] "Valuable Works Published by the Southern Baptist Publication Society," *Southern Baptist*, 19

Within three years, he became convinced of the need for believer's baptism and joined a Baptist church in 1812. Five years later, he was ordained and started his work as a pastor among several churches in Virginia and Philadelphia. In 1834, his voice gave out, forcing him to quit the full-time pastorate, but allowing him a new career as a seminary president and professor. For two years, he served as president of the Haddington Literary and Theological Institute in Philadelphia, and when that school dissolved in 1836, he left for Alabama to serve as president of Alabama Female Athenaeum. In 1844 he left Alabama to assume the presidency of Mercer University in Georgia, where he also served as a professor of theology. Upon formal retirement from teaching in 1856, Dagg began his career as an author, writing several works including *Treatise on Church Order*, *Elements of Moral Science*, and his most famous work, *Manual of Theology*.[40]

Dagg's *Manual of Theology*, produced in 1857, served as the first theological textbook for southern Baptists and provided them with a systematic explanation of evangelical providentialism. Students attending the young Southern Baptist Theological Seminary located in Greenville, South Carolina, looked through the pages of Dagg's work to help shape their own theology.[41] The Southern Baptist Publication Society produced Dagg's *Manual of Theology* and made it readily available for purchase at the price of $1.50, claiming it to be a "work of great value for all Christians, especially ministers of the Gospel."[42] The work, therefore, reflected not only the theological

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January 1858, 3; "Dagg's Theology," *SB*, 6 April 1858, 2.

[40] Mark E. Dever, "John L. Dagg," in *Baptist Theologians*, edited by Timothy George and David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990), 165.

[41] *History of the Establishment and Organization of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Greenville, South Carolina; to Which is Appended the First Annual Catalogue, 1859-1860* (Greenville: G. E. Elford, 1860), 46.

[42] "Valuable Books Published by The Southern Baptist Publication Society," *Southern Baptist* –

convictions of Dagg, but also those who bought the work and used it as their text for teaching theology to others. In addition, it shaped the theological mindset of many ministers throughout the South, so much so that E.Y. Mullins, a Baptist leader at the turn of the twentieth century, claimed that Dagg's theology, "exerted a widespread and powerful influence throughout the South…and these influences continue in power to this very hour."[43]

In his *Manual of Theology*, Dagg attempted to synthesize Baptist theology into a plain and brief work and "lead the humble inquirer into the thorny region of polemic theology."[44] Although he had no formal training himself, Dagg's work appeared orthodox in nature and relatively conservative, drawing many concepts from his early days as a Presbyterian. In his writing, he purposefully avoided commentary from other theologians, either by his contemporaries or the great thinkers of church history, and instead relied on the "express declarations of God's word, or such deductions as are adapted to plain and practical minds."[45] The result was a text seemingly unsophisticated in nature but remaining consistent with most other evangelical theologies at the time, with the only exception being the insistence on the ordinance believer's baptism. His book, therefore, did not provide any ground-breaking material for southern Baptists but rather a text that they could trust because it was written by one of their own—a Baptist

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[43] Dever, "John L. Dagg," 165. In their book, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slavehoders' Worldview*(New York: Camridge University Press, 2005), Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese comment how many Baptists throughout the lower South were familiar with Dagg's work through the frequent exerpts that were included in various denominational journals (437).

[44] J. L. Dagg, *Manual of Theology*, (Charleston: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1857; reprint, Harrisonburg, VA: Gano Books, 1990), iv.

[45] *Ibid*., v.

from the South. Over the course of some 370 pages, Dagg covered various topics such as the existence of God, the attributes of God, the depravity of man, the person of Jesus Christ, the doctrine of divine grace, and the future state of the world. Among these topics, Dagg gave a significant amount of attention to the topic of the providence of God.

According to Dagg's theology, God stood continuously over and above His creation. The universe remained "an object of his constant care, and his hand is concerned in all its movements."[46] This care of the creation, known as "providence," included not only the preservation of the created order but also the governance of creation. "God's control over all events that happen," Dagg claimed, "is abundantly taught in the Scriptures." This control manifested itself over "the wind, the rain, pestilence, plenty, grass, the fowls of the air, [and] the hairs of the head," and this control constantly accomplishes a purpose. According to Dagg, "The grass grows, that it may give food. Pestilence is sent, that men may be punished for their sins. Joseph was sent into Egypt, to preserve much people alive."[47] These purposes of providence Dagg labeled "predestination."

> The doctrine of predestination teaches that no event comes to pass, which is not under the control of God; and that it is so ordered by him as to fulfill his purpose. If it would thwart his purpose, the event is prevented; or if, in part only it would conduce to his purpose, only so far is it permitted to happen. This divine control extends over all agents, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational; and is exercised over each in perfect accordance with its nature, and with all the laws of nature as originally established.[48]

Dagg encouraged his readers to keep in mind how God's hand rested on the universe,

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[46] *Ibid*., 115.

[47] *Ibid*., 117.

[48] *Ibid*., 128.

constantly seeking to accomplish His greater purpose.[49]

On occasion, however, this purpose involved the use of less than honorable individuals. If necessary, God would use evil men and evil actions to accomplish his divine plan. In exploring various examples in the Scriptures, Dagg claimed, "Wicked men are called the rod, the staff, the ax, the saw, in his hand; and are therefore moved by him as these instruments are, by the hand of him who uses them." He went on to suggest that "[t]he Scriptures descend with still greater particularity to the very acts of wicked agents, in which their wickedness is exhibited, and attributes these to God."[50] He did not, however, suggest that God was evil in his purposes or was the one upon whom blame for evil could be given. "It is a good maxim," Dagg explained, "to consider all our good as coming from God, and give him praise of it; and all evil as our own, and give ourselves blame of it."[51] God, in using wicked men or evil events to his own end, did not himself

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[49] The *Westminster Confession*, the statement of faith and order of practice for the Presbyterian Church written and ratified in the late seventeenth century, makes the following claim concerning the providential action of God: "God the great Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy" (chapter 5, section 1), as well as this statement: "Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first Cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, He ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently" (chapter 5, section 2). As for the Methodist church, the *Articles of Religion*, compiled by John Wesley and adopted by his followers, remain silent on matters of God's providence or his dealings with his creation, except for his activities in the salvation of his people (see *The Doctrine and the Disciplines of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (Nashville, TN: J. B. M'Ferrin, 1858). Wesley, however, addresses the issue in one of his sermons, stating, "And as this all-wise, all-gracious Being created all things, so he sustains all things. He is the Preserver as well as the Creator of everything that exists. 'He up holdeth all things by the word of his power;' that is, by his powerful word. Now it must be that he knows everything he has made, and everything he preserves, from moment to moment; otherwise, he could not preserve it, he could not continue to it the going which he has given it" (John Wesley, "Sermon 72: On Divine Providence," in John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions* (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1827), 312. So for all three groups—Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodist—understood God as maintaining a consistent providence of God, overseeing every aspect of life, even if they had some disagreement as to the extent of the providence into matters of salvation.

[50] Dagg, *Manual of Theology*, 131.

[51] *Ibid*., 133.

become wicked or evil but instead overruled the evil for good. In the end, one should blame wicked men for evil while also "prais[ing] God for the good which he educes from it."[52]

In this view of Providence, mankind is encouraged to see all of creation as working out a greater purpose of God. The response from man should be gratitude to God for his care and attention. "We must not only feel the hand of God in our affliction, but we must realize that it has been laid on us with design."[53] To accomplish this, Dagg suggested that man must not look at the "Father's hand," but instead trust the "Father's heart."[54] This was the attitude of Job of the Old Testament, and Dagg reminded his students how Job demonstrated a resigned piety "under his afflictions, because he considered it sent by God."[55] When plenty and peace came, men should praise God. Likewise, when pestilence and affliction strike, men should praise God. Regardless of the situation, God brought it to bear for his purpose.

Dagg's theology, taught both in the classroom and from the pulpit, maintained a

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[52] *Ibid*. The *Westminster Confession* describes God's providence over sin but lack of culpability in sin as follows: "The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in His providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men; and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering, and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to His own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin" (chapter 5, section 4). Again, the Methodist Articles of Religion remain absent on this point, but Wesley in his sermon "On Providence" states his case this way, "Whereas all the manifold wisdom of God (as well as all his power and goodness) is displayed in governing man as man; not as a stock or stone, but as an intelligent and free spirit, capable of choosing either good or evil. Herein appears the depth of the wisdom of God, in his adorable providence; in governing men, so as not to destroy either their understanding, will, or liberty" (Wesley, *Sermons*, 314). While the Baptists and the Presbyterians tended to emphasize a bit more of the Providence of God, each did their best to blame man for evil and sin, even if God used it to "His own holy ends" or allowed "an intelligent and free" man to commit the sin.

[53] Dagg, *Manual of Theology*, 137.

[54] *Ibid.*, 137.

[55] *Ibid*., 136.

broad influence on Baptists throughout the antebellum South. In particular, the use of his *Manual of Theology* demonstrates a wide-spread acceptance of these teachings, teachings which placed a high view of God's Providence over creation. As God worked out his plans, Baptists were told, he did so in a variety of ways. Just because suffering occurred did not mean that God has abandoned his people. In fact, in the midst of suffering, the believer was told to believe even more in the goodness and purposes of God. Often God used evil or wicked men to accomplish these ends, but regardless of the means, the end remained clear. Charleston Baptists, therefore, were taught time and again that God had chosen them as his people, and even when evil struck, it demonstrated only more clearly their place in God's family. Plenty did not always mean a blessing from God, and pestilence did not always mean a curse. God used whatever means he desired to accomplish his ends, but the believer should always trust that God remained in control. While the concept of evangelical providentialism was communicated through sermons and theological discussions, it also came through in the songs that Baptists sang.

Baptist Hymnody

Evangelicalism allowed for a popular, individual expression of the Christian faith. Not only were the participants in the movement told how a personal God saved each individual, but they were also told the ways in which they could personally express devotion back to this Savior, ways such as prayer, Bible reading, church attendance, and hymn singing. Among these activities, few could energize and unite a group like the singing of hymns. While the individual in the pew sang his hymns, learning and embracing his theology, and by hearing the same words from those surrounding him, the hymns reinforced his theology. According the historian Richard Mouw, "[N]othing was

more central to the evangelical revival than the singing of new hymns written in praise to the goodness, mercy, and grace of God."[56] Evangelicals were a singing people.

Given this central place of hymns in the life of the evangelical movement, it becomes necessary to study hymnody in order to determine the actual beliefs of those in the pews. For historian Stephen Marini, hymns, especially popular hymns, "provide an important new source for understanding [the] domain of popular religion among early American evangelicals."[57] Hymns both demonstrate the thoughts of the writers as well as provide an understanding to the level of theological absorption by average participants—men and women, adults and children, whites and blacks.[58]

For Charleston Baptists, one of the more popular hymnals throughout the 1850s came from Basil Manly, Sr., along with his son, Basil, Jr. Their work, *The Baptist Psalmody*,[59] a collection of well-over one thousand hymns, was reprinted many times by the Southern Baptist Publication Society and used by Baptist churches throughout the South. A smaller hymn book used by Baptists in the 1850s, entitled *The Sacred Lute*, came from First Baptist Church pastor Edwin T. Winkler. Published in 1855, this collection of popular hymns cut Manly's hymnal in half and provides a specific view of the hymns sung in Charleston during the 1850s. According to Winkler, the Southern Baptist Publication Society requested that in compiling the work he "distinguish and choose [hymns], from among the thousands now in existence, those melodies which are

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[56] Mark A. Noll, "The Defining Role of Hymns in early Evangelicalism," in *Wonderful Words of Life: Hymns in American Protestant History & Theology*, ed. By Richard J. Mouw and Mark A. Noll, 4.

[57] Stephen Marini, "Hymnody as History: Early Evangelical Hymns and the Recovery of American Popular Religion," *Church History* vol. 71 no. 2 (June 2002): 276.

[58] Noll, "The Defining Role," 12.

[59] Basil Manly and Basil Manly, Jr., *The Baptist Psalmody: A Selection of Hymns for the Worship of God* (Charleston: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1859).

most familiar to the devotions of our Southern Zion." Drawing upon advice from "brethren residing in various Southern States," as well as, no doubt, members of his own First Baptist Charleston, Winkler presented his small hymnal for use throughout the South.[60] Among the hymns included in these works, one can detect certain aspects of the theology that continually reinforced the church's teachings in the minds of the Baptist congregations. Gathering for services, individuals raised their voices, declaring not only the goodness of God and salvation through his Son, but also the providential care that their heavenly Father provided. This care manifested itself in provisions as well as punishment, and the faithful, regardless of the circumstances, were taught to trust in God always.[61]

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Isaac Watts stood as the most popular hymn writer among evangelicals, becoming the "liturgist for a new nation."[62] Congregationalists used his words, as did Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists. As one of the earliest English hymn writers, Watts paraphrased passages of Scripture in an attempt to convey the words of God with a metered tune. For example, in Psalm 139 King David contemplates the all-knowing nature of God, and in turn, claims that no matter where he might flee, God remained ever attentive. Watts, in his hymn, "In All My

[60] E. T. Winkler, *The Sacred Lute: A Collection of Popular Hymns* (Charleston: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1855), 3-5.

[61] As one might suspect, many of the hymns included in the Baptist hymnals also made appearances in the hymnals used by the Methodists and the Presbyterian congregations. The general evangelical nature of these three groups meant that often times they read the same writings and sang the same songs, even if they attempted to demonstrate themselves as better than the other groups. With this cross-denominational singing in mind, special attention will be made when the hymn listed below also appeared in another denominational hymnal.

[62] Esther Rothenbusch Crookshank, "'We're Marching to Zion:' Isaac Watts in Early America," in *Wonderful Words of Life: Hymns in American Protestant History & Theology*, ed. By Richard J. Mouw and Mark A. Noll, 39.

Vast Concerns with Thee," rephrased the psalm in this way:

1. In all my vast concerns with thee,
In vain my soul would try
To shun thy presence, Lord, or flee
The notice of thine eye.

4. O, wondrous knowledge, deep and high!
Where can a creature hide?
Within thy circling arms I lie,
Enclosed on every side.[63]

As members of the Baptist churches gathered, they sang that no matter how hard they might try, they would be unable to shake off the presence of God, whose eye remained ever upon them. Indeed, Watts told the singers to consider this knowledge, that no creature could ever hide from God, to be "wondrous" and "deep and high," something to be embraced and celebrated. The Lord Jehovah remained circling them, and by him they were "enclosed on every side." As written, the text was meant to provide comfort, although for some it may have caused a level of trepidation. Regardless, these words communicated to the congregation that in any situation in which they might find themselves, God was there as well.

Watts repeated this sentiment in two more paraphrases of Psalm 139. In one hymn, he claimed that "Within the circling power I stand;/On every side I find thy hand;/Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,/I am surrounded still with God."[64] The individual convert should feel literally surrounded by God, whether he was "Awake, asleep, at home, [or] abroad." God's presence could not be escaped. Another paraphrase stated it

[63] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 44. This hymn was also included in the Presbyterian hymnal, *Psalms and Hymns Adapted to Social, Private, and Public Worshipin the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1843), 230.

[64] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 45; Winkler, *Sacred Lute*, 66. Hymn Title, "Lord, thou hast searched and seen me through." Also in *Psalms and Hymns*, 223.

this way, "Could I so false, so faithless prove,/To quit thy service and thy love,/Where Lord, could I thy presence shun,/Or *from they dreadful glory run*."[65] The presence of the "dreadful glory" of the Lord ran throughout all the earth, and even if someone attempted escape, he could not.

Watts was not the only author focused on this aspect of God's nature. Another popular hymn, this one by English Baptist leader John Ryland, reinforced the presence and providence of God at all times in life.

> 1. Sovereign Ruler of the skies!
> Ever gracious, ever wise!
> All my times are in thy hand—
> All events at thy command.
>
> 2. Times of sickness, times of health,
> Times of penury and wealth:
> Times of trial and of grief,
> Times of triumph and relief;
>
> 3. Times the tempter's power to prove;
> Times to taste a Saviour's love:
> All must come, and last, and end,
> As shall please my heavenly Friend.
>
> 5. Thee at all times will I bless;
> Having thee, I all possess:
> How can I bereaved be.
> Since I cannot part with thee?[66]

As Ryland told the story, God, the "Sovereign Ruler" of all things maintained every aspect of the author's time in His hands. Ryland did not seek to provide an exhaustive list, but instead provided extreme conditions, such as wealth, trial, health, triumph, or sickness, to impress in the imagination of the singers that whatever place they may be,

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[65] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 45. Hymn title, "Could I so false, so faithless prove" (Emphasis mine). Also in *Psalms and Hymns*, 229.

[66] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 69. Also in *Psalms and Hymns*, 257.

God still held them in His hands.

Songs such as Watts's paraphrase of Psalm 139 or Ryland's song of God having the whole world in His hands worked to reinforce a doctrine of the omnipresence of God into the minds of the Charleston congregations. They grew to believe that God never found Himself absent from a situation. Indeed, there remained no place that a person could travel where God would not be watching, meaning that in the trials and triumphs of life, God knew and God was in control. This doctrine caused the believers continually to look for God's Hand in all activities. If God remained ever close, then surely He worked in some way through some situation. As more hymns demonstrated, though, His purpose was always for the care of His people.

Turning to one of the more famous Psalms, Watts described the caring nature of an all-present, Divine Shepherd.

> 1. The Lord my Shepherd is;
> I shall be well supplied:
> Since he is mine, and I am his,
> What can I want beside?
>
> 4. While he affords his aid,
> I cannot yield to fear;
> Tho' I should walk through death's dark shade,
> My Shepherd's with me there.[67]

As before, the singer of the hymn was encouraged to remember the continual presence of his Lord, suggesting that even through death, "My Shepherd's with me there." Seeing God as the "Shepherd" over His flock provided a clear sense of caring for His people. God, the leader of the flock, provided aid, drove away fear, and remained close to the

[67] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 71. This hymn was also include in the Methodist hymnal produced for the Methodist Church in the South, L. C. Everett, *The Wesleyan Hymn and Tune Book: Comprising the Entire Collection of Hymns in the Hymn Book of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, with Appropriate Music Adapted to Each Hymn* (Nashville, TN: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1859), 200; and

flock, even in the face of death. In addition, God was understood as a provider, supplying the congregation, and since He held this role, keeper over the sheep, what could they possibly need that would not be "well supplied"?

The same idea came through in a hymn entitled "O, Thou, my light, my life, my joy." In the second stanza, churches sang, "Such are thy schemes of providence/And methods of thy grace/That I may safely trust in thee/Through all the wilderness."[68] God's providential hand was understood, again, to rest on the life of the singer, yet it here it became a hand in which one can "safely trust," instead of something to be feared. "Throughout all the wilderness" and wherever life would lead, the hymn promised that the Lord would remain close to the side of the believer, caring and providing for their every need. In another Watts classic, "O God, our help in ages past," the singers proclaimed that God had been "their shelter from the stormy blast,/And [their] eternal home."[69]

Charleston Baptists, therefore, had a keen sense that God remained close at hand in any situation, and likewise, his presence demonstrated his ultimate care for his people. The presence though did more than just demonstrate care, as if God were merely a care taker or divine butler. It demonstrated a providential God that who masterfully planned and crafted all things according to his grand design. William Cowper, a famous eighteenth century religious poet, penned the following lines, which found their way into Manly's hymnal and have remained a staple of the Southern Baptist hymnal to this day:

1. God moves in a mysterious way,

Psalms and Hymns, 37.

[68] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 70. Also in *Psalms and Hymns*, 274.

[69] Winkler, *Sacred Lute*, 63-4. Also in Everett, *Wesleyan Hymnal*, 79.

His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

2. Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
With blessings on your head.

3. Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

4. His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

5. Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.[70]

Through these stanzas, the saints learned that God's hand steadily guided the wheel. He moved along in his "mysterious way," and even in the midst of tumultuous waves, God "plants his footsteps in the sea,/ and rides upon the storm." Likewise, when clouds of destruction or despair came upon the horizon, the command to take "fresh courage" rang through as a shower of blessings should be expected to come upon their heads. Indeed, in the midst of the storms of life, Cowper encouraged his reader not to interpret the causes behind the circumstances. The believer in God should "trust him for his grace" and recognize that what appeared to be a "frowning providence," God hid "a smiling face." He concluded this thought in his final stanza, proclaiming that "God is his own interpreter" and "he will make it plain." In other words, the God of providence had

[70] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 68; Winkler, *Sacred Lute*, 77-8. Also in Everett, *Wesleyan Hymnal*, 125; and *Psalms and Hymns*, 275.

brought the clouds of dread upon the believer for some mysterious reason, but even if the clouds appeared dark and dreadful, as the South would experience in just a few years, they were merely part of the grand design that God would soon make plain to all.

Watt's hymn, "Keep silence, all created things" expressed a similar thought. In the third and fourth stanza, Watts made the claim that all of the created order lay within a book authored by the God of the universe.

> 3. Before his throne a volume lies,
> With all the fates of men;
> With every angel's form and size,
> Drawn by the' eternal pen.
>
> 4. His providence unfolds the book,
> And makes his counsels shine;
> Each opening leaf, and every stroke,
> Fulfils some deep design.[71]

For Watts, and in turn the singers of his hymns, God penned the fate and future of every man. An anonymous hymn in Winkler's collection phrased it this way, "Though Jesus sometimes hides his face,/And darkness overspreads our ways;/Oh, 'tis a soul-reviving word,/'Our steps are ordered by the Lord.'"[72] Beyond some random sense of the fates of the Greek or Roman gods, this Christian God turned every page of the book and wrote every line as he ultimately "fulfills some deep design" or confirms that all "steps are ordered." God not only saw the future of every man, woman, and child, he indeed moved them all in line with same grand narrative of which only he knew the outcome. Those in the pews singing these words, as well as hearing these words sung by those surrounding them, began to picture their God as ever-present, ever-caring, and ever-moving them

[71] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 67-68.

[72] Winkler, *Sacred Lute*, 125. Hymn title, "While passing through the wilderness."

along to some final end. In this sense, no positive development or tragic circumstance befell a person without God causing it to occur. Instead of fighting a God like this, hymns encouraged Baptists to trust in the ultimate outcome.

Of the many circumstances faced, perhaps the most difficult in which to comprehend God's great design were afflictions. The hymns, however, continuously answered any doubts that arose. In their hymnal, the Manlys devoted a number of lines to the issue of afflictions. One hymn, entitled "O Thou Whose Compassionate Care," shared a first-hand perspective of a person dealing with a heart that wanted to complain about the adversities he is facing. As it read, "Though cheerless my days seem to flow,/Though weary and wakeful my nights;/What comfort it gives me to know/'Tis the hand of a Father that smites."[73] The singer needed to find comfort, not in a God who moved mysteriously upon the sea, as if to rescue one merely lost, but instead in a Father who himself caused the pain and suffering. God "smites" the afflicted one, even if it was for the purposes of correction. Building upon the other hymns, the singer could find comfort in knowing that the smiting was happening for a purpose, but nonetheless, God's hand caused the pain.

Sometimes, this pain came as a result of the folly of the individual. This thought continued in one of Cowper's hymns, "Lord, unafflicted, undismayed." Once again, smiting became a tool of correction. "In pleasure's path secure I strayed;/Thou mad'st me feel afflictions rod,/And straight I turned unto my God."[74] Another hymn read this way:

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[73] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 475.

[74] *Ibid*., 467.

1. How tender is thy hand,
O thou most gracious Lord!
Afflictions come at thy command,
And leave us at thy word.

2. How gentle was the rod
That chastened us for sin!
How soon we found a smiling God
Where deep distress had been!

3. A Father's hand we felt,
A Father's heart we knew;
'Mid tears of penitence we knelt,
And found his word was true.[75]

Other hymns shared the same concepts. One claimed that it was good to receive the rod from God because "affliction made me learn thy law,/And live upon my God."[76] Another stated that God's "chastising rod" was "kind," since it "brought my wandering soul to God."[77] Still another asked for strength to rely upon God even if the Father's "lifted rod/Resolved to scourge us here below."[78] As a shepherd or a governing father, God stepped in and used the rod of punishment to set his followers back along the right path. This God used affliction and pain to get attention or a response from his people. Those who embraced lines such as these, therefore, needed to be cognizant of the fact that their suffering and pain might be an indication that they had strayed from God and needed to repent and return to him.

The suffering or affliction could take any form. For a society built upon agriculture, drought and famine stood among the worst of situations. Here, a hymn

[75] *Ibid*., 467.

[76] *Ibid*., 466. Hymn title, "Consider all my sorrows, Lord."

[77] *Ibid*., 468. Hymn title, "Father, I bless thy gentle hand."

[78] *Ibid*., 67. Hymn title, "Lord, we adore thy vast designs."

reminded the faithful who caused the conditions and to whom they should look for relief.

1. How hast thou, Lord, in righteous wrath,
Blasted our promised joy!
The elements obeyed thy nod,
Our prospects to destroy.

2. The sun, at thy dread order, now
Darts down destructive fires;
Hills, plains and vales, are parched with drought,
And blooming life expires.

3. Like burnished brass the heavens around
In angry terrors burns,
While earth appears a joyless waste,
And into iron turns.

4. Pity us, Lord, in our distress,
Nor with our land contend;
Bid the avenging skies relent,
And showers of mercy send.[79]

As seen before, God was understood as the author of affliction. He brought the conditions of drought, set about by his "dread order" upon the people, presumably because of the sin of the people. The fields became a "joyless waste," and "blooming life expires." In response, singers in the pews turned to songs like this and learned the proper response to the distress. "Pity us, Lord," became their cry, and "Bid the avenging skies relent,/And showers of mercy send."

In a similar vein came the troubles of disease and fire, both of which found their place in the hymnals. In times of pestilence, the faithful needed to remember that "[t]he Lord in judgment" had appeared, spreading "his wrath abroad" through "[i]nveterate disease" and "[i]nsatiate death." Their only response could be confession of their guilt

[79] *Ibid*., 667-8. Also in Everett, *Wesleyan Hymnal*, 156.

and sin and turning to God, imploring his mercy.[80] After a fire, the congregation sang how "in dust we lay…down,/And mourn[ed] [the Lord's] righteous ire."[81] Indeed, the fire came as a part of his vast "magazines of wrath," demonstrating the terrible nature of God. As with disease, the only response for those in the pews was to bless the Lord for not causing more destruction and strive harder to seek his righteousness.

With the afflictions, came a response from the afflicted, and Charleston Baptists were given many ways to respond. Sometimes they needed to "Wait, then…submissive wait,/Prostrate before his awful seat;/And, midst the terrors of his rod,/Trust in a wise and gracious God."[82] They could also kneel "'Mid tears of penitence,"[83] or "bless [God] for [the] chastening."[84] Others should look at the trials as having "Love inscribed upon them all" and see "happiness" within them, knowing that they are a "true-born child of God."[85] Indeed, one hymn called upon the sufferer to "desire the pain/That comes in kindness down." In the midst of this pain, he needed to strengthen his belief and associate himself with Jesus Christ, who "was wounded once for me."[86] Another hymn called the trials "sweet affliction," repeating the phrase throughout the stanzas.[87]

In a variety of ways, those singing the hymns repeated words each week that

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[80] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 668. Hymn title, "The Lord in judgement now appears." Also in Everett, *Wesleyan Hymnal*, 156.

[81] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 668. Hymn title, "Eternal God, our humble souls." Also in Everett, *Wesleyan Hymnal*, 157.

[82] Winkler, *Sacred Lute*, 145. Hymn title, "Wait, O my soul, they Maker's will."

[83] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 467. Hymn title, "How tender thy hand."

[84] *Ibid*., 469. Hymn title, "I'll think upon the woes."

[85] *Ibid*., 470. Hymn title, "O, Though, whose mercy guides my way."

[86] *Ibid*., 474. Hymn title, "In the floods of tribulation."

[87] Winkler, *Sacred Lute*, 149-50.

reinforced some basic theological principles of the Southern Baptist faith. First, God remained present and available in any and every circumstance. Second, regardless of the circumstance, God stood as the author of the grand narrative, penning each line according to his ultimate design. Third, at times this design meant that individuals would suffer through various trials and tribulations. Even death and disease were tools used by God to accomplish his purpose. Fourth, in response to death and disease, trials and tribulations, the believers should not "lose heart" but rather should cling even closer to God and ask him for help and guidance through the trial. Far from abandoning a God who caused pain, the Baptist needed to embrace him even more.

While the above hymns described the individual relationship with God, Baptists also confessed that God worked in a similar fashion toward the nation as a whole. Seeing God as the guiding hand of the United States, the congregations sang the following:

> 1. Sovereign Lord of all the worlds above,
> Thy glory, with unclouded rays,
> Shines through the realms of light and love,
> Inspiring angels with thy praise.
>
> 3. These western States, at thy command,
> Rose from dependence and distress;
> Prosperity now crowns the land,
> And millions join thy name to bless.
>
> 5. O! be thou still our guardian God;
> Preserve these States from every foe;
> From party rage, from scenes of blood,
> From sin, and every cause of woe.[88]

God, the creator of the United States, rose up the nation at his "command." He served as their "guardian God," granting the "prosperity [that] now crowns the land" and "presev[ing] these States from every foe…party rage…scenes of blood…sin…and every

[88] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 659-60. Also in *Psalms and Hymns*, 599.

cause of woe." God, as he did with the individual, cared for the nation and protected it according to his will. Winkler himself penned a hymn in this vein.

> 3. Thou didst defend the right,
> In freedom's fearful fight,
> From all its foes.
> A nation didst create,
> And lead its marches great,
> And build its pillared state
> And grand repose.[89]

For Winkler, God created the United States and, for the sake of "freedom's fearful fight," led its armies into battle and built its "pillared state." Another song asked God to "guard our shores from every foe,/With peace our borders bless,/With prosperous times our cities crown,/Our fields with plenteousness." It called upon the "Lord of the nations" to be the "refuge" of the country, as well as "her trust [and]…Her everlasting friend."[90] The God of the individual was also the God of the nation.

Given the correlation between the individual and the nation, it is a natural assumption that trials and tribulations on the national level also came from God. These thoughts were driven home in the words written, interestingly enough, from the English perspectives of eighteenth-century dissenter Philip Doddridge and Isaac Watts.[91] According to Doddridge,

> 1. O, Righteous God, thou Judge supreme,
> We tremble at thy dreadful name!
> And all our crying guilt we own,
> In dust and tears before thy throne.
>
> 2. Justly might this polluted land

[89] Winkler, *Sacred Lute*, 275. Hymn title, "Our Land, with mercies crowned."

[90] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 662-3. Hymn title, "Lord, while for all mankind we pray."

[91] David Lyle Jeffrey, ed., *English Spirituality in the Age of Wesley* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 174-6.

Prove all the vengeance of thy hand:
And bared in heaven, thy sword might come,
To drink our blood and seal our doom.

3. Yet hast thou not a remnant here,
Whose souls are filled with pious fear?
O bring thy wonted mercy nigh,
While prostrate at thy feet they lie!

4. Behold their tears, attend their moan,
Nor turn away their secret groan:
With these we join our humble prayer;
Our nation shield, our country spare.[92]

Doddridge graphically exclaimed that vengeance of God could strike the "polluted land" at any time, drinking their blood and sealing their doom. The only hope for survival lay in the possible "remnant here" who with "pious fear" could shield the nation and spare the country. Watts penned similar thoughts concerning the nation of Great Britain, which the Charleston Baptists correlated to their own southern Zion.

1. Lord, thou hast scourged our guilty land;
Behold, thy people mourn;
Shall vengeance ever guide thy hand,
And mercy ne'er return?

2. Our Zion trembles at thy stroke,
And dreads thy lifted hand;
O, heal the people thou hast broke,
And spare our guilty land.

3. Then shall our loud and grateful voice
Proclaim our guardian God,
The nations round the earth rejoice,
And sound thy praise abroad.[93]

As with personal affliction, God authored the national affliction. He "scourged [their] guilty land," showing vengeance over his mercy. In response, the nation could only

[92] Winkler, *Sacred Lute*, 275-6. Also in Everett, *Wesleyan Hymnal*, 17.

[93] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 664-5. Also in *Psalms and Hymns*, 89.

tremble at His stroke and "lifted hand," while calling out for healing and a dissipation of God's wrath. If God stopped, the singers proclaimed that they would all, with a "loud and grateful voice" rejoice and sing praised to their "guardian God." Another hymn modeled this pattern.

1. See, gracious God, before thy throne,
Thy mourning people bend!
'Tis on thy sovereign grace alone
Our humble hopes depend.

2. Tremendous judgments from thy hand
Thy dreadful power display;
Yet mercy spares this guilty land,
And still we live to pray.

4. O turn us, turn us, mighty Lord,
By thy resistless grace;
Then shall our hearts obey thy word,
And humbly seek thy face.

5. Then should insulting foes invade,
We shall not sink in fear;
Secure of never-failing aid,
If God, our God, is near.[94]

In this song, God sat on his throne, watching his people bend down in mourning as they claimed that it was his "sovereign grace alone" upon which they depended. God's "dreadful power" had been displayed across the land, in connection with his "tremendous judgment." Only God's mercy held back his full wrath, allowing the people to still "live to pray." As they prayed, they pled, "O turn us, turn us, mighty Lord," hoping that the "resistless grace" of God would cause the heart of the nation to obey and "humbly seek thy face." Once turned, the nation could rest assured that even if "insulting foes invaded," there would be no fear because "God, our God, is near."

[94] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 665. Also in *Psalms and Hymns*, 655.

Baptists learned much from their hymns. The hymns not only introduced difficult theological concepts to the congregations in accessible ways, but corporate worship also reinforced these concepts as their spiritual brothers and sisters sang the words along with them. When only one person sings that "God moves in a mysterious way,/His wonders to perform" he may choose to disagree, but when hundreds of voices sing in unison, then the individual more fully is convinced that God indeed "plants His footsteps in the seas,/And rides upon the storm."[95]

This reinforcement of evangelical providentialism taught the congregations six important concepts that would shape their understanding of the impending Civil War. First, it taught them that God was ever present in any circumstance in life. Second, God worked out his plan in all situations, even when he did not seem present. Third, God's plans dealt with both individuals and with nations. Fourth, God accomplished his will through a variety of means, including both the use of blessings and the scourge of suffering. Fifth, sometimes the suffering that God brought upon an individual or a nation was done in connection with a great sin committed, but the suffering did not mean he had abandoned his people. Sixth, when the blessings or suffering arrived, the individual, as well as the nation, should respond with thankful hearts to God and a deep sense of repentance for any sin they may have committed.

Conclusion

As Charleston Baptists entered their choice of churches each Sunday, they took pride in the the central role that Charleston played in the life of the Southern Baptist Convention. They believed their city to be the birthplace of all southern Baptist

[95] *Ibid*., 68; Winkler, *Sacred Lute*, 77-8. Hymn title, "God moves in a mysterious way."

churches. It possessed some of the most prominent preachers in the state and in the convention. It produced Southern Baptist literature for people around the nation. As they looked at their fellow Baptists in the pews, they felt confident with their place in the world. They could stand along side each other and raise their voices, proclaiming that the hand of providence favored their town. Even in times of plague or famine, they remained in the pews to sing of the favor of God and their desire to return to his blessings and end his sufferings. They sat and heard from the pulpit, whether it was from Winkler's voice or from Kendrick or Manly or someone else, sermons describing a God whose Providence watched over every aspect of their lives. This God was not afraid to use the chastening rod at any time, and as a people, they needed to remain vigilant to stay faithful to God, because he would always remain faithful to him. Indeed, when the trials of life would come, as they would in a few short years, they could look to the hand of the Almighty Father and know that this trial only demonstrated more clearly the love he had for his people. Departing the church, they could sing the words "God, our God, is near."

Table 2.1
Memberships Statistics for Baptist Churches in Charleston from 1850-1860*

Year	Church	White Membership	Black Membership	Total Membership Given	Actual Total Membership	Total Baptists in Charleston per Year
1850	First Baptist	261	1478	1739	1739	
	Wentworth	179	148	327	327	
	Morris Street	32	21	23	53	2119
1851	First Baptist	270	1494	1764	1764	
	Wentworth	199	164	363	363	
	Morris Street	39	40	79	79	2206
1852	First Baptist	293	1543	1836	1836	
	Wentworth	144	178	392	322	
	Morris Street	33	56	39	89	2247
1853	First Baptist	287	1568	1855	1855	
	Wentworth	207	197	404	404	
	Morris Street	41	82	123	123	2382
1854	First Baptist	not given	not given	1912	1912	
	Wentworth	221	219	440	440	
	Morris Street	44	194	138	238	
	Fourth Baptist	not given	not given	16	16	2368
1855	First Baptist	not given	not given	1905	1905	
	Wentworth	208	238	446	446	
	Citadel Square	77	114	191	191	2542
1856	First Baptist	not given	not given	1937	1937	
	Wentworth	204	251	455	455	
	Citadel Square	not given	not given	269	269	2661
1857	First Baptist	not given	not given	1937	1937	
	Wentworth	199	271	470	470	
	Citadel Square	127	142	269	269	2676
1858	First Baptist	not given	not given	1926	1926	
	Wentworth	195	288	483	483	
	Citadel Square	144	162	306	306	2715
1859	First Baptist	not given	not given	1925	1925	
	Wentworth	177	289	466	466	
	Citadel Square	140	188	328	328	2719
1860	First Baptist	not given	not given	1933	1933	
	Wentworth	167	310	477	477	
	Citadel Square	154	196	350	350	2760

*Statistics compiled from Charleston Baptist Association Minutes, 1850-1860

Chapter Two
Southern Nationalism in the *Southern Baptist*

From 1846 through 1860, the *Southern Baptist* helped to shape the way its readers understood their lives. It provided them with religious instruction, devotional thoughts, and encouragement to continue on the road to glory. However, the paper did more than just supplement their Sunday worship services, it also gave information about a wide variety of topics. In particular, the newspaper did not focus only on spiritual matters by removing any reference to the "secular" world. Instead, all subject matters appeared in the pages—from foreign wars to local crop prices, from national political meetings to local obituaries. In fact, the paper at times functioned as a supplement to other daily newspapers, such as the *Charleston Courier*, by including both local and national news in its issues. The editors believed it necessary to include this information on the various issues and provide for their subscribers knowledge of the world outside of Charleston that could both encourage and feed their curiosities.

Each issue contained a section on entitled "General Intelligence," which covered local, national, and international events. In addition to this section, on occasion the paper carried small news blurbs scattered throughout the paper, sometimes copied from other newspapers and other times original content. For example, an 1853 edition of the paper informed readers that the mayor of Montreal had been arrested for murder in connection with the Gavazzi riots, yellow fever had hit New Orleans, and the steamship *Herman* had safely made its voyage from England to New York.[1] Another issue included information on an earthquake that hit Naples, the religious practices of seventy-five-year-old

[1] "General Intelligence," *SB*, 7 September 1853, 3.

Washington Irving, and the purchase of Mount Vernon for $2,000.[2]

While the "General Intelligence" sections provided continuous but random news, certain major national events always found their place in the paper. On June 15, 1849, former President James Polk passed away, just months after leaving the White House. The newspaper, pointing out periodic disagreements with Polk, made sure to include the story of Polk's passing, even though they learned of the news as it was going to press. The story provided not only information, but also a spiritual side to the story, noting that although shocking, "Providence…ordained that his descent unto the grave should gradual'y (*sic*) follow his descent from the seat of power." As the story closed, readers were encouraged to pray for Polk's widow, of whom the story claimed maintained "possession of a Christian hope to bear this sore trial."[3]

News of the passing of southern stalwart John Calhoun likewise appeared in the newspaper on April 3, 1850, three days after his death. Six consecutive issues ran articles on Senator Calhoun's passing, noting how he had "for over forty years,…given the mighty efforts of his exalted genius" to the entire state. The paper included a description of his funeral, complete with the order of service, members of the committee that arranged the service, pall bearers, and other important attendees. It ran tributes to Calhoun, and subscribers read the eulogies given for Calhoun in churches throughout Charleston, including the pastor of First Baptist Church, James Kendrick, as well as extensive details of his body's arrival in Charleston and subsequent service at St. Philip's Church.[4] As a final salute, the editors included a poem by Richard B. Furman, eldest son

[2] "General Intelligence," *SB*, 9 February 1858, 1.

[3] "Death of Ex-President Polk," *SB*, 20 June 1849, 2.

[4] See *Southern Baptist* issues April 3, 1850-May 8, 1850.

of the famous Charleston Baptist leader. Furman exclaimed, "Mourn, Carolina, mourn! thy Statesman lies/In cold oblivion's final, dreamless sleep" as the "sentinel no more his watch shall keep…." He claimed that when "[Calhoun] spoke, the nation leaned upon his word,/And listening Senates in admiring silence heard." Asking them to hear one last time, Furman called out, "List to his voice, oh, South! maintain the right!/List to his voice, oh North! forsake the wrong!/So shall the North and South again unite,/And in the bonds of brotherhood be strong/So shall the glorious Union flourish long."[5] As the body of the great southern champion was laid to rest, readers of the *Southern Baptist* remained informed and were also guided in their memory of his work.

Whether it was by telling of national deaths or explaining national events, the pages of the *Southern Baptist* kept its readers informed as to the day to day events of the country, including updates on the growing sectional controversy. In providing this information, it also gave them various elements that helped to reinforce an idea of southern nationalism. While the writers of the newspaper never explicitly stated their support for this concept, it nonetheless showed up in numerous places, thus subtly influencing readers in three main areas. First, the paper portrayed the North, or at least elements in the North, as being aggressive and radical, seeking to destroy all that the South was built upon by attacking the character of the South and the southern institution of slavery. At the forefront of this charge were the abolitionists, whom the paper continually viewed as a diabolical enemy of the South and the country. Second, in response to the abolitionists, the paper provided a staunch defense of slavery. The defense rarely appeared as a line by line biblical defense of the institution, seemingly

[5] "In Memory of J. C. Calhoun," *SB*, 8 May 1850, 4.

because those arguments were already understood by the readers. Instead, the defense came in sometimes more subtle forms that showed slavery as a positive good for the Africans and for the South, and while it acknowledged some failings within the system, the paper nonetheless presented slavery as a key element in the formation of a divinely ordered society. Third, as the war crept closer and hostilities rose, the paper expressed a sense of betrayal as the entirety of the North turned its back on its fraternal relationship with the South and embraced an outright hostility, especially in response to the uprising at Harper's Ferry. Combined, these three elements helped to reinforce an emerging sense of southern nationalism that continued to grow throughout the South in the 1850s. In turn, it showed Baptists in Charleston and throughout the South how they were exceptionally different from the North and had, in fact, already formed a nation within a nation prior to secession.

Background on Southern Nationalism

The concept of "nationalism" is not native to the southern United States. It swept throughout the Western Hemisphere during the nineteenth century producing revolutions and civil wars. Perhaps the most prominent form of nationalism was seen in the formation of German nationalism throughout the 1800s, a formation which exploded into two World Wars in the twentieth century. According to sociologists Martha and Richard Cottam, nationalism is formed as individuals begin to identify more with a political entity, or a nation, than with any other identifying factor, such as ethnicity, gender, or political persuasion. In turn, they have a deep feeling of belonging to each other because they "share deeply significant elements of a common heritage" and they believe they

have "a common destiny for the future."[6] When nationalism is formed, several patterns arise:

1. There will be an enhanced proclivity in nation states to see a threat from others, and an enhanced tendency to see the threatener in highly simplified stereotypical terms;
2. There is a great likelihood that the leaders of a nation state will advance and seriously consider the option to expand state influence at the expense of others;
3. There will be a greater tendency among the public of nation states to become preoccupied with the objective of in-gathering of communities existing outside the borders of the state whom they regard as part of their community.
4. There will be a greater concern with maintaining face and dignity on the part of the people in nation states and a greater willingness to take action to rectify perceived affronts;
5. There will be a greater likelihood that the public of a nation state will be susceptible to grandeur interests;
6. Leaders of nation states will have a greater ability to make effective appeals to the citizenry to accept major sacrifices to enhance the power of the nation state, including a willingness on the part of the citizenry to become part of the armed forces;
7. There will be a more intense commitment of the military in a nation state to the defense of that state; and
8. There will be a greater likelihood that the citizenry of a nation state will grant its leaders the decisional latitude to take risks in defending state interests but a lesser likelihood of granting them the decisional latitude to accept defeats or the loss of face.[7]

These eight points provide a helpful paradigm for determining the existence of southern nationalism and the Civil War version of it, Confederate nationalism.

Few historians debate the existence of some form of southern nationalism prior to 1861, but they do disagree as to the extent of the concept. In its most robust form, southern nationalism was a phenomenon that caused various levels of white southern society to begin to identify more with their "southernness" than their status as a citizen of

[6] Martha L. Cottam and Richard W. Cottam, *Nationalism and Politics: The Political Behavior of Nation States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 1-2. Cottam and Cottam utilized the work of political scientist Rupert Emerson to provide this listing.

[7] Cottam, *Nationalism*, 3-4.

Richmond or Georgia or the United States.[8] In looking over the list provided by Cottam and Cottam, these southern nationalists displayed at least seven of the eight characteristics of nationalists. First, they saw the North as a tremendous threat to the southern way of life and described northerners, and especially the northern abolitionists, in highly simplified and stereotypical terms. Second, leaders of the southern states attempted to expand their power by military means in order to secure their freedom and maintain their new nation. They also attempted to solicit the power of the churches behind their cause, thus expanding their power into the religious arena. The one area that they were unable to expand was perhaps the one that weakened the regime the most, the political arena, given the desire to form a confederacy built upon the rights of the individual states. The third characteristic is perhaps the one that is hardest to locate within southern nationalism. If one were to stretch the idea, perhaps the cajoling and formation of the Confederacy in the early stages, and the subsequent attempt to have border states join the cause, could be seen as a means to in-gather other communities.

The fourth characteristic, however, is clearly present in southern nationalism. Volumes have been written on the concept of southern honor and during the years leading up to the war as voices throughout the South clamored for action to be taken against the offending North—one only has to look to the actions of Preston Brooks and his beating of Charles Sumner on the floor of the United States Senate. Fifth, several southern voices, and especially the fire-eaters like Robert Barnwell Rhett, who owned and

[8] As was pointed out in the introduction, the focus of this study is on the attitudes and thoughts of white Baptists in the South. Therefore, references to "southerners" or "southern groups" is meant to point to white southern groups, excluding the African slave community. This exclusion is done merely for the purpose of this study, to narrow the field of focus, not to signify a lack of historical importance concerning the attitudes and thoughts of African slaves during this time. Their place as historical actors during this time period is of extreme importance in order to gain a full picture of all that transpired; however, for the purposes of this study, that area of inquiry lies outside of the established parameters.

operated the *Charleston Mercury* daily newspaper in the 1850s, argued for the need to form a southern nation because of the purity of the labor system in the South had developed a nearly perfected society. Sixth, the call to arms following Lincoln's call for troops and subsequent drafts, as well as the various Fast Day proclamations, help to illustrate the attempt by southern leaders to call upon the citizens of the South to sacrifice for the sake of the state. The final two points are seen most clearly in the midst of the Civil War itself, as Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson became iconic figures throughout the South, even after defeat.

With just a cursory glance at this definition, it is easy to see the existence of southern nationalism on some level prior to or during the war. Questions remain, though, as to how much did these concepts permeated southern society. Was southern nationalism a mass movement prior to the war? Or did it only increase just prior to the war and only during the war manifest itself as Confederate nationalism, providing the citizens with a sense of common purpose? Or did it only impact a small number of radical leaders who pushed the South into the war, while the majority of the citizens felt little connection to one another? In this final argument, the existence of southern nationalism really began only after the war was over as a reaction to defeat and an attempt to justify the actions of southerners's fathers and grandfathers. Over the years, historians have attempted to answer these questions in various ways.

For one group of historians, southern nationalism could rightly be seen throughout the 1840s and 1850s, whether it was the actual political movement for disunion or a cultural separation between the North and the South. According to Avery Craven, a cultural southern nationalism impacted multiple levels of society throughout the South.

While admitting that the "South was never more than a bundle of contrasting and conflicting interests, classes, and values," Craven suggested that it was foolish to think that southerners fell victim to the tricks of a handful of fire-eaters or that they only remained loyal to their states.[9] Instead, the white South, even in its diversity, had always maintained a common outlook on life, drawn mainly from its agricultural way of life. "They were Southerners," Craven claimed, speaking of white southerners.

> They were largely of the same racial stock; they liked the same sort of food; they thought the same things were serious or funny; they had the same general notions of what was moral and what was immoral, what constituted success and what failure; they were a people close to the soil and some among them held slaves; they could, in other words, understand each other with reasonable certainty and count on one another's conduct and reactions to a reasonable degree.[10]

This essential sameness caused a majority of southerners to identify with each other, and as political tensions between the sections rose, southerners "felt the sting of Northern charges," and when the Compromise of 1850 became law, and the South began to sense further betrayal from the North, this sense of unity solidified as they came to see secession at their only way out.[11]

James McPherson echoes this conclusion as he explored the issue of southern exceptionalism. Like Craven, he points to an underlying unity that ran throughout the South and, when faced with northern criticism, this unity became galvanized into fierce opposition; however, McPherson does not describe the unity as merely agriculturally based and instead pointed out the political ideology that shaped the southern mind. "Thus when secessionists protested in 1861 that they were acting to preserve traditional

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[9] Avery O. Craven, *The Growth of Southern Nationalism, 1848-1861* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1953), 8, 399.

[10] *Ibid*., 9.

[11] *Ibid*., 111, 400.

rights and values," McPherson writes, "they were correct." He further states,

> They fought to protect their constitutional liberties against the perceived Northern threat to overthrow them. The South's concept of republicanism had not changed in three-quarters of a century; the North's had. With complete sincerity the South fought to preserve its version of the republic of the founding fathers—a government of limited powers that protected the rights of property and whose constituency comprised an independent gentry and yeomanry of the white race undisturbed by large cities, heartless factories, restless free workers, and class conflict.[12]

At the heart of southern nationalism lay a perceived connection to decades of political thought that had forged the nation. While not every southerner could articulate the nuances of republicanism, there remained a firm commitment to this concept in the people of the South, a commitment that many felt their northern brethren had abandoned.

While Craven provided a cultural explanation for the existence of a southern national mind and McPherson describes it as more ideological in nature, both would agree with other historians who have emphasized slavery as a key element in the creation of southern nationalism. According to David Potter, slavery remained a part of each explanation of southern nationalism, and while it may not be the cause of it directly, it was nonetheless the unifying factor that allowed for southern nationalism to permeate through the various levels—culturally, politically, economically, and theologically.[13] Steven Channing also maintains that slavery was key to the formation of southern nationalism. For Channing, though, it came about as a crisis of fear surrounding the growing power of the abolitionists and the Republican party. By the 1850s, southerners

[12] James M. McPherson, "Antebellum Southern Exceptionalism: A New Look at an Old Question," in *Civil War History*, 50, no. 4 (2004): 432.

[13] David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1976), 28-50.

distrusted the North and looked upon them with "hostility and suspicion."[14] Radicals in the South, in turn, drew upon this hostility and played up the fears of the southerners, "reinforcing the crisis atmosphere building towards the election of a 'Black' Republican."[15] As the frenzy grew, so did support for the Radicals' solution to the crisis, secession. Secession offered the greatest solution for the problem and provided the vision of a "halcyon age," to come, one free of northern anarchists. "Clearly," Channing states, "the mystique of Southern nationality was not wholly produced by the post-bellum generation, which wistfully gazed back across the wreckage and revolution of Civil War."[16] Instead, southern nationalism was alive and present, and it permeated the South.

Richard Carwardine, C. C. Goen, and Mitchell Snay have each pointed out that this permeation also included evangelical churches.[17] "The experience of America's evangelical Protestants," Carwardine suggests, "argued for the existence of deep cultural and ideological fissures separating the North from the South in 1861."[18] The fissures began during the 1850s as clear-minded leaders on both sides of Mason-Dixon line found it difficult to secure a common ground and even Unionist southern evangelicals began to identify with the southern nationalist sentiment. They perceived the existence of a "fanatical virus" of the idea of a higher law that came from the northern pulpits and

[14] Steven A. Channing, *Crisis of Fear: Secession in South Carolina* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), 75.

[15] *Ibid*., 261.

[16] *Ibid*., 143.

[17] Richard J. Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 245.

[18] *Ibid*., 323.

"political separation assumed a godly character."[19] For his part, Goen suggested that the denominational schisms of the 1840s served in some small way as a precursor for the Civil War. From his perspective, "when Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist churches divided along North-South lines, they severed an important bond of national union" and that the schisms represented "irreversible steps along the nation's course to violence" becoming "both portent and catalyst of the imminent national tragedy."[20] Mitchell Snay's *Gospel of Disunion* describes the long development of southern nationalism in the church, beginning with the abolitionist tract campaign in 1835. The southern clergy aggressively responded with a defense of slavery, which eventually propelled them to cut off ties with northern churches. Along the way, the southern church sanctified the concept of a separate southern nation and in connection with several other factors "helped lead the South toward secession and the Civil War."[21] Therefore, from the perspective of the churches, southern nationalism was a viable part of the antebellum culture.

Elizabeth Varon has recently provided another perspective on the permeation of southern nationalism. Choosing to look at the use of the word "disunion," rather than arguments for seccession, Varon concludes that there existed throughout the South, and even throughout the United States, a deep-seated fear over the use of the word. "This one word," Varon suggests,

> contained and stimulated, their fears of extreme political factionalism, tyranny, regionalism, economic decline, foreign intervention, class conflict, gender disorder, racial strife, widespread violence and anarchy, and civil war, all of

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[19] *Ibid*., 187-191.

[20] C. C. Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denomination Schisms and the Coming of the Civil War* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985), 6.

[21] Mitchell Snay, *Gospel of Disunion: Religion and Separatism in the Antebellum South*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 218.

which could be interpreted as God's retribution for America's moral failings.[22] *Disunion* apparently meant different things to different people. For the fire-eaters, *disunion* became the only solution to combat the growth of an unreasonable North. For southern Unionists, *disunion* stood as a troubling act, pushed in part by southern radicals but in large measure by northern radicals and abolitionists who wanted to rend the Constitution in two. Not to be left out, evangelicals believed *disunion* to be punishment from God rendered upon the United States for various national sins. Thus a movement of fear, based on the concept of *disunion*, unified southerners prior to the war and caused them to look to the creation of a separate southern nation as their only solution.

While some historians saw southern nationalism as a present reality prior to the war, others have described it more as a loose concept that never fully materialized until the war itself began. For them, southern nationalism was only "a hypothesis, not a fact."[23] Michael O'Brien points out that especially among intellectuals, southern nationalism was only a beacon of hope, and instead O'Brien suggests that the intellectual South can be better understood as "communities of discourse," a concept he borrowed from Rollin Osterweis. For his part, Osterweis remained fascinated with the development of southern nationalism and its marriage to romanticism. "The idea of southern nationalism, which developed chiefly in South Carolina during the decade before the Civil War, was the most ambitious romantic manifestation of the antebellum period," Osterweis claimed.[24] Southern nationalists consumed romantic literature and philosophy

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[22] Elizabeth R. Varon, *Disunion! The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789-1859* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 1.

[23] Michael O'Brien, *Rethinking the South: Essays in Intellectual History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 46.

[24] Rollin G. Osterweis, *Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South* (New Haven, CT: Yale

and began to develop "subcults," stressing the ideal of chivalry and emphasized "manners, women, military affairs, Athenian democracy, and romantic oratory." In turn, those involved spent their days involved with the "trappings" of chivalry: "the duel; the role of the horse in the tournament, the hunt, the race; emphasis on heraldry and ancestry; romantic place-naming; prodigal hospitality."[25] According to Osterweis, this focus proved to be a "distinctive and influential force" in the South that "helped to create a nation within a nation by 1860."[26]

Other historians have chosen to emphasize the unity of the United States prior to the war and have suggested that the differences between the North and South were minimal and not enough to begin a war. For these scholars, no clear form of southern nationalism existed prior to 1861, and even during the war, it remained a "fragile and weak organism," as Paul Escott suggests.[27] Only with the slavery controversy did the concept gain any ground, and even on the eve of secession, few of the southern leaders knew if the concept had spread enough to bring about a separation from the Union. Likewise, Stephanie McCurry sees in her work with yeoman households a lack of southern nationalism in 1850, and to remedy this, McCurry claims, the leaders of secession worked behind the scenes in order to get evangelical churches to buy into the concept and thus convince the yeoman farmers and others that God was on their side.[28]

University Press, 1949), 134-135.

[25] Rollin G. Osterweis, "The Idea of Southern Nationalism" in *The Causes of the American Civil War*, edited by Edwin C. Rozwenc (Boston, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1961), 55.

[26] Osterweis, *Romanticism and Nationalism*, 9.

[27] Paul D. Escott, *After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 32.

[28] Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press,

Southern nationalism, therefore, was manufactured in part through the pulpits and never possessed the groundswell of support that others have suggested.

John McCardell has also suggested that southern nationalism came about as a manufactured identity rather than a natural one. "[I]t is incorrect to think of Northerners and Southerners in 1860 as two distinct peoples," McCardell states. "Their intellectual, political, social, and economic beliefs were generally shared and were not determined solely on sectional grounds."[29] Instead, sectionalism developed as a result of two factors. First was a perceived threat from the North on the part of a growing number of southerners. Second, there existed a top-down insistence in both education and religion on "proper training and right thinking, orthodox behavior and orthodox beliefs" in order to "prepare the Southern mind for separate nationhood."[30] Thus southern nationalism became in large part a forced identity which southerners accepted gradually as they perceived hostility from the North.

For her part, Drew Gilpin Faust stresses the creation of "Confederate nationalism," thus suggesting that southern nationalism was a minor part of pre-war southern life.[31] In her view, the starting point for this mindset comes with the secession congresses in 1860 as "a widespread and self-conscious effort to create an ideology of Confederate nationalism to unite and inspire the nation."[32] The movement highlighted

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1995), 288-91.

[29] John McCardell, *The Idea of a Southern Nation: Southern Nationalists and Southern Nationalism, 1830-1860* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1979), 3.

[30] *Ibid*., 226.

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

[32] *Ibid.*, 14.

special features of southern culture in order to justify its desired independence and also to build a foundation for the coming war.[33] In her definition, southern culture seemed to take the place of an existing southern nationalism.

Among the aspects of southern culture that the movement drew upon were politics and religion. As Faust states, proponents of Confederate nationalism attempted to explain its political foundation as going back to the American Revolution itself.

> A central contention of Confederate nationalism, as it emerged in 1861, was that the South's effort represented a continuation of the struggle of 1776. The South, Confederates insisted, was the legitimate heir of American revolutionary tradition. Betrayed by Yankees who had perverted the true meaning of the Constitution, the revolutionary heritage could be preserved only by secession. Southerners portrayed their independence as the fulfillment of American nationalism.[34]

Thus "independence was the logical outcome of all that had gone before" so that their departure from the United States "was, in reality, no departure at all."[35] In the effort to build a nationalism around the Confederate flag, therefore, proponents described their work as the same as their father's before them, fighting for the cause of liberty and freedom, but instead of the British as the enemy, the South had to fight northern radical politicians. Yet, the South had no need to fear, because the second aspect that the creators of Confederate nationalism drew upon was the widespread evangelicalism that characterized the religion of the South. According to Faust, "[r]eligion provided a transcendent framework" as well as the "most fundamental source of legitimation for the Confederacy." Proponents argued that secession was "an instrumental part of God's

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[33] *Ibid.*, 7, 10.

[34] *Ibid.*, 14.

[35] *Ibid.*, 21.

designs,"[36] causing the Confederacy to take the place of the United States as "the redeemer nation, the new Israel."[37] In this view, God became transformed "into a nationalist," and the war into a "crusade."[38]

Interestingly enough, Faust and others that downplay the existence of a southern nationalism prior to the war neglect to see the same rhetoric used during the war being used also throughout the 1850s. Indeed, most of what Faust claims to be a Confederate nationalism, which in her description began in 1860, is clearly seen for years leading up to the war. Likewise, several historians have attempted to describe the South as entirely un-unique by pointing out various connections between the North and the South. These scholars err in over-statement. It may well be true that the South had little that was fundamentally different than their northern neighbors, but at their core, something was different. The greatest example of this is seen in the way the white southerners described themselves. Throughout the 1850s, they discussed the problems with the North and the need to secure their "unique" way of life. They viewed themselves as different and exceptional. While the North seemingly abandoned their reliance on agriculture or the Constitution or the Bible, the South proudly did not. Whether or not this view of exceptionalism was indeed based in reality or merely a construction on the part of the southerners, it eventually became reality. Perhaps Craven and McPherson overstate their discussion of the exceptional nature of the South, but their description of two separate lands better matches the reality of the situation than historians who for the sake of consensus and the development of bold, new theses, claim the North and the South to

[36] *Ibid.*, 27.

[37] *Ibid.*, 29.

[38] *Ibid.*, 28.

more closely resemble identical cousins, driven apart only by leaders who fed them lies about the other section. At the very least, a description of the exceptional nature of the South is clearly presented in the pages of the *Southern Baptist*. Regardless of the editor or the editorial board or the paper, the same themes remained in the paper during the 1850s, and as these themes continued to be reiterated to the readers of the paper, it presented to them a vision of the South as a united front, exceptional in its religious adherence and economic prosperity.

Sectional Hostility in the *Southern Baptist*

From early on in its history, the paper displayed a tone of sectional hostility and victimization. An 1847 editorial entitled, "Southern Christian Patriots Awake!" spelled out the rise in hostility toward the South and slavery that had occurred over the course of the past ten years, especially among northern Baptists. "Every Baptist Journal beyond the limits of the Southern Baptist Convention," the article read, "is openly antagonistic to the Southern social system and peculiar institution…We ask Southern Christian Patriots—Southern Baptist Patriots whether it be sound policy for us to shut our eyes to the contemplation of these facts?" Written just two years after the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention, the article attempted to chastise readers into abandoning their reliance on northern education and publications and instead increase their patronage of the Southern Baptist Publication Society, as well as various Southern Baptist publications and theological education.

> Brethren, it is shameful, mean, unmanly, unlike ourselves, foreign to the facts, disgraceful to our high character and to the character of our ancestry—and despicable in the sight of our Northern brethren and in the opinion of thinking and spirited men of all nations, for us to confess that we are not by the blessing of God fully able to possess our own land—to develop its resources—to maintain independence in the department of education, publication, and in missions. Let us

believe that we can do our duty….Let us do it and do it with our might.[39]

Articles concerning the need for capital by the Southern Baptist Publication Society and the publication of a new Southern Baptist Hymn Book surrounded this editorial, highlighting the opportunities for Baptists to answer the call.[40] The inclusion of these ideas helped to strengthen a sense of sectional hostility with the North, even their Baptist brethren in the North.

Immediately below this editorial, the paper carried a scathing review of the Wilmot Proviso, demonstrating a trend that the paper continued throughout the following decade—keeping its readers informed about political issues that involved sectional controversy. The article warned of the dangers of the Wilmot Proviso and claimed that "a crisis in the history of Southern Christians has arrived" and suggested that at the right time, "christians [*sic*] in the South, must assume higher responsibilities." "We are no alarmists," the author stated, "and yet a note of alarm can not be too soon, or to [*sic*] loudly sounded throughout the whole slaveholding territory. Enemies are in our midst." The article then pointed, much like had been done in the proceeding article, to the need for southerners to rely upon their own institutions, enterprises, commerce, manufacturing, religion, and education. "The public heart and purse must be dedicated to it," the article concluded. "Every man must be employed in the work, in the churches, at the polls, and in our political, civil, and ecclesiastical councils. The Southern masses must be

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[39] "Southern Christian Patriots Awake!" *SB*, 11 August 1847, 2. This editorial was most likely written by T. W. Haynes, who was the editor at the time. However, the tone resembles B. C. Pressley, who himself was closely involved with the Southern Baptist Publication Society; however, there is no indication that he wrote the article, and he did not take over as editor of the *Southern Baptist* for another few years.

[40] "The Southern Baptist Publication Society," *SB*, 11 August 1847, 2; "$5,000 for a Depository," *SB*, 11 August 1847, 2; "$500," *SB*, 11 August 1847, 2; and "Southern Baptist Hymn Book," *SB*, 11 August 1847, 2.

aroused."[41] As with the article on the need for patronage of Southern Baptist publications, this article further perpetuated an idea that the South had to unite against a hostile enemy bordering their land and in their midst.

The presence of this enemy and the issue of sectional hostilities continued to appear in the pages of the Southern Baptist during the 1850s. For example, the paper included stories about the Wilmot Proviso or the Compromise of 1850, including the brokering of the deal that crafted the compromise.[42] Also as conflict erupted over the Nebraska and Kansas territory, the paper carried a story from the *Columbia Banner* in the Spring of 1854, telling of how Douglas, having to defend himself against the "abolitionist confederates," mainly Senators Charles Sumner and Salmon Chase, rose to the occasion and delivered such a pointed and elegant rebuttal that, according to the correspondent, Sumner could only sit in silence, with head hanging, "look[ing] like he had been caught stealing." Following the debate, supporters of Sumner and Chase and their abolitionist cause began to burn Douglas in effigy, while southerners were called upon to remember Douglas as a friend of their cause.[43] Two years later, as conflict in the territory turned bloody, the *Southern Baptist* kept readers apprised on the events.

> On going to press, we learn from the despatches [*sic*] that Marshal Donelson and seven of his posse were killed, and many wounded, in a conflict with the free soil party. At another place, nine of the free soilers and thirteen pro-slavery men were killed. Armed bodies were coming in for the rescue. A fearful cloud is hanging over that new territory; and we can only pray that it may not burst in the thunder and desolation of a civil war.[44]

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[41] "The Wilmost Proviso," *SB*, 11 August 1847, 2

[42] "Congress," *SB*, 13 March 1850, 3; "Correspondence of the Courier," *SB*, 17 July 1850, 2-3; and "Washington," *SB*, 4 September 1850, 3.

[43] "Nebraska Debate," *SB*, 5 April 1854, 4.

[44] "Bloody Conflict in Kansas," *SB*, 10 June 1856, 2.

Just months prior, the editors included a blurb that implicated abolitionists as being the source of this conflict. The statements of New York minister Henry Ward Beecher drew the special ire of the paper. Quoting a New York state paper, the article read that Beecher invited individuals interested in contributing money to purchase "Sharpe's rifles" to remain at the close of the service, and they would discuss the matter. The *Albany Atlas* then jokingly suggested that Beecher "will next take measures to have his church fitted up as a shooting gallery, where emigrants for Kansas can, on a Sabbath evening, take lessons in the use of Sharpe's rifles."[45]

When the Supreme Court announced its decision in the Dred Scott Case the following year, the *Southern Baptist* made sure to inform its readers of the content of the decision and the history of the case. The article suggested that the decision provided "the strongest guaranty which the South will need against lawless interference and tampering with the slave population, by restless agitators." Point by point, the paper explained the decision's reasoning as to how slaves could not be considered American citizens, how Congress had exceeded its power in 1820 with the passage of the Missouri Compromise, and how the legal condition of a slave did not depend upon his temporary location but rather his eventual return to the location from which he arrived as a slave.[46] A few editions later, the paper ran a brief history of the case because of the "strong hold" that the case had taken on the national consciousness.[47]

Yet the paper went beyond just relaying some of the political events of the day.

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[45] "A Kansas Shooting Gallery," *SB*, 29 April 1856, 2.

[46] "The Dred Scott Case," *SB*, 17 March 1857, 2.

[47] "History of the Dred Scott Case," *SB*, 7 April 1857, 2.

Throughout the 1850s, subscribers to the *Southern Baptist* read about a growing hostility to their way of life from those in the North. Northern aggression and northern hypocrisy filled the pages of the paper, and it came in all shapes and forms. Some articles described various religious problems in the North, subtly informing readers of the increasingly anti-Christian nature of the other half of the United States. Other articles discussed the treatment of slaves, freemen, or wage laborers in the northern cities, pointing out the discrepancy between northern proclamation and northern action. Still others described the growing number of "radical" voices whose actions were bringing the nation to the point of collapse. The presence of these abolitionists, in fact, appeared to act as a type of 1850s "Red Menace" in the *Southern Baptist*.

Individual agitators, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe and her brother Henry Ward Beecher, were especially highlighted in the paper. Beecher, whose connection to the *New York Independent* remained well-known, had become a polarizing figure for southerners.[48] Not only did he denounce the institution of slavery, as well as the southern society that allowed it, from his pulpit in Brooklyn, but he also lambasted the South in editorials and various speeches around the United States. In 1851, Beecher addressed the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and proceeded to describe slavery as a great, universal evil. Responding to these charges, Edwin T. Winkler, who at the time served in Georgia as a minister and assistant editor of the Georgia Baptist paper, the *Christian Index*, stated that Beecher inaccurately portrayed both the current system of slavery in the South, and worse yet, Scripture's stance on slavery. Beecher claimed that the Bible forbade the use of "chattel" slavery, suggesting that Biblical slavery bore no resemblance

[48] For more information on Henry Ward Beecher, see Debby Applegate, *The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher* (New York: Doubleday, 2006).

to modern-day slavery. Winkler asserted that "chattel" merely meant property and did not signify a different class of slave, and therefore, any slave whom masters passed down from generation to generation, qualified as property and, therefore, a "chattel" slave. Since masters traditionally passed down their slaves as property in the Bible, chattel slavery, according to Winkler, was the only form that the Bible discussed. Another point of contention came from Beecher's assertion that "[t]here was a standing canon, that when a slave ran away, he should not be forcibly returned." As Beecher continued, "The attempt has been made [by southern proponents of slavery] to show, that this did not apply to Hebrew slaves, but only to those who fled from among the heathens. But it was not so. *This was not so*." Winkler responded,

> If now the reader will turn from this specimen of Mr. Beecher's logic to the passage referred to, Deut. 23: 15, 16, we think his conclusion will be, that this *was* so. "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master *unto thee*; *he shall dwell with you, even among you, &c.*" Does not this passage naturally apply, that the fugitive did not dwell "with" or "among" the Israelites, prior to his escape "unto" them? But when has the spirit of fanaticism demanded the sacrifice of the natural meaning of the word of God, and not found zealous hands ready to lay the victim on the alter?"

Winkler, who maintained a tone of mockery throughout the piece, also challenged other Beecher claims, including one that slaves in biblical times possessed the ability to appeal to a magistrate if their treatment became harsh, something in which no doubt Beecher would find a connection to the not-yet-decided Dred Scott Case. Winkler laughed at this assertion, claiming that the idea had no record Scripture. In the end, Winkler asked Beecher if he was merely "confident of the accuracy and excellence of a 'higher law,'" instead of the works of noted historians and Biblical scholars.[49]

Another appearance by Beecher came in the form of a reprinted open letter to

[49] "Mr. Beecher and Slavery," *SB*, 4 June 1851, 2.

Beecher by Irish New Yorker John Mitchel, who ran the newspaper, *The Citizen*.[50] Mitchel, who made a claim of supporting Irish independence against English oppression, took umbrage with Beecher, because Beecher accused him of being inconsistent in his support of both Irish independence and African slavery. Beecher, in his typical style, spoke of the righteousness of the abolitionist cause and pointed out that the hypocritical Mitchel, whom Beecher said was deceased, had made his bed with slaveholders, all of whom were criminals. "It seems…that I have disappointed you and the [New York] Tribune," Mitchel wrote, "which is painful. But what if the disappointment is owing not to my fault, but to your stupidity!" He went on to argue that by accusing slaveholders of being criminals, Beecher, in turn, accused George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and the Apostle Paul of being criminals.[51]

Continually the object of scorn in the *Southern Baptist*, Beecher's follies were especially celebrated, even if it had no connection to his work as an abolitionist. In 1857, Beecher, in an editorial in the *New York Independent*, charged Rev. L. W. Bacon of improprieties by publishing in the *New Englander* newspaper a favorable review of a hymn book that Bacon himself had compiled. Beecher's claim was scathing, but upon further review, it appeared as if ulterior motives were at play. Beecher evidently compiled his own hymn book and thus lambasted Bacon as a means to discourage others from purchasing Bacon's work in the hopes that they would instead buy Beecher's hymn book, at least according to the *Southern Baptist*. "It now appears," stated the Charleston paper, "that the whole charge by Mr. Beecher is utterly groundless; and is such a

[50] "Mr. Mitchel and the Slavery Question," *SB*, 1 February 1854, 2

[51] "John Mitchel on Slavery. Letter to Henry Ward Beecher," *SB*, 15 February 1854, 2-3.

gratuitous attributing of base motives as no one but a man of a perverted and dishonorable nature is capable of thinking." The editorial went on to point out how Beecher was forced by the *New York Independent* to give a retraction, yet in the same issue, Beecher provided an editorial covering the "Revelations of Southern Society," "in which his propensity for belying and belittling the people of the South, comes out with all his accustomed virulence." It ended by asking how should a paper with such a wide circulation be left to the hands of men "in whom treason and fanaticism are only qualled [*sic*] by selfishness and bigotry."[52] Littering the pages of the *Southern Baptist*, Beecher's views on abolitionism were laid out for the readers to see, along with select commentary claiming lunacy in his statements.

Beecher's sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, did not escape the attention of the *Southern Baptist,* which frequently included stories on Stowe and her most famous work, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The paper accused Stowe and her "clique" of being "profoundly ignorant."[53] One article included a letter to the *London Times*, suggesting that if Stowe and her readers were so interested in the plight of slaves, then they needed to put their money behind their opinions, not just their signatures.[54] Another article celebrated the lack of attention that Stowe drew on her trip to Europe in 1853. Re-running an article from another newspaper, the editors told readers how Stowe arrived in Europe with little fanfare and remained relatively unnoticed. The paper claimed that even the *London Times*, which published an article on Stowe's trip prior to her departure, ran nothing on her presence once she arrived in London. Queen Victoria gave "the panegyrist of the

[52] "Eating his own Words," *SB,* 6 January 1857, 2.

[53] "Southern Baptist and Mrs. Stowe," *SB,* 10 November 1852, 2.

[54] "Freed Slaves," *SB,* 8 June 1853, 1.

negroes" a noticeable cold shoulder by refusing to invite her to the palace, as did leaders from other countries in Europe. According to the article, Stowe and her works were "out of fashion," and in order to remain fashionable, "Mrs. Stowe and Uncle Tom were ruthlessly sacrificed. The negro-mania went out in a twinkling, and its heroes were forgotten in an hour."[55]

Even at home, the *Southern Baptist* intentionally included stories of the negative impact of Stowe's work. One small article in 1855 mentioned how four boys who had read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and fallen in love with "Little Eva," one of the book's characters, continued to visit the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* exhibit at Barnum's Museum in New York. In order to see her every night, these children acquired the five dollar entrance fee by stealing letters from one of their employers.[56] Although no direct connection was stated, the paper nonetheless implied that Stowe's work did little to establish true virtue in its readers. A year later, the editors warned readers of a new work undertaken by Stowe, one that would expose the ways in which slavery impacted the lives of poor white people.[57]

At the heart of their attacks on Beecher and Stowe lay a charge that the abolitionist cause was fanatical at best and atheistic at worst. The *Southern Baptist* ran articles that described abolitionists as "appealing to sectional prejudice," a prejudice that nearly "brought the government…to the brink of ruin."[58] Elsewhere they were described

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[55] "Decline and Fall of the Uncle Tom Mania," *SB*, 10 August 1853, 4. Harriet Beecher Stowe received silimar attention in the Methodist *Southern Christian Advocate*: "Morality of Uncle Tom's Cabin," *Southern Christian Advocate*, 8 October 1852, 4; "Sequal to Uncle Tom," *Southern Christian Advocate*, 15 October 1852, 4; and "Mrs. Stowe," *Southern Christian Advocate*, 3 June 1853, 1.

[56] "General Intelligence," *SB*, 4 April 1855, 3.

[57] "General Summary," *SB*, 1 July 1856, 1.

[58] "Crusade Against Slavery," *SB*, 4 August 1852, 2.

as "exceedingly wrathful," especially leaders like Henry Ward Beecher.[59] The northern newspapers, the editors claimed, deliberately exaggerated the conditions of the slaves and provided more rumor than fact when it came to slave insurrections.[60] Abolitionist Lucy Stone, while giving a lecture at the Tabernacle in New York, was described as a type of violent anarchist, thanking God that "political parties were in fragments, and that the church was splitting to pieces, without a future union." The same article suggested that "rank radicals," such as Stone, gather at the Tabernacle and use it as a "safety-valve" for their "pent-up indignation," so much so that a friend of the author refused to go near the place because of its "bad smell."[61] The paper described the abolitionists as radical trouble-makers, obscuring the truth and bent upon the destruction of the United States. Yet a worse charge remained.

An 1853 issue of the *Southern Baptist* ran a front page article celebrating how the decline of national tensions was evident by the marginalization of radical abolitionists. In so doing, they provided a brief, but damning, description of "genuine abolitionism."

> The only genuine abolitionists that give evidence of vital existence are certain crazy men and strong minded women—the Garrisons, the Phillipses, the Abby Kellys, the Lucretia Motts, et cetere, et cetera. Their conduct illustrates the idea of fanaticism run mad. They deal exclusively in denunciations. They denounce every body but themselves and negrodom. They denounce with the utmost flippancy the Christian religion, Christian ministers, and the American union. They denounce the Bible, they revile Jesus Christ, and speak of God with a levity that is horrible. They are Atheists.[62]

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[59] "Mr. Mitchel and the Slavery Question," *SB*, 1 February 1855, 2.

[60] "Disturbances Among Negroes," *SB*, 23 December 1856, 2.

[61] "Anti-Slavery," *SB*, 8 February 1854, 3.

[62] "Abolitionists," *SB*, 16 November 1853, 1. In 1854, the Southern Christian Advocate carried a similar sentiment toward abolitionism, claiming that they had been recently unmasked, showing it to be "a phrensied fanaticism which gloats over the prospect of cutting throats" ("Spirit of Abolitionism," *Southern Christian Advocate*, 24 March 1854, 2).

Beyond being unreasonable, beyond being radical, and beyond merely hating their country and their fellow man, the editors of the paper stated that the abolitionists, the true abolitionists that had been causing all of the conflict in the nation, were, in fact, haters of God Himself. They were atheists, deniers of God, of Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Scriptures. Several months later, the charge returned. In response to what it deemed a misreading of Scripture by the *New York Independent*, the paper declared that "[a]nti-slavery sprung from French atheism; and it never ceases to betray the evidence of its origin."[63] Not only were the abolitionists atheists, they were *French* atheists, harkening readers to back to the chaos and the horrors of the French Revolution and the attempted removal of religion from the country. As Charleston Baptists received their papers, hoping to learn about the world around them and the activities of Beecher, Stowe, and other abolitionists, they were treated to a very distinct description of a menacing force that sought the destruction of the government and the church in the United States.[64]

Defending Slavery in the *Southern Baptist*

In responding to the abolitionist charges, the *Southern Baptist* provided readers with a defense of slavery while maintaining a constant reactionary tone against the charges made by the abolitionists and providing very little independent information. In the midst of this defense, four significant themes emerged. First, the Bible sanctioned the institution of slavery while simultaneously affirming the status of slaves as fully human with souls in need of redemption. While the Biblical defense of slavery put the *Southern*

[63] "Outrageous," *SB*, 19 April 1854, 2.

[64] Loveland claims that prior to the 1840s and 1850s, evangelicals saw the abolitionists as being motivated, at least on some level, by religious concerns. Yet that changed in the two decades leading up to the Civil War as southern opponents claimed that abolitionists were in fact political radicals, who repudiated the church, the Bible, and Christianity in general. (Anne C. Loveland, *Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 258-9.)

Baptist in line with most of the southern voices, the stance concerning the souls of slaves put it at odds with some radical slave supporters in the South while also working as a rebuttal to the abolitionist charge that the South considered slaves merely animals. Second, the abolitionists overstated the stories of the evils of slavery. In fact, the Charleston paper claimed, many of the most sensational stories were indeed false. Third, the slaves in the South for the most part experienced a relatively easy life, especially compared to their former life in Africa. This argument became common especially in articles that described life in Africa. Fourth, the African slave in the South had a better life than free blacks in the North or even the white wage laborers. Stories of the hypocrisy of the North filled the pages of the *Southern Baptist*, some subtle and some plainly stated.

Perhaps the church's central role in the South prior to the Civil War was its defense of slavery.[65] Southern churches turned to Scripture for guidance, and they discovered slavery described throughout the Bible. Father Abraham owned slaves, Moses provided laws on how to treat slaves, Jesus said nothing against slavery, and the Apostle Paul gave instructions on how slaves should obey their masters, even going so far as to send one back to his master.[66] "The vast majority of our People of every

[65] For more information on the Biblical defense of slavery and abolition, see Mark Noll, "The Bible and Slavery," in *Religion and the American Civil War*, ed. Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson (New York: Oxford Press, 1998), Mark Noll, "*The negro question lies far deeper than the slave question*," in *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 51-74, and Mitchell Snay, *Gospel of Disunion*. Noll's work especially points out the way in which abolitionists abandoned traditional hermeneutics as they crafted their arguments as to why the Bible condemned slavery and thus "made proslavery interpretations seem more persuasive than antislavery readings." In fact, he states that by not utilizing traditional interpretive principles and by not attacking the principle that slavery in the Bible was never linked to race, an argument proslavery forces commonly used, abolitionists allowed proslavery voices to have a perceived upper-hand in the use of the Bible and "left the impression in many minds that to employ Scripture for opposing slavery [they] had to undercut the authority of slavery itself" (Noll, *The Civil War*, 72).

[66] See the New Testament book of Philemon.

Donomination [*sic*]," explained Edwin T. Winkler in an editorial carried in the *Southern Baptist*, "….do not regard [slavery] as sin, for they find duties, which spring directly from its existences, imposed by the Scriptures; and they are assured, that the precepts of Christianity were not addressed to one, but to every age."[67] Maintaining their stance, the paper carried similar comments from a group of southern New School Presbyterians who were defending themselves against their northern brethren. These southern men argued that "slavery [existed] by divine ordination and recognition for wise purposes, to be overruled for His glory, in the elevation and final redemption of the African race."[68] Going on, they explained that it was right for church members to hold slaves because they would be "acting consistency with the spirit and the law of the Gospel in so doing."[69] As one article stated, "Southern Christians look into the Scriptures…and square their philosophy, political, and social and domestic, by the Bible, while Northern Christians are…proposing to bring the Bible into consistency with their previously eliminated philosophy."[70] From a literal interpretation of the Scriptures, therefore, the southern churches, and the *Southern Baptist* in particular, maintained that God clearly sanctioned slavery, regulated slavery, and used slavery as a means to his own ends.

While the paper utilized the Bible to justify slavery, it also used the Bible to argue against those radical slavery defenders who saw the Africans as being a little higher than cattle, with no connection to the rest of humanity through the common ancestor Adam. In January 1850, the paper carried a series of front-page articles written by Presbyterian

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[67] "The South and Slavery," *SB*, 4 September 1850, 1.

[68] "The New School Presbyterian Church on Slavery," *SB*, 16 June 1857, 2.

[69] *Ibid*.

[70] "Slavery and the South," *SB*, 6 October 1857, 2.

pastor Thomas Smyth. Smyth, an Irishman transplanted to Charleston in 1832, led Second Presbyterian Church for 39 years until illness forced him to retire in 1871.[71] In his article entitled "The Unity of the Human Race—The Doctrine of Scripture, Reason, and Science," Smyth aimed to debunk the argument that Africans stood outside the human family.[72] Over the course of four consecutive issues, Smyth laid out the belief that Africans, as well as the rest of humanity, all originated from Adam, thus a unity of the races. While he still maintained a belief in slavery and an understanding that Africans were intellectually and culturally inferior to whites, he argued that they were still indeed children of God and possessed the same soul as any white person. Therefore, far from seeing them as cattle, Christians should understand slaves as standing in need of evangelism, direction, and education, even if this education did not include the ability to read. Four years later, the paper ran similar arguments from naturalist John Bachman, who was responding to a new work by Josiah Nott and George Gliddon entitled *The Types of Mankind*. Centering his argument on the divine revelation of Scripture, Bachman claimed that to deny the unity of the races in Adam was to deny Scripture itself, the "very foundation of the Christian faith."[73]

Since the slaves possessed souls, their presence in the South meant that God had

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[71] For background information on Smyth, see *In Memorium: Thomas Smyth, D.D.* (Charleston, Walker, Evans, & Cogswell, Printers, 1874) or Thomas Erskine Clarke, "Thomas Smyth: Moderate of the Old South," (Th.D. diss., Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, VA, 1970).

[72] "The Unity of the Races," *SB*, 4 October 1854, 2. The same series by Smyth was carried also in the *Southern Christian Advocate* (Methodist) over a series of 22 issues from December 21, 1849-May 24, 1850. The *Southern Presbyterian Review*, a quarterly journal of Presbyterians dealing with theological and philosophical topics, also gave ample room to this topic in one of their 1850 volumes with a series of articles concerning the unity of the races, such as "The Unity of the Race," *Southern Presbyterian Review* vol. 3, no. 1 (1850): 124-166; "The Mark of Cain and Curse of Ham," *Southern Presbyterian Review* vol. 3, no. 3 (1850): 415-426.

[73] "The Unity of the Races," *SB*, 4 October 1854, 2. For more on the background of the polygenesis controversy of the 1840s, see Walter H. Conser, Jr., *God and the Natural World: Religion and*

placed them there, not just to serve the white classes, but also to receive salvation through the Christian Church. Throughout the 1850s, the paper ran numerous snippets, reviews, and articles covering the religious life of colored people. A special charge went out to the churches to pay attention to the religious instruction of slaves. Accordingly, Winkler developed his *Notes and Questions for the Oral Instruction of Colored People* as a means help churches teach slaves the truths of Christianity and the Bible when they could not read it for themselves.[74] Instead of advocating literacy for the slaves, Winkler composed various lessons for them, each followed with a hymn reinforcing the truths of the lesson learned, because, "[t]heir fondness for music is well known." "No better vehicle of truth to them can be found," the review of the book in the *Southern Baptist* stated, "than an appropriate hymn, well suited to a pleasing tune. Their memories stored with sacred songs—and there is nothing they learn so soon,—will prove a source of enjoyment and improvement which scarcely anything else can supply."[75] To confirm the effectiveness of this technique, an article carried the testimony of a Sunday School instructor of colored children, who used hymns to teach various items. The instructor lined out the words to the children after the song leader had supplied them with a tune.[76] Evidently, the ability to read one's own Bible paled in comparison to being able to sing a catchy tune.

Science in Antebellum America (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993).

[74] Published in 1857 by the Southern Baptist Publication Society, the work contained instruction on how to orally instruct slaves in all matters of Christian faith and theology, including the character of God, the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and the importance of the Word of God in their lives. Of course, according to the law at the time, the slaves themselves were not allowed to read the Word of God, but they were encouraged to "receive God's words with reverence and delight." (E. T. Winkler, *Notes and Questions on the Oral Instruction of Colored People with Appropriate Texts and Hymns* (Charleston: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1857), 18).

[75] "Oral Instruction of Colored People," *SB*, 20 October 1857, 2.

[76] "Sunday Schools for Colored Children," *SB*, 12 January 1858, 1.

One article suggested that converting the slaves to Christianity was an altogether good thing, not only for the salvation of the slaves' souls, but also because Christianity worked to "exalt and improve" slavery. "[T]he master [became] more attentive to the interests of the slave, and the slave more attentive to the interests of his master," according to the author. "This is practically the effect of the gospel whenever it is preached among us; and this precise effect we believe that the Author of the gospel intended that it should accomplish."[77] Christianity, according to this logic, made the slave a better slave, presumably for the impact that it would have on the master's control of the slaves more so than the slave's personal health.

Another article, describing a scene from a slave church, demonstrated how successful this method of oral religious instruction had become. In one Georgia black church, with the membership consisting of slaves along with oversight by a white pastor or local white church leaders, members had the authority to ask questions and carry out church discipline. Another slave church had broken off all connections to white churches, having hired a black pastor, ordaining black deacons, and maintaining a certain level of independence from other churches and denominations, although the white churches in town made sure the church remained in "good order and good conduct."[78] Another story told of a new house of worship built by the First African Church of Louisville. The sanctuary, "new, elegant and capacious," had the ability to house some 700 parishioners.[79] Slaves, therefore, had so taken to the notion of Christianity that they had been able to create their own churches with their own sanctuaries, every bit, the

[77] "Religious Condition of the Slaves," *SB*, 18 May 1853, 2.

[78] *Ibid*.

[79] "Religious Intelligence," *SB*, 2 November 1858, 3.

paper suggested, as nice as their white masters' churches.

Stories also covered the religious practices of the slaves. One, reprinted from the *New York Observer*, described a "Negro Baptism Scene" on the bank of the Savannah. The slaves sang various hymns "with one accord and one voice…in their own peculiarly pleasing style….[while] [t]heir happy faces beamed with a holy joy, as if rejoicing in the consciousness of souls redeemed." As the slave pastor spoke, the author claimed, "[N]ever have I been more affected than by the simple and heart-reaching words uttered by this uneducated yet eloquent black preacher." Even though the author claimed not to be a supporter of slavery, he nonetheless was a "witness [of] so much of joy, of happiness, of christian love, and may I not add of christian privileges, among this large concourse of colored people upon this Sabbath day."[80] The readers of the article heard of happy slaves, coming to the Christian faith and setting their lives on the right path.

Still another article described a wedding service performed by a black minister. As the crowd gathered around, the minister spoke to the groom, "[D]o you take her for your dearly beloved wife to await on her through sickness and through health, safe and be safe, holy and be holy, loving and be loving?" The line of questioning did not end there. "Do you love her mother? Do you love her father? Do you love her brothers? Do you love her sisters? Do you love her master? Do you love her mistress? Do you love God the best?" After receiving an affirmation from the groom, the minister turned to the bride and asked, "[W]homsoever stands fastly by your right side, do you take to be your dearly beloved husband, to wait on him through health, and through *conflution* [*sic*] safe and be safe, holy and be holy?" As before, the questioning continued, but with a noticeable

[80] "A Negro Baptism Scene," *SB*, 29 August 1855, 4.

absence. "Do you love his mother? Do you love his father? Do you love his brother? Do you love his sister? Do you love God the best?" Although there is an uncertainty of why the master and mistress question remained unasked of the bride, the wedding continued, and the minister pronounced them both man and wife "by the *Commandments of God*." Turning to the new couple, he said, "We shall *hopes* and trusting through God that you may live right, that you may die right, now and forever. Now, Mr. Jim, *slew* your bride." The service concluded with the singing of a hymn, "Plunged in a gulf of dark despair,/Ye wretched sinners are,' &c. Amen."[81] In this tale, Charleston Baptists had an inside look at the God-centered nature of the wedding vows for slave couples, as well as the love that the slave was required to have for all, even his wife's master and mistress.

A common charge against the South came precisely on the subject of marriage, how so often masters forcibly separated and sold husbands and wives, parents and children, to different plantations. The *Southern Baptist* suggested that these stories overstated the frequency of separation, and instead, most slave owners took great care to keep families intact and made provisions for those "rare" times when separation occurred. In response to an article carried in an Illinois newspaper concerning the abolitionist claim that the South did not honor slave marriage, the *Southern Baptist* asserted that the marriage union between slaves was indeed honored and governed by the church, not the state, thus seeming to give it some level of even higher meaning. Churches granted slaves whose spouses had been separated from them the freedom to

[81] "A Negro Wedding," *SB*, 12 May 1860, 1. Emphasis in the original. This same story was also carried in the Charleston Courier a few months prior to the publication in the *Southern Baptist*. (See "A Negro Marriage," *Charleston Courier*, 15 March 1860, 1. This issue actually ran on March 14, 1860, but the publishers mislabeled it as March 15.)

remarry, so long as there reunification was impossible. The correlation to this provision came because some states allowed for a individual to declare her spouse dead if she had been abandoned by him for five years. In that case, the newly declared widow could remarry without consequence. Slave marriage, according to the article, could claim the same protection in many ways as white marriage. However, the author claimed, this provision for remarriage rarely had to be used. As far as he knew, "Christian professors are decidedly averse to the separation of husband and wife [for gain] in the exchange of servants." Many noble masters throughout the South, "when about to remove from one State to another…made a sacrifice of value, rather than sunder this family relation."[82] While exceptions to the rule remained, slaves clearly, at least according to the *Southern Baptist*, enjoyed security in their lives, marriages, and everlasting souls.[83]

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[82] "Marriage of Slaves," *SB*, 15 August 1855, 2.

[83] While in theory slaves appeared to have the ability to remarry for abandonment or removal of the spouse, in actuality it seems that it was far from a simple process. In 1848, two issues came in front of the membership of First Baptist Church, Charleston, both involving slaves and both dealing with issues of abandonment. The first was Rose Porcher. With the permission of her parents, Jonas and Flora, both of whom were also members of First Baptist Charleston, Rose took up residence as the wife another man after she had been abandoned by her husband. When the church discovered that she was living as a wife of a new husband, they investigated the situation, and Jonas testified on his daughter's behalf. According to Jonas, efforts had been made to compel Rose's former husband to return, but he refused to do so. Unconvinced that enough had been done, the church voted on June 12, 1848, to excommunicate Rose on the grounds of adultery. The following October, the matter of Rose appeared again in front of the church. The Committee on Colored Members brought an update to the body, explaining that more effort had been made to convince the husband to return, but he refused to do and indeed had himself taken up with another wife. While the grounds for divorce seemed to have been sufficient, Rose was denied because she had not sought permission from the church to remarry prior to her cohabitation with the new man. Because of this, the church decided to carry forward with their original ruling and maintained the sentence of excommunication on Rose. (First Baptist Church Charleston Minutes, June 12, 1848 and October 16, 1848)

The second example came as a slave named George Heyward applied for a certificate of divorce because his wife's master had moved and therefore she had been taken from him. He testified to the Committee that she had been gone for two years and his master would not allow him to go and visit her. Because of this, George told them that he did not expect to ever see her again, and in light of that, he wanted to have permission to remarry. The church, on a motion by James Tupper, denied him permission. (First Baptist Church Charleston Minutes, June 12, 1848)

Snapshots such as these seem to suggest that while churches or religious leaders claimed to maintain a standard and simple process for slave marriages, the reality of the situation was far from simple.

Another story in the *Southern Baptist*, which came from the *Southern Christian Advocate*, the Methodist newspaper in Charleston, told of a Methodist communion service that the author attended, leaving him under the "conviction that many of [the slaves] were the children of God by spiritual regeneration." During this service filled with "heart-felt" piety, the church heard testimonies from those gathered. One member, John, claimed,

> Tongue can't 'spress my feelins when I hear de bell ring dis' morning. I think I feel like King David, when he say, "I was glad when dey say, let us go up to de house ob de Lord." My preacher, I lub my Jesus. I want to lub him wid all my heart, and sarb him wid all my might.

Another named Thomas asked, "Pray for me, dat God may make me a faithful man, and sabe me at last in heben." Nancy exclaimed, "I ain't ashamed to own my Lord. He is de friend of sinners. He lub me, and gib heself for me, and now prays for me in heben, and I ain't ashamed to speak a word for Master Jesus." No doubt bringing a smile to every slave owner's face, Jack summed up the rationale for how much better off the Africans were as slaves in the United States than as freemen in Africa.

> Me is one poor African. Me born in dat koontry. Never hear 'bout God and Jesus, and heben, till dey bring me to dis koontry. Here, missionary tell me 'bout Jesus. Jesus die to sabe poor Jack; and Jesus hear me, and forgib me sins. Now me happy. Now me lub Jesus.[84]

For readers, these words provided confirmation from the mouth of these black Christians that they much preferred the life of a slave in the United States to that of freedom in Africa. Slavery had set them free from their sin and unbelief, and the southerner could take pride in having been a part of God's providential plan of salvation for the souls of their slaves that remained in chains.

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[84] "A Negro Love Feast," *SB*, 23 July 1851, 1.

Another theme in the response came as the paper attempted to demonstrate that abolitionists exaggerated many of the "so-called" horrors of slavery. One of the most extreme forms of this argument appeared in an 1854 front page article that carried the snippet of the narrative of Captain Theodore Canot, a retired slave ship captain, explaining life on board these vessels and providing a corrective to the "alleged cruelties" of the voyage.[85] Canot began by assuring readers that a good captain selected only the finest of cargo—no disease or sickness would be allowed on board. Each slave next underwent a thorough preparation—including having heads' shaved, being branded if necessary, and receiving a departing "feast." "On the appointed day," Canot explained, "the barracoon, or slave-pen, is made joyous by the abundant 'feed which symbolizes the negro's last hours in his native country." Sailors placed the slaves into small vessels and transported to the ship. Once on board, they stripped the slaves naked, men and women, a precaution, Canot claimed, that was "indespensible; for perfect nudity, during the whole voyage, is the only means of securing cleanliness and health." In addition, the deckhands scrubbed and cleaned the ship daily so as to avoid any disease from spreading throughout the ship. "I am not aware," Canot said, "that the ship-fever, which sometimes decimates the emigrants from Europe, has ever prevailed in these African traders."[86]

On board, the slaves received two meals a day consisting of "rice, farina, yams, or beans, according to the tribal habit of the negroes." Those refusing to eat had their

[85] The article was a section of Canot's larger narrative, which was published in 1854 (Brantz Mayer, *Captain Canot; or Twenty Years of An African Slave* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1854). The snippet was carried in other papers as well, including the *New York Times* ("An African Slaver," *New York Times*, 27 September 1854). Italian by birth, Canot was raised in France and began his work as a slave trader in the 1820s, delivering most of his "cargo" to Cuba.

[86] "Life Aboard Slave Ships," *SB*, 13 September 1854, 1.

"appetite stimulated by the medical antidote of a 'cat.'"[87] For those who could not eat due to sickness, sailors took them from their quarters and handed them over to the infirmary. At the conclusion of the meal, sailors distributed pipes and tobacco to the slaves, allowing each to have a few whiffs. Once a week, the ship's barber shaved the slaves' beards and trimed their nails. During the day, slaves would be allowed to "converse freely," although the sexes still remained separated, and often they joined one another in African songs, enhancing the melodies with "extemporaneous tom-tom on the bottom of a tub or kettle." In the evenings, the second mate and boatswain stowed the slaves in their quarters, laying each one on their right side, "which is considered preferable for the action of the heart." Lying on the ship board naked, Canot suggested, was in no way barbarous. Instead, it connected the slaves to their African culture, where they did not "indulge in the luxury even of a mat or raw-hide." According to Canot, "Among the Mandingo chiefs—the most industrious and civilized of Africans,—the beds, divans and sofas are heaps of mud, covered with untanned skins for cushions, while logs of wood serve for bolsters! I am of the opinion, therefore, that emigrant slaves experience very slight inconvenience in lying down on the deck."[88]

The Canot story as run in the *Southern Baptist* lacked all of the horrors and cruelties that the northern abolitionists told. Discipline was used, but sparingly and only so that "every negro would [not] accommodate himself as if her were a passenger." In the end, the Captain said,

> These hints [as to life on board a slave ship] will apprise the reader that the greatest care, compatible with safety, is taken of a negro's health and cleanliness

[87] "Cat" most likely refers to flogging with a cat-of-nine-tails.

[88] Life Aboard Slave Ships," *SB*, 13 September 1854, 1.

> on the voyage. In every well-conducted slaver, the captain, officers and crew are alert and vigilant to preserve the cargo. It is their personal interest, as well as the interest of humanity, to do so.

The *Southern Baptist* did not suggest that the slave trade be reopened; it merely provided an alternative version of the middle passage for its readers. Charleston Baptists, therefore, could rest assured that the well-documented tales of horror aboard slave ships, the tales that "radical" abolitionists told, were, according to the paper, far more myth than truth and that the slaves' passage to the country, while not a pleasure cruise, was safe, secure, and ultimately in the slaves' best interest.[89]

Other articles demonstrated less extreme arguments and instead suggested that while some abuse in the system did exist, these abuses stood few and far between. The *Southern Baptist* stated that northern abolitionists delineated the "evils of the system of slavery" according to the following logic: "Slavery confers an authority upon the master which is liable to abuse: this authority sometimes *is* abused: this abuse is sinful: therefore, slavery is sinful: away with it out of the earth!"[90] Such flawed logic, the paper suggested, could also be used to argue for the annihilation of the institution of marriage.

> For instance, if women were never married, the many annoyances of domestic life, together with the conjugal oppressions and the conjugal infidelities, which have broken so many loving hearts, and peopled so many jails with the victims of justice, and defiled the annals of our country with so many dark spots, only to be washed away with blood;--such evils would never exist. Therefore, because these evils—whether necessarily or otherwise, it matters not—exist in connection with marriage, the institutions itself "is an immorality in practice and a heresy in doctrine."[91]

In this argument, the paper attempted to use the logic of the abolitionists against

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[89] *Ibid*.

[90] "Crusade Against Slavery," *SB*, 4 August 1852, 2. Emphasis according to the paper.

[91] *Ibid*.

themselves. If the system of slavery stood condemned because of the abuses of a small number of individuals, then likewise, the system of marriage should stand condemned because of various evil actions that take place in some marriages. On the other hand, God established marriage, and the abuses by a small number of individuals do not change the divine nature of the institution. The same went for slavery, explained the *Southern Baptist*.

The *Southern Baptist* also developed as one of its themes in the defense of slavery the argument the African lives, in fact, became better once they became slaves. In Edwin T. Winkler's opinion, slavery, like no other form of labor can, provided "for the wants of the laborer, imparting to him good, clothing, and shelter and defence, in sickness medicine, and in old age an asylum."[92] Judge O'Neal of South Carolina, in responding to charges leveled by Harriett Beecher Stowe concerning the legal treatment of slaves, claimed, "Generally, slaves in the South are treated with more kindness, have more comforts and more money of their own, than free servants in the North or in Europe."[93] Contrary to Stowe's assertion, they possessed legal protection under the law for unjustified beating or death. O'Neal gave two examples of the application of these laws. One hired overseer mercilessly beat a slave and was held liable for his actions, while another slave owner was put to death for murder his own slave.[94] The *Southern Baptist* provided its own example of how a grand jury indicted two women, Mrs. Aimes Dietz and Mrs. Eliza Dimitry, for treating a slave ill while she had been suffering from

[92] "The South and Slavery," *SB*, 4 September 1850, 1.

[93] "Slave Laws—Letter from Judge O'Neal," *SB*, 7 September 1857, 1.

[94] *Ibid*.

"worms" and eventually whipping her to death.[95] While at one time cruel overseers and masters may have been common, the paper claimed, by the 1850s this character of man was rare, and the care of the slave, in turn, became better.[96] In fact, one story quoted the *Charleston Medical Journal & Review*, pointing out how, according to census statistics, black slaves lived longer than their white masters. As J. D. B. DeBow explained,

> This is a fact pregnant with significance; proving conclusively, as it does, that the almost complete freedom from care, the lightness of his labor, and the physical comforts generally enjoyed by the slave, combine to increase the duration of his life, not only beyond that of the laboring white class, but even beyond the average of the white class of all conditions.[97]

The article went on to suggest that the difference in life span proved even more dramatic when one removed from the list the mulattoes "that exist in large numbers in the cities of the slave States."[98] As stories and commentaries such as these came across the pages of the paper, readers grew more and more convinced that slavery, far from being cruel o the slaves, instead provided them with a good life in the United States.

This concept of the good life of a slave was made even more dramatic as the *Southern Baptist* told tales of the horrors facing those who remained in Africa. According to Baptist missionary T. H. Bowen, various elements inside and outside of Africa had been attempting to reinstitute the slave trade, something that the paper hoped would not happen. Bowen described the various wars that had taken place between African tribes, most with the intent of capturing slaves for profit.[99] In the same issue that

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[95] "Murder of a Slave," *SB*, 28 February 1855, 3.

[96] "Slave Laws—Letter from Judge O'Neal," *SB*, 7 September 1857, 1.

[97] "The Longevity of Slaves," *SB*, 24 January 1855, 4.

[98] *Ibid*.

[99] "The Slave Trade in Africa," *SB*, 3 February 1857, 2; "The Slave Trade," *SB*, 19 May 1857, 2.

the story from Bowen ran, the paper included a small story from a New York newspaper about a slave ship that had captured some 400 Africans from the Congo in order to sell them into slavery. Although hotly pursued by the British navy, the slaver managed to get away. Out of the range of British guns, the story claimed, the captain of the slaver had an African brought up from the galley and hanged him for the British ship to see. The captain afterwards stood at the stern of the ship "fiddling" and watching the British ship grow ever more distant.[100] For those reading the articles, the horrors facing the Africans only solidified their belief that chains in America was much safer for their slaves than freedom in their homeland.

This belief was perhaps best summed up in an article that the editors included from the *Cincinnati Enquirer*.

> The only portion of the [African] race…which has obtained any intellectual or moral development, are those which have been taken from their servitude in Africa and placed under white masters; and if their native country is ever regenerated from its low and debased condition, it will be through the instrumentality of their American descendants returning there and founding a civilized empire upon its coasts. The African slave stands at the head of his race—his condition being conceivably better than those which have remained in slavery in their native jungles and wilds…."[101]

Even from the pages of a northern newspaper, with no sympathy toward slavery, Baptists in Charleston comforted themselves that their peculiar institution had elevated the status of a handful of Africans and eventually may transform all of Africa itself.

Along with these testimonies from the slaves concerning their religious conversion, other stories in the *Southern Baptist* demonstrated how slaves embraced their condition of servitude in the South. In 1855, the paper reprinted a story carried in the

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[100] "The Slave Trade Flourishing," *SB*, 3 February 1857, 4.

[101] "The African Race," *SB*, 29 July 1856, 4.

Savannah Republican, describing a scene in Norfolk, Virginia, as disease swept the town. In desperate need of aid, a plea went out from the city for nurses to travel to Norfolk, and among those who arrived were several slaves hired out by their master. "[O]ne might reasonably suppose," the *Republican* stated, "[the slaves] abandoned their comfortable homes for a laborious and perilous sojourn in a plague-stricken city, with reluctance, if not under compulsion." However, the slaves, instead of being forced to work, "entered cheerfully upon it, and seemed to feel as deep an interest…for the suffering whites of Norfolk, as did their more enlightened and Christian masters." The backhanded compliment notwithstanding, the story nonetheless attempted to cast aspersions on the belief of the "Northern traducers" that "the slave is the enemy of the white man."[102] Instead of their being racial or social tension, the slaves naturally cared for the white patients with no thought to their own harm. They embraced their role in the society and harbored no ill will against the race of their masters. Even further to this point, another edition carried on the front page a small blurb about a particularly entrepreneurial former slave. This gentleman, William Ellison, had purchased his own freedom. Since that time, he had saved enough to purchase a large cotton plantation of his own complete with fifty slaves.[103] In both stories, readers received a picture of slavery that suggested how many slaves harbored feelings only of care and compassion for southern whites, and in fact, some slaves strived to themselves become masters, thus the ultimate embrace of the southern slave culture.

A final theme in the paper arose as articles described the hypocrisy of the North in

[102] "Black Nurses for Norfolk—A Nut for Abolitionists," *SB*, 3 October 1855, 4.

[103] "A Colored Slaveowner," *SB*, 3 June 1856, 1.

regard to their treatment of slaves, black freemen, and white wage laborers. An 1854 edition of the *Southern Baptist*, ran a letter, reprinted from the *Mobile Tribune*, "written" by a slave to his wife, demonstrating disdain for North culture and their so-called "freedom." "I am sick of this country, and I want to get home," slave Allen Foster told his wife, Milley, "not that I have been mistreated, but because of the sickening scenes of poverty I so often meet with in this boasted land of 'Freedom and Plenty.'" Foster had been in New York, with his master, whom, it seemed, had gone to the North to recover his health. Although living in Sharon Springs, Foster and his master ventured for a few days to New York City, where, according to Foster, he saw "more evidences of destitution—more ragged, half clad, miserable, beggared people than [he] ever saw in Virginia or Alabama." He spoke with several of these people, only to discover that they could not find jobs nor had they friends who could help them locate employment. When some did "succeed in procuring employment," they were paid some eight dollars a month. The chambermaids in his hotel had a particular difficultly in that they could only make four dollars a month and that only during the travel season, which lasted three months. "God only knows," Foster wrote, "how they work through the winters, which I am informed are five times as cold as ours."[104]

Foster went on to tell the poor story of the porter at his hotel. A white man with a wife and two children, Foster claimed him to be the best porter he had ever seen. His

[104] "A Slave's Estimate of the Character and Condition of Northern Society," *SB*, 4 October 1854, 1. The *Southern Baptist* gives no indication how one slave who, according to the laws of the time, was supposed to be illiterate, could write a letter to be read by his wife, who was also slave and also supposed to be illiterate. Ironic as this letter is, the assumption on the part of the reader at the time most likely was that the letter was dictated by the slave and then read to his wife. Some 150 years later, a more likely scenario may have been that the slave never actually wrote the letter, rather it was created by an anonymous author as an attempt to convince the readers of the goodness of the slave system. If a slave actually dictated this to a white writer, then the candor of the letter is brought into question.

work load, though, shocked the slave. With around 200 guests at the hotel, the porter maintained a responsibility for all luggage, with some trunks weighing as much as 250 pounds. When he was not hauling luggage up and down the many floors, the porter went throughout the establishment trimming the lamps. At the end of the day, he then collected boots from throughout the hotel and blackened and shined them. As Foster observed,

> At the approach of rest's hour, when you and I, and all Southern slaves are slumbering at our ease, this poor man's lonely and most tedious task commences….Thus this fortunate Northern *freeman* (I say fortunate for the reason I see thousands worse fated) works and worries from "early dawn" to the "small hours" of the night.

As for compensation, the porter could only rely upon tips from the guest, which he often had to remind the guests of before receiving it. Foster stated, "Hence, I inferred, that the reward of his hard labor was the poor privilege of being permitted to beg for a support of himself and family."[105]

His views concerning the porter glowed compared to the others he met. He described the other employees at the hotel as the "filthiest, meanest, most woe begone bipeds" he ever met. He was shocked at the scene of a 15-year-old boy whose meager 75 cents, the product of many days' work, went to help the boy's "aged and destitute parents who were mainly dependent on his exertions" to live. In summing up the scene, this slave described perfectly the prevailing sentiment of the South concerning wage labor in the North.

> Talk about Southern slavery and Southern poverty—I declare that I have seen more of them since I came North than I ever before in all my life. Some people wonder that I should go back to Alabama, and deem it very strange that I do not avail myself of the offer of what they call *freedom*. On the other hand I have

[105] *Ibid.*

> hosts of acquaintances who envy me my fortune in life, and at this hotel alone are over a dozen who are anxious to go with me to Mobile.
>
> I would not exchange conditions with them for all the bribes and charms Abolitionism could offer me. What has ever been denied you or me that we wanted? Nothing, absolutely nothing, and God knows my masters have ever been my best friends.[106]

This slave of the South pitied the wage laborers of the North. In fact, Foster claimed that many of those wage laborers, some perhaps white, desired to leave their "freedom" in New York and live a life of slavery in the South, free from want of any need. It would seem that the system of southern slavery was so perfect that even poor northern whites wished they were as lucky as the southern blacks.

A commentary by the editors of the *Mobile Tribune* accompanied the letter written by Foster. The article spelled out precisely the conclusions that the reader of the article needed to take from the description of northern wage labor, and the *Southern Baptist* made sure to pass this along to its subscribers. These poor souls, although "[n]ominally free" had none of the freedoms of the typical southern servant. Instead, they lived a life of liberty "restrained by an unyielding necessity," always having to constantly "choose between the meanest servitude and hunger and misery leading to death." Waxing philosophical, the author began to describe the trap of the notion of freedom. The right to freedom for whites may allow them to vote or become President or travel as they will, but in the end, freedom only allows for continuous toil, along with "torment and discontent, ending at last in disappointed hopes." According to the editors,

> The negro has none of these cares. He is born an independent man. He has a master bound for his food, and raiment, and good treatment when he is sick. His work is done when the sun goes down, and the rest of the time is sleep, or a dance, or anything which he can manage to extract from the hours and the

[106] *Ibid.*

> watchfulness of his master, whose object is chiefly to restrain him within those rules which add to his good digestion and the other conditions of his happiness. The slave has no care, and this is better than freedom and the liberty to starve.[107]

Herein lies the summation of the southern view of slavery in the 1850s. Slavery benefited the slaves the most and was at worst a burden to the masters. It provided a comfortable life of ease for the slaves, whose only lot in life was to obey their master and receive, in turn, kind treatment. Those in the North who claimed slavery to be an evil institution only demonstrated their hypocrisy. Even an uneducated slave could realize the life of ease provided in the South, for in the wage-laboring North, the poor starved and the sick died. Seemingly nobody cared for their fellow man the way the master cared for his slaves.

As pointed out in the *Southern Baptists*, abolitionists claimed to seek the best for the Africans, but stories of the northern treatment of former slaves told a different tale. One 1854 article explained how a slave owner from Georgia opted to grant freedom to his slaves and also paid their way to leave the South for the supposedly friendly confines of the North. Hoping to make their home in Indiana or Illinois, the free slaves realized that their dreams would not come true when they discovered that the laws in these states prohibited free negroes from settling there. In a mocking tone, the paper asked, "Do not these States by their laws declare that the free African is worthless as a citizen, and thus justify the domestic relations which exist among us?"[108]

While the North accused the South of abusing the slaves trapped in the system, the South replied by pointing out the troubles with the northern economic system of wage

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[107] "Comments on the Above—A Negro's Account," *SB*, 4 October 1854, 1.

[108] "Free States and Free Negroes," *SB*, 30 August 1854, 2.

labor. In 1850, Edwin Winkler, a resident of Georgia at the time, sent a letter to the *Christian Chronicle*, in response to an editorial they had published over "Slavery and Southern Christianity." Winkler's words, which the *Southern Baptist* ran in November of that year, pointed out the discrepancies between emigrants in the North and slaves in the South.

> Let the amount and quality of the food consumed; the increase of the native population; the number of paupers and criminals in proportion to the population, leaving out of view all the foreign pauperism and crime, that emigrates to the Northern shores; the average duration of human life, and the value of our lands, as compared with the agricultural wealth of other nations, be investigated; and we have no doubt, that the result will, in the estimation of the North, as they have in that of the South, afford the most ample vindication of our system.[109]

By far, Winkler argued, the quality of life for the slaves exceeds that of any wage laborer in the North. Going on, he claimed that although the South had less wage laborers than in the North, those who did live in the South enjoyed better wages and had a higher value. While the North may see them as the "Yahoo of christendom," southern gentlemen have never treated these individuals with "a lack of courtesy or kindness." In 1854, the paper published a comparison article between the North and the South in an attempt to see if the morality of the North was indeed superior to the South as some claimed. Pulling from census records, the article stated that while the South has only 500,000 less individuals, they have over 1,000 more churches than the North and over 1,000 less criminals. "[Abolitionists] shamefully misrepresent the state of Southern society; and strangely ignore the true state of things among the people of the North," the article concluded.[110] An article published in 1855 suggested that in the small state of

[109] "Slavery and Southern Christianity," *SB*, 6 November 1850, 1.

[110] "The North and South Compared," *SB*, 26 July 1854, 2. The article lists the table below and claims that it is taken from the 1850 Census.

Rhode Island, some 57 cases of divorce were pending, a number that the paper said stood larger than "occurred either of voluntary or forcible marriage separations, in any three of the largest slave States, for the same time, among all their colored People." If the northern abolitionists wanted to complain about the abuses of slavery, the paper implied, they should first look to their own glaring problems. In a similar vein, the paper ran a small blurb in March of 1856 that reacted to a lecture given by William Lloyd Garrison, where he "displayed eleven yards of newspaper paragraphs of crimes at the South, in a few months." In response, the paper suggested that this same "length of infamy," as Garrison described it, "might be cut from the New-York papers in any one week."[111] An 1858 edition of the paper ran an article from the *New York Sun* that described the "vast amount of suffering" that existed in New York City. City jails, the article read, became

States	Population	No. of Churches	No. of Criminals
Maine	593,169	945	62
Massachusetts	994,514	1,475	301
N. Hampshire	317,976	626	77
Vermont	314,120	599	39
Connecticut	370,792	734	145
Rhode Island	147,545	228	24
New York	3,097,394	4,134	1,080
New Jersey	489,555	818	135
Pennsylvania	2,311,786	3,566	302
Delaware	91,532	180	6
Northern Total	**8,718,883**	**13,300**	**2,171**
Maryland	583,084	909	200
Virginia	1,421,661	2,383	188
North Carolina	869,039	1,795	14
South Carolina	668,507	1,182	19
Georgia	906,185	1,862	85
Alabama	771,623	1,373	73
Mississippi	606,523	1,016	81
Louisiana	517,762	306	160
Tennessee	1,002,717	2,014	187
Kentucky	982,405	1,845	141
Southern Total	**8,329,459**	**14,685**	**1,098**

[111] "Domestic News," *SB*, 14 March 1856, 3.

filled with "wretches" every night, so many that few could sleep full length on the floor. Those unlucky ones, whom the jails could not fit, found themselves crying on the streets, being forced to sleep in the open air. Interestingly, these homeless individuals were not the "usual drunken vagabonds."[112] Instead, they were among the hundreds of mechanics, unable to find any form of labor. Northern philanthropy, focused far too much on the evils of slavery in the South, overlooked the consequences of its own economic system. Indeed, between the two systems, the *Southern Baptist* argued, slavery remained fair, equitable, and charitable to every level of society.

Another aspect of the charge of northern hypocrisy came as the paper suggested that the North, far from being the innocent doves they claimed to be, actually profited in the early stages of the institution of slavery. An 1850 *Southern Baptist* editorial included comments made in the *Christian Review* by Dr. Williams of New York. Williams, in an attempt to stem the frustration associated with the debates surrounding the Compromise of 1850, suggested that both sides, not merely the South, were to blame for the hostility. Even though Williams professed to desire the elimination of slavery, the paper made sure to include those comments that condemned the North.

> Nor should the North forget, that the South bore true testimony in the taunting reminiscence, that the earlier generations in New England had much to do in bringing the African from his native shores, and vending him and his children's children to their Southern purchasers, and that it is not fluent and cheap reproach against the successors of the purchasers, on the part of the descendants of such shippers and venders, that will wash from the ancestral monuments the "smutches" of that filthy lucre, or exempt the beams and the walls of the family mansions so reared, and yet inherited by these accusers, from the clinging curse of unrighteous gain.[113]

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[112] "Destitution in New York," *SB*, 5 January 1858, 1.

[113] "The Union of the States," *SB*, 24 April 1850, 2.

According to the *Southern Baptists* editors, Williams, whom they labeled a moderate, did not "allow the justice of a single demand urged by the South." In spite of this, the paper ran Williams comments in the hope that it might shed some light on how some in the North were willing to admit to the past wrongs and to sit down in discussion with their southern brethren. An unwritten reason behind the inclusion was clear. The North may accuse the South of being evil for allowing slavery, but the North's ancestors, according to the paper, brought slavery to the country in the first place. Noticeably lacking in this history lesson was any connection of slavery to its origins in Virginia or the West Indies, but accuracy lay outside of the scope of this polemic. The point for the readers remained clear—the northern financial giants rose to power on the backs of the slave trade, and any accusation from the North should be directed right back to them.

The *Southern Baptist* made this point again in an 1854 front page article taken from the *Washington Sentinel*. As a "corrective," the article claimed that "Old and New England adhered to the slavery idea as long as any profit could be made from the slave trade." As profits ceased, "they were both open to new considerations." "In the United States," the article claimed

> the slavery discussion was initiated as a political movement. In the beginning it was not based on any pretence of philanthropy. After 1808, no further profit could be made from the slave trade in the United States. The climate of the north was found to be uncongenial to the African, and the northern States got rid of slavery—not by manumitting the slaves, nor by promptly abolishing slavery, but by enacting laws which gave freedom to their slaves at specified times and at specified ages. As that time approached, or as the slave approximated the age at which the law would make him free, his value diminished and he was taken to the south and sold into perpetual bondage. Avarice was too strong for spurious philanthropy then as well as now.[114]

Far from merely making a profit at the beginning of the slave trade, the article accused

[114] "Negro Slavery," *SB*, 16 August 1854, 1.

the North of making a profit on both ends of slavery. They made money by bringing slaves to the states from Africa, and when their value dropped in the North, they made another profit by selling them into slavery in the South. Readers of the article saw a sinister conspiracy lying behind northern abolitionism. According to the article, "Having sold their slaves to the people of the south and got rid of slavery by a profitable process, the north was in a position to take a new departure with regard to that institution." In fact, one blurb ran a figure obtained from the *New York Tribune* that claimed that the State of New York alone had obtained some $8 million through the slave trade, and by 1857, that money profited annually around $17 million.[115] Through "false statements and pretended piety,"[116] the North condemned slavery once they had made all the money they could out of the institution, and through this condemnation, they worked to destroy the economic system of the South. The North, *Southern Baptist* subscribers could rest assured, could not be trusted.

Southern Victimization in the *Southern Baptist*

Tension between the North and the South continued to build throughout the 1850s, and the pages of the *Southern Baptist* provided readers with a view of this tense relationship. In particular, the paper reinforced a sense of victimhood at the hands of unwarranted northern hostility and inaccurate portrayals.

In 1849, Boston's *Watchman & Reflector*, published a scathing editorial concerning the complaints of the southern states during the debates surrounding the Wilmot Proviso and the eventual Compromise of 1850. The *Southern Baptist* ran this

[115] "The African Slave Trade," *SB*, 11 August 1857, 4.

[116] "Negro Slavery," *SB*, 16 August 1854, 1.

article for its subscribers and provided its own response to the northern viewpoint. "South Carolina," the *Watchman & Reflector* said, "[t]his little State of a few white men and many blacks, like the manager of a theatre, is always getting up novelties for the people to laugh at." With chivalry and southern patriotism as the theme of these novelties, the Boston paper suggested that no serious support for her claims existed in the Union. Instead, contempt reigned for the state as well as for the state's most famous leader, John Calhoun, and his "platform of what he facetiously called *States Rights* [their emphasis]." Of particular note, the paper pointed out stories of how the state celebrated the Fourth of July in its papers, by repudiating the Declaration of Independence, using the "Arch Nullifer's Disunion Address" as a substitute, and giving speeches far and wide of the need to rise up against perceived northern aggression.

> The dinner sentiments were, perpetual slavery, extension of slavery, no Wilmot Proviso, no Union, and "Down with the North!" We mention this last exhortation that our readers may have a chance to join in the laugh. It is altogether probable that the Union will stand yet awhile in spite of South Carolina madmen.[117]

Readers could clearly sense the disdain felt against the South in Boston. Northerners believed those in South Carolina to be "madmen," even including the great Calhoun himself in this accusation. Their reactions to major issues such as the Wilmot Proviso were seen as laughable at best and hypocritical at worst, and above all, this Boston paper suggested that South Carolina stood alone by herself and against the true meaning of Union.

The *Southern Baptist* felt the need to defend the honor of the State and did so in the same mocking style of the *Watchman & Reflector*. "Citizens of South Carolina!" the paper exclaimed,

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[117] "The End of South Carolina," *SB*, 25 July 1849, 2.

> our glory hath departed—the *Watchman & Reflector*, which centers itself in the "wisdom of a score and a *half* of *free*, *sovereign* and *independent* States" (how grandiloquent!) has pronounced our sentence, and we have nothing more to expect but the skull cap and straight-jacket."

Explaining how the Boston paper suggested that South Carolina make its way to an asylum, the editors of the *Southern Baptist* cried out for mercy and also asked "how many of her white *freemen* find the like refuge in sickness or old age?" By including stories like this one, along with biting commentary, the *Southern Baptist* provided a vision of northern sectionalism, complete with elitist commentators who gave little regard for southern honor and even less regard for the poor in their own neighborhoods.

The *Watchman & Reflector* and the *Southern Baptist* continued its war of words into the following year. The former accused the latter of losing its temper, while the southern paper claimed the northern group as the true agitator. Indeed, B. C. Pressley, the editor of the *Southern Baptist*, a vocal secessionists, and sub-treasurer of the United States, based in Charleston,[118] claimed that for a long time, papers such as the *Watchman & Reflector* had "almost regularly contained language exquisitely adapted to outrage our sensibilities and 'excite our ire,'" to quote the northern paper. In continuing the claim of innocence, Pressley gave a list designed to demonstrate the audacity of the northern aggression.

> When our paper becomes the regular vehicle of abuse against the North; when we industriously hunt up, and parade before our readers with evident gusto, specimens of Northern wickedness and meanness; when we advocate the exclusion of Northern Ministers from our Pulpits; when we treat our readers to weekly showings up of such as Hale and Chase, and Giddings, and such poor demagogues as Seward, just as North religious papers are ridiculing Mr. Clemens, Mr. Foote, Mr. Davis, and even that unsullied patriot Mr. Calhoun; when, in short, the Baptist breathes the spirit of the Reflector, and follows its example, then will

[118] For brief biography on B. C. Pressley, see U. R. Brooks, *South Carolina Bench and Bar* (Columbia, SC: The State Company, 1908), 235-36.

> we acknowledge its right to catechize us in reference to our being "infected with the foul spirit of disunion."[119]

Several months later, Pressley's furor remained as his tone seemed to take on the character he accused the *Watchman & Reflector* of having. Pressley claimed that he did not intend to turn the *Southern Baptist* into a political organ, but, he asserted, "The spirit that would overthrow our Constitution and convert our Union into a tremendous machine of oppression and injustice, would, if allowed its full sweep, soon degrade religion into an odious fanaticism." Continuing on, he derided northern abolitionism for "setting up individual notions of justice and humanity, against the morality of the Bible." Pressley described the growing abolitionist fanaticism and saw only one way to protect the South from inevitable doom.

> How then is this evil to be removed? How are we to stop the mouths or palsy the hands of those who persecute us? We know of no cure for religious madness, the world has never discovered a remedy for fanaticism. But we can withdraw ourselves from its influence….We can do politically what we Baptists have already done religiously, that is, agree to separate….Freedom of conscience is the birthright of the Baptist. We have never persecuted others and will submit to persecution from none.

Written in the months following the Compromise of 1850, Pressley claimed to see the writing on the wall and told his readers that the concessions to the South would never be honored by the North and the work at a peaceable solution only increased "slavery agitation." The Constitution, the document that created and sustained the Union, Pressley pointed out, was being ripped apart by those in the North who suggested a higher law than the Constitution governed the land, or who claimed that "if our Constitution is too rigid to yield *to the expanding convictions* of the human mind…then it will be rent and demolished by a power greater than itself." The hand of the South had been forced, and

[119] "Union and Disunion," *SB*, 13 February 1850, 2.

Pressley made the key issue at hand clear, "[t]hat issue is *secession* or degradation, and with our degradation and destruction of our institutions, fanaticism triumphs and revelation yields to a higher rule of morality."[120]

Not too surprising, the following year, Pressley left the editorship of the *Southern Baptist* to help establish and edit a new newspaper known as the *Southern Standard*, whose object stood as the "advocacy of a Southern Confederacy," claiming it to be the "only hope" of the South.[121] In the announcement, the editorial board of the *Southern Baptist* stated that they had regretted, as did Pressley, the turn into the "arena of political strife" that the paper took. Claiming that Pressley felt his political commentary was a "necessity," the paper seemed to indicate that not every reader appreciated the new tone of the paper, thus leaving one to suspect that Pressley may have been asked to leave as much as he decided to help begin a separate paper.[122] Tellingly, after his departure the paper rarely recaptured Pressley's intense disdain for the North, although it continued to cast the North in a negative light whenever it could.

The commentary surrounding Pressley's departure highlighted a tension that many antebellum southern ministers faced when dealing with political issues. On the one hand, a paper like the *Southern Baptist* seemed to have little problem with providing information on a variety of political topics, especially those that perpetuated a sense of southern victimization by the North. On the other hand, they attempted to avoid overt

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[120] "Secession and the Fugitive Slave Law," *SB*, 23 October 1850, 2.

[121] "Prospectus of The Southern Standard," *SB*, 9 July 1851, 3. See also William L. King, *The Newspaper Press of Charleston, S.C.: A Chronological and Biographical History, Embracing a Period of One Hundred and Forty Years* (Charleston, S. C.: Edward Perry, 1872), 159-63).

[122] "The Southern Standard," *SB*, 9 July 1851, 2. Even though Pressley did leave as the editor of the paper, he remained heavily involved with the *Southern Baptist* as well as the Southern Baptist Publication Society, the Charleston Baptist Association, and First Baptist, Charleston.

endorsements or commentaries on political issues. For example, a June 1848 editorial discussing the upcoming presidential election, warned of the damage that can occur when political advocacy infiltrates the church, damaged that included suspicion, jealously, hatred, and "deep seated scars." According to the author, "When the children of God mingle in the contests of political feud, Zion mourns that her gates are desolate, that her wells are broken down."[123] Several years later, Winkler provided an editorial in directed toward the political activities of northern clergy. "We say that this is an unjustifiable stretch of clerical power," Winkler wrote, referring to the claim made by the *New York Independent* that such political commentaries found precedence in the Bible. He claimed that the example of the Old Testament prophets held no connection to the United States ministers since the prophets worked under a theocracy, not a democracy, and that they were "guided by immediate inspiration, and that their functions have ceased forever." Instead, the ministers of their time were "commissioned to declare not political principles, but saving truths.—The sphere of their labor is the individual, not the national, conscience."[124] For Winkler and other likeminded ministers in the South, they walked a careful line between maintaining a distance from the political realm and also serving as staunch advocates of the South and its social structure. It seems as if this balance was kept by their ability to perpetuate the image of the godless North, as symbolized by the atheistic abolitionists, and the image of the god-fearing South, symbolized by its allegiance to the Bible and its endorsement of slavery. As long as they maintained this dichotomy and discussed the North in this light, then southern ministers rationalized their

[123] "The Presidential Election," *SB*, 21 June 1848, 2.

[124] "The Northern Clergy," *SB*, 10 May 1854, 2.

political commentary as not being political—it became theological or religious or spiritual. When the tone changed, and the discussion turned from being quasi-theological to being overtly political, as was the case with Pressley's commentaries, then the southern ministers began to feel uncomfortable, thus causing Pressley to step down in his role with the *Southern Baptist*.

Even with Pressley's absence, however, the examples of the southern victimhood kept coming. In 1852, the paper ran excerpts from an article in the *New York Times* concerning slavery, noting the article's conciliatory tone as a step in the right direction. However, lest they should be drawn into trust through flattery, the *Southern Baptist* reminded its readers not to forget the "savage war cries" that emanated from the North "even while we listen with comparative gratification to the fraternal greetings into which they have been subdued."[125] Two years later, the paper ran two blurbs concerning the actions of the legislature of Connecticut. One resolution passed by that body censured Senator Isaac Toucey for voting in favor of the Nebraska Bill, while another resolution nullified the Fugitive Slave Law within their state.[126] An 1854 paper carried a front-page reprint of an article in the *Richmond Examiner* that took to task an article written in the *New York Tribune*. The *Tribune* article claimed that the South did very little in connection with the American Revolution, and instead, a northern state such as Massachusetts provided nearly 83,000 men while South Carolina only gave 6,000. The *Richmond Examiner* provided a rebuttal against the "monstrous absurdities of fact and theory," showing the number of 83,000 to be fictitious and suggesting that only one

[125] "The Slavery Question," *SB*, 24 November 1852.

[126] "Telegrams of the Week," *SB*, 5 July 1854, 3.

military giant, Nathaniel Greene, ever came from New England, while the South produced the likes of George Washington, Daniel Morgan, Francis Marion, William Henry Harrison, Winfield Scott, Zachary Taylor, Edmund Gaines, Thomas Jesup, and Andrew Jackson. Adding insult to injury, the author claimed that New England's true legacy in war lay in the hands of failures and traitors such as William Hull, Aaron Burr, and Benedict Arnold. In the end, the article stated, "this kind of low bully talk…has become so common of late years in the North, and is so cowardly, so mean, so base, so hateful, and so entirely unsupported by facts, that we must expose it or die of indignation."[127]

Another example made its way into the paper in 1857 as the *Southern Baptist* attempted to expose an outrageous set of lies perpetrated by the *New York Examiner*. According to the northern paper, a Presbyterian minister who remained nameless had recently left his pulpit in Virginia after forty years of ministry because of he could no longer handle the evils of slavery. Among his charges, the pastor claimed that any minister of the Gospel was only allowed to preach on a small number of biblical truths because he dare not call out such grievous sin as master's impregnating slaves, selling their slave children, committing incest with their daughters who are slaves, and selling and buying infant slaves by the pound of human flesh. "[F]rom nearly twenty years' acquaintance," the editor of the *Southern Baptist* claimed, "…not one of the…items have been verified in any one of the hundreds of churches within our knowledge."[128] Here, as elsewhere, the North appeared as the aggressor, casting lies and aspersions against an

[127] "The North and the South in the Revolution," *SB,* 2 August 1854, 1.

[128] "Church North and South," *SB,* 12 May 1857, 2.

innocent victim, the South.

Continuing this theme of southern censorship, the *Watchman & Reflector* ran another article chastising the South, which the *Southern Baptist* made sure to pass along to its subscribers. Censorship lay at the heart of the latest accusation as the Boston paper discussed "Liberty in the South" and the denial of free speech to individuals who disagreed with the institution of slavery, as seen in the case of Rev. Mr. Boardman of the Barnwell Church. The *Southern Baptist* at first suggested that the *Watchman & Reflector* paid little attention to the facts of the case, as had been demonstrated as being misrepresented in a number of northern newspapers. The paper then went out to accuse the *Watchmen & Reflector*, as well as other abolitionist papers, such as the *New York Independent*, of themselves denying liberty of speech in their publications. "There has never been a time," the editors claimed, "when the religious press, especially in the Baptist denomination in the North was less independent of popular prejudice and passion than it is at this day." Going on, they stated that the widespread publication of "cheap books and cheap papers" had flooded the North with falsehoods about the South. Lamenting this occurrence, the editors believed that "a generation [was] growing up with a settled prejudice against the South," which has been "placed in a libeled and defensive position from the first."[129]

Another episode of the "crusade" against the South occurred during the the debates within the American Tract Society. From 1856-1858, the *Southern Baptist* carried stories of a growing anti-slavery and, in turn, anti-southern spirit within the American Tract Society (ATS), an inter-denominational society who employed travelling

[129] "Liberty in the South," *SB*, 7 October 1856, 2.

colporteurs to distribute Christian books and tracts throughout the United States. A Boston branch of the group in 1856 decided to push the publication of anti-slavery literature through the ATS.[130] In the years that followed, the *Southern Baptist* carried article after article detailing the passage of resolutions against the abolitionist groups, threats of the withdrawal of southern funds, rumors of anti-slavery tracts, pleas for peace within the ATS, calls for southern disassociation from the ATS, reports of the executive board of the ATS rejecting the anti-slavery tracts, resolutions from other northern branches against the ATS executive board decision, and a final resolution by the South Carolina branch thanking "Almighty God that this great Association may still speed on its angelic mission, bringing thousands every year to their first knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus…."[131] Although the episode ended well for the South, the inclusion of stories such as these reminded readers of the continuing hostility northern states harbored for the South, even among those who claimed to be interested only in spreading the Gospel.

In the midst of the ATS controversy, the *Southern Baptist* provided a front-page commentary describing how "the engrossing spirit of the North [had] now become anti-*Southern*, fully as much as anti-*slavery*." Subscribers read that "multitudes" in the North, especially those in religious circles, claimed that southerners were "great sinners" and that "the religion of Southern Christians [was] vain," and, in turn, the only proper

[130] "Sectionalism," *SB*, 24 June 1856, 2.

[131] Quote taken from "American Tract Society," *SB*, 22 June 1858, 2. For the various articles covering the controversy, see also "Report and Resolutions," *SB*, 7 July 1857, 1; "American Tract Society," *SB*, 21 July 1857, 2; "The Abolition Tract Society," *SB*, 18 August 1857, 1; "American Bible Society," *SB*, 15 September 1857, 1; "American Tract Society," *SB*, 29 September 1857, 2; "The American Tract Society," SB, 3 November 1857, 2; "American Tract Society: The Chicago Congregational Association," *SB*, 10 November 1857, 2; "American Tract Society," *SB*, 5 January 1858, 2; "Why I Love the American Tract Society," *SB*, 19 January 1858, 1; "The American Tract Society," *SB*, 8 June 1858, 2; and "The

response the North has for the South is to "belittle and degrade" them. "We do not hesitate to say," the paper read,

> and we do it without a feeling of invidiousness, that there is more of an evangelical, scriptural, and spiritual tone of piety among this portion of people, than among an equal portion of the same or any other denomination, in the restless and crowded regions of the North. The conscience as well as the patriotism of the Southern Christians may be trusted.

Interestingly, instead of continuing in its degradation of the North, the commentary suggested that the "causes of turbulence," causes which originated with the North, would eventually find their conclusion in the Providence of God, and the best prescription to follow was that of Martin Luther, "to take the forty-sixth Psalm, and sing away [their] troubles." Even though the author attempted to end on a spiritual note, the point of the article remained clear—northern forces stood opposed to the South, forces that shared little of the South's Christian character or commitment.

The northern hostility felt by the South came through clearly in the days that followed John Brown's October 1859 raid at Harpers Ferry. The paper carried dispatches describing the event, including a description of John Brown as being confident in the "goodness of God" to deliver him from all harm because "God has always been at his side."[132] Just a few months after the violence, the *Southern Baptist* included an excerpt from the *Boston Courier* that expressed southern worries for northern "fanaticism." The excerpt came from a letter that Richard Fuller, a South Carolinian serving as a pastor in Baltimore. Fuller sent the letter to Edward Everett, whom he engaged in a relatively friendly debate concerning Everett's charges against slavery in the South. Fuller began

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Rejected Tract," *SB*, 29 June 1858, 1.

[132] "The Harper's Ferry Insurrection," *SB*, 25 October 1859; "The Harper's Ferry Trouble," *SB*, 1 November 1859, 2 (quote taken from second article).

his letter in reference to Brown's violence in western Virginia. Believing that perhaps too much has been made out of the one act, Fuller nonetheless pointed to the subsequent northern reaction as reason for worry on the part of all southerners. As Fuller stated, "the sympathy with such a deed of violence and blood, which has been manifested at the North—can any patriot, any good man, observe this without amazement and alarm?" Fuller continued, expressing concern with political leaders "who openly avow their hostility to the South," yet at the same time were "utterly ignorant to the condition of things at the South." How could these individuals dare to claim any authority in the affairs of the South, he questioned, because "a man in New England has no more right to interfere with the institutions of Virginia than he has to interfere with those of England of France."[133] In closing the letter, Fuller expressed his deep love of the Union. "I regard the Union as the greatest blessing," he claimed. "Hitherto I have smiled at all croaking about disunion; now I feel that the Union is in imminent danger." Turning to the Scriptures, Fuller predicted the inevitable outcome of the continuing hostilities.

> It is written in the Book of Genesis, that when Rebecca, in danger of expiring, cried to God to know the cause of the strange pangs by which her frame was convulsed, the angel replied, "Thou carriest two hostile nations in thy bosom." Unless Heaven interposes, this land must be rent and torn by two nations burning with fiercest hostility, and engaged in a fratercidal [*sic*] and most horrible warfare.[134]

By 1860, the writing was on the wall, and Fuller and Baptists like him knew it. Perhaps some held out hope that cooler heads would prevail, men who were "worthy citizens of this great and glorious Republic who would "rally to the cause of the Union" and, in turn, rescue the nation from the coming war. In the end, though, Fuller knew that would not

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[133] "Christianity and Patriotism," *SB*, 21 January 1860, 4.

[134] *Ibid*.

happen.

The inclusion of this letter by Fuller, as well as the other articles that discussed northern hostility, only worked to reinforce a sense of victimhood within the mind of the readers of the *Southern Baptist*. The South stood content to live its life as it always had, but the North wanted it to change. The South believed that the Constitution afforded them protection, but the North wanted to move beyond the letter of the document to the higher law behind the document. The South desired to live in peace, but the North rallied behind the actions of a madman and his band of abolitionist raiders. Clearly, the Charleston Baptists believed, they were not the aggressors but merely the victims at the hands of bloodthirsty northern hypocrites, bent on the destruction of the southern way of life.

The week following Fuller's letter, the paper included an excerpt from the *Due West Telescope* which described a conversation between two northern Methodist ministers and Henry Clay, just weeks prior to Clay's death in 1852. Clay spoke of the danger facing the Union with the rise of a spirit in both sections of the country, a spirit that would eventually cause the states to divide "not into two, but into half a dozen little petty republics or despotisms as the case may be." The hosts of the great compromiser reminded the statesman of all of the past hostilities, and how each time, the country came back together. "Ah," replied Clay, "that was before the rise of modern Abolitionism. Fanaticism cannot be controlled, especially religious fanaticism." Due to the presence of staunch abolitionists who refused to compromise, Clay saw no solution in sight. The only potential hope, unfortunately, had already been lost.

> The churches of the country [previously] stood together, and in their great assemblies they drew the bonds of union and brotherhood together. Now, most of

> them have been rent asunder, and they are acting as dividers rather than to bind the country together….I tell you, that this sundering of religious ties, which hitherto bound our people together, I consider to be the greatest source of danger to our country.

Continuing on, Clay challenged the ministers to partner with politicians and steer the country away from the "high party excitement" and the "violent men on both sides." "If you preachers will only keep the churches from running into excesses and fanaticism, I think the politicians can control the masses." The article concluded with commentary, challenging the readers to heed Clay's warning and asking whether or not Clay would have any imitators, either in the North or in the South.[135]

Much like the Fuller letter, the inclusion of this article placed the blame for the tension at the hands of "modern Abolitionism" and "religious fanaticism." However, the article also showed a sense of hesitation on the part of the paper. While the South was indeed a victim of northern forces, the South needed to respond properly and not rush into secession. This tension between peace and secession had precedent within the pages of the *Southern Baptist*. In fact, with the exception of B. C. Pressely's editorship of the paper, readers found articles appealing for peace scattered throughout the 1850s. In January of 1856, a brief article described the foolish discussion of "dissolving the Union" by "malcontent political agitators." Instead of listening to the ranting of those in Washington, the author claimed that it was the role of the people to decide whether or not to "unmake as they made the Government."[136] A few months later, an appeal by the clergy of Richmond made its way into the *Southern Baptist*, as they called for a calming to the political violence. "The flames of civil war are kindling our borders," the letter

[135] "The Greatest Source of Danger," *SB*, 28 January 1860, 3.

[136] "Dissolving the Union," *SB*, 9 January 1856, 4.

stated. "As American citizens we are humbled, and as Christians, we are deeply mortified and grieved at the state of things." The clergy asked all of their fellow citizens to spend the fourth of July as a day of public and private prayer "to the God of nations that he would mercifully restrain the angry passions of men…[and] restore the harmony which once existed among the States of this Union…."[137] Unfortunately, it appeared that few heeded the call to pray for peace.

Conclusion

While this sense of tension between secession and peace appeared sporadically in the 1850s, by 1860, it was all but absent as the churches and the politicians of the South remained convinced that northern interests were working against their way of life. Over the course of the decade, newspapers such as the *Southern Baptist* continued to proclaim a southern nationalism within its pages. Readers viewed the North, especially radical abolitionists such as Stowe and Beecher, as a threat to the southern way of life. These agitators for disunion and so-called atheists sought only the elimination of slavery and the destruction of the southern way of life. In response to these aggressors, the paper reminded its readers of the divine sanction of slavery and how this peculiar institution helped to maintain a peaceful South. To drive this point home, examples of social conditions in the North, wrought with crime and poverty, poured from the pages. No reader could walk away without a sense that the northern way of life was dangerous and ultimately chaotic. As the 1860 election grew closer, the sense of southern victimization became stronger. The paper told stories of the way in which the North perceived the South as sinners and backwards. This sense of victimization grew even more following

[137] "Appeal of the Clergy of Richmond," *SB,* 15 July 1856, 1.

the raid at Harper's Ferry. The lack of northern outrage convinced the South that the die had been cast. The South stood as a nation unto itself, separate and superior to the North. The only response to the North seemingly had to be secession.

Chapter Three

Evangelical Providentialism in the *Southern Baptist—Pestilence and War*

Deny it not! there is a God,
Who watches o'er the earth,
By whose almighty power 'twas formed
And ushered into birth;
His pow'r is felt in every clime
Wherever man has trod,
And all His works proclaim and chime—
"There is—there is a God!"[1]
-C.N. Pine

On a Wednesday morning in August 1848, subscribers to the *Southern Baptist* newspaper found a familiar sentiment on the front page. C. N. Pine's poem, "There is God," provided an encouraging reminder of a belief that many already held firm in their hearts—that above all things, God reigns. The poem, seven stanzas in length, described how God's providential hand could be seen in the "mountain's low'ring peaks," heard in the "ocean's roar," and felt through the "whisp'ring zephyr." The final three stanzas, though, turned from describing the majestic reign of God over his creation to describing his reign on a much more personal level.

When death, with stealthy step, has come
In all his dreaded gloom,
And taken from our happy home
A loved one to the tomb;
And when we've seen that lov'd one laid
Beneath the silent sod,
Has not the bleeding bosom said—
"There is—there is a God!"

When, in adversity's dark hour—
When love of earth has sped,
And earthly pleasures, and their pow'r
To please the heart, have fled;
Or when, in hopeless grief, we've groaned

[1] "There is a God," SB, 28 August 1848, 1. The poem was taken from Neal's *Saturday Gazette*.

Beneath affliction's rod,
Has not the heart, in silence owned—
"There is—there is a God!"

Though unbelieving skeptics rail
Against Almighty Pow'r,
The courage of their hearts will fail,
When comes the trying hour;
When death, with unrelenting grasp,
The feeble form has bow'd
Upon its final couch, they gasp—
"There is—there is a God!"

The believer in God could feel confident in the divine presence regardless of the circumstances. The death of a loved one or even the pain of affliction or adversity stood as nothing but reminders for the Christian that God graciously ruled. In fact, the very presence of death or suffering seemed to have been authored by the same God that formed the mountains and controlled the wind. Yet instead of fearing a God of such actions, the poet, and in turn the *Southern Baptist*, encouraged readers to rejoice and see both creation and afflictions as a sign of his continual presence.

The image of an ever-present God continually authoring all aspects of life appeared throughout the pages of the *Southern Baptist* in the years leading up to the Civil War. Readers discovered that "[b]y his permission and appointment, each and every event has its own part in the general plan," and that "nothing shall happen, but what is to contribute to the grand design."[2] Another issue ran a quote by Horace Bushnell, a Connecticut Yankee, who proclaimed that every individual "fill[ed] a place in the great everlasting plan of God's intelligence."[3] They all were a part of God's great design, and

[2] "Science and Truth," SB, 21 September 1858, 2

[3] "Every Man's Life a Plan of God," SB, 26 October 1858, 1. The Methodist *Southern Christian Advocate* carried a similar concept in their article, "Providence of God in Minute Events," as it used Psalm 65 to describe how God oversees every aspect of a man's daily life by "governing the grand phenomena of nature" (*Southern Christian Advocate*, 1 October 1852, 1).

no little event occurred without God's approval.

To illustrate this point further, the *Southern Baptist* ran an article copied from the *New England Puritan* on its front page in the fall of 1848, describing the "little accidents" that had set into motion all of the revolutions in Europe earlier in the year. It claimed that the revolution in France began with an accidental gunshot, as did the one in Prussia. Likewise, an errant shot from the crowd triggered the revolution in Naples, and the Austrian revolt started with the accidental breaking of a palace window.[4] According to the author, "Now in these accidents, so called, none but an atheist can fail to see the hand of God."[5] Rejecting the idea that God had only a general providence over the world, meaning that God merely put laws into place and allowed the creation to carry on at will, the article stated, "It is difficult to see on what principles men reason, when they allow Providence to take care of the world, but not the things of the world." God, therefore, exercised a particular providence over the universe, overseeing the tiniest details according to his purposes. These purposes included not just for the care of a sparrow or the healing of the sick, but also the beginnings of revolution, bloodshed, and the deaths of thousands of people, all of which took place because God willed it to be so.

God's providential care remained a core belief in the life of southern Baptists, so much so that the first seminary established by the convention in the spring of 1858, located in Greenville, South Carolina, included the concept of providence in its essential articles of faith. Every professor at the seminary pledged to maintain these articles and teach according to them; otherwise, the trustees would have the right to remove the

[4] It should be noted that these simplistic explanations for the beginnings of the revolution are not entirely accurate. For a more detailed look at the revolutions in Europe during 1848, see Mike Rapport, *1848: Year of Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 2009).

professor from the classroom. Readers of the *Southern Baptist* discovered the required guidelines in the issue that ran the week following the adoption of the articles by the Southern Baptist Convention. Articles one through three dealt with the Scriptures, God, and the Trinity, respectively, while article four discussed the issue of providence:

> God, from eternity, decrees or permits all things to come to pass, and perpetually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and all events; yet so as not in any wise to be the author or approver of sin, nor to destroy the free will and responsibility of intelligent creatures.[6]

The statement echoes the sentiments represented by Baptist theologian J. L. Dagg.[7] Indeed, Dagg's *Manual of Theology* served as the standard textbook for all students in the seminary, and the view of providence as reflected in the above statement and in Dagg's work shaped the mindset for Baptist ministers throughout the South. According to Dagg, "no event comes to pass, which is not under the control of God; and that it is so ordered by him as to fulfill his purpose."[8] For Baptists, God alone was master of the universe, directing every event according to his divine script.

An adherence to the idea of providentialism stood as an unquestioned reality for many evangelicals throughout the South. As historian John Boles suggests, the precarious nature of life and the mystery that it held pushed evangelicals to look toward an "omniscient and omnipotent Providence" as orchestrating everything.[9] According to Boles, this concept provided believers with "a way of explaining both the highs and lows

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[5] "The Little Accidents or God's Particular Providence," SB, 27 September 1848, 1.

[6] "Southern Theological Convention," SB, 11 May 1858, 2. See discussion of J.L. Dagg's views concerning God's involvement in evil in chapter one.

[7] See discussion on Dagg in chapter one.

[8] *Ibid*., 128.

[9] John B. Boles, *The Irony of Southern Religion* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 17.

of everyday life—birth and death, joy and tragedy, sickness and health—and the otherwise inexplicable ways of both nature and nations—peace and war, good times and bad, calm weather and storms."[10] Samuel Watson writes that providentialism became a "pervasive explanatory idiom" with an "interpretative power [that] was unmatched."[11] Drew Gilpin Faust points out that this explanatory function of religion provided the ultimate sense of understanding: "God, not they, in their view was the Great Narrator, humans had only to uncover his stories and to place them in the context of the broader tale of Christian sacrifice and salvation."[12] Providentialism, therefore, was one of the most powerful theological concepts for southern Christians when it came to their daily living.

A strong belief in God's providence was not merely a southern doctrine. It had already been woven into the fabric of the nation as early as colonial times when Puritans took special aim to understand their place as New Englanders, set apart for the work of God and called to be a "City on a Hill," to use John Winthrop's famous allusion to the Bible. Historian Henry May in a 1976 essay aptly titled "The Decline of Providence?" suggested that although a variety of Christian expressions existed, "most eighteenth-century Americans were one kind or another of Calvinists, and the most powerful churches subscribed to the Westminster Confession, whose doctrine of Providence [was] clear…."[13] This belief system helped sustain the colonies through the revolution because

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[10] *Ibid*., 16.

[11] Samuel J. Watson, "Religion and Combat Motivation in the Confederate Armies," *Journal of Military History* 58 (1994), 35.

[12] Drew Gilpin Faust, "The Civil War Soldier and the Art of Dying," *Journal of Southern History* 67, no. 1 (2001), 37.

[13] Henry F. May, *Ideas, Faiths, and Feelings: Essays on American Intellectual and Religious History, 1952-1982* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 136.

> the dominant form of Christian orthodoxy was clearly ranged not on the side of the ancient oppression or the defense of status quo, but on the side of successful revolution. In America, Providence, and specifically Christian and Calvinist Providence, was on the side of the people.[14]

In other words, since the majority of the churches maintained a Calvinistic leaning, and these same churches expressed support for the Revolution, God's providential hand appeared to be on the side of the Revolution, at least in the eyes of the Patriots. This assurance in the providence of God, May claimed, "blurred and mingled" with Enlightenment ideals and produced the American culture of the nineteenth century.[15] Frederick Merck has provided a very powerful description of this blending in his standard, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History*.[16] Although far more a political history than a religious one, Merck's work demonstrated how the concept of God's favor on the United States combined with a desire of territorial expansion, producing the concept of Manifest Destiny. The concept, in turn, developed an altruistic component. The people of the United States desired expansion not just to have more land, but rather because it was on a mission to spread democracy and Protestant religion. The "City on a Hill" continued to increase its borders, but the mission did not change. God willed to use his chosen people to spread light in a dark world.

Mark Noll has further pointed out the rise of a "theistic common sense" or "evangelical Enlightenment" in his description of the American theology during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Christian ministers and theologians, shaped largely by Scottish philosophers such as Francis Hutcheson, Thomas Reid, Adam Smith,

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[14] *Ibid*., 143.

[15] *Ibid*., 145.

[16] Frederick Merck, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963).

and Dugald Stewart, relied heavily on the concept of "self-evident truths." [17] Scripture, doctrine, and even the workings of God could for the most part be known and reasonably deciphered. By the time of the Civil War, this perspective gave many theologians "self-confidence in the powers of human perception, assessment, and interpretation," resulting in "flourishing of providential reasoning."[18] Across the United States, then, evangelicals relied heavily both on the concept of providentialism—that God was at work in all things—and on the ability of the human mind to discern God's plans.

Southern evangelicals, seeing God as the author of all things and understanding themselves as God's chosen people, attempted to discover the meaning behind various visitations of his providence. For example, the rapid growth of evangelical denominations in the South in the early nineteenth century became evidence of God's approval of southern religion and the southern way of life.[19] Likewise, southern economic growth demonstrated the divine stamp of approval on the southern economy and most notably on the southern institution of slavery. In what John Patrick Daly points out was termed the "Divine Economy," southerners believed that God practiced a system of "worldly reward and punishment," not only for individuals, but also for the overall society.[20] The defense of slavery reinforced this belief in the providence of God, and the belief in the providence of God reinforced the defense of slavery. For clergy in the South, the region had been blessed for its adherence to the leadings of God and the

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[17] Mark Noll, *America's God: from Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 95.

[18] Mark Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 75.

[19] Boles, *Irony*, 35.

[20] John Patrick Daly, *When Slavery Was Called Freedom: Evangelicalism, Proslavery, and the Causes of the Civil War* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 25.

teachings of the Bible. In their literal and selective reading of the Bible, slavery not only existed, it was condoned. The great fathers of the faith—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—owned slaves, and the Apostle Paul gave instructions to slaves as to how they should obey their masters. As Mark Noll and others have pointed out, the northern abolitionists provided a more nuanced attempt to explain the role of slavery in the Scriptures, and often, they neglected to engage the Bible at all and instead pointed to a higher law or the spirit of the Word instead of the Word itself.[21] For southerners then, defending the institution of slavery became equal to a defense of the Bible itself. It also became a means to demonstrate to God the faithfulness of the South and the apostasy of the North.

In the pages of the *Southern Baptist*, readers found discussions of God's providential hand, as well as attempts to determine not only why afflictions came but also how the Christian should properly respond to them. For example, an 1850 issue of the paper ran a small article entitled "Uses of Affliction." In it, the author listed four ways in which God used affliction to build up his people. Sometimes, the misery of affliction came because such suffering "sweeteneth joy," as the Lord turned the "water of our earthly afflictions into that wine of gladness wherewith our souls shall be satiate for ever." Other times, it was a technique of discipline, a rod of affliction "all cut from *the tree of life*," meant to keep believers away from the trappings of Satan. Affliction also became a means through which God would build a person up in order to sustain even greater pressure later in life. In addition, "sanctified affliction" came upon a person like a "seasonable rain," keeping "inward corruption" at bay and keeping Christians from

[21] Mark Noll, "The Bible and Slavery," in *Religion and the American Civil War*, edited by Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 51; and Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *The Mind*, 565.

"carrying our heads too high."[22] Although no explicit instructions were written, the proper response during affliction became clear—humble oneself before the Lord. Only by acknowledging God's sovereignty over the affliction and seeking his guidance in the midst of it could the Christian be assured of survival.

Another article several months later, written at the beginning of the disease season in Charleston, which typically lasted from August through November, discussed the issue of the "afflictive dispensation of Providence." The article began, "Often, it has been said, that our whole life is but a scene of sorrows and trials. They are incident to every condition." Because of the inevitability, believers should not "aggravate" the situation with added impatience or struggling, for the situation only grew worse, much like the animal's struggle caused the trap only to tighten. "Though, as God's prisoners, we may be bound on every side, though affliction casts its fetters about the outward man," the author claimed, "yet so long as patience hath her perfect work it can never corrode the humbled spirit, nor can the 'iron enter the submissive soul.'" The afflicted individual needed to be patient and remember that "God is the author and inflictor of all sufferings we are called to undergo." As "clay in the hands of the potter," each is subject to be shaped by a "sovereign will" that is not his own, and to "repine at any of his dispensations, is to question the prerogative of the Almighty; it shews a rebellious spirit, which would destroy the method and order of his administration."[23] In this commentary, God was not just the *author* of the sufferings, he was the *inflicter*. He was the great *potter* molding his people, described as his *clay*, while at the same time serving as the

[22] "Uses of Afflictions," *SB*, 24 April 1850, 1.

[23] "Afflictions," *SB*, 28 August 1850, 2.

warden for these same people, described also as his *prisoners*. Each person remained subject to the will of God, helpless to stand against whatever he chose to do.[24]

In addition to his role as the sovereign author, inflicter, potter, and warden, the article went on to explain that God is also the "Proprietor and Father." God granted all "comforts and enjoyments,—our children and property and whatever is dearest to and most prized by us," and because of this, no gift could be clasped too tightly. One should never complain when a pleasure is taken because it was only "lent" to them by God. To those trapped in this seemingly hopeless state, where each found themselves at the mercy of this sovereign, the article attempted to bring comfort by reminding the reader that God's role extends to that of a Father, yet while this role of fatherhood was based on mercy and love, it was expressed through chastisement and affliction.

> Were it not that God sees the discipline of the rod to be necessary for us, we would never receive any thing but smiles and favors from him….God in punishing his children feels as much pain and grief as do they who receive it. It is then our Father who chastises us. A Father who is infinitely gracious and merciful, and whose love alone causes him to resort to this strange and unwelcome work. [25]

Instead of becoming frustrated and abandoning such a Father, the author claimed it best that those afflicted "kiss the rod and the hand that holds it; to bless God that he shews so much of a Father's concern as to correct us 'for our profit.'"[26]

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[24] Baptist minister J. M. C. Breaker of Beaufort, South Carolina, located about 70 miles south of Charleston, described trials in a similar way in his 1855 Sermon: "Review of the Past Year." In it, Breaker stated, "It is indeed a proof of God's wisdom and love, as exercised for the good of his creatures, that he chastens them as his children, for the errors they indulge….It is not, then, while we are enduring the pain or passing through the trial, that God sends upon us, that we can fully understand its design, or derive from it all the profit it is suited to impart: we can do this only by reviewing it as past." (J. C. M. Breaker, *Review of the Past Year: A Sermon Delivered in the Baptist Church in Beaufort, S.C., Sunday, January 7, 1855* (Charleston: SC, Walker and Evans, 1855), 8.)

[25] "Afflictions," *SB*, 28 August 1850, 2.

[26] *Ibid*.

Two years later, a September issue of the paper once again took up the issue of afflictions, and once again, it came in the during the disease season. After recounting the Biblical history of leaders who neglected God's ways and paid the price for it, the article discussed the possibility of those events reoccurring in modern times.

> Though God does permit men and nations to exalt themselves, to become idolaters, worshippers of themselves, glorifyers of their own talents, fame and wealth, yet does he, in due time, humble, prostrate and punish them and cause all to acknowledge that he alone is great; that God only ruleth in heaven and on earth.[27]

Though the wicked prospered, their time of punishment would eventually come, and this warning served not so much as an understanding of why lapsed individuals or nations experienced blessings, but rather as a call to examine whether or not God had already begun visitations upon the land. "[I]t may be profitable for us to enquire whether God has not given us unmistakable intimations that he recognizes our forgetfulness of him as our Benefactor and the Ruler of all things," the author queried. He further wrote:

> What means those devastations by fire, by flood, by disease—that great city, Montreal, nearly destroyed by devouring flames,….Whence arises the causes of cholera, that fearful epidemic which has swept off the thousands of people in the West….And whose Almighty hand has opened the windows of heaven and poured down upon our afflicted land the mighty floods which have engulphed [sic] some of our friends and so many of our fellow-beings in one common ruin?[28]

The solution came in a simple declaration, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!" Indeed, in experiencing such "manifestations of God's displeasure," the only possible steps that could be taken was to practice humility and repentance and to "supplicate his mercy, that he will turn away his anger and chastise us not with his fearful judgments."[29]

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[27] "God Only is Great and Independent," *SB*, 8 September 1852, 2.

[28] *Ibid*. Although not specified in the article, the author is perhaps referring to the burning of Montreal during the riots of 1849.

[29] "God Only is Great and Independent," *SB*, 8 September 1852, 2.

As afflictions arose, regardless of their nature, Baptists were challenged to celebrate the visitation and see in it a larger meaning—that God hovered as the ultimate author of the affliction, bringing it about for the discipline of the afflicted. If one were to respond poorly with frustration and distress, the trial would only compound itself. If one were to respond properly, with patience and submissiveness, then the trial would run its course, and the afflicted could grow in his faith and, in turn, see the smiling face of his Father.

The Affliction of Disease

In spite of the attempts of Baptists to follow the will of God, sometimes God chose to send visitations of his providence—namely through disease, war, and the ultimate visitation, death. As Adam Jortner has pointed out in his study of the 1833 cholera epidemic, the response to the disease was "surprisingly uniform," despite a diversity of religious opinions in America. While some pulpits claimed the disease came because of a lack of charity or pride or intemperance, all believed it to be a "special charge" from God, and to answer the charge, those communities suffering needed to repent and grow stronger in their commitment to God.[30] Inside the home, a similar sentiment could be seen. Women of the South in dealing with illness believed it to be "God's most potent corrective for wayward pilgrims" or a type of wake-up call to cause the individual to return to the faith of their fathers because "[t]he God who inflicted physical pain," Scott Stephan has claimed, "also provided physical and spiritual healing."[31] Going even further, South Carolinian Mary Brown in 1855 wrote the following in her journal during a season of illness:

[30] Adam Jortner, "Cholera, Christ, and Jackson: The Epidemic of 1832 and the Origins of Christian Politics in Antebellum America," *Journal of the History of the Early Republic* 27 (2007): 239.

[31] Scott Stephan, *Redeeming the Southern Family: Evangelical Women and Domestic Devotion in*

> We have had two months of wonderful sickness....We bless the[e] that thou hast heard our prayers and commanded delliverance [*sic*] to those that has been under thyne afflictive hand....[M]ay we ever remember that a recovery is only a reprieve.[32]

For those like Brown, afflictions themselves were praiseworthy because through them believers could more clearly see "God's mysterious designs."[33]

Charleston was no stranger to this form of visitation. Being a port city, the town experienced the dangers of yellow fever and cholera every fall. The *Southern Baptist* kept its readers informed of epidemics, tracking the movement of diseases from July through October. In 1849, readers learned of how cholera had taken the lives of 152 in New York over the course of one week, 216 in Cincinnati, 100 in St. Louis, and 18 in Richmond. The coming disease, the *Southern Baptist* reported, had a larger than usual number of victims, surpassing the early totals of the epidemic that swept the country in the 1830s.[34] While the cholera epidemic avoided Charleston that year, residents of the city in 1858 faced a fierce outbreak of yellow fever. Beginning in August of that year, the paper discussed what at the time it believed would be a mild season for the disease. Only six deaths were reported during that first week, a figure the paper claimed showed how "reports abroad in the country that the fever is 'raging' here, are simply absurd." According to the article, "We would not tempt Providence, nor assume the position of over-conservatism and incredulity; but we think it very foolish in our people generally to

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the Antebellum South (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 185.

[32] *Ibid*., 188.

[33] *Ibid*.

[34] "Progress of Cholera," SB, 4 July 1849, 2. The Methodist *Southern Christian Advocate* similarly continued to inform its readers whenever cholera or yellow fever attacked Charleston. For examples, see "Domestic," *Southern Christian Advocate*, 27 October 1854, 3; "Domestic," *Southern Christian Advocate*, 3 November 1854, 3; "The Pestilence," *Southern Christian Advocate*, 4 October 1855; and "The Yellow Fever in Charleston," *Southern Christian Advocate*, 23 September 1858, 2.

make so much alarm for so small a cause."[35] The following week, the tune changed, even if ever so slightly. The yellow fever deaths totaled 28. However, the paper still maintained that no epidemic had occurred, claiming inaccurate the report in the New York papers that the Charleston Board of Health had issued such as statement.[36] Two weeks later, the total per week had jumped to 61.[37] By the end of September, yellow fever claimed about 86 a week.[38] A month later, the disease had dissipated and moved on to other towns, dropping the weekly total in Charleston to 17 deaths, with only 7 coming in the following week.[39]

Knowing firsthand the disastrous effects of disease, the *Southern Baptist* did its best to provide an answer as to why God would bring such deadly afflictions upon his people. "We cannot disguise the fact, that a cloud has passed over this good, old city of Charleston," an editorial read at the end of November in 1858, reflecting upon the recent disease as well as the recent Thanksgiving observations in the country. "We would not under-estimate an affliction—nor is it well to over-estimate it. The main thing is to make a right use of our trials," the article continued.

> The mass of men as much misuse their afflictions and humiliations, as they abuse the goodness of God. But it may be, that some may find a blessing in their late afflictions. If permitted to meet with returning days of Thanksgiving in successive future years, they may look back upon this year as the beginning of a true and heavenly life. In the midst of mercies, mingled with judgments, they may see the hand of God, and hear his voice, and be made to follow the Saviour

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[35] "Health of Charleston," SB, 24 August 1858, 3.

[36] "Health of Charleston," SB, 31 August 1858, 2.

[37] "Health of Charleston," SB, 14 September 1858, 2.

[38] "Health of Charleston," SB, 5 October 1858, 2.

[39] "Health of Charleston," SB, 9 November 1858, 2; "Health of Charleston," SB, 16 November 1858, 2.

to the rest remaining for his people.[40]

Instead of feeling a sense of relief that the disease had passed, believers needed to see it as an opportunity to turn to God and give thanks to him, discovering his hand in the midst of death, a hand that sought to bring his followers closer to himself. The following year, Edwin Winkler took up this same theme in his Thanksgiving sermon to First Baptist Charleston, delivered at the end of the disease season on October 27, 1859. Winkler spoke of the signs of disease in Charleston—the "sad procession of mourners" passing along the streets, or the "light of watchers gleaming from chamber windows" as "the pestilence that walketh in darkness shall gloomily enter our houses"—all of which caused the people to "feel the calamities which the wrath of God inflicts." Since the season had passed, Winkler told the congregation that it was necessary then to give praise to God. He also informed them that "the gift of health demands that we should bear sickness with resignation and patience."[41] Baptists needed not to forget that health and disease both came in part from God, and both should be responded to with acceptance and praise.

Another attempt to provide an answer for the affliction of disease came in a November 1854 issue of the *Southern Baptist* in the form of a poem especially written for the publication. Entitled "The Pestilence," the poem described a silent killer stalking its victims in the middle of the night while the town lay in bed, resting in a false sense of security. The wind, on which the disease came, "Breathes soft on our vitals,/But wafts us to death!" This "Angel of Death" flew over cities on "raven black wings," scouring nations with a "merciless rod." The poem ended with these words of warning to

[40] "Public Thanksgiving," *SB*, 30 November 1858, 2.

[41] Edwin T. Winkler, "Thanksgiving Sermon: Health Preserved, October 27, 1859," from Winkler Sermons, Oct. 23, 1851-June 1879, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives. According to his

America:

Not our happy land,
From the monster is free,
E'en now his approach
Makes her citizens flee!

Not a Hercules bold,
Can his ravages stay—
In a greater than he,
All the power doth lay!

Then America turn,
From your sin and your shame;
'Tis God that afflicts you,
Revere his dread name.

He can take from your shores,
These afflictions severe,
And free all your land,
From sorrow and care.[42]

The poem further described the disease as the "Lion of old" who "ravage[d] unchecked/All the Oceans broad shore." While God was not himself named as the "Angel of Death," he nonetheless was the author of the "pestilence." God maintained his providential oversight, yet he never became evil in the process. The readers, though, could not escape the simple message in the poem—God brought the plague, and they needed to ask him to remove it.

During the 1856 disease season, an editorial again discussed the issue of the "unsanctified visitations of judgment." The author, in describing the brevity of life, suggested that many individuals had grown too accustomed to sudden and unexpected death or periods of pestilence or war, and instead of responding to such events with

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notes, Winkler gave this same sermon again twenty years later in August of 1879.

[42] "The Pestilence," SB, 15 November 1854, 2.

horror and a greater reliance upon God, they reacted with a "natural levity" or "unusual gayety" and sought to act as if no event had occurred. On the contrary, in view of "God's dealings" through "a visitation of yellow fever or cholera," whether it was in New Orleans, Savannah, Norfolk, or Charleston, "it becomes us to exercise more of reason and religion." In fact, the author suggested that the relatively light amount of deaths to disease during the 1856 season, a period "with no alarming Providences breaking in upon us," should bring about a religious awakening among the people, lest God change his mind.[43]

In the pages of the *Southern Baptist*, readers saw a God whose hand manifested itself in a number of ways. He was the Creator God, bringing light and life to the world. He was the Provider God, giving blessings upon blessings to his people. And he was the Afflicter God, chastising his people through any means necessary in order to discipline them and grow them in righteousness. Disease became a particularly common form of this discipline. God, the author and inflictor, sent the plagues for his own unknown purposes. They came in seasons, much like the growth cycles on the plantations that surrounded Charleston. They struck any one at will, passing over some houses and devastating others. They demonstrated to the afflicted their powerlessness in the face of disease. When articles speculated as to the cause, the common suggestion was that God decided to deal with a sinful public who no longer relied upon him. Indeed, as one article speculated, in times of low disease, if thankfulness did not rise from the people, they ran the risk of God sending the disease in greater measure. Therefore, the paper proclaimed that believers could only respond to such a force through prayer and supplication to God.

[43] "Visitations of Providence," SB, 23 September 1856, 2.

The destruction came from the hand of God because of some sin in the land or because of his greater plan. The solution had to come from the same location—the hand of God.

The Ordeal of War

While talk of the visitation of disease and other physical afflictions drew attention, another major visitation of God came through the ordeal of war. According to historian Melvin B. Endy, Jr., "War was far from glorified in the clerical literature." Instead, clergy "generally regarded it as a product of human lusts and as an unmitigated disaster for all involved." While defending oneself against tyrants could be characterized as "noble," it was nonetheless to be "approached mournfully."[44] For southern minister Charles Colock Jones, war stood as a "hotbed of iniquity of every kind" and the "greatest school of vice," since soldiers in the war had been removed from the "softening" restraint of womanhood.[45] Instead of celebrating battles and preaching the glory of conflict, ministers spoke of war in negative terms, as another visitation of the providence of God. Fox-Genovese and Genovese in their book *The Mind of the Master Class* pointed out how Episcopal Bishop Stephen Elliott of Georgia viewed war as part of the great cosmic order, a "test" that nations had to pass through in order for God to "perfect His purpose."[46] "God, after all," the historians stated, "uses war to chastise His people and set them back on the right course."[47] Bishop Elliott was not alone in his thoughts. Others "harbored serious reservations about war, especially the cultivation of a bellicouse spirit

[44] Mevlin B. Endy, Jr., "Just War, Holy War, and Millennialism in Revolutionary America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (1985): 19-20.

[45] Drew Gilpin Faust, "Christian Soldiers: The Meaning of Revivalism in the Confederate Army," *Journal of Southern History* 53, no. 1 (1987): 63-90.

[46] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 165.

[47] *Ibid.*, 166.

that might undercut religious devotion," as well as recognizing that it "demoralizes a people and disrupts the holy work of the churches."[48]

Much like the issue of diseases, the view of war in Charleston did not develop as an abstract theory, but instead, it was formed from experience. Two generations leading up to the Civil War each had first-hand knowledge of a world at war. Richard Furman, stalwart pastor of First Baptist Church of Charleston from 1787 to 1825, lived through the American Revolution as a spokesperson for the Patriot cause, and during the War of 1812, he served as the most prominent pastor among Baptists in the South.[49] As Furman witnessed a second war with Britain in his lifetime, he wrote to his brother suggesting that the recent drought conditions seemed to indicate that "God was about to add the Scourge of Famine to that of War."[50] Although mentioned in passing, it is clear that Furman saw God as the author of not only the drought, but also the war, and he believed the only means to end the war was through supplication to the author. Furman helped to lead the Charleston Baptist Association as it called for public prayer in light of the "awfully alarming dispensations of divine providence…[and] the existing state of war" in

[48] *Ibid.*, 164.

[49] In 1776 Furman enlisted as a member of the Charleston militia, but after mustering with his fellow soldiers, his commander requested that he return to his home and continue in his role as pastor of the Baptist church in High Hills since his services presented greater help as a spokesman for the cause than as a soldier. Evidently, his role as a voice for the Revolution drew Furman some level of public notoriety. With the invasion of Charleston by Cornwallis in 1780, many Patriot leaders fled the colony, fearing for their lives. Among these included Rev. Oliver Hart, who had served as pastor of First Baptist Church of Charleston as well as a member of the South Carolina Council of Safety in 1755. Hart made his way to New Jersey and established a new residence in the state as well as taking on a new role as a local pastor. Furman also fled South Carolina to the border between Virginia and North Carolina. Rumors suggested that Cornwallis sought to have Furman arrested for his continuing advocacy of the Patriot cause. (James A. Rogers, *Richard Furman: Life and Legacy* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2001), 39.)

[50] Richard Furman to Josiah Furman, 13 July 1813, file 1746, Richard Furman (1755-1825) Correspondence, 1777-1825, Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

the country.[51] The following year, the association continued in its spirit of prayer, asking people to "beseech Almighty God, our heavenly Father and Great Arbiter of nations to avert from us the judgments of his anger; to take under his merciful guardian care, our people and government…to defend us from our enemies…and to restore us to a state of peace and national prosperity."[52] In these requests for public prayer, Baptists in Charleston believed that God had taken his hand of favor away from the nation, and it was up to the churches and individuals of the land to ask for him to restore his peace.

Thirty years later, the country found itself at war again, this time with a neighbor to the South, Mexico. While Baptists in Charleston displayed their normal patriotism at the outset of the campaign, especially lauding the members of the South Carolina's Palmetto Regiment, a sense of dread grew as the war continued and casualties amassed. Among the 1,019 soldiers in the Palmetto Regiment, 429 died, 43 deserted, and only 547 returned home. Their death rate became a staggering 43%, an especially high figure when compared to the death rate of the entire United States Army, 15%.[53]

As news of the deaths of the Palmetto Regiment made it to Charleston, the *Southern Baptist* developed a melancholy attitude toward the war. One October issue ran an article entitled the "Population of the Grave," suggesting that some nine billion people had died a premature death due to warfare. Two paragraphs above this article, an ancient saying declared that "In time of peace the sons bury their fathers; in the time of war the

[51] Minutes of the Charleston Baptist Association, 31 October 1812.

[52] Minutes of the Charleston Baptist Association, 6 November 1813.

[53] Ernest McPherson Landers, Jr., *Reluctant Imperialists: Calhoun, the South Carolinians, and the Mexican War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980).173. Please see this work for more information on the Palmetto Regiment.

fathers bury their sons."[54] A couple of months later, the newspaper carried names of South Carolina sons whose lives had been stopped short during the war.[55] Even the poetry in the newspaper seemed to relay a message of anguish with the war. In January of 1848, the *Southern Baptist* included the 1798 poem "Fears in Solitude" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, yet the paper retitled it as "The War" and edited the poem down to include only a few lines that chastised its readers for using the stories of war as a means of entertainment, forgetting the bloody and gruesome results.

> Boys and girls,
> And women, that would groan to see a child
> Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war—
> The best amusement for a morning meal!
> The poor wretch who has learnt his only prayers
> From curses, who knows scarcely words enough
> To ask a blessing from his heavenly Father,
> Becomes a fluent phraseman, absolute
> And technical, in victories and defeats,
> And all our dainty terms for fratricide;
> Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our tongue,
> Like mere abstractions, empty sounds, to which
> We join no feeling and attach no form!
> As if the soldier died without a wound;
> As if the fibres of their godlike frames
> Were gored without a pang; as if the wretch
> Who fell in battle, doing bloody deeds,
> Passed off to heaven, translated, and not killed;
> As though he had no wife to pine for him—
> No God to judge him![56]

Coleridge's words, intended originally for English audiences, served as a reminder for readers of the *Southern Baptist* that war was never fully a glorious event. Soldiers did not die without wounds or pain, and there were no miraculous translations into heaven for

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[54] "Population of the Grave," SB, 27 October 1847, 4; "War and Peace," SB, 27 October 1847, 4.

[55] "Deaths in the Palmetto Regiment," SB, 1 December 1847, 3.

[56] "The War," *SB*, 19 January 1848, 1.

one in battle. Instead, death, destruction, and horror always accompany war.

The paper went beyond just commenting on the horrors of the war itself. An 1848 editorial issued reflections on the properness of pursuing war in the first place. According to the author, the nation pursuing the conflict should seek all means necessary in order to settle the dispute peacefully and therefore avoid the horrors of battle. "If by any means we can avert the dreadful calamity," declared the *Southern Baptist*, "let us spare no pains and shrink from no sacrifices…."[57] Therefore, a people or a nation should never seek conflict nor desire material gain from conflict, but rather should react to conflict when it is thrust upon them and all other courses of redress have been exhausted. The justness of any war should not be considered an endorsement of war itself. "But," claimed the Baptists, "while we say that war is sometimes unavoidable, we do not mean to throw a veil over its horrors," for the horrors of war were plentiful.[58] The experiences of the citizens in Charleston both in the War of 1812 and the Mexican War in the 1840s provided a vivid background for the discussion of war. Their sons had fought, and their sons had died. They knew about war, and they did not like it. They saw war as something that might be necessary but was to be avoided at almost any cost. They understood God as the "Great Arbiter of nations." War only came because of his hand, and it could only leave by the same method.

During the 1850s, war did not visit the United States, but it did in Europe, and the *Southern Baptist* kept its readers apprised of the various conflicts that erupted. In 1855, the Crimean War drew particular attention with a series of articles that used the fighting

[57] "Reflections Occasioned by the Mexican War," *SB*, 20 October 1847, 2.

[58] *Ibid*.

to describe the massive losses that accompanied war. In January of 1855, the front page of the paper described the foolish "brutal method of deciding great national questions" and detailed the economic loss in Europe and even in the United States. "War is the vast vortex," the article read, "which draws into it all the financial resources, not only of those nations engaged in it, but to a great extent of all others connected with them in commercial transactions." An estimated £20 million, or $100 million, was said to have already been spent by England as a part of the Crimean conflict, an amount that drained the national economy, an economy already weakened by the disruption of international trade. These economic troubles, though, paled in comparison to the "demoralizing effects of war." "[D]isgusting ferocity and cupidity" littered the accounts of the battles fought, accounts that told nothing of the "unbridled licentiousness and treachery" that took place in the camps. In addition, "[t]he wholesale butchery of thousands, the untold agonies of the wounded, the viewless miseries of widows and orphans are all sought to be covered up by a highly varnished pictures of a spurious victory, or a glory crimsoned with blood." The article appeared to believe the Crimean War itself was an unjust conflict, and as such, it went on to communicate a particular disdain for the despotic leaders of the war and sympathy for the pitiful soldiers who had been "dupes of kingcraft and priestcraft." It wrote about the horrors of battle, presenting armed conflict not with glorious trappings and grand fanfare, but rather as being destructive of a society—economically, physically, and emotionally, yet still the article identified the ultimate cause behind the war: Beyond the desires of the kings and rulers an Europe, "God in his infinite wisdom [had] permitted the war in order to bring about some great result."[59] As

[59] "War and Hard Times," *SB*, 24 January 1855, 1. There is a sense of historic irony that an article such as this would appear just six years prior to the beginning of the American Civil War, a war that cost

with every other affliction, God remained the author.

In the following months, discussion of the war continued. One article quoted an American in Paris as claiming that there was "little prospect of peace," but instead, the war would likely "extend its ravages into the heart of Europe" and produce a result in which "humanity would sicken, and the world stand aghast."[60] Another on the same page described the losses from the conflict to number around 250,000 men.[61] In September, an article carried the story of atrocities committed in a small Russian town called Kertch at the hands of English merchants and straggling Turkish and French soldiers. The account lamented the "weak and imbecile" nature of the English leadership at Kertch for allowing the plunder of the town. Stores were ransacked, precious treasures destroyed, homes robbed, children butchered, and women raped. At the beginning of the article, the editors of the *Southern Baptist* explained their intentional desire to write their own article covering the event, but instead decided to reproduce the English account, allowing the facts to "speak for themselves," hoping that they would "produce the proper effect upon the minds of those who may peruse them," seemingly a sense of horror and fear of the destructive aspects of war.[62]

Four months later, the paper ran an excerpt from the *New York Times* entitled "Loss of Life by War," which attempted to put the loss of life from the Crimean War in perspective with the battles of the Napoleonic Wars. "In all these battles," the author

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the lives of thousands of men who likewise followed the wishes of their rulers into battle, even if the post-war generation attempted to cast the battles in a heroic, glorious light.

[60] "A Bloody War Predicted.," *SB*, 11 April 1855, 4.

[61] "The Miseries and Horrors of War," *SB*, 11 April 1855, 4.

[62] "The Diabolism of War," *SB*, 5 September 1855, 4.

stated, adding up casualties in both campaigns, "the loss, in killed and wounded, on all sides, was at least a MILLION OF MEN! besides THOUSANDS in skirmishes and minor engagements, &c., and that within a period of less than thirty years!" Added to this would be the "loss of life caused otherwise by war," such as "disease, exposure, and other causalities incident to war," a number which could raise the total to some four million individuals. The author further wrote:

> Such are the curses of war! It is the great calamity that can befall a nation, and more to be dreaded than plague, pestilence or famine. If it has any advantages, they are of such character as the hurricane or earthquake produce in nature—more of a negative than positive character—in the destruction of tyrannical governments, and old, time-worn political systems of error and oppression. War should be a *dernier* resort; and a nation submit to almost any evil, rather than engage in one.[63]

While the article did note some of the positive outcomes of war, it was difficult to see how anything so destructive could really be seen as positive. An article by the same title ran in 1859, this time taken from the *Christian Chronicle*. Going further back, to the battles of Julius Ceasar and "Jenghiz-khan" (Genghis Khan) to more contemporary conflicts, the author described war as having taken the life of "one-tenth of the human race," whether on the battlefield or from causes associated with war. Accordingly, the article estimated that some 14 billion had been killed in battle with a total loss in life around 35 billion. "What a fell destroyer is war!" it proclaimed.[64]

Beyond the loss of life and destruction of land, war devastated something else—an individual's soul. An 1855 front-page article, reprinted from the *Advocate of Peace*, discussed the demoralization of war. "There never was a more preposterous idea," the

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[63] "Loss of Life by War," *SB*, 30 January 1856, 4. Emphasis in the original.

[64] "The Loss of Life by War," *SB*, 10 December 1859.

article began, "than that of supposing it possible to have war without vices, crimes and woes." Writing in the middle of the Crimean War, the author no doubt had the devastation from that war in mind as he penned these words. From his perspective, war broke with the essential hallmarks of Christianity. It repaid evil for evil. It practiced "retaliation and vengeance." It aimed to "inflict the greatest possible amount of mischief and misery." War could never be made into a noble enterprise; to do so would be turning "theft into honesty, adultery into chastity, or idolatry into the worship of the true God." In the end, the article concluded, "We must either abolish the custom entirely, or retain it with essentially the same abominations and woes that have always characterized it."[65]

As with many similar articles, the *Southern Baptist* provided no commentary for these statements, no caveat, no suggestion of alternative views. Instead, it tacitly endorsed the statements. While the paper may not have openly endorsed all of the causes of the Peace Society, it clearly thought their message was worth sharing with its readers, a message identical to other articles throughout the 1850s—war was hell. Even if the war could be justified, it should never be pursued or desired. It meant death and destruction for any who experienced it. One did not wish for war and worked at all costs to avoid war. Mankind could lift up prayer after prayer, yet despite every effort to prevent it, war still plagued mankind and wreaked havoc on individuals, families, and nations. As these Baptists grappled for a way to understand why wars continued to rage, they relied on the same answer as to why diseases ravaged the land—war was a visitation of providence—God brought the war.

An 1848 article responding to the revolutions in Europe in the 1840s described

[65] "Demoralization Inseparable from War," *SB*, 7 November 1855, 1.

the "hammer of God's providence" in that land. Originally carried in the *Christian Union* and written by George B. Cheever, a northerner who in the 1850s gained a reputation for his outspoken abolitionism, the article attempted to provide commentary for the outbreak of revolutions. In his mind, God decided to bring the experiment of monarchies to an end, seeing that kings "have not ruled for the many, but have used and ruled the many for them." They built countries that endeavored to "live without God," they neglected to "enlighten" their subjects through instruction of the Bible, and in the end they only appeared "selfish, and in most cases despotic." Because of their blatant defiance, God determined to set into motion, as with the motions of a clock, a set of "revolutions and restless motions of God's creatures and governments on earth and in heaven." No nation could live without God, the article concluded. And if a nation attempted to do so, God would act accordingly.[66]

The following month, a second article appeared attempting to place a prophetic interpretation on the European revolutions. According to the author, God desired a pure church, and the revolutions served the express purpose of bringing that desire into being. For some thirty years prior to the revolutions, God allowed peaceful relations to exist in Europe, thus allowing for economic growth, the spread of religious ideas, and a preparation of the hearts of the people. Now, by God's "extraordinary providence," the wars the doors swung open for Protestant missionaries to flood Europe and help re-establish a zeal for the Lord that the continent had formerly possessed. Beyond the spread of the Gospel, however, the revolutions symbolized the next step in the return of Christ.

[66] "God's Providence in Revolution and Reform," *SB*, 28 June 1848, 1.

> It is clearly indicated in the Apocalypse that a revival of pure religion is to take place in each of the ten kingdoms, and a body of faithful witnesses raised up before the last great struggle of the anti-christian powers; and this is the great moment, undoubtedly, when the agencies are to be instituted that are to lead on to that result.[67]

God stood poised to move nations and armies into place and to bring peace for a season and then war in order to fulfill his purpose, and in this case, the purpose was seen as the ultimate purpose as foretold in the Book of Revelation.[68]

The following year an article submitted by an unknown "Sosthenes"[69] specifically for the *Southern Baptist* carried on this theme of God's use of wars and revolutions for his own purpose, yet here the apocalyptic overtone was absent. "[A]ll events are a series of developments," the author claimed, "resulting from certain laws, coming whence they [non-believers] cannot tell and leading whither they are profoundly ignorant." Christians, on the other hand, saw a meaning behind these developments and are "assured that God overrules all things." The providential hand of God steadily wrote the script and put into place every action, even if the action sometimes seemed "inconsistent with the idea our private conceptions form of the divine perfection." Death, destruction, and mayhem that

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[67] "The Late Revolutions in Europe. Interpretation of Prophect," *SB*, 19 July 1848, 1.

[68] The inclusion of a prophetic interpretation rarely occurred in the *Southern Baptist*. A November issue also in 1848 ran a lengthy article describing "The Final Triumph of Christ," but even that could be seen as more of a call to missionary action than an embrace of apocalyptic theology ("The Final Triumph of Christ," *SB*, 8 November 1848, 2-3). Overall though, the paper seemed to be very disinterested in this type of discussion, a situation made even more interesting by the saturation of apocalyptic belief in nineteenth century Southern evangelical religion.

[69] The use of a Greek pseudonym for writing opinion pieces in newspapers became quite common in the early stages of American newspapers, especially during the time of the American Revolution and Early Republic (see Jeffrey L. Passley, *The Tyranny of Printers: Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002). It was not common, though, in the *Southern Baptist*. In this case, Sosthenes appears to be utilized by the author because it was the name of a fellow-traveler with the Apostle Paul and is listed as a part of Paul's group during the writing of 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:1). The same name is seen in the Book of Acts as a ruler of the synagogue in Corinth who was beaten for being friendly to Paul (Acts of the Apostles 18:17). It is likely these two individuals are meant to be the same person.

accompany war may be undertaken by "bad men, and actuated by bad motives," but they happened for a greater purpose. "The iron heel of war is sometimes the only means by which can be crushed the obstacles to the great blessings." In all things, "the end designed by the Almighty is effected. He is honored and his people blessed."[70] From this perspective, God used any means necessary to complete his goal, and on occasion, that meant the use of war by the sword of selfish men. Of course, in their mind, the use of evil men to accomplish his goals did not make God himself evil. Such a thought was considered to be merely a misconception. The better thought was to praise God and seek his face and will in the midst of the event. Only then can the individual grasp his role in God's greater plan.

Conclusion

The *Southern Baptist* discussed the issues of disease and war, and four common themes emerge. First, God remained the overarching author of the visitation. Whether it was a war between nations, a revolution within a nation, a seasonal disease, or a random plague, God decided to send the affliction to the land. In all cases, he had a grand plan, something that demonstrated both his justice and his loving care at the same time. Second, the paper described both disease and war as terrible afflictions. Disease crept in without warning and killed at random—men, women, and children—with no sense of propriety. Likewise, even in the South, a place noted for its violent nature and love of duels and for its reliance upon a culture of chivalry and honor, Baptists refused to see war as a glorious event.[71] While those fighting the war should be honored, the war itself

[70] "God Over All," *SB*, 23 May 1849, 2.

[71] For more on the violence and honor associated with antebellum Southern culture, please see Grady McWhiney, *Cracker Culture: Celtic Ways in the Old South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama

should be avoided. It was always accompanied by death and destruction, both of the body and the soul. Third, when man attempted to determine the cause for the affliction, it often was described as the result of sin in the life of the individual or the nation. While sin was not always be the root cause and perhaps the visitation was just a standard trial, individuals were encouraged nonetheless to examine their lives and see if some offense against God exists. After all, God was the Father God, who used his rod as a means of discipline. Finally, patience and endurance proved to be the only proper response to the trial. The individual or the nation needed to cry out to God, lift up a prayer of thanksgiving, and seek his direction in their lives. Only then would the trial pass and the reason for the trial be revealed. In the end, however, the individual needed to understand that life did not always provide an easy road, especially the Christian life. It remained full of trials and disciplines, heartache, and sorrow. In 1850, the *Southern Baptist* spoke to this issue, carrying an excerpt from a track by Rev. Henry Giles. "Sorrow," Giles claimed, "is the noblest of all disciplines."

> It is a scourge, but there is healing in its stripes. It is a chalice, and the brine is bitter, but strength proceeds from bitterness. It is a crown of thorns, but it becomes a wreath of light on the brow which it has lacerated. It is a cross on which the spirit groans, but every Calvary has an Olivet. To every place of crucifixion there is likewise a place of ascension….Christianity itself is a religion of sorrow….Sorrow is not to be complained of, it is to be accepted. It has godliness in its power, it has joy within its gloom, and though Christianity is a religion of sorrow, it is not less a religion of hope; it casts down in order to exalt,

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Press, 1989), Scott Stephan, *Redeeming the Southern Family: Evangelical Women and Domestic Devotion in the Antebellum South* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2008), Elizabeth R. Varon, *Disunion! The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789-1859* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), and Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982). For this violent culture in connection with the Civil War and Reconstruction, see Fred Hobson, *Tell About the South: The Southern Rage to Explain* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), Ted Ownby, *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), and Jason Phillips, *Diehard Rebels: The Confederate Culture of Invincibility* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2007).

and, if it tries the spirit by affliction, it is to prepare it for beatitude.[72]

According to Giles, the true believer accepted sorrow and trial as a part of the Christian life. As the prime example of suffering, Jesus Christ endured the crown of thorns and the cross on Calvary, yet he did so for a reason, knowing that the suffering would be momentary and for a greater purpose. He also did so knowing the resurrection and ascension that lay ahead. Likewise, followers of Christ needed to accept sorrow and recognize the godly nature of the trial and the joy that stood behind the pain. Charleston Baptists learned in articles such as this and others throughout the pages of the *Southern Baptist* that God the Author brought the affliction for his purpose in order to chastise or strengthen his people and ultimately to bring them closer to him as they turned to God the Father in the midst of their sorrow, ready to receive his blessing. Of all of the afflictions that God brought upon his people, none was more sobering or permanent than death.

[72] "The Discipline of Sorrow," *SB*, 18 September 1850, 1. Taken from Giles' *Christian Thoughts on Life: in a Series of Discourses* (Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1850), 110. This work by Giles seems to have attracted some popularity, and he was noted as a lecturer; however, the inclusion of this article is interesting to note especially given the theological background of Giles—a Unitarian minister from Massachusetts (George Willis Cooke, *Unitarianism in America: A History of its Origin and Development* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1910), 420.). It does point out the how the *Southern Baptist* included a wide variety of religious voices in their publication.

Chapter Four

Evangelical Providentialism in the *Southern Baptist*—Death

As already seen in the previous chapter, the pages of the *Southern Baptist* continually communicated to its readers a belief in evangelical providentialism. This belief provided a framework through which Baptists in Charleston could understand the world around them, especially when that world was attacked by disease or war. The belief in the sovereign hand of God became even more evident when the paper discussed the issue of death—God's final and most devastating affliction.

In September of 1850, the *Southern Baptist* printed the words to a poem by Matilda Caroline Smiley entitled "The Time to Die." Five stanzas in length, each stanza pictured an individual at a specific stage in life dealing with the subject of death. The "sweet young girl" wished to die in the spring, "when the flowers are opening fresh" and the "birds sing sweetly on every hill." The "youth" wanted to be taken in the summer as the "birds are filling the air" and the "waves are raising their loudest notes." A "strong man" asked to depart in autumn amidst the falling leaves and dying flowers, and the "way-worn pilgrim" decided his time should come in the winter after, he said, "I have wondered long in this wintry way. My step is weak, and my head is gray,/It is time for me to die."[1]

Why anyone would wish for death is a question that perhaps came to many

[1] "The Time to Die," *SB*, 18 September 1850, 4. The words, attributed to Matilda Caroline Smiley of Grape Hill, Virginia, originally ran in the *Southern Christian Advocate*, the Methodist newspaper of South Carolina, published in Charleston. Like the *Southern Baptist*, the *Southern Christian Advocate* carried many poems about death in its publication, including: "Weep Not," *Southern Christian Advocate*, 8 March 1850, 1; "Death," *Southern Christian Advocate*, 18 May 1855, 4; and "Hymn for the Dying," *Southern Christian Advocate*, 3 April 1856, 4. The *Southern Presbyterian* also carried similar poems, such as "A Little While," *Southern Presbyterian*, 17 March 1860, 4.

readers, yet the fifth and final stanza explained this inexplicable desire to die. Surrounded by individuals at various ages, the Christian came forward and spoke these words:

> The Christian stood on the Jordan of death,
> And smiles as the waves swept by,
> Father! he said, if thou willest it
> Let they suffering servant die.
> Let me pass away from the ills of life,
> To a fairer and brighter clime.
> Let me find a holier place of rest—
> Let me lean my head on thy loving breast:
> Let *me* die in *thine own good time*.[2]

These final words give clarity to the ultimate lesson of the poem—Christians should always be ready and willing to die at any stage when God so chooses to take them from this world. The God of the Universe oversaw all of life, and according to his providential care and direction, he decided the length and the end of their lives.

Viewing God as the sovereign over death was a common theme found throughout the pages of the *Southern Baptist* in the decade leading up to the Civil War. The paper devoted articles upon articles to the discussion of death. Obituaries appeared, not only of contemporary deaths, but also of famous men who had died centuries before. Random columns gave advice on how to cope with dying and how to prepare oneself properly for that final journey, but perhaps the most common discussion of death came not in articles and commentaries, but through poetry. The *Southern Baptist* often included poetry in their issues, and by far, the most popular subject of these poems was death. Combined, these images of death provided Charleston Baptists with a consistent way to view God. Just as God remained sovereign over pestilence and war, God stood as

[2] "The Time to Die," *SB*, 18 September 1850, 4.

the Lord over death. He decided the time and he decided the form; humanity merely accepted his will and did their best to embrace death and die peacefully.

The obsession with death in the *Southern Baptist* was not an isolated event. Evangelicals throughout antebellum America maintained a certain fascination with the concept of death, especially that of the "Good Death." According to historian Scott Stephan, "antebellum Americans never tired of discussing death," and Drew Gilpin Faust has pointed out that throughout the nineteenth century various forms of literature, such as sermons, Sunday School tracts, health books, and popular literary works, focused on the issue of death.[3] Death was not a matter of the macabre or an event to be shunned and forgotten. Instead, it became a part of everyday life. As Faust explains, by the beginning of the Civil War, Americans stood "better prepared to die than to kill."[4]

During the years leading up the Civil War, the *Southern Baptist* did its best to remind its readers of death and the need to die well. Articles such as one in 1857 spoke of the "beautiful" memory of the dead, "those who pursue no longer the fleeting, but have grasped and secured the real."[5] Another described deaths of "remarkable" individuals from English history, including Mary, Queen of Scots; Chaucer; Thomas More; and the Venerable Bede.[6] A few issues later, the paper retold of the "majestic" deaths of the Founders of the United States, such men as Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Monroe. "The greatest of our great men have died in a manner so remarkable—so fitting—that an

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[3] Scott Stephan, *Redeeming the Southern Family: Evangelical Women and Domestic Devotion in the Antebellum South* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 184; Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 7.

[4] Faust, *This Republic*, 6.

[5] "The Dead," *SB*, 5 May 1857, 1.

[6] "Death Scenes of Remarkable Persons," *SB*, 5 April 1848, 1.

awe comes over us in recurring to the circumstances of their decease," the paper read.[7] Some obituaries described the "Last Hours" of famous Baptists, like Hosea Wheeler, a well-known minister in Massachusetts and Maine who passed away in 1833, or James Shelbourne, a famous Virginia Baptist minister who died in 1820.[8] The paper also carried the obituaries of local Baptist stalwarts such as Dr. M. T. Mendenhall, who served as the president of the Southern Baptist Publication Society and on many other committees with the Southern Baptist Convention and First Baptist Church of Charleston.[9] Another issue spoke of the passing of a thirty-seven-year-old wife and mother named Mrs. Maria Louisa Nicholes, whose devotion to the Lord and her family "could not be excelled."[10] Each obituary described death as tragic yet noble and worked to keep the idea of death always in front of the readers of the paper.

Poems also kept the subject of death on the minds of the readers. One by J. G. Shaw entitled "A Soldier's Musings," expressed a nameless soldier's desire for those left behind to "twine no wreath upon my grave,/Nor plant a single flower." Instead, the cherished memory "[w]ithin the breast of one dear maid" would be like a "gem within a cell" and be enough for him.[11] Another poem, "Lonely she Sleeps," lamented the death of a child, describing how "Lonely she sleeps in the burial ground," with "a mother's wail o'er her child," yet the mother need not mourn too long "for the child sweetly

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[7] "Heroes of America," *SB*, 10 May 1848, 4.

[8] "Last Hours; No. 11: Hosea Wheeler," *SB*, 14 July 1847, 1, and "Last Hours; No. 9: James Shelbourne," *SB*, 26 June 1847, 4. For more information on Shelbourne, also see James B. Taylor, *Lives of Virginia Baptist Minister: Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged* (Richmond: Yale and Wyatt, 1838), 174-181.

[9] "The Death of Dr. M. T. Mendenhall," *SB*, 10 November 1852, 2.

[10] "Obituaries," *SB*, 27 June 1849, 3.

[11] "A Soldier's Musings," *SB*, 14 December 1853, 4.

sleeps,/Though lonely in its little grave;/He, who is watch o'er it faithful keeps,/Is mighty to shield and save."[12] Likewise, a poem entitled "The Child's Coffin" gave a glimpse of a funeral of a young girl whose life had been taken by illness. "I saw the coffin lowered in the ground," the poet wrote, "'Neath the cold sod,/And turned and left her calmly sleeping there,/Along with God." Later, the author dreamed of seeing the child again, "once lowly laid,/Soar and arise,/And smiling, sit at Jesus' holy feet/in seraph guise."[13]

Through articles, obituaries, and poems such as these, the *Southern Baptist* sought not only to honor those who had departed this life, but also to teach lessons to those remaining. Combined, they presented for the reader several overarching themes concerning death. First, life was fleeting and temporary, not something to be clung to or grasped. Second, there was hope in the life to come, an eternal hope where one's soul was at rest with God. Third, God stood as the author of death, and not just of death in general, but of specific deaths for specific people. He decided who stayed and who left this mortal ground. Fourth, believers needed to respond properly to death by undergoing a Good Death when one dies. The idea of the Good Death dominated antebellum American culture, and it continually found its way into the pages of the *Southern Baptist*.

The Fleeting Nature of Life

Readers of the *Southern Baptist* understood that life was merely a moment in time, and death was always around the corner. An 1847 issue of the paper included a

[12] "Lonely She Sleeps," *SB*, 8 December 1860, 2. This poem was attributed to an "esteemed brother," who sent in the lines for the *Southern Baptist*.

[13] "The Child's Coffin," *SB*, 18 November 1856, 4. This poem was taken from a book published by the Southern Baptist Publication Society entitled *Poetry and Prose for the Young*. Stories and poems concerning the death of children also appeared in the issues of the *Southern Christian Advocate* and also the *Southern Presbyterian*, both published in Charleston: ""Happy Death of a Child," *Southern Christian Advocate*, 7 October 1853, 4; "I'm Not Afraid to Die," *Southern Christian Advocate*, 4 November 1853; "Going Home," *Southern Presbyterian*, 17 March 1860; and "Happy Death of Little Children," *Southern*

series of articles with no author given entitled "The Brevity of Life," "The Mortality of the Body," and "The Destiny of the Soul," each of which provided illustrations as to the temporary status of life. "How frail is our life! a pile of grass," the first read, "a withered leaf, dry stubble, a flour [*sic*], a breath, brittle clay, fading flesh." It continued:

> How swift! a weaver's shuttle, an eagle, a ship, a wind that passes away, and cometh not again. How short! a moment, a breathing. While I bewail a departed friend, death, suddenly, seizing me, translates the lamentations to another tongue, that is most nearly connected to me, who also in a little time must follow me into the silent grave, and leave the protracted elegy to be continued by their nearest relations….I am only a stranger, a pilgrim, a sojourner, and posting away from everything below.[14]

According to the author, the trials of life and the troubles of the day would all prove transient in the grand scheme of things. Another reminded the reader of the true nature of humanity—that they were nothing but "dust." "What a humiliating description of man! not a tall pillar of marble, but a little heap of dust; how feeble, worthless, and insignificant!"[15] Man came from the earth, and man's "affecting destiny" would end in the earth. Still another article provided hope, but only for the soul in that those who had made peace with God would have an eternal destiny by his side.[16] Overarching in these articles, though, was a continuous theme—this life proved merely temporary and could vanish at any moment.

Perhaps the most poignant example of the brevity of life came in the death of a child, and the *Southern Baptist* often detailed the devastation such death heaped upon the hearts of their loved ones. One article carried the description of an "afflicting

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Presbyterian, 9 June 1860, 4.

[14] "Brevity of Life," *SB*, 26 June 1847, 2.

[15] "The Mortality of the Body," *SB*, 26 June 1847, 2.

[16] "The Destiny of the Soul," *SB*, 26 June 1847, 2.

dispensation" that came upon the family of A. D. Cohen, a Baptist minister in Charleston. Rev. Cohen's wife had traveled to Savannah, Georgia, to visit relatives, taking their children with her. Within days of their arrival, all three children, two boys and a daughter, became ill with a "disease of the throat," and not long after, they all died. All of their children were "snatched suddenly from the loving embraces of fond and devoted parents."[17] A poem entitled "The Little Boy's Burial" described a scene as "[t]wo dark-eyed maids" sat by a river, mourning the loss of dear boy and missing "[h]is ready smile his ready kiss,/The prattle of his little feet,/Sweet frowns and stammered phrases sweet."[18] An 1857 issue carried an article about the death of a baby. "The baby is dead!" it read, and the child "no longer clings in innocent love to its mother's bosom, or stirs fondest joy its father's heart." The departure of one "so early lost" devastated the family who had hoped to see the child have a full life, but instead, lowered it into the ground, the babe lying "so calmly in its silken-cushioned coffin."[19] Death visited to these children with little or no warning, reminding readers that life itself was a mere vapor, lasting only for a moment and departing without warning at any time.

Poem after poem expressed this concept of the fleeting nature of death. One poem read, "There is a stream whose narrow tide,/The known and unknown worlds divide—/Where all must go." The writer, standing next to this "Stream of Death," watched as an infant, a youth, a grown man, and a gentleman of "a score/ [o]f toilsome years" each approached the river, and each found themselves carried away in its "bitter"

[17] "Afflicting Dispensation," *SB*, 25 December 1850, 2.

[18] "The Little Boy's Burial," *SB*, 6 December 1854, 4.

[19] "The Baby is Dead," *SB*, 28 April 1857, 1.

waters.[20] None could escape. Another author claimed, "*That I should die,* full well I know,/All human life is short and frail;/No lasting good can earth bestow,/All portion here must quickly fail."[21] The poem, "The Power of Death," lamented, "How sad to think, that all we see,/That all we love, adore and trust,/Must soon forever pass away,/And mingle with the common dust." With a familiar theme, mankind and all of life were seen as nothing but mere dust. Likewise, the author compared life to that of the flowers of the field, "whose beauty charms the passer by," but soon "[w]ill shortly wither on its stalk,/And droop its lovely head and die." Regardless of the beauty or majesty of a flower or man in his prime, the end was always near, for "The infant on its mother's lap,/The monarch on his gilded throne,/The peasant in his humble cot,/Relentless Death! are all thine own."[22] Similarly, another poem entitled "The Dying Christian" described how the earth's "beauteous scenes," with all its hills, mountains, lakes, and forests, would "soon no more be seen."

> The flower which blooms on mountain's side,
> In valley, cave, or glade,
> Appears in glory but to droop,
> In beauty but to fade
>
> And so with all—man too must die,
> Must leave this world of care,
> And in the darkened realms of hell,
> Or heaven's bright courts appear.[23]

The poet stated his message clear. All men reach the same fate, just as all flowers

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[20] "The Stream of Death," *SB*, 13 February 1850, 4. In many ways, this poem mirrored the poem "A Time to Die," which ran several months later in September of 1850 and was discussed earlier in this chapter. The same poem ran in the Methodist newspaper the *Southern Christian Advocate* ("The Stream of Death," *Southern Christian Advocate*, 18 April 1851, 1).

[21] "Meditations on Death," *SB*, 17 April 1850, 4.

[22] "The Power of Death," *SB*, 22 September 1852, 1.

[23] "The Dying Christian," *SB*, 26 January 1853, 4.

eventually faded, and every scene of beauty would "no more be seen." Issue after issue, poem after poem, readers saw life described as a fleeting vapor, not to be too tightly cherished or embraced. Southern Baptists knew full well from their reading of these pages that every person would meet his or her own fate. None could escape.

Hope in the Life to Come

The inevitable nature of death, though, brought hope, not despair to the true believer. In the poem seen above, "The Dying Christian," the departing individual provided these last words for the family that had gathered near.

> I leave you here a little while—
> Oh! meet me all above,
> In those bright realms of purity,
> Where Jesus reigns in love.
>
> Then with our Savior, Brother, Friend,
> Forever shall we dwell,
> Good by—good by—why sorrow thus!
> Beloved friends, farewell.

As indicated in this poem, death was a call to "Paradise" for the believer. It signified an end to the "transient world" and a beginning to a life where he would be with his "great and glorious God," the "Mighty King divine," praising him with "ceaseless strains."[24] Hope beyond death decorated most every commentary, poem, and obituary. In fact, the writing often became formulaic, especially the poetry, forever reminding believers of the brevity of life, challenging them to give their all to the Kingdom of God in this world, and in the end, and describing the glory that awaited them in the next life.[25]

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[24] *Ibid*.

[25] This same formula appeared in countless evangelical hymns throughout the latter part of the nineteenth. Perhaps the clearest example of this formula was the reworking of John Newton's classic "Amazing Grace." Six stanzas in the original, a seventh stanza was added by an unknown author in the early 1800s and has remained connected to it ever since. Whereas the last stanza in Newton's original work ended with the inevitable fading of the world and a declaration that in the midst of that transition,

Other poems presented these same ideas. "But when in death I shall recline," one read, "Then let my soul ascend to thee!/Through Christ's redemption I am thine,/By faith his glories now I see;/'Twill all be well! I little prize/*Where, how,* or *when* this body dies."[26] The physical world in this poem gave way to a vision of heavenly glory so great that the soul cared little about the timing nor the cause of his death. Likewise, another set of lines, attributed to a "poor and aged" lady of the faith exclaimed, "Mourn not, I'm going home!"

I'm coming home, prepare the bridal wreath!
My Savior bids my happy spirit come.
Damp not with tears the Christian's bed of death;
Rejoice!—I'm going home!

Earth hath its cares: for three score years and ten
My lot has been midst thorny paths to roam;
I would not track those desert scenes again—
'Tis past!—I'm going home!

The dove hath found her nest—the tempest-tossed,
A place of rest beyond the dashing foam
Of grief's wild billows –thither am I bound:
Joy, joy! I'm going home!

Earth's flowers all fade—there fadeless roses blow;
Earth's sunniest light is shaded by the tomb;
Earth's loves all slumber in the vault below—
Death dwells not in that home.

I see the city of the blest on high,
With the freed spirit's ken, I come! I come!
Ye calling voices, catch my heart's reply—
Home! Home! I'm going home![27]

God remained connected to the singer, the new stanza painted a picture of heaven—"When we've been there ten thousand years,/bright shining as the sun./We've no less days to sing God's praise,/then when we've first begun." See Steve Turner, *Amazing Grace: The Story of America's Most Beloved Song* (New York: Ecco, 2002).

[26] "Meditations on Death," *SB*, 17 April 1850, 4.

[27] "I'm Going Home," *SB*, 11 August 1852, 1. Poem attributed to Thomas Ragg.

The aged soul in this poem spoke of the Savior who stands as a bridegroom anxiously awaiting her arrival. Never again would the woman have to endure the "thorny paths" or the "tempest-tossed" life because her new home was with Jesus in that city on high. The ending of days on this earth meant only the beginning in heaven.

More poems of deathly hope followed. One author excitedly waited for the chance to "soar away" to the place where "Christ a glorious victor reigns/O'er Satan, sin, and death's domains."[28] Another prayed to God that in the end, his soul would ascend to his heavenly courts because "There in that blest and sweet abode,/From every care and sin set free,/With harp of gold, and songs of love,/It shall forever worship thee."[29] An October 1852 issue carried a poem entitled "Entering Heaven" by Ohio poet Phoebe Carey, telling the tale of a woman whose life of "toil and care" had drawn to a close. The dying soul, surrounded by her family, implored them not to remember her in that final state, but instead to "[t]hink of the immortal spirit/Living up above the sky,/And of how my face, there wearing/Light of immortality,/Looking earthward, is o'erlaying/The white bastions of the sky." As the final moments passed, the faithful woman kept "murmuring very softly/…[of] a better life than ours."[30]

Another issue ran a poem entitled "Lines on the Death of—," the dash suggesting that these lines of poetry could apply to many of the faithful in their final days. "Mourn not—for she is safe," the poem read, "Safe from all grief and pain,/The loss alone is

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[28] "Dying Hymn," *SB*, 4 August 1852, 1. Poem attributed as a translation "from the Latin of Musculus" by Richard Furman in July of 1852. This particular Richard Furman was the grandson of the famous Charleston pastor.

[29] "The Power of Death," *SB*, 22 September 1852, 1. Poem attributed to J. Ruomyese.

[30] "Entering Heaven," *SB*, 27 October 1852, 4. Poem attributed to Phoebe Carey.

ours,/To her all—*all* is gain./Her prayer is answered, 'May my sufferings cease/Lord, Let thy servant now depart in peace.'"[31] Similar lines told of a man who was "gently laid to rest" and encouraged those around him to give no "Thought of toil and suffering past—/But joy to think the task is done;/The heavy cross at last laid down,/The crown of glory won."[32] Here the dead was clearly identified with Christ, having also carried a heavy cross in life, and after faithfully completing that life, earning a "crown of glory." Yet another poem echoes this idea by declaring with surety and excitement, "Christ hath said, His word ner're faileth,/Thy dead ones all shall rise again;/At my command, they will gladly come/Forth from the tombs where they have lain."[33]

A similar idea appeared in lines composed for the death of James B. Mobley of the Chester District in South Carolina. It read:

> Within the grave thy flesh shall rest,
> Secure from death's alarms,
> Thy spirit on thy Saviour's breast,
> Encircled with his arms.
>
> And when the last loud Trumpet's sound
> Shall wake the sleeping dead,
> The approving Judge shall place a crown
> Of glory on thy head.[34]

In this poem, a loved one's death became merely a time of separation until the final resurrection of the dead when all will be reunited in a new home in the great land beyond. It would be "a land where beauty will not fade," began another description of heaven,

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[31] "Lines on the Death of—," *SB*, 6 July 1853, 4. Poem attributed to "Fannie Fern."

[32] "Let Him Rest," *SB*, 19 April 1859, 1. No author given.

[33] "They Brother Shall Rise Again," *SB*, 1 March 1859, 2. Poem attributed to Hettie.

[34] "Lines Written on the Death of James B. Mobley," *SB*, 20 October 1852, 1. Poem attributed to "M."

"Nor sorrow dim the eye;/Where true hearts will not shrink nor be dismayed,/And love will never die."[35] For readers of the *Southern Baptist*, poetic words such as these provided great comfort of the ultimate hope that came from death.

Hope also came through various instructional articles in the paper. An article in June of 1847 concerning "The Destiny of the Soul" reminded its readers of how believers could be assured of having "eternal happiness with God."[36] Two years later, another article explained how "[t]he faith that sustains a believer in Christ, amid all the difficulties and afflictions of life, causes him to triumph at the approach of death in all its fearful realities."[37] Still another in 1853 described the believer's "Final Sleep," and how "[d]eath opened the doors that imprisoned the immortal incorruptible essence in its house of clay….The earthly remains on earth: the spirit ascends to God who gave it." The true friend of Jesus heard of a "nobler mansion" for his soul that awaited him or herin glory, one that is "[p]urged of its dross, reorganized, prepared by spiritual and immortal powers to respond to all the promptings of a spiritual and immortal nature."[38] Not only did the afterlife promise a new body in a new city, but it also promised union with one's Lord. "The Christian's highest conceivable reasons for desiring death," one article by Dr. Maginnis of New York read, "are all included in the fact, that thereby he is introduced directly into the society of Christ." This union with Christ came immediately with death, the ultimate consummation of one's existence. Because of this fact, "[u]nion with Christ…is to be desired, not as a means to any higher end. This itself is the end of all

[35] "The Better Land," *SB*, 5 September 1855, 4. No author given.

[36] "The Destiny of the Soul," *SB*, 26 June 1847, 2.

[37] "The Death of the Christian," *SB*, 7 November 1849, 2.

[38] "The Final Sleep," *SB*, 20 July 1853, 2.

means, the end of all ends." For the author, "To be with Christ is far better than anything else he can choose."[39] Death's door ushered the believer into a glorious new world, with a glorious new body in the presence of his or her glorious risen Lord. It offered no fear, only hope, a hope that the life to come would be far better than any of the sufferings on earth, and a hope that the God of the universe cared enough for his people to prepare a wonderful place for them in the life to come.

God, the Author of Death

The great God of the universe, who was the keeper of the world to come, was also the final decision maker on who would be allowed to join him and who had to remain behind. As with all other afflictions, God decided the fate of man and orchestrated their final destiny, including the time and date when one dies. In essence, God was the author of Death. In some situations, the paper expressed this idea in a simple form—his providence oversaw the end of the life. "Whereas in the providence of God," one obituary read, "our beloved and venerable Brother in the Ministry, JONATHAN DEWEESE, has been called from our midst and Church membership, by death."[40] Carolina Barnwell Rountree's death came as a "dispensation of Divine Providence."[41] James Furman, son of former Charleston pastor Richard Furman, eulogized the passing of Elizabeth Ann Townes of Greenville, explaining how she did "bow to the appointment of his providence" and accepted God's will that her time had came to a close.[42] In an April 1859 sermon, Edwin T. Winkler warned his First Baptist Charleston congregation to

[39] "The Christian's Desire for Death," *SB*, 17 April 1850.

[40] "Fork Shoal Creek," *SB*, 27 February 1850, 2.

[41] "Obituaries," *SB*, 7 September 1853, 3.

[42] "Preparation for Death," *SB*, 27 October 1852, 1.

always be prepared for death. Man could not guess the hour or the day of their own demise, or plan for the future of their children or family, because of "the very fact that the appointment [for death] is made by God."[43] The *Southern Baptist* even understood the death of ex-President James Polk in 1849 as an "inscrutable" decree of Providence who "ordained" that he should expire so soon after leaving office.[44] Through these sentiments, believers saw a God who almost passively allowed death to enter one's life, but had no direct connection to it.

However, other articles in the *Southern Baptist* presented the view of a God who had a far greater role in one's demise. Maria Louisa Nicholes' death "pleased God that [it] should be proceeded by long and severe suffering," which lasted nearly six months after the birth of a child. She lost all her strength and a "malignant tumor showed itself upon her person." In spite of a painful surgery to remove the tumor, Nicholes kept her hope in God, "doing her duty," and appearing to have fully recovered. Yet soon disease again attacked her, and "[e]very appliance that affection and skill could suggest was used," but to no avail. The pain and illness took over her whole body, and she finally passed on to be with the one who had appointed her "long and severe suffering."[45] In this experience of death, God acted as no passive gatekeeper. Instead, he sent the disease, an act that pleased him, an act that sent Nicholes through six months of agony. Another poem referred to death as "Our Father's chastening rod" and told readers to "adore" that

[43] Edwin T. Winkler, "Death Appointed," 18 April 1859, from Winkler Sermons, Oct. 23, 1851-June 1879, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.

[44] "Death of Ex-President Polk," *SB*, 20 June 1849, 2.

[45] "Obituaries," *SB*, 27 June 1849, 3.

same rod.[46] An excerpt from Matthew Henry's diary carried this same idea of God's hand bringing death. In reflecting on the death of a child, Henry wrote, "My desire is to be sensible of the affliction, and yet patient under it; it is a rod, a smarting rod," one dealt by the hand of God himself.[47] The poem "Lines on the Death of—" expressed this same view of God when the woman who had lived a life of immense suffering and "racking pain" died, and the mourners are encouraged to emulate her great example of patience through suffering:

> Ay, trust Him, mourning ones
> Whose anguish none may tell
> Cast all your care on Him
> Who 'doeth all things well,'
> Look nnto [*sic*] Him for strength, for well ye know,
> His power can dry the tears His hands have caused to flow.[48]

God did not just passively allow death, and, in turn, allow loved ones to mourn over death. His hands *caused* death. His sovereign will decided the course of one's life and the timing of one's death. He ended some lives early, and for others, he decided to let the pain and agony of death carry on for days, weeks, and even years. God caused this suffering and eventually this death for his overarching purposes, to fulfill his greater plans.

This concept of God as the author of death was firmly embedded in the obituaries and eulogies of the faithful in Charleston. In November of 1852, Charleston lost one of its Baptist stalwarts, Dr. M. T. Mendenhall. The *Southern Baptist* ran an obituary that expressed deep loss at his death, yet also recognized the providence of God behind it.

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[46] "Lines Written on the Death of James B. Mobley," *SB*, 20 October 1852, 1. Poem attributed to "M."

[47] "Submission to the Loss of Children," *SB*, 31 March 1848, 1.

[48] "Lines on the Death of—," *SB*, 6 July 1853, 4.

These thoughts also appeared at Mendenhall's memorial service, which was held at First Baptist Charleston, on November 28, 1852, and led by Mendenhall's friend and pastor, James R. Kendrick.[49] Drawing upon a passage from Jeremiah, Kendrick asked the question, "How is the strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod"?[50] Mendenhall had done much for Baptists in Charleston, serving not only in the city, but also for the newly established Southern Baptist Convention. His able leadership had proved to be a "strong staff" and "beautiful rod" for many. Why, then, Kendrick challenged, should such "active and eminent Christians" be taken from the community "in the plentitude of their strength?" "Our natural expectation would be that God would allow them to complete the full measure of human life," Kendrick said, "and exhaust their capacity for usefulness before their removal."[51] Yet God had other plans for Mendenhall and for the Charleston Baptist community. As to why God made these plans, Kendrick speculated, "It cannot be without cause that God afflicts His people, and when He unexpectedly removes a strong support and bright ornament from the Church, it is with the purpose of chastising some sin, correcting some error, or preserving some threatened danger."[52] Later in the eulogy, Kendrick suggested that perhaps the death of Mendenhall came as an affliction of God, brought about not because of an sin in Mendenhall's life, but perhaps because of problems within the body of believers that surrounded Mendenhall. Kendrick continued,

> Perhaps it may be to teach His children the necessity of an exclusive reliance on Himself, and warn them against trusting to an "arm of flesh," that God thus smites

[49] James R. Kendrick, *The Strong Staff and Beautiful Rod Broken. A Discourse Delivered in the First Baptist Church, Charleston, on Lord's Day, November 28th, 1852, Occasioned by the Death of Dr. M. T. Mendenhall* (Charleston: Steam Power Presses of Evans & Cogswell, 1852).

[50] *Ibid*., 6.

[51] *Ibid*., 14.

[52] *Ibid*., 15.

> them and has now smitten us….Churches may be in danger of cherishing an idolatrous regard for their pastors, officers and shining members, and God who is "jealous," withdraws them from a too admiring gaze, to prevent greater calamity.[53]

In other words, God might have authored the death of Mendenhall to teach a lesson to Mendenhall's church, a body that had come to rely far too much on someone like Mendenhall. God, being a "jealous" God, did not want his people relying upon anyone but himself. Therefore, God ended Mendenhall's life. While Kendrick did not claim his interpretation to be the only explanation, he nonetheless spent much time in his eulogy suggesting the possibility and challenged the members of First Baptist Charleston "to interrogate their lives and their hearts, the history and character of their Church, to discover" whether their sin might have caused his death.

> There should be solemn searchings of heart amongst us, and vehement renunciations of the idols whose presence has subjected us to so great a calamity.—Especially should we turn to God with deep repenting and a clearer perception and heartier acknowledgement of our complete dependence, as a congregation, on His gracious succours.[54]

Kendrick continued in the message to challenge the congregation to emulate the work of Mendenhall and use his life an example of the life each should live. However, it is difficult to escape seeing Kendrick's view of a God who, in his opinion, determined that something was terribly amiss among this body of believers, decided that the best course of action was the death of Mendenhall, and stepped into the midst of the church to carry out his will. God seemingly authored the death of Mendenhall, and if God could decide in such a way to take the life of so faithful a servant, he could decide to take anyone's life at any time for any reason.

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[53] *Ibid*., 15-16.

[54] *Ibid*., 16.

Such was the case for Abby Turner Winkler who passed away on July 6, 1858, ten days away from her thirty-third birthday, after succumbing to the effects of yellow fever.[55] Winkler, the mother of three and wife of First Baptist Charleston pastor Edwin Winkler, was eulogized by J. P. Tustin, at the time editor of the *Southern Baptist*.[56] "When we see what a grievous loss is sustained…by the deaths which we call *untimely*," Tustin said, "we are ready to question the wisdom of that Providence which sometimes spares the wicked and the worthless…and removes the active, the gifted, the lovely, and the useful, whose removal leaves us with such a crushing loss."[57] Abby Winkler underwent her "brief" battle with yellow fever with "patience and tranquility," receiving from God "dying grace to die by."[58] For those remaining, who believed that the loss of someone so useful in their family or church was insurmountable, death was seen as "a wise and benevolent dispensation."[59] As Tustin explained,

> But how often does God disable us, to show how little his work, or his cause, depends on *us*; and when *His* time comes, he makes provision for other instruments, which, but for such removals, would never have been raised up to take their places.[60]

Death became a way in which God prospered those left behind. He brought about the death of Abby Winkler as a means to bring some to salvation, others to re-commit to the

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[55] Robert A. Baker and Paul J. Craven, *Adventure in Faith: The First 300 Years of First Baptist Church, Charleston, South Carolina* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1982), 291-92; Minutes of the First Baptist Church of Charleston, 3 October 1858.

[56] J. P. Tustin, *A Discourse, at the Funeral of Mrs. Abby T. Winkler, who died, July 6th, 1858. Delivered in the First Baptist Church, Charleston, S.C., July 7th, 1858* (Charleston: A. J. Burke, 1858). See note in introduction on J. P. Tustin.

[57] *Ibid*., 5.

[58] *Ibid*., 10.

[59] *Ibid*., 13.

[60] *Ibid*., 14.

faith, and still others to bear the responsibilities of this fallen one.[61]

Along with the eulogy of Mendenhall, as well as the other obituaries, commentaries, and poems contained in the pages of the *Southern Baptist*, Winkler's death demonstrated for those remaining that God was the ultimate author of the universe, and in this case, the author of death. Death, as with other afflictions, became merely a tool in his hand to bring about his ultimate plan. In the cases of those departed, death challenged some to take up the cause of Christ in greater ways. Others received pleadings to draw unto Christ for the first time. Still others heard of the great comfort and peace that awaited them in the afterlife when God the author of life and death called them home. Regardless, God loomed over death not so much as a compassionate father, although they did describe him in that way, but rather as the keeper of the grim reaper, who would let loose his servant at any time to accomplish his grand purpose.

The Good Death

The pages of the *Southern Baptist* continually reminded readers of the fleeting nature of life, the hope in the life to come, and God's role as the author of death, yet perhaps no theme appeared as often as the fourth—the Good Death. The Baptist newspaper had no monopoly on this idea of dying well. Throughout the antebellum period, the idea of the Good Death became almost an obsession. According to historian Drew Gilpin Faust, "American culture treated dying as an art and the 'Good Death' as a goal that all men and women should struggle to achieve."[62] A number of elements combined to form the Good Death, or *ars moriendi*: first, the dying person knew of his

[61] *Ibid*., 16-17.

[62] Drew Gilpin Faust, "The Civil War Soldier and the Art of Dying" in *Journal of Southern History* 67, no. 1 (2001): 6.

coming fate; second, he made peace with the coming death; third, he demonstrated on his deathbed a belief in God, or if he had not previously believed, he turned to God in that final hour; and fourth, he gave a final message for those he was leaving behind.[63] In most cases, family was an essential part of the Good Death, with family members standing by the bedside as the dying gave up their final words, words that "imposed meaning on the life narrative they concluded and communicated invaluable lessons to those gathered around the deathbed."[64]

In his work, Scott Stephan has delineated the particular way in which southern antebellum women served in promoting this concept of the Good Death. As Stephan writes, women operated as "religious stewards in a culture that sacralized patriarchal authority."[65] They steered family toward Good Deaths, warned others of their immortal dangers, and "loudly professed resignation to God's will."[66] Illness became a testing ground of their faith, a testing where they demonstrated continuous prayer for healing, but when the healing obviously refused to come, the deathbed "symbolized the family's hope for the dying family member's salvation, the collective hope of family reunification in heaven, and the reality of sacrifice to an all-powerful and all-wise God."[67] Once the loved one passed away, those left behind saw the final test of illness to be the ability to accept death as the will of God.

Numerous references indicated the sufferer's awareness of his or her own coming

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[63] *Ibid*., 19.

[64] Faust, *This Republic*, 10-11.

[65] Stephan, *Redeeming*, 185.

[66] *Ibid*., 192.

[67] *Ibid*., 191.

demise, a necessary first step in a Good Death. An 1847 issue carried the story of the final moments of a well-known Virginia Baptist leader, James Shelbourne, who died in 1820.[68] The obituary, one in a series of "eminently useful and pious individuals" described Shelbourne's preparation for death as he sensed the end was near and called his son to his side and charged him with the continuing care of Shelbourne's congregation, wanting to make sure that all was in order.[69] Likewise, famous Baptist Hosea Wheeler weeped at the thought of being unable to "preach Jesus Christ" any longer because of his illness, and in the last days, he told a friend, "I have had a foretaste of heaven, and the glories of the redeemed. God has prepared me for all of this: his will be done, and not mine."[70] Carolina Barnwell Rountree, a 17-year-old from South Carolinian, battled a severe illness and in the end called her family to her side when she "became conscious that her resolution was near."[71] The poem "I'm Going Home" demonstrated the final stages of an elderly Christian who knew that she was on her death bed and told her family, "Mourn not, I'm going home."[72] Each instance demonstrated an essential element in the Good Death—that the dying knew they were dying.

Just knowing death was imminent was not enough for the *ars moriendi*, the dying needed to demonstrate a peace with his fate. An 1848 front-page article described how believers "die willingly," making it a "religious act to die," yet against the backdrop of these Christians dying gladly, stood those unrepentant and dying angrily. "Bad men die

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[68] James B. Taylor, *Lives of Virginia Baptist Minister: Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged* (Richmond: Yale and Wyatt, 1838), 174-181.

[69] "Last Hours; No. 9: James Shelbourne," *SB*, 26 June 1847, 4.

[70] "Last Hours; No. 11: Hosea Wheeler," *SB*, 14 July 1847, 1.

[71] "Obituaries," *SB*, 27 June 1849, 3.

[72] "I'm Going Home," *SB*, 11 August 1852, 1. Poem attributed to Thomas Ragg.

reluctantly," the author stated, "life is extorted from them as if by main force."[73] Another article described their fear of death. "Death may be called the King of Terrors—and to many he is so," the article stated. These unconverted individuals experienced death as a "hopeless wretchedness" and the "end of all enjoyment and happiness." It was an exchange of "happiness for sorrow, and joy for misery and wo [*sic*]" and an "eternal separation from all those around whom the heart's affections have entwined." "No wonder, then," the author stated, "that the unconverted man trembles at the thought of Death, for it is the destroyer of all that he loves, and the entailer of all that he loathes and abhors." Contrasted to this scene is the Christian.

> To the Christian who has a true faith in his God, there are no such feelings and no fear of Death. He looks upon it as that which will terminate his sufferings here on earth, and admit him to the joys of a heavenly world, and to the pleasures without alloy. He thinks not that "Death is an eternal sleep"—for Christ, his God, was dead and is alive—*He* slept in Death and awoke to life again, and so the Christian hopes to sleep and live. He fears not to meet his God, for Christ is his intercessor and Saviour, and God is his loved and revered Father.

Placing one's life in the hands of Christ, the believer had peace in death and hope for the life to come. As the article stated, "When the Christian's heart is filled with love towards God, Death has no terrors."[74]

An 1849 article demonstrated this same idea. "The faith that sustains a believer in Christ amid all the difficulties and afflictions of life," the article began, "causes him to triumph at the approach of death in all its fearful realities." Death, indeed, made believers happy. They "cheerfully await[ed] the last hour without impatience or fear." The end came with "holy joy."[75] A similar article published several months later

[73] "Dying Gladly," *SB*, 31 May 1848, 1.

[74] "Death," *SB*, 6 August 1851, 1-2.

[75] "The Death of the Christian," *SB*, 7 November 1849, 2.

suggested that Christians should, in fact, desire death. Again, Maginnis claimed, "Union with Christ, therefore, is to be desired, not as a means to any higher end. This is itself the end of all means, the end of all ends. No other good is either to be hoped for or conceived."[76] Death should be welcomed with open arms and happily embraced. The Good Death gave evidence to this welcoming, peaceful spirit—the dying soul knew the end was near, experience peace rather than fear in the face of death, and gladly understood death as the beginning of something far greater.

A third element of the Good Death was the presence of meaningful faith in the life of the dying. Articles in the *Southern Baptist* warned individuals of the need to settle the issue of their faith prior to their death bed. "When you lie down at night," one article instructed, "compose your spirits as if you were not to awake till the heavens be no more." Then the believer should let go of the cares of the "worldly enjoyments," much like corn lets go of the ground or fruit lets go from the tree. In these instances, the food is easier to pick; likewise, "when a Christian's heart is truly weaned from the world, he is prepared for death, and it will be the more easy for him."[77] Thus, believers should live their life with faith in Christ and their future in heaven, preparing themselves every evening for the possibility of it being their last.

Several articles discussed this concept by highlighting the plight of those who had and had not found salvation prior to their death bed. Rev. D. Temple, a missionary to Smyrna, charged believers with the duty of sharing the Gospel with those on their death bed. In these final moments, as the individual lay dying, "taking leave of all earthly

[76] "The Christian's Desire for Death," *SB*, 17 April 1850, 1.

[77] "Preparation for Death," *SB*, 23 June 1852, 1.

things, " the author explained, "[n]othing else can bring comfort and peace to the soul in such an hour" than to point the "poor dying sinner" to the "infinitely compassionate Saviour." Those who had already been saved oftentimes needed reassurance of their eternal glory in heaven, while others needed to be presented with the message of salvation one final time. Regardless of their status with God, preparation was the key, for in these last hours, the dying "needs to be reminded of these things in his dying hour, for his memory is often weak, and his mind confused, and Satan comes with all his subtlety, to cast his fiery darts, and annoy him at this dreadful moment."[78]

Contrasted to these prepared for death, the paper also described those who had waited too late to turn. "Life's last hours are grand testing hours," one article began. "Death tries all our principles, and lays bare all our foundation," and as the author further explained, many individuals who had seemingly made peace with God proved themselves instead hypocrites, whose "misgivings of the heart" came to the surface at death's door. One "gentleman of renown" confessed to a friend that he had no assurance of the truth of Scriptures and his prospects for the life after were "[v]ery dark—very dark." His Christian friend pressed, "But have you no light from the sun of righteousness? Have you done justice to the Bible?" "Perhaps not," responded the dying man, "but it is now too late—too late." The man of renown had made no effort to prepare for this final stage of life, and in these final moments, facing death, he experienced only fear. The article also described the plight of a mother, "who had laughed at religion and religious people." "Restless and miserable" on her death bed, the mother called her children to her side and said to them, "My children, I have been leading you in the wrong road all your life." She

[78] "Counsel of the Dying," *SB*, 24 August 1858, 1. Written by Rev. D. Temple, Missionary to Smyrna.

confessed that she had put them on a road of destruction and that they should instead seek earnestly to serve God and to "try to find the gate to heaven, though you may never meet your mother there,"[79] and with those words, the mother died. In the cases of both this well-known man and this caring mother, the unprepared soul lay wasting on the death bed, wishing only to have the chance to better brace themselves for the coming death, yet coming too late to do so. The message was clear—prepare yourself so that you do not find yourself facing these same final moments—find faith while it is still the day.

While the famous man and dear mother did not practice faith, they did leave instructions for those they left behind, to strive for a better life, a life of faith. This aspect of their demise demonstrated the last stage of the Good Death—the final words. The *Southern Baptist* often carried obituaries that demonstrated the needed departing thoughts that capped off the *ars moriendi*. James Shelbourne, who had asked his son to come near as he sensed the coming end, gave a final sermon as his departing words, drawing from the book of Luke 2:29-30. The scene in the passage told the story of Simeon, a devout Israelite who was told by God that in his lifetime, the promised Messiah would arrive. Day after day, he waited in the temple until one day he saw Mary and Joseph along with their child, Jesus. When Simeon saw Jesus, he shouted for joy and prepared for his departure, saying "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Shelbourne saw himself in the life of Simeon. He was prepared to leave this world for his time had finally come. Next, the obituary described the "peaceful resignation" that Shelbourne demonstrated to his colleagues as death approached, stating that "he was no for afraid of dying than living."

[79] "Life's Last Hours," *SB*, 12 May 1847, 1.

Shelbourne exhibited no fear in his departure and joyfully welcomed death. In his final moments, he stated, "I have no more doubt of divine favor than I have of my existence; I could say, come Lord Jesus, come quickly…."[80] The Good Death was complete.

Two weeks later, the obituary of Hosea Wheeler, who died in 1833, told a similar story to that of Shelbourne. An established Baptist minister, Wheeler spent his life preparing others and himself for the life to come, and as illness set in and weakened his voice to the point of no longer being able to preach, he lamented the inability to continue his life's work. Weeks prior to his death, after a severe coughing attack in which he spit up blood, Wheeler was asked by a friend whether or not he had any doubts about his future. "Not the least," he replied. "I have tried to preach Jesus Christ to the world, and in his hands can trust myself." Fear did not overcome Wheeler even in these trying hours. The only thing that troubled him was the care of his family. Yet, even that worry he surrendered to God, whispering to his wife and family in his final moments alone with them, "He will provide for you, if you trust in him. He will be the widow's God, and a father to the fatherless children. And now I have done with this world."[81] His final wishes expressed not only a confidence in the provision of God for those whom he would leave behind, but also a welcoming of the life still to come. In their deaths, these stalwart leaders stood as examples of the readers of the paper of how to die properly.

Maria Louisa Nicholes' obituary also expressed this same *ars moriendi*. The article described at length the care and concern that Nicholes showed for her family, not only providing for their physical needs but also their spiritual needs. Even as a lengthy

[80] "Last Hours; No. 9: James Shelbourne," *SB*, 26 June 1847, 4.

[81] "Last Hours; No. 11: Hosea Wheeler," *SB*, 14 July 1847, 1.

battle with illness ensued, she demonstrated a continuing "concern for the souls of others," as well as a trust in God and a "desire to depart and to be with Christ." She had perfectly surrendered herself to God's will, unafraid of the death that quickly approached, even welcoming death when it arrived, telling her husband, "It is well! It is well!" all the while staring directly toward the heavens.[82] Likewise, Carolina Barnwell Rountree, the 17-year-old South Carolinian, demonstrated the Good Death in her passing. She had already made a profession of faith and had joined a local church when death came upon her. In the midst of her final days, she repeated the lines of a simple hymn, "Jesus can make a dying bed,/Feel soft as downy pillows are,/While on his breast I lean my head,/And breathe my life out sweetly there." With "her last breath…singing praises to God," Rountree welcomed the death that awaited her and "entreat[ed] those who wept around her, in the most affection manner to prepare to meet her in heaven, and earnestly warning them of the consequences of delay in attending to those momentous matters."[83] Once again, the paper provided individuals the chance to read descriptions of the Good Death.

An attempt to evangelize while on the death bed sometimes found its way into death narratives. While it was not always a part of the Good Death formulation, it appeared almost as a ringing endorsement of the individual's life, and it more often than not appeared in the descriptions of the death of children. For example, one issue carried the fictitious story of a young girl named Eve who lay dying in her bed from scarlet fever. Her mother, Evelyn, was a believer, and the child too had embraced the Christian faith,

[82] "Obituaries," *SB*, 27 June 1849, 3. The Southern Presbyterian carried obituaries similar in style and formula. For example, see "Tribute of Respect," *Southern Presbyterian*, 21 January 1860, 2.

[83] "Obituaries," *SB*, 27 June 1849, 3.

but the father, Euston, had not. As the disease ravaged the body of the young child, it spread to the mother, leaving the father to tend to them both. Euston stood by the bed of his little Eve, watching her struggle in her sleep when she awoke and asked for her mother. The father explained that her mother was resting, and Eve asked that he say the Lord's Prayer with her as her mother had done so many times. Although he knew the prayer, he felt it wrong to say words that he had not believed. As his dying child pleaded with him, Euston relented, knelt, and "for the first time since he murmured it with childish earnest in his mother's ear, his lips gave utterance to that hallowed form of prayer which was given to man by a Divine Teacher." At that moment, Euston truly meant the prayer, surrendered all things to God and "[h]is infidelity was annihilated." The story did not end with his salvation. Eve sat silently as the prayer ended, and within a few minutes exclaimed that she could see "some celestial visitant." "Eve coming!" she exclaimed. "Take Eve!" In her final words, she spoke, "Papa come too—mamma—grandpa—little brother—dear papa." As Eve died, Euston's life changed. "His proud, stern unbending nature had been taught to tremble at the decree of 'Him who ruleth over the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.'" God "mercifully" gave back Euston his wife, and in the taking of his daughter, God also took away Euston's past life and gave him a new one.[84] Eve's passing carried all of the necessary elements of the Good Death. Her tiny heart was prepared for death; she had no fear of death and instead merely wanted comfort through the Lord's Prayer, and when death came to claim this child, she gladly welcomed death, asking her father and the rest of her family to join her. Furthermore, Eve brought about salvation in the life of her father through her Good

[84] "The Infidel and Dying Child," *SB*, 13 September 1848, 1.

Death. God seemingly had a purpose in her death, and that purpose came through as Euston committed himself to God at the deathbed of his daughter.

A similar story ran several years later. A ten-year old girl lay dying in bed as her father struggled to pray that God's will be done in this situation, and he began to weep bitter tears. In the midst of his crying, the girl awoke. In broken sentences, the daughter asked, "how much—do I cost you—every year?" The father responded by trying to calm the child and telling her not to speak. But the child continued, "But please—papa, how much do I cost you?" In order to placate his seemingly delirious child, the father responded, "Well, dearest, perhaps two hundred dollars." The child then made a second request, "I thought—may be you would lay it out this year—in Bibles—for poor children—to remember me by." The father, amazed at the selfless nature of this final request, promised to do so "every year as long as I live." The child then fell asleep, and waking minutes later, described to her father the golden gates she had seen and the crowds of children that came pouring out to greet her. Then she began to say, "Yes, yes. I come! I come!" and gave her last breath. The father "rose from his knees with a holy triumph on his face," saying, "Thank God…I am richer by another treasurer in heaven."[85] Again, the Good Death appeared. The child had prepared herself for her end, had no fear of death, and celebrated her journey to the other side. And also again, the evangelistic addition appeared. The girl sought to provide Bibles for "poor children" with her dying wish, that they too would know the Christian life. Through her death, others could come to know Jesus.

A poem entitled "The Dying Girl," written by a student at Furman University and

[85] "The Dying Child," *SB*, 22 February 1859, 4.

published in 1853, also carried this familiar scene. Lying in bed dying from disease, the child spoke to her mother her final words. Most of the poem described the preparation of the child, saying good bye to her earthly pleasures and assuring her mother that no tears should be shed because the child did not fear death. In the final lines, the girl welcomed death with a smile:

> Mother, farewell, weep not because
> The tender ties of earth are riven;
> Soon wilt thou meet me far above
> Within the blissful realms of heaven.
>
> There all is calm, no pain is felt,
> No sorrow enters heaven above,
> No parting words are uttered there,
> No tear drop dims the eye of love.
>
> Say mother, wilt thou meet me there,
> With me in that blest land reside?
> In tears the mother whispered, yes,
> In smiles the happy daughter died.[86]

In this version of the Good Death, the child gladly considered the world before her. The "awful pain" like "fiery darts" plagued her for so long that soon she looked forward to relief in the realm of heaven, and her final evangelistic plea was to ask her mother for reassurance that they would be reunited in time. The dying girl died a Good Death.

Poems such as these, as well as obituaries, painted the picture of the *ars moriendi* for the readers of the *Southern Baptist*. The paper never published a step-by-step process that individuals had to go through to achieve the Good Death, but the essential elements of the Good Death managed to make their way into the writing. As Faust has suggested, the concept was in many ways ingrained into the psyche of antebellum America. Indeed, Baptists in Charleston, like many others throughout the United States, may very well

[86] "The Dying Girl," *SB*, 30 November 1853, 1.

have been "better prepared to die than to kill."[87] They understood that God's hand watched over them daily and brought death into their lives according to his will. The Good Death became a form of submission to this sovereign act of God, a humble acknowledgement that in the end, they accepted his plans for their lives, even if the plan included watching a loved one die or perhaps dying themselves.

Conclusion

Death littered the pages of the *Southern Baptist* prior to the Civil War. It surpassed talk of disease and war and at times appeared to be more popular of a subject than spiritual disciplines. Perhaps one reason for this continuous talk of death was the ever-present nature of it. Death touched everyone's life. Nobody was immune. Disease may skip the city for a season, and wars may never reach the shore, but death was constant, and God ruled over death just as he did over disease and war. His hand kept death at bay, and his hand brought the full force of death to bear.

As such, mankind needed to respond properly to death, just as they needed to respond properly to God's other visitations—namely disease and war. While death brought with it more elements, such as the concept of the Good Death, five common themes appear as Baptists were taught to deal with God's providence. First, God was the source of all afflictions. Death, disease, and war did not occur because of random chance or solely on account of man's activities. Instead, God was the author of affliction. While he still maintained his status as a good, pure, and holy God, in no way tainted by evil, he nonetheless used seemingly evil afflictions to accomplish his purposes. Second, mankind remained helpless in the face of the affliction. The actions of men could not help them

[87] Faust, *This Republic*, 6.

escape from the oncoming visitation of God's providence. They could flee to avoid a disease, fight nobly in the midst of battle, or come back from the brink of death, but when God decided the time had come, men could not stop his hand. Third, God brought the afflictions for a specific purpose and specific plan, most notably to reinforce the concept of his power and man's helplessness. There was no random act in the world, and God's visitation came for a reason. Fourth, it was man's job to acknowledge God's power and their helplessness through prayer and petition. When affliction came, rather than running away from a jealous and angry God, or believing that God had turned his back on his people, readers were encouraged cling even more tightly to the God that was afflicting them. Fifth, in the end, through prayer and reliance on God, mankind could discover the purpose of the affliction and work towards God's greater purpose.

An 1851 article encouraged readers to assume this position of submission when it came to the issue of trials or even death. "Ye who mourn under the correcting hand of Providence," the author concluded,

> who bend with anguish over the ashes of the friends of your affections, the beloved partners of your hearts,—ye sons and daughters of affliction, who bedew with tears the turf, fresh springing over a parent's grave,—ye mothers, who refuse to be comforted because your children "are not,"—*learn from Christ*; be resigned, be patient, and remember who, in the hour of agony, meekly bowed his head and said with pious submission, "Father not my will, but thine be done."[88]

Believers, instead of remaining in grief and disbelief that God would take from someone or pour out his afflictions upon them, needed to accept it as a part of God's overall plan—his will, not their will. Once individuals assumed this posture of submission, then God could strengthen his people and ultimately to bring them closer to himself, ready to receive his blessing. The prevalence of this concept of evangelical providentialism, and

[88] "The Meekness of Christ, An Impressive Example to His Followers," *SB*, 13 August 1851, 2.

especially the ways in which it manifested itself in regard to God's afflictions of disease, war, and death, helped to shape the way in which Baptists in Charleston would understand the coming Civil War and interpret the war following its bloody conclusion.

Chapter Five

Good Lord, Deliver Us!: The Coming War

> Deliver us from evil, national and social! Defend us from unjust laws, from intestine strife, from the curse of fanaticism, and from the rage of human passions. From pride, arrogance, and disregard of other's rights, may the Lord deliver us! From national judgments, from war and tempest, from plague, pestilence and famine, good Lord, deliver us![1]

Rev. Edwin T. Winkler prayed these words on July 4, 1860, before an audience gathered to honor the legacy of the American Revolution. He and those gathered there that day stood on the cusp of the Civil War, and from their collective vantage point, celebrating the independence of their nation, this prayer encapsulated the way in which many southern Baptists understood the conflict prior to the war and the way in which they would come to understand the war at its conclusion. For years, southern ministers complained about the rise of northern fanaticism. Throughout the 1850s, Baptists heard about the sanctity of slavery and the absurdity of abolitionism. They believed in the values of the southern way of life—a life imperfect yet nonetheless characterized by allegiance to God's Word and God's social structure. This allegiance helped to solidify a sense of southern nationalism prior to the war, the sense that they stood as a separate nation within the United States. In addition, they had come to believe in a strong sense of God's providence, a providence that brought disease, war, and death according to his overarching plan. While these ideas developed in the 1850s, it was the year 1860, with the election of Abraham Lincoln and the subsequent secession of South Carolina, that forever fused southern nationalism and evangelical providentialism to produce the form

[1] E. T. Winkler, *Oration, Delivered before the '76 Association, and Society of Cincinnati, at Hibernian Hall, Charleston, S.C., on the Occasion of the Semi-Centennial Anniversary of the '76, Fourth of July, 1860* (Charleston: A.J. Burke, 1860), 6.

of southern religion seen throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century.

In the months leading up to the November 1860 election, talk of secession and hostility toward the North filled the streets. From April 24 to May 4, the city played host to the Democratic National Convention, yet prior to the arrival of any delegates, the possibility for unity among northerners and southerners seemed impossible, even those of the same party. On March 13, the *Charleston Courier*, the moderate voice among the two daily newspapers in Charleston, carried an article noting an "Extraordinary Disclosure" of the activities of the Republican Party as it prepared for the upcoming election. According to the article, a group of southerners in Washington had managed to obtain a copy of a circular intended for members of the Republican Executive Congressional Committee. The circular called for the mass distribution of Republican political speeches and pamphlets; it also accused the Democratic Party of "denunciations and misrepresentations" and of using their position of power to engage in "patronage of the General Government to corrupt votes and influence elections." The article contained a special accusation against the treasurer of the Republican Committee, John Convode of Pennsylvania, who, along with the signers of the circular, asked for supporters to contribute money for the distribution of the pamphlets and speeches. According to the article, just one week prior Convode had called for the appointment of a special committee to investigate the money spent by the Democratic Party in Pennsylvania for the upcoming elections. "Is there an instance upon public record of such disreputable hypocrisy and inconsistency as is thus revealed to the world in the person of John Convode?" the author of the article asked. In addition, the author called upon all Democrats to read carefully the circular "sent forth by the Black Republican Committee"

and be on the lookout for the pamphlets which would soon be distributed, pamphlets that would prove to be "more mischievous, in all probability, to its repose, than the infamous Helper book."[2]

A few weeks later, the *Courier* carried Rev. J. Lafayette Girardeau's address to the College of Charleston held in Hibernia Hall that, among other things, raised again the issue of resistance to one's government. "All eyes are turned upon the evils which threaten the very existence of the Federal Government and of the Union," Girardeau stated, "and all minds are speculating in regard to the nature of the remedies which ought to be employed for their removal." He claimed that while God did indeed ordain government, there were, nonetheless, two cases that allowed individuals to stand up and rebel against government. The first came when the individual was "required to infringe his conscientions [*sic*] convictions of what the Divine law demands, in which he is prohibited from doing what it enjoins or directed to do what it forbids." The second came when a standing government invaded or overthrew the "fundamental law of a country and the clearly defined constitutional rights of its people." Both instances, Girardeau stated, had been violated by northern elements in the United States, because the North had both denied the Scriptural validity of slavery and betrayed the sacred trust of the Constitution.[3]

Against the relatively moderate voice of the *Charleston Courier* came the more radical *Charleston Mercury*, owned and operated by fire-eater Robert Barnwell Rhett. In the days before the Convention, Rhett blasted the work of "Black Republicans" and his

[2] "Extraordinary Disclosures—the Modus Operandi of Abolitionism," *Charleston Courier*, 13 March 1860, 4.

[3] "Conscience and Civil Government," *Charleston Courier*, 28 March 1860, 1.

supposed Democratic allies in the North. One particular poem, entitled "A Political Union of the Crows and Blackbirds," portrayed the Northern Democrats and the Republicans as conspiring against the South, becoming birds of the same feather. At the poem's beginning, the Republican crow explained to the northern Democrat blackbird, "We go for high Tariffs, to create high prices,/That Blackbirds and Crows may all get their allies;/We give all the honor and fighting to fools,/And thus make the game cocks our convenient tools," and then to dispel any and all confusion about its motivation, the Crow said,

> We cry for the Union like a brotherly band,
> But theirs is the Union and ours all the land.
> We make all our fortunes by tricks and by figures,
> And save all their souls by killing their negroes.
> Thus now you see, we are practical Parties—
> We hate all the white folks and love all the Darkies;
> We hate the old Bible, we hate all abstraction;
> We long for all power and money, to distraction.
> And now, since the Blackbirds' as black at [sic] the Crow;
> You all may be Black Republicans, you know;
> We'll fight and we'll steal in on, as one party."
> So they kissed and they hugged, and both laughed out right hearty—[4]

Following the poem, Rhett went on to accuse northern Democratic delegates of denying southern rights and lambasted southern delegates for timidly relying on their supposed northern allies to fight their battles with the abolitionists and hostile Republicans.[5] With this kind of rhetoric, Rhett, who had no love for the North and had spent years arguing for secession, stoked the fires of dissent in the streets of Charleston as the Democratic National Convention meeting drew ever closer.

When the Democratic delegates finally gathered in Charleston on April 23, and

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[4] "A Political Union of the Crows and Blackbirds," *Charleston Mercury*, 4 April 1860, 4.

[5] "The Convention," *Charleston Mercury*, 21 April 1860, 1, and "The True Polity," *Charleston*

the convention came to order, Rev. Christian Hanckel, rector of the St. Paul's Protestant Episcopal Church, who had served in the city since 1820, gave the opening blessing, asking for God's favor to rest upon the men assembled.[6] However, Hanckel's prayer did not appear to be answered as following the "amen," arguments erupted concerning the seating of the delegates from New York. As the days continued, so did the arguments. Rhett through the *Charleston Mercury* called for southerners to remove themselves from the convention and create their own party.[7] Following his lead, several southern delegates walked out of the Democratic National Convention seven days after it began on April 30 and formed their own group, the Constitutional Democratic Convention. Lacking many of their southern brethren, the first convention continued in Charleston for several days, adjourning on May 3. The delegates left Charleston with no presidential candidate, even though Stephen Douglas continued to receive a plurality of votes in each of the fifty-six ballots.[8] Douglas would later achieve the nomination at a second convention held in Baltimore in June. Interestingly, in the last days of the Charleston

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Mercury, 25 April 1860, 1.

[6] "Democratic National Convention," *Charleston Courier*, 24 April 1860, 1; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, In South Carolina: Held in St. Michael's Church, Charleston, on the 12th and 13th of February, 1851* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1851), 4; and *History of St. Paul's Church, Radcliffeboro* (Charleston: Lucas and Richardson, 1878, 20-21. In the days that followed, ministers from each major denomination in Charleston, excluding the Catholics, provided opening prayers, including the Presbyterian ministers W. C. Dana and Thomas Smyth, as well as the Baptists Winkler and Kendrick.

[7] "The Convention," *Charleston Mercury*, 30 April 1860, 1.

[8] "Democratic National Convention: Eighth Day. Afternoon Proceedings Continued," *Charleston Courier*, 3 May 1860, 4; "Democratic National Convention: Ninth Day. Morning Session," *Charleston Courier*, 3 May 1860, 4. For more on the Charleston Democratic Convention, see Austin Venable, "The Conflict Between the Douglas and Yancey Forces in the Charleston Convention, *The Journal of Southern History* vol. 8, no. 2 (May, 1942): 226-241; Robert W. Johannson, "Douglas at Charleston," in Politics and the Crisis, edited by Norman A. Graebner (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961): 61-90; and William H. Freehling, "Democracy's Charleston Convention," in *The Road to Disunion, Volume II: Secessionists Triumphant,1854–1861* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007): 288-308.

convention, when the delegates continued to cast votes with no results, Baptists James Kendrick and Edwin Winkler both gave their scheduled opening prayers on May 2 and May 3 respectively.[9]

Even after the conventions concluded their business in Charleston, tension continued to rise. While focus still remained on the Constitutional or Southern Democratic Convention, papers gave updates about the "Black Republican Convention" that was being held in Chicago and about the Republican candidate, Abraham Lincoln.[10] Curiously, while the main papers in Charleston carried continuing updates, including the *Southern Presbyterian*, the *Southern Baptist* remained silent on these volatile political issues that occurred throughout the summer, seemingly to rely on the belief that political affairs lay outside the proper scope of a religious newspaper.[11]

Even Winkler's speech on July 4 to the '76 Association and the Society of the Cincinnati, groups formed to remember the spirit of the Revolution, remained overall silent as to the actual tensions of the time, although reading between the lines, his stance can be seen. After his prayer for God's deliverance from the coming evil, Winkler

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[9] "Democratic National Convention: Tenth Day. Morning Session," *Charleston Courier*, 3 May 1860, 4; "Democratic National Convention: Tenth Day. Morning Session," *Charleston Courier*, 4 May 1860, 1.

[10] "Platform of the Black Republican Convention at Chicago, As Adopted," *Charleston Mercury*, 22 May 1860, 1; "The Black Republican Convention," *Charleston Courier*, 19 May 1860, 1; and "Chicago Convention," *Charleston Courier*, 19 May 1860, 1.

[11] The *Southern Presbyterian*, published in Charleston, seemed to have no hesitancy in its statements in the realm of politics. The paper kept its readers informed about the Democratic Convention in Charleston ("Charleston Convention," *Southern Presbyterian*, 13 May 1860, 2), and with the election of the "Black Republican" Lincoln and the subsequent actions of the South Carolina Legislature, the newspaper maintained its strong support of separation: "The Election," *Southern Presbyterian*, 9 November 1860, 2; "Domestic," *Southern Presbyterian*, 9 November 1860, 2; "Union or Disunion?" *Southern Presbyterian*, 17 November 1860, 2; "The Southern Movement," *Southern Presbyterian*, 1 December 1860, 2; "Our Country," *Southern Presbyterian*, 8 December 1860, 2; "Shall We Have War?" *Southern Presbyterian*, 22 December 1860, 2; and "'Comfort of the Scriptures' for God's People in 'the Present Distress,'" *Southern Presbyterian*, 12 January 1861, 2.

proceeded to describe the reciprocal nature between the rulers and the ruled in society and the need to maintain "political integrity" to ensure the continuation of a good government. "Governments are established for the happiness of Society," he began. "Whatever may be our theory of the commencement and development of the social polity, we must admit that its right to exist is based upon its subservience to the welfare of the people."[12] Winkler did not use this speech as an occasion to launch into a diatribe against the North. He did not list the abuses of the abolitionists or those who seemingly sought to destroy the Constitution. Instead, he explained what he believed were the core principles that led the Patriots to the rise up against England and how those principles should be applied in their situation.

The government, according to Winkler, maintained its power first and foremost by "Divine ordinance." Whether providing blessings or curses for its citizens, it nonetheless had its origin in the decree of God.[13] However, governments could not rely merely on this connection to Providence to justify their continued rule. Drawing upon Enlightenment principles, Winkler stated that governments remained in power because the will of the governed allowed them to remain in power. Therefore, they should be run by men of integrity who neither neglected their duties to protect and care for the citizens nor turned their office into a means for personal gain. As Winkler stated, "All that we can justly demand of a ruler, in behalf of society, is the endeavor to approximate to a nobler state." He then stated, "He [the leader of a nation] stands approved in his high trust, if, at the end, he can say with a deeper truth than Augustus, that the State which he

[12] Winkler, *Oration*, 7.

[13] *Ibid*., 7-8.

found of brick he left of marble."[14]

In regard to those who are ruled, they too had their own unique responsibilities in this relationship. While it was understood that the government power came from the people and maintained its power so long as it worked for the good of the people, the subjects of the government should not consider themselves as being lords over the government. Instead, their "principal duties" were that of "obedience and respect." According to Winkler, subjects needed to respect their government and work in accordance with the government. When the government errs, Winkler stated, "Let it be remembered that there must be faultiness in all men as well as in all systems."[15] In other words, he encouraged his listeners to refrain from blaming the structure of government itself and instead view the problem as stemming from the frailty of men. In fact, Winkler told them that revolution was only the last and final resort that a people could take: "And as the last act of the planter is to commit an unfruitful field to burning and barrenness, so that last appeal of the citizen is to the sword."[16]

Those in the audience did not hear the call for revolution that they might have had if Robert Barnwell Rhett had spoken. Indeed, Winkler's noted lack of anger against the North, especially when considering the content of his prayer prior to his talk, demonstrated a far different stance than the secessionists. Winkler seemed to remain calm. Since he despised the "fanaticism" of the North, he refused to match it on his part, and in the process, he called for citizens to bear through the problems of government and only resort to rebellion when all other avenues failed. At the same time, those in the

[14] *Ibid*., 19.

[15] *Ibid*., 21.

[16] *Ibid*., 22.

audience could not escape hearing the implicit ways in which he described the failure of the North. By claiming the government's duty to the welfare of its citizens, Winkler no doubt brought to mind the perceived failure that a Northern-controlled government would bring. Likewise, stating that the job of the government was to leave the land in a better state seemed to suggest that those vying for power would fail in that regard. Again, Winkler made no direct claims against the North, but implicitly he stated what would eventually be the rallying cry for secession—the Northern Republicans failed to respect the rights of the South and the agreements laid out in the Constitution, and if all other means should fail, separation could prove to be the only answer.

This attempt by Winkler to avoid overt political dialogue mirrored an editorial that ran in the *Southern Baptist* the following month. Entitled "Religious Newspapers and 'Political Intelligence,'" the article lamented, "We confess to much astonishment in looking over the religious newspapers of the country to find so much space occupied in them by the political news of the day." Continuing on, the author noted that the papers "appear to have entered the lists of the party press, and are trying to do service in the cause of their respective candidates." Activity such as this undercut the very ministry of the religious press, that being to speak "to things spiritual and not temporal." Of course, the paper maintained a long history of informing its readers about the various political activities in Columbia, Washington, and beyond, but it seemingly did not view their sharing of political information in the same way as it did the northern abolitionist-leaning newspaper that it perhaps was describing. Trying to set himself above the unbecoming "political ardor," the author stated,

> the mission of the religious press should be to break down the aspirations of partisanship, and inculcate the lessons of fraternal love taught by our divine

> Master; recognizing that to none of us is given an entire exemption from error or superiority of judgment over our equals.[17]

Thus the *Southern Baptist* demonstrated the fine line that many Baptist ministers perceived when they dealt with the issue of politics. On the one hand, they needed to remain informed citizens, and they believed that the hand of God could be seen in every event. On the other hand, they felt that they sullied the pulpit when they turned it into merely a political podium. They could talk about political events, but they could not be political—after all, becoming political was one of the sins of the northern ministers, and the southerners viewed themselves as far too close to God to allow themselves to stumble in that way. The following week, though, the paper had no problem with publishing a scathing open letter from "a Country Clergyman to Sensation Sumner" that had run in the *New York Times*, a letter which defended the institution of slavery and lambasted Senator Charles Sumner and his speech, "The Barbarism of Slavery" for lack of facts and logic.[18] Apparently, political speech many times was in the eye of the beholder.

Summer gave way to fall, and the country prepared itself for the contentious November election. An article in the October issue of the *Southern Baptist*, while saying nothing of the coming election, nonetheless reminded readers of the need to accept God's will, regardless of its bitterness. It told the story of a New England minister who had lost his wife and two children. The article highlighted the man's resignation to the purposes of God: "My heart arose in all its strength against the government of God, and then suddenly sunk under its distress, which alarmed me," the man said. Gathering himself, he claimed, "I must *submit* or I am undone for ever." After his declaration, he stated, "In

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[17] "Religious Newspapers and 'Political Intelligence,'" *SB*, 4 August 1860, 2.

[18] "'The Barbarism of Slavery.' A Letter from a Country Clergyman to Sensation Sumner," *SB*,

a few moments I was entirely calm, and resigned to the will of God." The article concluded by stating that in time of distress and sorrow, "Submission whispers with faltering lips and choking utterance, 'the cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink of it?' The will of the Lord be done."[19] A month away from the election, the readers received a final reminder that God's hand remained in control at all times and that the only proper response from the believer was to submit and accept—that is unless they were forced to accept Lincoln as their president.

As November came, Charleston and the rest of the nation braced for the results of the election. In Virginia, Robert L. Dabney, an influential Presbyterian and soon-to-be biographer of Stonewall Jackson, stood in front of the College Church in Hamden Sidney, Virginia, and warned those present of the consequences that awaited them. "[W]when political strife proceeds to actual war, then indeed do 'the ways of Zion mourn.'" Going on, Dabney stated, "War is the grand and favorite device of him who was a liar and murderer from the beginning, to obstruct all spiritual good, and to barbarize mankind."[20] Claiming that a "civil feud" is the worst of all possible strife, Dabney asked,

> Should we not, my brethren, rather weep tears of blood at the wretched and wicked thought, that the common prowess with which the North and the South have so often side by side carried dismay and rout into the ranks of common enemies—that terrible prowess which, in North and South alike, withstood the force of the British Lion while we were yet in the gristle of our youth, and which ever since has overthrown and broken every enemy, with the lion's force and the eagle's swiftness combined—should hereafter be expended in fratricidal blows?[21]

11, August 1860, 1.

[19] "The Bitter Cup," *SB*, 6 October 1860, 1.

[20] Robert L. Dabney, "The Christian's Best Motive for Patriotism," 83, in *Fast Day Sermons or the Pulpit on the State of the Country* (New York: Rudd & Carleton, 1861).

[21] *Ibid*., 84.

In surveying the causes for the conflict, Dabney refused to discuss only the northern failures and instead reserved his harshest criticisms for the South and their "national sins." Included among these social sins were "general worldliness," "selfish profusion and luxury," "Heaven-daring profanity and blasphemy," and the Southern code of honor, described as that "passion for bloody retaliation of personal wrong."[22] These sins would not go unpunished, he said, and even suggested that the coming conflict may be God's will for handling that punishment.

> Let us remember also, that our innocence or rightfulness in the particular point of present differences and anticipated collisions, gives no assurance that God may not chastise us for our sins by those very events. Often has His manifold, wise and righteous providence permitted an unjust aggressor to make himself the instrument, wherewith to lash His sinning people, even when he afterwards punished the invader himself.[23]

The South was not immune from the charge of sin, and the political strife and possible future violence stemmed in large measure from the sins of the South themselves. Dabney warned his listeners that even if they stood in the right on the issue of secession and slavery, God could still use the North to administer his justice on the land. The right could suffer at the hands of the might, and Dabney pleaded with the congregation to seek forgiveness and resolution of conflicts at all costs. "Every Christian must study the things which make for peace," Dabney stated. "In one last word; let each one resolve to grant all that is right, and ask nothing else; 'and lo, there will be a great calm.'"[24]

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[22] *Ibid*., 88-89.

[23] *Ibid*., 90.

[24] *Ibid*., 96-97. Dabney's reference here is interesting because he is seemingly quoting Scripture, yet there is no Scripture passage that matches his exact phrase "and lo, there will be a great calm." Perhaps he was eluding a passage found both in Matthew 8:26 and Mark 4:39 where Jesus Christ calmed the storm upon the Sea of Galilee—"Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm" (Matthew 8:26).

Dabney's sermon, however, was not preached in Charleston. He preached in Virginia, a state, much like its famous General Lee, that reluctantly joined the war only after the Battle at Fort Sumter. Charleston was different. Fire-eaters roamed the streets for years breathing unrest and calling for separation. As the election approached, these same men stood ready to pounce. The day prior to the election, Rhett's *Charleston Mercury* claimed that a Lincoln administration would impose laws such as the British government did through the Stamp Act, and he called for immediate separation if he should win the presidency.[25] The following day, Rhett's newspaper laid out the first steps that Lincoln would take in office—namely a blockade of Charleston.[26] In the more moderate *Courier*, readers learned that the Governor of South Carolina had already begun a preemptive strike, calling for a special meeting of the legislature to discuss secession should Lincoln win.[27]

Little is can be known, though, of the immediate thoughts of Charleston Baptist surrounding the election of Lincoln. No sermons remain from this time period to gauge their particular reaction prior to the election, and again the *Southern Baptist* itself decided that political activity was best left to other non-religious publications. What is known is that in the years leading up to this election, subscribers to the *Southern Baptist* read stories about fanatics in the North. They saw "atheists" and abolitionists who wanted to destroy the southern way of life and denied what the South believed to be the clear

[25] "To the People of the South," *Charleston Mercury*, 5 November 1860, 4.

[26] "What Would a Seceding Southern State Suffer from Northern Invasion and Open Warfare?" *Charleston Mercury*, 6 November 1860, 1. These steps were laid out in the form of a letter received by the *Mercury* prior to the election, dated October 30, 1860, by an E. R. of Virginia, perhaps fellow fire-eater Edmund Ruffin.

[27] "Governor's Message," *Charleston Courier*, 6 November 1860, 1.

reading of Scripture. These fanatics grew in numbers, and according to people such as Rhett, they were about to win the White House. Although the southern nationalism that the readers saw week in and week out never rose to the level of Rhett and the fire-breathers, the concept nonetheless helped to shape the way in which they viewed the election. While many could perhaps sympathize with Dabney's charge that southern sins had brought this conflict upon themselves, they most likely would not have agreed with his desire to seek peace at all costs. Repentance to God was certainly needed, southern Baptists seemed to think, but if separation from the North came, it came for the best.

The election came on Tuesday, November 6, 1860, and in the days that followed, the newspapers carried the results as the votes were tallied. Lincoln's victory soon became known. Preparations were already underway for a special election to select representatives for the governor's called convention to decide on separation from the Union. Talk of secession filled the streets. One clever clothing store tapped into the fury for secession in one of their advertisements. Running several times, the ad appeared as follows:

> The people of the
>
> **SOUTH**
>
> are respectfully informed that the Proprietors of the
>
> **CAROLINA**
>
> Clothing Depot are now prepared to supply the wants of their numerous customers. Any one that
>
> **EXPECTS**
>
> to be pleased in STYLE and PRICE, need not be disappointed by calling at 261 KING-STREET, having reduced the prices so that
>
> **EVERY MAN**
>
> will be satisfied. All that is, therefore, needed on the part of any one that wishes clothing at low prices and
>
> **TO DO**
>
> them service, is to call this DEPOT, where their or

HIS

TASTE and IDEAS can be satisfied in every particular. The Proprietors concede it to be their PRIDE and

DUTY

to acknowledge the handsome PATRONAGE extended for so many years, and to solicit a continuance of the same.[28]

The following week, on November 12, a group of Charleston citizens met in the city and issued a demand to the State Legislature to withdraw from the Union, stating that with the election of Lincoln, the North had become "fatally hostile to the interests and the institutions of the South." Among those leading the meeting was B. C. Pressley, an active member of First Baptist Charleston and standing president of the Charleston Baptist Association.[29]

The Charleston Baptist Association met several days later from November 17-19 for their annual gathering at the High Hills Baptist Church, located over 100 miles to the North of Charleston. James Kendrick delivered the introductory sermon, messengers to the association elected Edwin Winkler as moderator for the second year in a row and B. C. Pressley as president of the General Committee, also for the second year in a row.[30] J. L. Reynolds, a messenger from Columbia,[31] rose and presented a resolution for passage by the body. Citing a precedent set by the Charleston Baptist Association when it passed a similar resolution in 1777 during the struggle for independence, Reynolds addressed the

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[28] *Charleston Courier*, 10 November 1860, 2.

[29] "Charleston Speaking Out. Will of the City," *Charleston Courier*, 13 November 1860, 1.

[30] *Minutes of the One Hundred and Ninth Session of the Charleston Baptist Association, Held with the High Hills Baptist Church, November 17-19, 1860* (Charleston: A. J. Burke, 1860), 3, 12. For Winkler's and Pressley's previous election, see *Minutes of the One Hundred and Eight Session of the Charleston Baptist Association, Held with the Congaree Baptist Church, Nov. 19-22, 1859* (Charleston: James & Williams Printers, 1860), 3, 14. Notes concerning the meeting and the resolution were also carried in the *Southern Baptist* ("Charleston Association," *SB*, 8 December 1860, 2).

[31] *Minutes of the One Hundred and Ninth Session of the Charleston Baptist Association*, 11.

crisis that had come upon the state. The resolution first professed the sanctity of the institution of slavery. Secondly, it condemned the teachings of those "professed Disciples of Christ" who labeled slavery a sin. It then claimed that these false teachers were the root cause of the hostilities between the sections and called upon all "faithful Christians" to remove themselves from fellowship with such individuals. Furthermore, it stated that the Association would continue to exhort masters to treat their slaves properly and within the ordinances of Scripture, and last of all, the resolution informed fellow Baptists that "in resisting the encroachments of the enemies of our domestic institution, and opposing 'perverse disputing of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth," our duty to God coincides with our duty to country"—that being the country of South Carolina, not the United States. The resolution concluded with an appeal to God, asking Baptists to

> [E]arnestly commend our beloved Commonwealth to the protection and guidance of Almighty God, beseeching Him to enlighten the minds and strengthen the hearts of our people, and overrule all our affairs for the advancement of His Kingdom, and the glory of His Holy Name.[32]

The following day, the resolution unanimously passed, and R. F. Whilden from the town of Kingstree offered a prayer for the "beloved Commonwealth." No other mention of the election or coming secession made it into the minutes of the meeting, although there could be little doubt that with men like Pressley present, talk of dissolving the Union monopolized a great deal of the unofficial business. Interestingly, though, even with such a firebrand as Pressley leading the group, it remained relatively reserved in its official statement concerning the crisis. They claimed the South to be innocent, laid the blame at the feet of the abolitionists, and called for the citizens of South Carolina to follow their

[32] *Ibid*., 4.

state leaders in the coming days, but these thoughts did not consume the meeting, possibly because many in the crowd wanted to avoid the appearance of pride and thus incur God's wrath, or perhaps because they felt that the role of the church was not to meddle in politics.

The same day of the meeting, the *Southern Baptist* carried a special article commenting on "the Present Crisis." The article began by echoing the latter sentiment, stating, "The pulpit and the religious press should be kept free from political discussions. We do not intend to enter into the politics of the day."[33] However, the paper determined that "there is a religious point from which the present state of affairs may be and ought to be viewed." Going on, it asked readers to ponder the question of the Christian's duty should South Carolina and other states secede. The South had long been divided in its opinion of the secession question, the paper stated. Some voices suggested that as soon as Lincoln was elected, the South should secede, while others believed in waiting for the northern powers to commit some heinous act against the Constitution prior to withdrawal. Still another group sought to preserve the Union at nearly all costs. Regardless of which of these decisions was made, the paper said, it remained the responsibility of the Christian citizen to follow his scriptural duty—"Let every soul be subject unto higher powers. For there is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained by God." The paper pointed its readers to the Book of Romans, chapter 13, verse 1, a passage directing believers to submit to the governmental powers that ruled the land. As the Apostle Paul wrote, God ordained the government to rule, and if one resisted the government, one resisted God himself.

[33] "The Present Crisis," *SB*, 17 November 1860, 2.

The paper, though, suggested that the only true government that the Christian should obey was one supported by the will of the majority of the people, the people of South Carolina. In illustrating this point, the paper stated that in order for the federal government to "coerce" southern states to remain in the Union, it would violate its own "foundation principle," "that it is the Government of the people, and that they have the right to change it at pleasure." If the will of the majority of the state abandoned the Union and established its own new government, then "we would say to every Christian, and to everyone who wishes to act on Christian principles, forget the past diversity of opinions, and support the Government to be established by the will of the majority of the people." As the South goes, explained the *Southern Baptist*, so should the southern Christian.

While the article demonstrated an unspoken confidence that the South stood in the right, it did not exhibit the same level of hostility against the North as did articles in the *Charleston Mercury*. Instead, the paper attempted to keep its political tone to a minimum and in so doing, looked to the one whom they continually claimed held the world together in his providential care.

> What a blessed assurance it is that "the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth," that He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. May he cause "the wrath of man to praise Him, and restrain the remainder of wrath."

Perhaps embodying the sentiments of many other Baptists, the *Southern Baptist* stood on the precipice of war and prayed for an end to hostilities before they began. It seemed resigned to the outcome of secession, though, and believed that the northern states would do little to resist the move. In the end, they prayed that God would bring the matter to a conclusion. Yet in their prayer, they still maintained that regardless of the outcome, God

was working all of this present crisis "according to His will."[34]

The following Wednesday, November 21, South Carolina Governor William H. Gist called for the state's churches to hold a "day of public Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer" to ask for "the direction and blessing of Almighty God in this our hour of difficulty, and to give us *one heart and one mind* to oppose, by all just and proper means, every encroachment upon our rights."[35] Pastors around Charleston and across the state answered his request and addressed the present conflict from the pulpit. Many of these sermons were published, yet seemingly none of the sermons from the Baptist pastors in Charleston were among the ones that found their way into print. Therefore, in order to gauge the sentiment of the pulpit in Charleston, it is necessary to look to other congregations inside and outside of the city.

"If ever men stood in need of the help of an Omnipotent arm, we are the men," stated Rev. James H. Elliott of St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Charleston.[36] Elliot outlined for his congregation the "senseless and arrogant fanaticism" that had been perpetrated by the North and that had "sucked within its insatiable vortex all sense of justice and all regard for the law."[37] Although the North should receive the bulk of the blame, Elliott cautioned his congregation to humble themselves before God because although they may be right, "we are never so guiltless as to leave God without

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[34] "The Present Crisis," *SB*, 17 November 1860, 2.

[35] Thomas Smyth, *The Sin and the Curse; The Union, the True Source of Disunion, and Our Duty in the Present Crisis. A Discourse on the Occasion of the Day of Humiliation and Prayer Appointed by the Governor of South Carolina, on November 21st, 1860, in the Second Presbyterian Church, Charleston, S. C.* (Charleston: Evans & Cogswell, 1860), 3.

[36] James H. Elliott, *Are These His Doings? A Sermon Preached in St. Michael's Church, Charleston, S.C., on the Day of Public Prayer, Wednesday, November 21st, 1860* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1860), 7.

[37] Elliot, *Are These His Doings?*, 6.

justification in punishing us."[38] Echoing Darby's sentiments in many ways, Elliott stated that among these potential grounds for punishment stood their pride, reliance on the Southern Code of Honor, and inability to properly discharge their "duties as masters…towards the race which Providence has placed under our charge." Therefore, the South needed to take seriously the call to humiliation and prayer and appeal to the "Searcher of hearts," asking him to bring repentance and true righteousness regardless of the outcome of secession, for "we cannot elude the judgment of God."[39] With purity of heart and reliance upon God, therefore, the South could face the "dreadful evil" that was war, a war brought upon them by the North. The coming conflict, therefore, became a trial for the South to endure. According to Elliott, "If it please the Almighty to try us, to put our courage, our patience to the test, let us implore Him that we may come forth from the furnace purified by adversity, that our faith may be upheld, and our course approved in his sight." He then uttered a sentiment that would be echoed for years following the Civil War. "Thus acting and thus feeling, we may fail, but we will not be dishonored,—we may be overthrown, but cannot be 'forever fallen.'"[40] Regardless of the outcome, Elliott assured his parishioners, the best course of action was to follow humbly and admit their sin before God, trusting in him with the future of the nation.

Elsewhere in the city, others pastors called their congregations to prayer and repentance although some did not limit their criticisms against the North as Elliott had. W. C. Dana of the Central Presbyterian Church explained to his congregation that by the "providence of God" the "whole question" put before them was whether or not the people

[38] *Ibid*.,, 7.

[39] *Ibid*., 7-8.

[40] *Ibid*., 9.

of South Carolina would "permit a *foreign and hostile government* to bear rule over them."[41] In light of the new power of the northern fanatics, who had "openly and defiantly trampled upon those provisions of the Constitution which are most essential to the peace and well-being of the South States," the time had come for the South to practice the "same principles that impelled our great ancestors, in their day of trial, to *shake off*…a *foreign and hostile government*."[42] While Dana echoed the need for repentance, he left his harshest criticisms for the North, who "could not have been thus our enemies (and their own)—had they known how to read their Bibles aright."[43]

At St. Peter's Episcopal Church, which did not survive the war, William O. Prentiss explained the major sins of the North that had brought about this conflict. At the heart of the Northern sin, Prentiss claimed, was its belief that the will of the people had more authority than the will of God. Relying upon "congregational infallibility," ministers in New England sought to determine "the direction of the popular gale" more so than the direction of God's word.[44] This reliance on the governance of congregationalism caused the churches to fall into all manners of errors and heresy, not the least of which is the tendency toward Unitarianism, divorce, and "free love societies."[45]

Taking the disdain for congregational authority a step further, Thomas Smyth, the

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[41] W. C. Dana, *A Sermon Delivered in the Central Presbyterian Church, Charleston, S.C., Nov. 21st, 1860, Being the Day Appointed by State Authority For Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer* (Charleston: Evans & Cogswell, 1860), 6.

[42] *Ibid*., 7.

[43] *Ibid*., 9.

[44] William O. Prentiss, *A Sermon Preached at St. Peter's Church, Charleston by the Rev. William O. Prentiss, on Wednesday, November 21, 1860, Being a Say of Public Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer* (Charleston: Evans & Cogswell, 1860), 9, 11.

[45] *Ibid*., 11, 13-15.

long-time minister of the Second Presbyterian Church in Charleston, claimed that the concept of democracy and a reliance on the Declaration of Independence was to blame for the troubles in the land. "Now to me," Smyth stated, "…the evil and bitter root of all our evils is to be found in the infidel, atheistic, French Revolution, Red Republican principle, embodied in an axiomatic seminal principle—not in the Constitution, but in the Declaration of Independence." That principle embodied in the opening lines of the Declaration, *We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal*. "All men are not born equal," Smyth shot back. "The only equality is, that all men are born in sin; children of wrath, even as others; lost, and yet redeemable."[46] Smyth explained the "progressive development of this atheistic, revolutionary and anarchic principle," which first gave birth to the idea of universal suffrage and then to the concept of majority rule, the latter obliterating the idea of submitting to the Constitution. Smyth then described how attention was turned to the Bible, and following the idea of majority rule, people began to claim that the Bible could be ruled in the same way. Therefore, by relying on the concept of the "higher law," many rejected "the divine inspiration, and infallible, unalterable authority of the Bible, as the only standard of faith and practice, of right and wrong, of sin and duty."[47] For Smyth, continuing down this path led only to

> …anarchy, prodigality, profanity, Sabbath Profanation, vice and ungodliness in every monstrous form, and in the end the corruption and overthrow of the Republic, and the erection, upon its ruins, of an absolute and bloody despotism, of which coercion, or in other words, force, is the vital principle. An anti-slavery Bible must have an anti-slavery God, and then a God anti-law, order, property and morality; that is no God but "THE GOD OF THIS WORLD."[48]

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[46] Smyth, *The Sin*, 13.

[47] *Ibid*., 14-15.

[48] *Ibid*., 16.

Smyth described for his congregation what amounted to the slippery slope of pure democracy, a principle seemingly embraced in the North. Because of this gloom, Smyth concluded that little hope remained within the union, especially when a "conglomeration" of "atheists, infidels, communists, free-lovers, rationalists, Bible haters, anti-christian levelers, and anarchists" had "swept away all existing landmarks and barriers" which had kept the two sections of the country united for so long.[49] With the nation on the brink of collapse and the prospect of separation in front of the state, Smyth, drawing from his heritage as a native Scotsman, reminded his congregation of the Scottish rebellions against the Church of England and encouraged them to stay the course and remain with South Carolina

> …and upon all the people of South Carolina, so that you shall be able to say to any one who is faint-hearted, and ready to fly from it in this day of darkness and tribulation, in the language of holy Rutherford, in one of Scotland's darkest and bloodiest days, when he himself was privily doomed to death, and when a friend proposed to leave the country, "Let me entreat you to be far from the thought of leaving this land; I see it, and find it, that the Lord hath covered the whole land with a cloud in his anger: but though I have been tempted to the like, I had rather be in Scotland beside angry Jesus Christ, than in any Eden or garden on the earth."[50]

Like Christ in this quote, Smyth stood angry in front of his congregation. Far from reflecting on the sins of the South, Smyth blasted the North and laid the majority of the blame for the conflict at its feet. Clearly, Smyth, and likely many in his congregation, felt assured in their innocence as they prepared for secession and possible war.

Again, little remains available to determine the Charleston Baptist voice in the midst of this state-wide Day of Fasting. The *Southern Baptist* carried no sermons and

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[49] *Ibid*., 8.

[50] *Ibid*., 24.

made no mention of the proclamation by the South Carolina governor, and if any sermons by Winkler, Kendrick, or any other Baptist were published, they are no longer available, and no sermon notes appear to have survived. However, in the town of Bennettsville, South Carolina, a little over 150 miles to the north of Charleston, Rev. John Alexander William Thomas, who arrived in 1849 as their pastor and would remain in that role for over thirty years, excluding his service as a captain in the Confederate army, presented a fast-day sermon that so struck members of his congregation that they paid for it to be published in Charleston.[51] His words, interestingly, struck a far different tone than that set by Smyth or other ministers in Charleston. Instead of confidence in the righteousness of the South, Thomas seemed far more penitent. Turning to the Old Testament Book of Jonah, Thomas used the reaction of the Ninevite king to Jonah's warning as his verse for the special service—"Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn from the fierceness of his anger, that we perish not?" (Jonah 3:9). By quoting this verse, Thomas attempted to turn the attention of the congregation away from the sins of the nation as recounted by Smyth—the reliance on majority rule and the presence of fanatical voices—and instead turned to the individual sins that he saw plagued the nation. Among the many "national crimes" stood profanity, intemperance, and the violation of the Sabbath. Moreover, "The fanaticism, the upheavings and commotions, which now convulse the American Republic from centre to circumference, are but the effects of the raging pent up

[51] For Thomas' rank as captain and his time as pastor of the church, see "Bennettsville Is Near a Hundred," *Pee Dee Advocate*, November 1919, accessed at http://www.carolana.com/SC/Towns/Bennettsville_SC.html. Biographical information on J.A.W. Thomas is difficult to locate. It seems as if his family had been long established in South Carolina's Marlboro County region, bordering the state line with North Carolina. According to Thomas in his History of Marlboro Country (*A History of Marlboro County: with Traditions and Sketches of Numerous Families*, Atlanta, GA: The Foote & Davies Company, 1897), which was published posthumously by his son, Thomas' grandfather Robert Thomas helped to establish the Salem Baptist Church, travelling frequently as an evangelist throughout the county (234).

fires of sin within the great national heart," Thomas claimed and then continued,

> Oh, it is a wonder of God's mercy, that He has not long since withdrawn his Almighty hand from the bellowing quaking mountain of our guilt, and permitted fire and sword, pestilence and famine to blast this goodly land, as the tree is blasted and riven by the bolt of heaven….If our iniquities had been visited upon us, instead of being called together to supplicate his mercy in the land of hope; we had been called as Sodom and Gomorrah, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.[52]

Thomas's tone did not indicate a man certain of the heavy-handed oppression of the North. He did not describe a menace or terror that waited to strike from Washington. He did not lead the charge to separate the state from the nation. Instead, he spoke as a man facing an uncertain future with a level of trepidation and fear.

According to Thomas, the nation as a whole had long committed sin after sin, and like the town of Ninevah, "In punishment for their sins[,] God's own hand was about to take hold on vengeance and lay the proud city in ruins."[53] The true answer was not secession, but repentance: "[E]ither we must repent and purge ourselves from guilt, or God's fierce anger will descend upon us."[54] Repentance, according to Thomas, had to come from all sections—including the South.

> When you contemplate the righteousness of your cause—the character of those with whom you struggle—the wrongs and repeated insults which you confidently believe you have suffered, and the prospect of sympathy and aid afforded you, you may feel hopeful and assured….But remember there is another side to the picture, and you must look at that.[55]

Rather than merely listing the sins of the North as was seen in the sermons in Charleston, Thomas charged southerners with the duty of examining themselves first. Through

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[52] J. A. W. Thomas, *The Alternative: Repentance of Punishment: A Sermon Preaching in the Bennettsville Baptist Church, November 21st, 1860* (Charleston: Evans and Cogswell, 1860), 13.

[53] *Ibid*., 14.

[54] *Ibid*., 16.

[55] *Ibid*., 17-18.

examination and repentance, peace may come, or through God's wrath and by his providence, he may choose "to employ one section of the country as the rod with which to beat the other to atoms, and will then break the rod in pieces, and cast it into the fire."[56] Such an uncertain possibility should compel the South to pray humbly. In the end, Thomas acknowledged the coming separation and did his best to brace his congregation for inevitable conflict. In addition to calling for repentance, he also called for prayer for the section's enemies, and he used the example of the Babylonian captivity of the Israelites to remind them of the believer's duty to "seek the peace, and pray for the good of the government under which we live," even though they may disagree with its decisions. "Although its every act may oppress," he said, "and our every act may be to sever our connection with it; still must we pray for its peace."[57] Again, the hesitation in Thomas's voice could clearly be heard. He believed in the veracity of the South, but not in the South's entire innocence. Knowing how God dealt with such sins, he made a final plea to his flock: "Let us, my countrymen, repent of sin, and cry mightily unto God, 'Who can tell, if the Lord will turn and repent; and turn away the fierceness of his anger, that we perish not?'"[58] Even though Thomas defended the South, he still believed in a God whose justice would be carried out against all, regardless of the section in which they lived.

While Thomas showed some level of hesitancy, another Baptist, much like B. C. Pressley, fervently embraced secession. James Furman, son of Richard Furman, the famous pastor of First Baptist Charleston, had himself become an influential Baptist

[56] *Ibid*., 19.

[57] *Ibid*., 21.

[58] *Ibid*., 22.

leader and in 1859 accepted the presidency of Furman College. Following Lincoln's election, the Greenville district of South Carolina elected Furman as one of their candidates representing them at the secession congress called by the South Carolina governor. Furman was one of two Baptist ministers to hold such a seat, the other being John Gill Landrum from Spartanburg.[59] Prior to his election, Furman, along with fellow ministers from Greenville, wrote a letter to the citizens of the Greenville District, charging them to "show yourselves as men" and support secession from the Union.[60] Harkening back to the establishment of the Constitution, Furman claimed that the document that had been established for "wise and noble purposes" had fallen into "the hands of wicked and even foolish men."[61] The letter went on to detail the abuses suffered by the South at the hand of the North, including unjust taxation, unbalanced trade, continuous insults, and, as Smyth also claimed, the "Gospel of Northern fanaticism," the concept that "every man is born free and equal."[62] This concept, he claimed, would be used to destroy the Constitution and give way to "universal emancipation." According to Furman,

> Then every negro in South Carolina, and in every other Southern States, will be his own master; nay, more than that, will be the equal of every one of you. If you are tame enough to submit, Abolition preachers will be at hand to consummate the marriage of your daughters to black husbands! Nay, nay! We beg pardon of South Carolina women for such a suggestion. If their fathers and their brothers have not the spirit to break loose from a government whose Chief Magistrate aims

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[59] Mitchell Snay, *Gospel of Disunion: Religion and Separatism in the Antebellum South*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 153.

[60] James Furman, "Letter to the Citizens of the Greenville District," *Southern Enterprise*, 22 November 1860, 20. Transcribed by Lloyd Benson, Department of History, Furman University, from the Greenville, South Carolina, and located at http://history.furman.edu/~benson/docs/scgese112260.htm. (27 November 2010).

[61] *Ibid*., 3.

[62] *Ibid*., 5.

> to establish such a state of things, the daughters of South Carolina would die for shame at the dishonor of the men.[63]

Furman painted a picture of the future state of affairs, complete with appeals to racist fears, white supremacy, masculine identity, and Southern honor, should the men of Greenville choose to stay with the Union. Furman even gave his rationale for breaking from the political silence that ministers typically kept, claiming that with the rise of a "tyrannical proscriptive party" who had purposed to "lay [domestic] tranquility at last in absolute ruins," he could no longer stay silent.[64] He even went so far as to claim a precedent for secession within the Baptist church. "[C]hurches are smaller bodies, and the associations are the larger," he stated, "yet the churches make the association, and if at any time an association should interfere with the rights of a church, that moment that Church would secede."[65] Therefore, for "[s]elf-respect, honor, the safety of our wives, our children, and our slaves themselves" should compel them to support secession. "The Abolitionists are not our masters," the letter concluded, "and though they have '*assumed* the Government,' yet they cannot exercise it over you without your *submission*. Men of Greenville, *will you submit?*"[66]

In this letter, written within weeks of Lincoln's election, the classic elements of southern nationalism were present. Furman, along with his fellow authors, identified themselves as victims of northern forces who had betrayed their allegiance to the Constitution and assumed the right to dictate new laws to the South. For years, according

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[63] *Ibid*.

[64] *Ibid*., 13.

[65] "Letter to the Citizens of the Greenville District," 20.

[66] *Ibid*.,

to Furman, the abuse had been perpetrated on various levels for years, but with the election of Lincoln, permanent and direct action had to be taken. Secession was the only option if the South was to save not only its way of life and livelihood, but also its wives and daughters and sacred honor. Interestingly absent was the notable hesitation that J. A. W. Thomas and the *Southern Baptist* seemed to show. Perhaps this is best understood by both a greater sense of anger on the part of Furman and also the acknowledged awkwardness that the Baptist clergy felt toward explicitly engaging in political affairs. After all, Furman went out of his way to defend his writing the letter as a clergyman—he felt that without action, the nation would come to ruins.

Back in Charleston, the movement toward secession continued, and all eyes turned to the harbor. There, four forts—Sumter, Moultrie, Pickens, and Castle Pickney—stood as sentinels guarding the waters and protecting Charleston. Yet after South Carolina seceded from the Union, the protecting sentinels became enemies at the gate. Governor Gist and the powerless President James Buchanan exchanged correspondence concerning the proceedings of the South Carolina legislature and also the future of the forts. Gist assured Buchanan that upon secession, the state would take no immediate action against the forts, but Gist's tenure as governor would end in the middle of December.[67] In his place, the congress elected Francis W. Pickens as their new governor, and after they voted for secession on December 20, they expanded his powers over the state government, including control of the militia.[68] On December 21, Rhett allowed his

[67] For more on the stressful buildup to war in November and December of 1860, see Maury Klein, *Days of Defiance: Sumter, Secession, and the Coming of the Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 114-115, 135.

[68] Klein, *Days of Defiance*, 135; Wallace Hettle, *The Peculiar Democracy: Southern Democrats in Peace and Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 102.

Charleston Mercury to express his celebration at the event for which he had longed. "Inscribed among the calends of the world," Rhett began, "memorable in time to come—the 20th day of December, in the year of our Lord, 1860, has become an epoch in the history of the human race."[69] Immediately to the left of this great announcement on the front page was an article and drawing describing the defenses of Fort Sumter—a telling sign of events to come.[70]

Days earlier, the *Southern Baptist*, published its final issue. Due to a lack of payment from subscribers, the paper could no longer carry its debt and print issues, so it appealed for cash, perhaps hoping only to halt printing for a week or two, yet it never came back. Its final issue, much like previous ones, attempted to remain neutral and positive concerning the crisis. "We believe there is now very little question about the withdrawal of six of the seven States from the Union," the editorial began. "We believe, also, that the separation will be, if not like that of Lot and Abraham, as brethren, yet without an appeal to arms." Their rationale was simple—to coerce the Southern states to remain in the Union would amount to a "military despotism," something that in the end would "entertain far more embittered feelings against the North than they do at present" and "unite the entire South." Unknowingly, the paper uttered prophetic words concerning the actions that would take place in the coming months, actions that would indeed unite states that looked upon secession with a skeptical eye. Oddly enough, the paper made no appeal or mention of the hand of God or the need for believers to pray that his providence would side with the South. This absence of providence is perhaps because

[69] "The 20th Day of December, in the Year of Our Lord, 1860," *Charleston Mercury*, 21 December 1860, 1.

[70] "Our Harbor Defenses—Fort Sumter," *Charleston Mercury*, 21 December 1860, 1.

as far as the editors believed the paper would no doubt return within the month and plenty of time could be given to the spiritual dynamics of the political conflict then. As it stood, the final words of the paper were mere wishful thinking.[71]

December continued in Charleston with shouts of independence in the streets and preparation for armed conflict. Although leaders claimed to want a peaceful resolution, the presence of Union soldiers in the harbor told a different story. Rhett and the *Charleston Mercury* continued to cover the issue of the Union presence, including discussion of the other three forts in the harbor, Castle Pinckney, Fort Moultrie, and Fort Johnson. All were Union property, yet only Fort Moultrie was occupied with troops; only ordinance sergeants occupied Pinckney and Johnson. On December 27, Major Robert Anderson, commander of the Union troops in the harbor, withdrew his troops from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter, preparing for the eventual turn of events in Charleston. News of the withdrawal in the midst of talks with Anderson made Governor Pickens furious, causing him to send state troops to seize immediately the abandoned Fort Moultrie, remove the ordinance sergeants from Castle Pinckney and Fort Johnson, and raise the South Carolina flag over the forts.[72] According to historian Maury Klein, while Anderson's move was intended to quiet tensions and Pickens's move was intended to stabilize South Carolina's claim of sovereignty, their actions had wide-ranging consequences, bringing unity of purpose on both sides of the country. In the matter of two days, the two men "had brought the nation to the brink of war."[73]

As the calendar turned to 1861, few seemed to believe that the conflict would

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[71] "Read This," *SB*, 15 December 1860, 2.

[72] Klein, *Days of Defiance*, 105-08, 162-166.

[73] *Ibid*., 166.

remain in the realm of political rhetoric. While none foresaw the death and destruction that would soon come to characterize the war, many knew that some form of military conflict was inevitable, including First Baptist Church pastor Edwin Winkler. Over the course of his time in Charleston, he had served in many roles—editor of the *Southern Baptist*, pastor of First Baptist Charleston, frequent moderator of the Charleston Baptist Association, occasional speaker to various groups, and chaplain to the Moultrie Guard, a volunteer unit formed years prior to the war. On Sunday morning, January 6, Winkler found himself assuming this latter role, addressing the members of the Moultrie Guard. Just a few days prior to the address, the Guard, captained by Barnwell W. Palmer, an active member of First Baptist Charleston, had been asked to enlist as a unit in service to South Carolina, an enlistment requiring a 12-month commitment. With "an immediate outburst of enthusiasm" the Guard agreed to become a part of the 1st regiment of rifles of the South Carolina Militia.[74]

"Within the life-time of a single man," Winkler lamented, "the government of the United States has been perverted into a tyranny—the asylum for the oppressed into the prison house of oppressors."[75] Yet against this "tyranny" stood the soldiers before him. Winkler told those gathered, "[W]e behold the imposing spectacle of Valor arming in defence of Liberty, and now appearing in the sanctuary to invoke upon its righteous cause the blessing of the Lord of Hosts."[76] These citizen soldiers, Winkler stated, were not

[74] Edwin T. Winkler, *Duties of the Citizen Soldier: A Sermon, Delivered in the First Baptist Church of Charleston, S. C. on Sabbath Morning, January 6th, 1861, before the Moultrie Guards* (Charleston: A. J. Burke, 1861), 14.

[75] *Ibid*., 5.

[76] *Ibid*., 6.

"mercenaries to whom conscience itself would be an incumbrance [*sic*]."[77] Instead, they stood as individuals following the highest principles of sacrifice on behalf of their land and their country. "Reason itself teaches that he who will not protect his endangered person, his endangered home, his endangered country, is something less than a man; and it is certain that religion casts no dishonor upon this dictate of reason,"[78] Winkler claimed. In fact, far from being condemned by Christianity, Jesus Christ and the apostles affirmed soldiers and their duty because, as Winkler stated, no soldier in the New Testament had been called upon to abandon his duties after he gave his life to God's cause. Given the reasonableness of their decision and their blessing from God, Winkler turned to his duty as their chaplain and explained to them their spiritual duties as they entered the potential arena of war.

According to Winkler, the soldiers needed to remember two important duties should conflict arise—first, they needed to prepare themselves spiritually for war, and second, they needed to conduct themselves properly in the midst of war. As a part of their spiritual preparation, Winkler asked them two important questions. The first was simply this: Is this a just war? The answer for Winkler was simple as well, "Think, then: is it just that a sovereign State should be forced to submit its rights, its laws, its institutions, its fruitful fields, its quiet homes, to the domination of a hostile people?" In asking this, Winkler echoed the sentiments of his fellow Baptists such as James Furman. He then described issues of tariffs, abolitionism, Southern honor, and the presence of Union soldiers in the Charleston Bay. He concluded his answer with this thought: "If all

[77] *Ibid.*

[78] *Ibid.*, 7.

this is *not* right, then resistance is right," he concluded. Since South Carolina was right in its resistance, then the soldiers needed to proceed to the next question: Are you prepared for the death and destruction that accompanies war? Pain, death, destruction, desolation, and exposure to all kinds of evil followed in the wake of war, and in the midst of this onslaught, only the "religion of Jesus Christ" could rescue them and serve as their "best resort at this hour." According to Winkler,

> …it is religion alone which, in uncertain affairs, can soothe, by awakening a quiet trust in Providence. And if we should have war, which God in his mercy avert! it is religion which best prepares for the brave duties of battle, and for the solemn peradventure of death.[79]

Far from being a distraction for the soldier, Winkler suggested that religion itself emboldened the soldier not only to trust in the veracity of his cause, but also to know that regardless of the outcome, his eternal destiny was sealed in heaven.

The soldier's second duty was to "depict the character of a model soldier" by maintaining proper conduct in the midst of war, and proper conduct could only come from the possession of certain virtues, the first being the essential virtue of obedience and submission to the commander's will.[80] Next came temperance and self control. Soldiers should demonstrate the ability to refuse indulgence, and they should practice a form of self-discipline, including abstinence from alcohol, a pledge that every member of the Moultrie Guard had made when he joined the group. Another virtue was justice, demonstrated by dealing fairly with individuals in the field and refusing to engage in tactics of oppression or robbery. Interestingly enough, Winkler next included mercy on the list, and he explained that whenever possible, the dutiful soldier should attempt to

[79] *Ibid*., 10.

[80] *Ibid*.

spare lives and not take them indiscriminately. "How then can we expect to be saved," Winkler asked, "unless we also try to save, even in the madness of the battle and amid the wrathful tumults of the victory?"[81] Heroism followed mercy. Winkler explained heroism as the drive of a soldier to plunge himself into battle with boldness "as a brave heart feels in a good cause, which best guards the endangered warrior, which steels the bayonet, and guides the fearless flag, and wins to a contending host the favorable providence of the God of battles." Finally came devotion, yet it was not seen in regard to one's country but rather in regard to one's God as the soldier continued "to maintain the practices of piety."[82] Armed with these virtues, the members of the Moultrie Guard could head into the unknown with confidence that regardless of their outcome, "the honor of South Carolina will be vindicated, and the approbation of God will be secured."[83] Winkler ended his sermon by telling the soldiers to look beyond the temporal, and as they steeled themselves for conflict and prepared to march under the South Carolina flag, they should "follow the Captain of your salvation beneath the blood-stained banner of the cross."[84]

Standing before these soldiers, three months before the first shots would be fired in a war that would last over four years and claim the lives of over 600,000 citizens of the United States, Winkler's sermon carried all of the elements that would come to characterize the religion of the war and the religion of the lost cause—the marriage of southern nationalism and evangelical providentialism. When Winkler reassured the members of the Guard that their cause was a righteous cause, he did so in a way that

[81] *Ibid*.

[82] *Ibid*., 13.

[83] *Ibid*., 14.

[84] *Ibid*.

reiterated a sense of southern nationalism. Winkler echoed what had been read in the pages of the *Southern Baptist* throughout the 1850s, that the North had betrayed the South, that abolitionist radicals had taken over, and that those in power wished simply to turn the South into a "prison house of oppressors."[85] Against this "tyranny" stood men like the Moultrie Guard, citizen soldiers who determined to give themselves for the sake of their country—not the United States, but rather South Carolina, and in a greater sense, the entire South. No longer brothers from different states, the North had become the enemy they dreaded for so long, the enemy that southerners, including Baptists, feared throughout the 1850s.

Not only did Winkler's message demonstrate a sense of southern nationalism, but it also highlighted a reliance on the providence of God. As would be expected from a sermon, the focus of the message rested on the need for the soldiers to prepare themselves spiritually as well as physically. His call to seek virtues such as justice, obedience, and mercy demonstrated a desire to create a holy soldier—one whose actions would be honored by God and whose cause could be considered righteous. Winkler described war, even a just war, as a horrible ordeal in which soldiers would be taken away from the domestic sphere and transplanted into the camp, a place filled with "unblushing ribaldry and unbridled license." If the evils of the camp were not enough, soldiers had to deal with the actual battle itself—lives slaughtered before their eyes even while they had to maintain a sense that at any moment, they too could succumb to death as well. War was hell, and death was everywhere, yet the soldiers were called to enter the hell and face death, and therefore, they needed to make peace with God and him throughout the

[85] *Ibid*., 5.

conflict, therefore winning "the favorable providence of the God of battles." The soldier's future and therefore the future of the conflict lay in the hands of a providential God who oversaw all of his creation, especially war. Gazing over those souls charged to his care, Winkler assured them that the best way to keep God's favor on the South was to ensure that the South stay devoted to God, whether that be individuals in the pews or soldiers in the field.

Conclusion

Seeing the Religion of the Lost Cause

> [T]he sore trials through which we have passed and the darkness which now overshadows us are a part of the workings of Providence….[O]ur severe chastisements…are ordained of God, as instruments to work for us a far more exceeding and eternal glory.
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> – Rappahannock Baptist Association, Virginia, May 1865[1]

By April of 1865, the dream of the Confederacy had died and with it the dream of the great society that the South had sought to save. The North stood victorious, the South stood broken, and the slaves stood free. Some soldiers returned home from the battle field; many did not. Cities were devastated, fields in flames, and families crushed, and all this due, in part, to the influence of a southern clergy who had, according to Charles Wilson Reagan, "laid the basis for secession" through their defense of slavery and southern society.[2] George C. Rable likewise has described the conflict as the "'holiest' war in American history," since so many individuals turned to their religion and their Bibles to explain everything from "the meaning of individual deaths, to the results of battles, to the outcome of the war."[3] Drew Gilpin Faust has also asserted that "the most fundamental source of legitimation for the Confederacy was Christianity." During the war, Faust claims that the southern clergy "provided a transcendental framework for southern nationalism" and as a result possessed "extraordinary power in shaping the South's wartime ideology."[4] Yet that ideology brought the South disaster. In the midst

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[1] Quote taken from Daniel W. Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion: The Religious Reconstruction of the South, 1863-1877* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 40.

[2] Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 8.

[3] George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen People: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 397.

[4] Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil*

of this ruin, southerners turned to their clergy to ask why.

According to Richard E. Beringer, Herman Hattaway, Archer Jones, and William N. Still, Jr., the inability of clergy to give a compelling response not only caused despair among many after the war, but also contributed to the defeat of the South during the war. Among the many factors as to why the South lost, these historians have pointed to the existence of a Confederate civil religion that identified God's will with the affairs of state. As they suggest, the church, and in turn the soldiers, interpreted the South's victories or defeats in battle as a direct sign of God's favor. If the South won, God smiled upon them. If they lost, he abandoned them. When applied to the Civil War, this simplistic understanding of God's providence wreaked havoc on the morale of the Confederate armies, at least according to these historians.

> The South's religious views served as a trap for Confederate will. If, as Confederates said, God controlled events (and that would be difficult for most Christian southerners to deny) and victory was a sign of God's favor, then repeated battlefield successes would build morale and will by shoring up any wavering faith in the cause. By the same token, however, if the South began to lose battles, it could only mean that God did not side with the Confederacy, and if God sided with the right, it would mean that the South did not have right on its side and God favored the adversary. God, then, had not chosen the Confederacy, and it would be wrong for the South to continue to fight. This knowledge would inflict a devastating blow to morale.[5]

The presence of this "church-induced guilt," therefore, magnified the significance of every defeat, effectively destroying the morale of the South and helping the North win the war.[6]

However, this simplistic understanding of God's providence does not correspond

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War South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 22, 81.

[5] Richard E. Beringer, Herman Hattaway, Archer Jones, and William N. Still, Jr., *Why the South Lost the Civil War* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press,1986), 98.

[6] Beringer, *Why the South*, 90.

to the actual southern evangelical understanding of providence before, during, and after the war. Far from being dumbfounded as to the causes of defeat, southern clergy relied on their pre-war theology for their answer. Despite the loss, the South was and still remained God's holy nation, and as often happens, "'Tis the hand of God that afflicts you" since as he chastises those whom he loves to bring them to greater glory.[7]

"It can not be doubted that Southern ministers, as well as other Christians, for the most part, believed honestly and earnestly in the justice of the Southern cause," explained John Adger, editor of the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, in 1866.

> The error of some was in allowing themselves to receive the popular idea, and to encourage the idea amongst all Christian people, that God must surely bless the right. They forgot how frequently it seems good in his infinite wisdom and sovereign pleasure to suffer the righteous to be overthrown.

Going on, Adger described how in the midst of the "unjust, and wicked war of invasion upon free States," some began to believe that "God must and would crown all with success." "It was an error," Adger stated. "God had revealed no promise on which faith could rest."[8] Instead, the South needed to acknowledge that in spite of being right, God proved to have a different plan for them. "[W]e accept the failure of secession, as manifestly providential," Adger explained. "The overthrow of that just cause made evident not so much the prowess of its foes, nor even their prodigiously superior resources, as it did the direct hand of God. Yes! The hand of God, gracious though heavy, is upon the South for her discipline."[9]

Responses much like that of Adger's have been the source of several historical

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[7] "The Pestilence," *SB*, 15 November 1854, 2.

[8] John Adger, "Northern and Southern Views of the Province of the Church," *Southern Presbyterian Review* 16 (March 1866): 398-399.

[9] Adger, "Northern and Southern," 410.

studies over the past several years. For example, Daniel W. Stowell has suggested that between 1865 and 1866 religious leaders, in trying "to convince themselves and their congregations that God had not deserted the South," "develop[ed] a framework within which they could accommodate both assurance of God's continued favor and the military defeat of the Confederacy"[10] and in so doing "quickly established their interpretations of the war as God's chastening and committed themselves to rebuild their religious institutions."[11] Gaines M. Foster likewise discusses how after the war these "Good Protestants" avoided a discussion of the veracity of secession or slavery and pointed to a "vague" sinfulness of the South that brought about defeat, a sinfulness that was never fully defined by any one source.[12] Some suggested that the South had become too prideful, depending upon their own military might, rather than the strength of the Lord. Others, such as Baptist theologian John L. Dagg, claimed that defeat came because the people of the South failed in their duty to those entrusted to their care and thus God inflicted defeat upon the South.[13]

These charges of varied southern sins did not appear only after the war. In fact, they were made repeatedly throughout the war itself. As Faust explains, the wartime jeremiad from the southern pulpits lambasted the South in ways rarely seen prior to the

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[10] Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion*, 40.

[11] *Ibid*., 44. For more on the discussion of God's hand of providence in the midst of the war itself, see George Rable's *God's Almost Chosen People* (2010). Although the concept of "providence" was not the author's focus, he nonetheless demonstrates how discussions of providence filled the sermons, letters, and newspapers of the war, both in the North and the South. Unfortunately, Rable's work only covers the years 1861-1865 and gives little attention to the years leading up to the war, which established southern concepts of providence, or the years that followed the war, which demonstrated how consistent the southern churches were in their discussion of providence.

[12]Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 22.

[13] Eugene D. Genovese, *A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White*

war.[14] Thomas David, Bishop of the South Carolina Episcopal diocese explained in his annual address to the 1862 convention of the diocese that God was "chastening us for our sins, and proving our faith, that it may be found in His sight 'laudable, glorious and honorable.' Let us submit to His holy will; rest upon His mercies, and pray to Him to strengthen our confidence in His mighty power and righteous judgment."[15] In 1863, Calvin H. Wiley, a North Carolina Presbyterian minister, claimed that "God is chastening the country for its sins in connection with slavery."[16] Even General Robert E. Lee addressed this issue of chastisement in an address to his troops in August of that same year, telling them that the South had "sinned against Almighty God" and had "relied too much on our own arms for the achievement of our independence."[17] That same month, Alabama Baptist leader I.T. Tichenor delivered a Fast-Day sermon to the General Assembly of the State of Alabama, listing the reasons why God had "permitted the calamities of war to scourge this people." He warned them that "[p]eace will not come until his design shall have been fully accomplished," and asked, "Have we yet repented of our sins and reformed our lives so that God as the judge of the nations can turn away from us the rod of his anger?"[18] Highlighted among the sins of the south were

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Christian South (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 68.

[14] Faust, *Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, 29.

[15] Thomas F. Davis, *Address Delivered to the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of South Carolina, on Thursday, the 13th of February, 1862.*

[16] Quote taken from Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion*, 37. Original quote from Charles H. Wiley, *Scriptural Views of National Trials: Or the True Road to Independence and Peace of the Confederate States of America* (Greensboro, NC: Sterling, Campbell, and Albright), 191.

[17] Steven E. Woodworth, *While God is Marching On: The Religious World of the Civil War Soldiers* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 273.

[18] Isaac Taylor Tichenor, "Fast Day Sermon," in J.S. Dill, *Isaac Taylor Tichenor: The Home Mission Statesman* (Nashville, TN: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1908), 96-97.

"covetousness," pride and "boastful self-reliance," "Sabbath breaking," choosing poor leaders, and a failure to properly "discharge our duties to our slaves."[19] In particular, Tichenor pointed to the lack of care for their moral and religious upbringing, as well as a disregard for the institution of marriage among the slaves. "The remorseless creditor may avail himself of the power of the law to separate husband and wife, parent and child," Tichenor stated. "This is an evil of no minor magnitude, and one which demands an immediate remedy."[20] Once a genuine penitence and reformation was made in the hearts of the South, Tichenor claimed, then they may see peace in their land. In the meantime, he reminded them that God was at work.

> But it may be that God has for the South a world mission, and that by these sufferings he is preparing them for the trust….In the midst of this great storm around us, I have no vision that can pierce these black clouds and tell you what God means by it all. But I can confidently believe that in leading us through this fiery trial God is preparing a chosen people for a great mission. He wants a people purified, a people with a proper understanding and regard for all human rights; he wants a people, above all things, who will set the glory of God and the good of the race above all self-centering ambitions.[21]

Tichenor viewed the events of as coming from the hand of God as a means to prepare the land for something greater.

Privately, the charge of chastisement also became prevalent. Georgia Presbyterian Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., asked his father if the punishment could stem from "this practical atheism and national neglect in not by organic law, legislation, and in

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[19] Tichenor, "Fast Day Sermon," 97-103.

[20] Tichenor, "Fast Day Sermon," 102.

[21] Tichenor, "Fast Day Sermon," 103-104. These last lines by Tichenor provide a clear example of the workings of not only the religion of the lost cause in the midst of the war, but also the beginning stages of the New South mentality. For more on Tichenor's role in the creation of the New South, please see Michael E. Williams, *Isaac Taylor Tichenor: the Creation of the Baptist New South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005).

a public manner acknowledging his supremacy?"[22] Basil Manly, Sr., wondered in a private letter whether or not God had chosen to chastise "our guilty people in this war" because of a failure to properly minister to the slaves.[23] In July of 1863, while stationed in Buckner's Hill in Virginia, Tally Simpson, a soldier with the Third South Carolina Volunteers, wrote to his sister Carrie that even in the midst of the losses, God still held "the destiny of our nation, as it were, in the palm of his hand." Sensing that they would be victorious in the end, he claimed, "Let the South lose what it may at present, God's hand is certainly in this contest, and He is working for the accomplishment of some grand result…." Yet in the end he paused to recognize why the South had suffered. "We were a wicked, proud, ambitious nation, and God has brought upon us this war to crush and humble our pride and make us a better people generally. And the sooner this happens the better for us."[24]

Chastisement, therefore, became the common theme for defeat, and in turn, it gave the southern clergy even more confidence in the chosen nature of the South. Years following the war, Father Abram Ryan, who became known as the "Poet Priest of the Lost Cause," wrote his "Prayer of the South": "Ah! I forgot Thee, Father, long and oft,/When I was happy, rich, and proud, and free;/But conquered now, and crushed, I look aloft,/And sorrow leads me, Father, back to Thee."[25] Later in the poem came these lines

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[22] Quote taken from Faust, *Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, 31.

[23] Quote taken from Paul Harvey, *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities among Southern Baptists, 1865-1925* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 32.

[24] R. W. Simpson, Taliaferro N. Simpson, Guy R. Everson, and Edward H. Simpson, *Far, Far from Home: The Wartime Letters of Dick and Tally Simpson, Third South Carolina Volunteers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 258.

[25] Abram J. Ryan, "The Prayer of the South," in *Poems: Patriot , Religious, Miscellaneous* (Baltimore: John B. Piet & Co., 1884), 56

that echo familiar thoughts from the antebellum period:

> Girdled with gloom, of all my brightness shorn,
> And garmented with grief, I kiss Thy rod,
> And turn my face, with tears all wet and worn,
> To catch one smile of pity from my God.
> Around me blight, where all before was bloom,
> An so much lost, alas! and nothing won
> Save this—that I can lean on wreck and tomb
> And weep, and weeping, pray, Thy will be done.[26]

Ryan demonstrated a belief that though the South had been crushed, it had been a Father's rod of discipline that had done it, and in the end, with tears streaming, the best answer was simple to ask for God's will to be done. As Virginia Baptists explained in the weeks following the surrender at Appomattox, "the sore trials through which we have passed and the darkness which now overshadows us are a part of the workings of Providence." Indeed, "[O]ur severe chastisements…are ordained of God, as instruments to work for us a far more exceeding and eternal glory."[27] In that same vein, Henry Holcomb Tucker, editor of the *Christian Index*, explained, "Whether you see the good that is to come of what has happened or not, is immaterial. God will be certain to subserve some grand purpose of mercy by it. The present result is not of man's doings. God is the author of his own providences."[28] As North Carolina poet Fanny Downing wrote in 1866 concerning the South,

> Man did not conquer her, but God
> For some wise purpose of his own
> Withdrew his arm; she, left alone,
> Sank down resistless 'neath his rod.

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[26] Ryan, "The Prayer of the South," 58.

[27] Quote from the meeting of the Rappahannock Baptist Association, Virginia in May of 1865 taken from Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion*, 40.

[28] Quote taken from Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion*, 41. Original at "All Things Work Together for Hood to Them that Love God," *Christian Index*,13, January 1866.

God chastens most whom he loves best,
And scourges whom he will receive.
The land we love may cease to grieve,
And on his gracious promise rest!
…
She nobly yielded to its might,
Gasping amid her fiercest pain:
"God's way!—and he will make it plain—
"His evening-time will bring us light!"[29]

According to Charles Reagan Wilson, the defeat proved to the South the love that God had for them, and in the process, the memory of the Confederacy developed almost Christ-like qualities as the story of the Confederacy "enacted the Christian story of Christ's suffering and death, with the Confederacy at the sacred center."[30] Thus began what Wilson has described as the "religion of the lost cause," a civil religion whose aim was to protect the legacy of the movement for southern independence while at the same time maintaining the South's status as a chosen people of God. After all, how could the South be chosen if they lost? The answer was that God wanted to bring the South to even greater glory and He determined to use the sword of the North to chastise the South and baptize them in blood to raise them up to greater glory.

The beginning of this movement, however, occurred long before the surrender at Appomattox or even the firing on Fort Sumter. As seen throughout this study, the dual themes of southern nationalism and evangelical providentialism had become fixed in the minds of evangelicals such as the Baptists in Charleston prior to the Civil War. These Southern Christians believed firmly in the righteousness and exclusivity of the South. From 1847 through 1860, the *Southern Baptist* provided readers with tales about the

[29] Fanny Downing, "The Land We Love: Dedicated to General D. H. Hill," in *The Land We Love* 1 (July 1866): 161.

aggressive North whose radical elements sought to destroy the South. Articles called for "Southern Christian Patriots" to "Awake!" because every northern Baptist journal was "openly antagonistic to the Southern social system and peculiar institution."[31] Southern Baptists needed to establish their own publication societies, seminaries, colleges, and denominations—in essence, do their best to break off all ties from the hostile nation. Ten years prior to secession, Baptist voices such as B. C. Pressley openly called for the Baptists to do with the political realm what they had already done in the denominational realm—secede. He told them to decide between "*secession* or degradation, and with our degradation and destruction of our institutions, fanaticism triumphs and revelation yields to a higher rule of morality."[32]

In addition, the *Southern Baptist* provided a continuous defense of slavery, thus reassuring its readers that the South could rightfully claim to uphold a belief in Scripture whose text "clearly" demonstrated the divine approval of slavery. It was the North, with leaders such as Henry Ward Beecher, who had replaced the literal reading of the Scripture with a reading that relied upon the "higher law" of God. In addition, these northern rabble-rousers were hypocrites, claiming to love black slaves, but offering them a labor system that provided none of the paternalistic security found in the slave South. According to the paper, even a southern slave upon seeing the conditions of the northern free labor force pitied these workers and longed to return to his home.[33]

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[30] Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 24.

[31] "Southern Christian Patriots Awake!" *SB*, 11 August 1847, 2.

[32] "Secession and the Fugitive Slave Law," *SB*, 23 October 1850, 2.

[33] "A Slave's Estimate of the Character and Condition of Northern Society," *SB*, 4 October 1854, 1.

By the end of the 1850s, the paper expressed a growing sense of betrayal as all of the North, not just the radical elements among abolitionists, turned against the South and, in their mind, the Constitution itself. Charges of southern censorship and the controversy with the American Tract Society helped to demonstrate that even organizations supposedly neutral to the slavery debate brought potential peril. To illustrate the problem further, John Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry received sympathy in many papers, not anger. "[C]an any patriot, any good man," asked Richard Fuller, "observe this without amazement and alarm?" Fuller expressed the feelings of many in the South when he stated that "a man in New England has no more right to interfere with the institutions of Virginia than he has to interfere with those of England or France."[34] For these Charleston Baptists, the North had become a hostile nation, and the election of Lincoln only proved that the United States could no longer remained united. Far from what historians Stephanie McCurry, Paul Escott, or John McCardell suggest, by 1861, at least according to this group of Baptists, southerners were a distinct people, their own nation in their own right. Southern nationalism was not manufactured for the war or manifest at the beginning of the war; it was alive and well in the years leading up to the war.

Alongside this sense of southern nationalism existed a firm belief in evangelical providentialism. According to these Charleston Baptists, God exercised a particular providence over the universe, overseeing the tiniest details according to his own plan. Dagg's *Manual of Theology* taught Baptist ministers that "no event comes to pass, which is not under the control of God; and that it is ordered by him to fulfill his purpose."[35]

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[34] "Christianity and Patriotism," *SB*, 21 January 1860, 4.

[35] J. L. Dagg, *Manual of Theology*, (Charleston: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1857; reprint, Harrisonburg, VA: Gano Books, 1990), 128.

This providence oversaw the stars in the sky and the birds in the air. By his will, God maintained the grass, the oceans, and the breath of every living thing. Congregations sang that they could never hide from their God because he continually "enclosed [them] on every side."[36] He would walk "through death's dark shade"[37] with them and "throughout all the wilderness."[38] This "Sovereign Ruler of the skies" held in his power "Times of sickness, times of health,/Times of penury and wealth:/Times of trial and of grief,/Times of triumph and relief."[39]

In the times of affliction, the believers sang about a God who "moves in a mysterious way/His wonders to perform." Even though the trial seemed to come from a "frowning providence," God would eventually interpret how it all occurred for his purposes.[40] They claimed to have comfort because they knew that "'Tis the hand of a Father that smites,"[41] and upon feeling "afflictions rod," they would turn "straight…unto my God."[42] "Afflictions come at thy command," they told God, "And leave us at thy word."[43] They knelt "'Mid tears of penitence,"[44] and "bless[ed] [God] for [the]

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[36] Basil Manly and Basil Manly, Jr., *The Baptist Psalmody: A Selection of Hymns for the Worship of God* (Charleston: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1859), 44.

[37] *Ibid*., 71.

[38] *Ibid*., 70.

[39] *Ibid*., 69.

[40] *Ibid*., 68; and E. T. Winkler, *The Sacred Lute: A Collection of Popular Hymns* (Charleston: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1855), 77-8.

[41] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 475.

[42] *Ibid*., 467.

[43] *Ibid*.,.

[44] *Ibid*.,.

chastening."[45] They told each other to look at the trials as having "Love inscribed upon them all" and see "happiness" within them, knowing that they are a "true-born child of God."[46] Whether the affliction came on a national or individual level, the answer remained the same—it came because God willed it so in order to discipline his children.

The pages of the *Southern Baptist* presented readers with the same concept of God's use of afflictions. Through articles, editorials, stories, and poems, the reader was confronted with the idea that God authored every affliction and man was absolutely powerless to avoid those afflictions. This state of powerlessness compelled him to trust in the one from whom the affliction originated, the one with a reason behind sending the affliction—to discipline the believer and purify him, thus making him holier and more like Christ. In the midst of affliction, he should not "question the prerogative of the Almighty," but rather "kiss the rod and the hand that holds it; to bless God that he shews so much of a Father's concern as to correct us 'for our profit.'"[47] Therefore, should an affliction befall a believer, he believed it not as a sign of God's abandonment, but rather as a sign that God saw the believer as his beloved child, a child who needed to be disciplined and strengthened for greater work in the future.

Afflictions came not only to individuals, but also to communities and nations. Churches sang, "Justly might this polluted land/Prove all the vengeance of thy hand:/And bared in heaven, thy sword might come,/To drink our blood and seal our doom," to a God they hoped would see a righteous remnant on their knees and sheath his sword and spare

[45] *Ibid*., 469.

[46] *Ibid*., 470.

[47] "Afflictions," *SB*, 28 August 1850, 2.

their land.[48] In times of disease, poems encouraged the country to turn "[f]rom your sin and your shame;/'Tis God that afflicts you,/Revere his dread name." E. T. Winkler recounted to his congregation in 1859 past epidemics and the "calamities which the wrath of God inflicts," in order to remind them to praise God in both their sickness and their health.[49] Even a seemingly individual affliction such as death could be understood as communal in nature, as seen in the cases of Abby Winkler and M. T. Mendenhall.[50] Here, eulogies suggested that their departure was in some way connected to an over-reliance on them on the part of the congregation, that the church had come to seek man's strength over God. In essence, God would use any means necessary to get the attention of his chosen people.

War was a particularly special use of God's afflictions. It was the "hammer of God's providence,"[51] the only means "by which can be crushed the obstacles to the great blessings."[52] Destructive, disastrous, and deadly, the "fell destroyer" was "the great calamity that can befall a nation, and more to be dreaded than plague, pestilence or famine."[53] Yet, as with all other afflictions, war came for a reason. God brought war to a land because its people had turned their back on him; they relied more on their own money and their own strength than on God. As one author stated,

> Though God does permit men and nations to exalt themselves, to become idolaters, worshippers of themselves, glorifyers of their own talents, fame and

[48] Winkler, *Sacred Lute*, 275-6.

[49] Edwin T. Winkler, "Thanksgiving Sermon: Health Preserved, October 27, 1859," from Winkler Sermons, Oct. 23, 1851-June 1879, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.

[50] See discussion of the eulogies of Abby Winkler and M. T. Mendenhall in chapter four.

[51] "God's Providence in Revolution and Reform," *SB*, 28 June 1848, 1.

[52] "God Over All," *SB*, 23 May 1849, 2.

[53] "The Loss of Life by War," *SB*, 10 December 1859.

> wealth, yet does he, in due time, humble, prostrate and punish them and cause all to acknowledge that he alone is great; that God only ruleth in heaven and on earth.[54]

As a means of correction, God would let loose the hounds of war, even though the war was carried out often by "bad men, and actuated by bad motives."[55] As Dagg explained, "Wicked men are called the rod, the staff, the ax, the saw, in his hand; and are therefore moved by him as these instruments are, by the hand of him who uses them."[56] Baptists in Charleston, therefore, understood an affliction such as war, along with the death and destruction that accompanied it, as a consequence of their sins and an instrument of God to make their land holy. It never meant that God left his people; rather it meant that his people left him, and he sought to bring them back to himself.

It is with this understanding of God's providence and a strong adherence to southern nationalism that Charleston Baptists braced themselves for war. Because of this firmly established belief system, they claimed in November of 1860 that "the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." They fully believed that all of the events that had brought about the prospect of secession and possible war had occurred because God willed it to be so. While some expressed confidence in ultimate Confederate victory, others, like J. A. W. Thomas cautioned Baptists to look not only at the sin of the North, but also at the transgressions of the South and to "repent of sin, and cry mightily unto God."[57] Behind the caution or confidence lay a reliance that in the end, "God is his own interpreter, and

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[54] "God Only is Great and Independent," *SB*, 8 September 1852, 2.

[55] "God Over All," *SB*, 23 May 1849, 2.

[56] Dagg, *Manual of Theology*, 131.

[57] J. A. W. Thomas, *The Alternative: Repentance of Punishment: A Sermon Preaching in the Bennettsville Baptist Church, November 21st, 1860* (Charleston: Evans and Cogswell, 1860), 22.

he would make it plain."[58] Victory in battles may have meant God's favor, but defeat, contrary to Beringer's conclusions, did not mean God's abandonment. The understanding of God was never that simple for antebellum Christians, and thus, "church-guilt" is not a valid explanation as to why the South lost the war.

Likewise, contrary to conclusions of Stowell and Foster, the clergy did not need to "quickly establish" any belief system in order to explain the defeat of the Confederacy. While they may have been troubled and confused at the ultimate loss of their war for southern independence at the hands of a "godless" North, they already possessed a belief system that allowed them to interpret defeat the same as they would victory. Instead, as Mark Noll has stated, "In surprisingly large measure, however, the religion with which theologians emerged from the war was essentially the same as that with which they entered the war."[59] Likewise, Kent Dollar discovered in his study of nine Christian soldiers from the South that they claimed their faith grew deeper throughout the war.[60] Steven Woodworth also concludes that "one of the most remarkable aspects of the Civil War may be how little it changed, rather than how much." Going on, he states, "In the religious world of the Civil War soldiers, and that of the families to which they returned when the war was done, nothing fundamental had changed."[61] While isolated individuals may have abandoned their trust in God, as a whole southern religion looked the same after the war as it did prior to the war. The antebellum establishment of southern

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[58] Manly, *Baptist Psalmody*, 68; Winkler, *Sacred Lute*, 77-8.

[59] Noll, *Civil War as Theological Crisis*, 16.

[60] Kent Dollar, *Soldiers of the Cross: Confederate Soldier-Christians and the Impact of the War on Their Faith* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005), 224-226.

[61] Woodworth, *While God is Marching On*, 292-293.

nationalism and evangelical providentialism helps to explain this consistency. Prior to the war, the religious world of the South, as seen among the Baptists in Charleston, firmly held that regardless of any outcome, whether it be the devastation of disease, the destruction of war, or the finality of death, God was their God, and they were his people. Thus, as E. T. Winkler, standing in front of the Moultrie Guard on that morning of January 6, 1861, told his soldiers that the "religion of Jesus Christ" and a "quiet trust in Providence" would "best prepare[] them for the brace duties of battle, and for the solemn peradventure of death,"[62] he also unknowingly instructed them on how to prepare for the ultimate defeat of the Confederacy. When preachers similarly stood in front of their congregations four years later and began what Wilson termed the "religion of the lost cause" by telling them that the South had been chosen by God as a holy people to be baptized through blood, they drew directly from their antebellum understanding of how God dealt with his people. In essence, the religion of the lost cause was the religion of the South before the cause was lost.

[62] Edwin T. Winkler, *Duties of the Citizen Soldier: A Sermon, Delivered in the First Baptist Church of Charleston, S. C. on Sabbath Morning, January 6th, 1861, before the Moultrie Guards* (Charleston: A. J. Burke, 1861), 10.

Appendix A

Names of Subscribers to the *Southern Baptist*
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[1] Subscriber names taken from list provided by the *Southern Baptist* in the following issues:11 January 1859, 18 January 1859, 25 January 1859, 1 February 1859, 8 February 1859, 15 February 1859, 22 February 1859, 1 March 1859, 8 March 1859, 15 March 1859, 22 March 1859, 29 March 1859, 5 April 1859, 12 April 1859, 19 April 1859, 26 April 1859, 3 May 1859, 10 May 1859, 17 May 1859, 24 May 1859, 31 May 1859, 7 June 1859, 14 June 1859, 28 June 1859, 12 July 1859, 19 July 1859, 26 July 1859, 9 August 1859, 23 August 1859, 30 August 1859, 13 September 1859, 27 September 1859, 4 October 1859, 18 October 1859, 1 November 1859, 8 November 1859, 19 November 1859, 26 November 1859, 3 December 1859, 10 December 1859, 17 December 1859, 24 December 1859, 7 January 1860, and 14 January 1860.

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Vita

Personal Background

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Experience

Assistant to the President, Dallas Baptist University, 1998-1999, 2001-present
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ABSTRACT

'TIS GOD THAT AFFLICTS YOU:
THE ROOTS OF THE RELIGION OF THE LOST CAUSE AMONG
CHARLESTON BAPTISTS, 1847-1861

by Vernon Blake Killingsworth, Ph.D., 2011
Department of History
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This dissertation explores the religious world of the pre-war United States South. In particular, it focuses on a specific group from 1847-1850, Baptists living in Charleston, South Carolina, and attempts to locate the presence of both southern nationalism and evangelical providentialism.

In order to study this group, effort has been made to examine the main newspaper for Baptists in South Carolina, the *Southern Baptist*, which was printed weekly in Charleston from 1839-1860. The paper enjoyed a stable circulation during the 1850s and provides a window through which one can explore not only the thoughts and actions of Baptist leaders, but also individual Baptists who chose to receive the paper. In addition to the paper, effort has been made to explore the sermons preached and hymns sung in Charleston throughout the 1850s.

The study concludes that in order for historians to properly discuss the post-war marriage of religious rhetoric and Confederate memory and the church's description of the loss as a chastisement from God for the greater glory of the South, one has to also understand that prior to the war, Baptist groups, as well as other evangelicals, made the same arguments concerning various other afflictions from God, including disease, war,

and death. This focus on God as an afflicter of people, combined with a staunch southern nationalism that developed in the 1850s, forms the soil from which would eventually grow what Charles Reagan Wilson coined the “religion of the lost cause.”