

Fall 2015

## "Living in the Confluence of Two Eternities": The Impact of Politicized Religion in Richmond, Virginia, 1845-1914

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.fuf9-n66q>  
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**“LIVING IN THE CONFLUENCE OF TWO ETERNITIES”: THE IMPACT OF  
POLITICIZED RELIGION IN RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, 1845-1914**

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the History Department

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Timothy A. Case

December 2015

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The Designated Thesis Committee Approves the Thesis Titled

“LIVING IN THE CONFLUENCE OF TWO ETERNITIES”: THE IMPACT OF  
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## **ABSTRACT**

### **“LIVING IN THE CONFLUENCE OF TWO ETERNITIES”: THE IMPACT OF POLITICIZED RELIGION IN RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, 1845-1914**

by

Timothy A. Case

This thesis analyzes the political nature of religion before, during, and after the Civil War in Richmond, Virginia, the capitol city of the Confederacy. I contend that the relationship between the state and the church, politics and faith, public space and sacred space was forever changed by the war and its origins. Sacred space and sacred actors became political space and political actors before the war in the debates over slavery, during the war in defense of the Confederacy, and continued in this role in its aftermath. Their faith in God and his providence for the South aided Southerners as they dealt with defeat and guided them as they encountered the effects of a rapidly changing world. Religion and faith offered the citizens of Richmond, and the South, a means of navigating these changes and a space in which to do so. Though the South remained politically divided with debilitating class conflict, religion afforded Southerners a sense of unity. Convinced of their righteous position, Southerners' defense and remembrance of the cause in God's name remained political and allowed them to avoid political scrutiny. Driven by a new sense of political agency and guided by their Southern faith, members of the war generation, especially in urban and industrial centers like Richmond, negotiated the world of the old and new, the past and present. Men used the circumstances of the time to chart a new future for themselves in the enterprises of the New South, while many women drew upon their wartime experiences to continue in more overt public and political roles. Religion afforded Southerners the ability to be both ardent defenders of the Lost Cause and participants in social and economic change.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor, the Graduate Studies Chair, and primary thesis reader, Dr. Libra Hilde. Finishing this work has definitely been a challenge and I could not have done it without the patience, guidance, motivation, and immense knowledge from Dr. Hilde. I am grateful for her willingness to advise me in an area close to her research and the time she put in aiding the improvement of my argument and scholarship.

I would also like to thank the rest of the thesis committee, Dr. Patricia Evridge Hill and Dr. Glen Gendzel for their effort and guidance as well as two other professors who helped me along the way: Dr. Ruma Chopra and Dr. Patricia Lopes Don. Your classes provided inspiration for this work and I am grateful for your help in becoming a better scholar in the field of History.

My sincere thanks also goes to the Santa Clara County Office of Education and the faculty of San Jose State University that coordinated with the SCCOE to offer teachers in the valley the Teaching American History grant which helped cover the costs of part of the Masters degree and highlighted the need to link academia with high school history teachers in order to enhance and improve how history is taught and the quality of historical scholarship.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my wife for her patience and support while I completed this work. She stuck with me through some tough times and continued to support my dream to complete my Masters degree. For that I will be forever grateful.

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## **Introduction: The South's Politicized Religion**

In the course of research on this paper I visited the city of Richmond eight times. I spent most of my days in the archive rooms of the Library of Virginia, the Virginia Historical Society, and the Museum of the Confederacy. With the remaining hours of light after these institutions closed, and with the few days I set aside for exploring the surroundings, I traversed the city and its history. I visited every major church from the war period that was still operating, captured photos of Civil War monuments in every part of the city and the surrounding areas, and staked out the cemeteries and battlefields scattered across the city and at its gates. I re-traced the steps of Jefferson Davis as he left the White House of the Confederacy and walked to St. Paul's Church, then passed the Washington statue in Capitol Square, and finally made his way to the Capitol Building. I walked the route of volunteers from historic St. John's Church, where Patrick Henry spoke in defense of liberty, to where the massive Chimborazo medical complex stood. I followed the path Union soldiers took to enter the city after breaking through the lines at Petersburg. I stood in awe of the ninety foot pyramid dedicated to the memory of the fallen Southern soldiers that it commemorated and walked among Confederate graves in Hollywood, Shockoe, and Oakwood Cemeteries. I traced the route of the marchers as they made their way through the main streets of the city to the Lee Monument unveiling on the aptly named Monument Avenue.<sup>1</sup> By my last trip to Richmond, I could direct you to every Civil War related building, museum, artifact, monument, church, battle-site, and cemetery that was still there from nearly any point in the city. This had not been my intention when I first embarked on the project. It was the institutions of historical preservation, not the city's history, which brought me to Richmond

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<sup>1</sup> Reference to city events and the actions of Richmond's residents as outlined in Emory Thomas, *The Confederate State of Richmond: A Biography of the Capital* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971).



for my initial research. Though I set out to simply demonstrate the importance of religion in the lives of Southerners and the role the church played in supporting and legitimizing the state during the war, my experience of the city's history and its sacred spaces led me to a far broader and more significant position by chance.

It did not occur to me until after I was reviewing the photos I took over the course of my first four trips to Richmond that I visited Hollywood Cemetery every time. I had four different sets of photos of the exact same scenes: four trips worth of shots of the pyramid soldiers' monument, four series of images of Jefferson Davis's resting place and the monuments dedicated to him and his family, four shots of the markers identifying the Gettysburg section where the remains of soldiers were reinterred through the work of the Hollywood Memorial Association, and photos of four visits to the graves of George Pickett, J.E.B. Stuart, John Pegram, Rev. Moses Hoge, and others.<sup>2</sup> It struck me that with such limited time outside of formal research hours, I made my way to the same place repeatedly over the course of multiple trips and documented the exact same thing as if it were a new experience. I was not purposely documenting the details of the cemetery for my initial study. Based on its existence and the number of Confederates buried there during the war, I concluded that death was a regular occurrence and that it was often celebrated in this place. Yet, as I looked closely at the photographs and the inscriptions on the graves and considered the purposes of the messages to those that would read the words in the future, it became clear to me this was why I had visited Hollywood Cemetery so many times. I was enmeshed in its history and its preservation of the South's memory.

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<sup>2</sup> The monuments and gravesites described from first-hand visits below can be identified, viewed and studied in Mary Mitchell, *Hollywood Cemetery: The History of a Southern Shrine* (Richmond: Library of Virginia, 1999).

The statements of faith and patriotism on the physical markers of the cause in the cemetery—its monuments and headstones—were intended to reach the members of future generations, to immortalize the honor and Christian character of its citizens and their devotion to the cause. A newly erected monument “sacred to the memory” of Eusebius Fowlkes, a Confederate captain killed at the Battle of Seven Pines in 1862 whose “body could never be recovered,” defended the importance of faith and devotion. Honoring both his life and death, the monument read, “In life, he illustrated the high toned Christian gentleman, in death the devoted patriot and hero.” The footstone of Jefferson Davis’s grave etched his memory side by side with that of the Southern cause and its providential supporter. The inscription read “Jefferson Davis. At Rest. Deo Vindice” (“God will vindicate”). Also inscribed on the seal of the Confederate States of America and adopted as the motto of the Confederacy, Davis was immortalized with these words identifying the providential purpose of the South. The mausoleum to Pickett’s division in the Confederate section of the cemetery accomplished the same feat for all of the soldiers he led. The seal on the monument of Confederate flags partially furled acknowledged that “Fate Denied Them Victory But Gave Them A Glorious Immortality.” The army was defeated but their memory, and the memory of the cause persevered through the monument in their honor. The Confederate flag was “furled but not forgotten.” A poem dedicated to Pickett’s division inscribed on one side of the monument underscored this purpose, “Whatever changes time has wrought, how wrong or rash their course may seem; though adverse doctrines may be taught, the future surely will redeem the patriots cause for liberty and keep their act from censure free, for ‘eternal right,

tho' all else fail, can never be made wrong.”<sup>3</sup> Those who built the monument in their honor sought to immortalize the legitimacy of the cause.

Another marker, honoring the work of the Junior Hollywood Memorial Association whose members re-interred fifty-two Confederate soldiers from the fields of Drewry's Bluff outside of Richmond and placed on Memorial Day, May 30, 1927, noted that “Only the Forgotten are Dead.” The people who died on behalf of the cause lived on as it was immortalized in stone. These markers ensured it was not forgotten. In what has to be among the most unique resting places in the Confederate section of the cemetery, the grave of Robert C. Moates, Sr., was decorated with Confederate flags despite the fact that Moates never served in the Confederate army and was born seventy years after the end of the war. A veteran of the U.S. Navy, Moates spent much of his life playing the part of Robert E. Lee in public and social events in the city. A participant in the public commemoration of the cause, Moates was immortalized in the same way as the soldiers who had literally fought and died for the cause because “His portrayal of General Robert E. Lee was an inspiration to us all.”<sup>4</sup> It became clear through my trips to Hollywood cemetery that Southerners' honoring of the dead was meant not just for those grieving their loved ones but also for future generations who they believed would look upon these stone indicators of the struggle and cause and gain inspiration to help sustain the memory. The vindication and immortalization of the wartime generation was made possible not only by those who dedicated their efforts to placing the markers in this sacred space, but also by the visitors who walked among them and cherished their memory. In the process of taking pictures, reading the inscriptions, and envisioning their struggles, I was blindly engaged in the immortalization of the cause.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Each time I visited, the graves were decorated with fresh or newly dead flowers and surrounded by Confederate flags and symbolism. Though the size, number, and wear of the flags adorning the graves changed, they were a constant theme in the images I took. I only now notice the effort I exerted to capture the photos in ways that emphasized the Confederate identity of the graves and monuments. It never occurred to me that aside from the museums I visited, this was the only place I had come into contact with the Confederate flag. Though controversy has raged outside its walls for decades<sup>5</sup> on the presence of the political symbols of the Confederacy and its legacy in public space, these markers lay undisturbed, honored, and celebrated within the confines of Hollywood and the other cemeteries in the city. Though I have similar images of the monuments in the city's public spaces—along Monument Avenue, in Capitol Square, atop Libby Hill, even the battlefields around the city—none displayed the symbols of the Confederate cause beyond the words inscribed in stone and the memory and history brought to mind by them. The city's sacred spaces continue to serve, as they had during Reconstruction, as an arena for the celebration of the political cause of the Confederacy. Yet, it was the end of Reconstruction and the transition of memorialization from sacred space to public space that witnessed the overt celebration of the Confederate cause after the war. During Reconstruction, celebrations of Confederate memory, even in sacred spaces such as the early Decoration Days, had been prohibited from using the symbols of the defeated nation.<sup>6</sup> This does not suggest that the sacred spaces of the

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<sup>5</sup> I was in Richmond doing research in the Spring of 2010 when then Virginia Governor, Robert McDonnell was forced to apologize for omitting any mention of slavery in his proclamation on Confederate History month. Since then efforts to eliminate public displays of the Confederate flag and Confederate monuments have increased significantly. Sacred spaces like Hollywood Cemetery continue to provide physical and symbolic protection for political symbols that have fanned over a century of racial and political flames even at a time when their public presence is being effectively challenged.

<sup>6</sup> William Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

city lost importance when Southerners began to celebrate the Confederacy outside these limits. Quite the contrary, the conventions of early rituals were repeated in the more openly public celebrations of the cause. This continued well into the twentieth century.

That the political symbols have once again been confined to the protective spaces of the cemetery illustrates the central argument of this paper. The relationship between the state and the church, politics and faith, public space and sacred space was forever changed by the war and its origins. Sacred space and actors became political space and political actors before the war in the debates over slavery, during the war in defense of the Confederacy, and continued in this role in its aftermath. As the moral wing of the state during the war, people continued to view Southern churches and their agents as institutions of the cause. Their faith in God and his providence for the South aided Southerners as they dealt with defeat and guided them as they encountered the effects of a rapidly changing world. Religion and faith offered the citizens of Richmond, and the South, a means of navigating these changes and a space in which to do so. The display of Confederate symbols in the city's sacred spaces suggests that they continue to serve this purpose.

People inspired by their faith to defend the cause often engaged in actions that had unintended consequences that challenged the very foundations of the cause itself. Driven by a new sense of political agency and guided by their Southern faith, members of the war generation, especially in pre-war industrial and urban centers like Richmond, negotiated the world of the old and new, the past and present. Men used the circumstances of the time to chart a new future for themselves in the enterprises of the New South, while many women drew upon their wartime experiences to continue in more overt public and political roles. Both men and women relied upon their faith and religion to justify actions that departed from

pre-war Southern norms, and yet that same faith compelled them to celebrate the cause for which they and their parents had fought. The intersection of these two forces in society, faith and politics, at a time of tremendous change had significant consequences for the people and institutions celebrating this fusion as a pillar of their national identity. Those Southerners who defended the cause during the war engaged in political action, and, when the nation no longer existed, those partisans who continued to defend the cause and preserve its memory remained highly political actors. As Caroline Janney suggests they knew “that memory is not a passive act. They recognized that the memorials people built, the ceremonies they made sacred, and the stories they told had immense power. They knew that shared memories held the power to unite communities over space and time, to bind people together as ‘Americans,’ ‘Southerners,’ or even ‘veterans.’ What individuals and communities elected to tell of the war held enormous potential for staking claims of authority and power.”<sup>7</sup> This paper focuses on how religion was both a central part of Southern identity and a force that motivated the defense and memorialization of the cause. As such, it conferred agency and power to the actors who engaged in these efforts. Southern men and women found many ways to communicate their message and stories after the war and in the process waged a battle over memory that afforded them greater authority and power and a vindication for their version of events. The result of this battle was not simply a backwards looking conservative movement to resurrect the past in the present. Their faith offered them a bridge to celebrate the past and bring it with them into a new future.

This paper analyzes the political nature of religion and the impact the merging of the two spheres had on Southern society, with a focus on the capitol city of the Confederacy—

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<sup>7</sup> Caroline Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 4.

Richmond, Virginia. Though citizens in Virginia actively debated over the proper relationship between religion and the state since the introduction of Thomas Jefferson's proposal to build "a wall of separation" between the two spheres, churches in the South turned into overt political actors the moment they became distinctively Southern institutions.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the 1845 division of the Protestant churches of the South from their northern counterparts, specifically the Methodists and Baptists, the two largest denominations, serves as this paper's general starting point for analyzing the impact of the South's political religion. While I trace other earlier developments that led to public discussions regarding the relationship between church and state, the debates over the legitimacy and justifiability of slavery turned Southern churches into spokesmen for political causes and helped sustain a religious basis for white supremacy that maintained the antebellum racial ordering of society despite the end of slavery after the war.<sup>9</sup>

Celebration of the cause would continue to change as the war became part of the distant past, thus, the transfer of control of Confederate memory from one generation to the next and the new challenges faced by the post-war generation represent a symbolic turning point for understanding Southern identity. The authorization of a marker to be placed at the foot of the Confederate pyramid monument in Hollywood Cemetery, entrusting the Confederate section of the cemetery to the "perpetual care" of the women of the South, as well as the unveiling of the Confederate Monument in Arlington National Cemetery, reflect this generational transfer and provide an appropriate book-end for this study. Not only was the Lost Cause celebrated on the grounds of a national cemetery on land formerly owned by

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<sup>8</sup> Thomas Buckley, "After Disestablishment: Thomas Jefferson's Wall of Separation in Antebellum Virginia," *The Journal of Southern History* Volume LXI, No. 3, August 1995, 445-480.

<sup>9</sup> The division of the Southern churches as a catalyst of war plays a prominent role in Mark Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

the South's greatest hero, Robert E. Lee, the two monuments represented a final passing of the guard of the history of the South from Ladies Memorial Associations to the United Daughters of the Confederacy.<sup>10</sup> The interplay between the old generation and new generation, the placement of markers in both national public space and Southern sacred space, and the religious symbolism that adorned the monuments ensured that Confederate memory would be tied to faith and that efforts to preserve it would remain political acts.

There is the risk when using a case study to describe a larger social trend that conclusions could be incorrectly drawn from the lens of one unique local experience. Though Richmond was important to both local and national politics, and its local experiences significantly influenced national policy, it is not within the scope of this paper to show how trends in Richmond were typical of the Confederacy as a whole. In many instances, quite the opposite is true. Richmond was an atypical city within the larger scope of the Antebellum Era and war-time South. It was one of a few industrial centers; housed three governments at once—local, state, and national; was home to the second largest slave trade in the South; and contained one of the largest urban evangelical populations in the Confederacy. No other city, North or South, experienced the war like Richmond.<sup>11</sup> As the target of four years of Northern campaigns and as the staging ground for Southern war efforts—troop movements and training, hospitals, prisons, and cemeteries—the experiences of the citizens of Richmond offer the most direct example of what compelled people to act on behalf of the nation and the cause. The many religious institutions of the city offered people escape, refuge, and

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<sup>10</sup> The importance of the generational shift in the control of Confederate memory to the women of the UDC, and in particular the Confederate Monument in Arlington Cemetery, is highlighted in Caroline Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*.

<sup>11</sup> Emory Thomas, *The Confederate State of Richmond: A Biography of the Capital* is a foundational work in establishing how the military, political, social, and economic battle for Richmond was as important for the existence of the Confederacy as battlefield accomplishments.



explanations for the war's experiences and hardships, and the government promoted this behavior. As a result, the challenges many Southerners faced in confronting a new world outside their doors already existed long before the war's end. Richmond residents had no choice but to figure out a way to navigate their new lives while maintaining a Southern identity. Religion offered them that path.<sup>12</sup> The agency derived from their continued support of the cause fueled their efforts to reform society and take advantage of its developments while also honoring the memory of the past.<sup>13</sup> Though Richmond was a unique city, institutional attempts to cultivate Confederate nationalism and the way people received, understood, and acted upon these messages are consistent with the experiences of people and institutions across the state and the South. This paper does incorporate sources from other areas of Virginia and the South in order to make observations about the wider construction and acceptance of the Southern cause.

Religious institutions and agents were a central force that helped Southerners navigate the transition from an agricultural to industrial society, as well as traditional to more progressive roles. Many, though not all, active participants in Lost Cause activities also engaged in efforts to bring about a distinctively new society. To illustrate the source and impact of this dynamic, this paper draws upon a broad array of sources from the institutions

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<sup>12</sup>Two important works on the importance of religion on the development of the cause in Richmond during the war include Christopher Grasso & Harry Stout, "Civil War, Religion, and Communications: The Case of Richmond" in *Religion and the American Civil War*, ed. Charles Wilson, Harry Stout, and Randall Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 313-359., and Amy Minton, "Defining Confederate Respectability: Morality, Patriotism, and Confederate Identity in Richmond's Civil War Public Press," in *Crucible of the Civil War: Virginia from Secession to Commemoration*, ed. Andrew Torget, Edward Ayers, Gary Gallagher (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 80-105.

<sup>13</sup>For extensive histories on Richmond not directly referenced in this paper see, Alfred Hoyt Bill, *The Beleaguered City: Richmond, 1861-1865* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1946); Michael Chesson & Leslie Roberts, *Exile in Richmond: The Confederate Journal of Henri Garidel* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2001); W.C. Corsan, *Two Months in the Confederate States: An Englishman's Travels Through the South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996); Virginius Dabney, *Richmond: The Story of a City* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Inc. 1976); A.A Hoehling & Mary, *The Day Richmond Died* (New York: Madison Books, 1981); Nelson Lankford, *Richmond Burning: The Last Days of the Confederate Capital* (New York: Penguin Group, 2002). All provide an excellent overview to the events of Richmond during the war.

and individuals connected to the cause and from the generation of Southerners who came of age before the war to the post-war generation with no direct personal experience of the war. Conference papers, religious tracts, religious newspapers, and printed sermons, as well as the speeches of politicians and Confederate laws and political documents, provide important windows for viewing the message of the Southern cause through the lens of the institutions that helped shape it. These national institutions, the state and the church, as well as their actors—politicians, clergy, and religious leaders—attempted to build consensus. As Faust indicates, they were the ones “incorporating both the powerful and the comparatively powerless into a negotiation of the terms under which all might work together for the Confederate cause.” In the process, they “reopened unfinished Antebellum debates, intensified unresolved prewar conflicts, and subjected some of the most fundamental assumptions of the Old South to public scrutiny.”<sup>14</sup> Only national institutions, and the spaces they occupied, could create a national identity from these conflicts and thus their actions and publications deserve attention.

Since Evangelical Protestant churches made up the largest majority of religious institutions in Richmond, this paper is naturally driven by sources that deal directly with a Protestant understanding of the war. References to “the church” or the “Christian cause” more specifically imply an evangelical Protestant ideology formed by the major denominations present in the city—Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Episcopalians.<sup>15</sup> The “religious voice” of Richmond is a collective term for all of the means that the church

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<sup>14</sup> Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 7.

<sup>15</sup> This order illustrates the strength of these denominations by number of members during the Civil War. In Charles F. Irons, “Religion in the Civil War,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, ed. Brendan Wolfe. Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, June 17, 2009, [http://www.EncyclopediaVirginia.org/Religion\\_During\\_the\\_Civil\\_War](http://www.EncyclopediaVirginia.org/Religion_During_the_Civil_War). (first accessed Feb 10, 2010)

used to transmit its message including sermons, soldier's tracts, church discourses, civilian and military religious press and publications, religious journals and memoirs, and congregational reports. All these sources help illustrate changes in the ideology of the church and its view of the state during the war. The top-down structure of both the church and state, especially the church, meant that any effect the populace could have on these institutions would be through debate over *what* they decreed and not input on *how* church policy or ideology was formed. The war generated an image of the Confederacy as a Christian nation and this paper explores the impact of that ideology on church-state relations, analyzing the discourses and actions of both institutions—church and the state. They created, shaped, and attempted to perpetuate the ideology in question, thus analyzing how church-state relations changed from Antebellum to Civil War America and after the war requires reviewing the policies and ideology of these institutions.

That said, the success and lasting influence of Confederate nationalism meant nothing without popular support for the cause. This essay also relies upon the writings, diaries, letters, publications, and actions of Southerners and their organizations to demonstrate the influence that the cause constructed by national institutions had on their understanding of the war and its aftermath. These materials help illustrate how religious beliefs, and the centrality of faith for the cause, helped shape white Southerners' views of the war's events. In addition, the war offered people and their organizations greater authority over the cause as the state became increasingly dependent on their resources and services. It is important to note that this study primarily reflects the experiences of middle and upper class white Protestants. The records left of service to the cause, the resources and donations that sustained the religious press during the war, the primary lay leaders of church groups and associations, and those

with access to benefit from the developments of the New South and changes in gender norms limit analysis of the influence of religion on the cause to this perspective. There is no question that Southern nationalism was constructed and experienced differently across class and racial lines, but the stranglehold of the planter class and elites on Antebellum Southern society gave the middle and upper classes more control over the nature and direction of the Southern cause, and thus they are the primary focus here. The institutions that survived the war, namely the church, offered both the space and rituals for the continued celebration of the cause, and the actions and statements of Southerners illustrate how they remembered the old yet also embraced the new.

The past two decades have seen a considerable increase in the scholarship regarding the role of religion in fueling division and nationalism, both North and South, during the war.<sup>16</sup> While religion has now been thrust to the forefront of new social history, there is still a need to situate religion as a central element in the maintenance of the cause after the Confederacy's defeat. Though recent works have acknowledged the importance of religion and spirituality—both Christian and secular—in Civil War Richmond,<sup>17</sup> the influence of religion on state policy, and vice versa, as well the need to situate the blending of church and state in Richmond within a larger historical picture of church-state relations in Virginia, and its impact on the Lost Cause, merits more attention. Charles Reagan Wilson's *Baptized in*

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<sup>16</sup> See Eugene Genovese. *A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998); Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997); Edward Crowther, *Southern Evangelicals and the Coming of the Civil War* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000); George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010); David Goldfield, *America Aflame: How the Civil War Created a Nation* (New York: Bloomsbury press, 2011); and Timothy Wesley, *The Politics of Faith During the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013) for complete histories and comparative studies of Northern vs Southern development of and reaction to religious cultural norms as they relate to the war.

<sup>17</sup> Christopher Grasso & Harry Stout, "Civil War, Religion, and Communications: The Case of Richmond" and Amy Minton, "Defining Confederate Respectability: Morality, Patriotism, and Confederate Identity in Richmond's Civil War Public Press".

*Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause* sparked a wave of important scholarship on the religious history of the South and its role in the construction of the Lost Cause. While elements of his argument have received critical attention from scholars—such as framing the church as opposed to social religious associations as the main agents of the post-war civic religion, his understanding of the cause as a uniform experience of the entire Southern region, as well as the absence of analysis on the discontinuities produced by industrialization and modernization in Lost Cause visions—two central positions of *Baptized in Blood* remain relevant for studies of religion in the South. First, the Lost Cause was the result of Southerners’ attempts to create, or re-create, a cultural identity in the face of Confederate defeat and the dramatic changes underway in Southern society. Second, evangelical Protestantism was central to Southern identity and the efforts to maintain a cultural war over history and memory with the North. Perhaps the most controversial element of Wilson’s thesis is his characterization of the Lost Cause as a “civil religion.” Many interpretations of the relationship between religion and the cause have emerged from these debates, including Gaines Foster’s view of the cause as a regional “tradition” or “celebration” rather than a national “civic” experience, W. Scott Poole’s use of the term “Confederate religion,” and Lloyd Hunter’s favoring of “a Southern culture religion” to emphasize the importance of the religiosity of Southern culture rather than institutional religion as the foundation of the Lost Cause movement. Despite the rhetorical differences among these interpretations, they all share a principal idea with Wilson’s framing of the “civil religion” of the cause, one central to the argument of this paper. All agree the people of the South maintained a regional identity fueled by a sustained devotion to the Confederate cause and a faith that assured them their position was a righteous one. All also acknowledge some relationship between religion

and politics in the efforts to preserve and celebrate Confederate memory and history; that Confederate nationalism was in some way a religious nationalism and remained that way when the state itself was defeated. In this way, the support of and divergences from Wilson's position in *Baptized in Blood* provide an appropriate launching point for the arguments of this paper.<sup>18</sup>

Like Wilson, I argue that sustaining the cause made religion political and afforded religion a central role in the existence of a Southern identity. While Wilson mostly looks at the religion of the post-war era in his analysis of the Lost Cause, this paper will show how the politicization of religion that was central to the Lost Cause can be traced to pre-war debates over sectional issues that involved the church as well war-time discourse that affirmed Southerners' providential purpose even in the face of mounting defeats. It is my argument that Wilson's "civil religion" was the result of decades of changes in the relationship between church and state. Churches became the first Southern national organizations in the 1840s due to divisions over the legitimacy of slavery and became agents of the state during the war. Just as they had been before the war, Southern churches remained Southern national institutions and retained their war-time political agency. War-time agents of the church—priests, nurses, women's associations, the religious press, etc.—became political actors due to wartime demands and conditions and remained this way after the war.

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<sup>18</sup> Much has been written since the publication of Wilson's book on the role of religion in the formation, defense, and celebration of the Confederate cause. These works figure prominently in the discussion. Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1980); Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Scott Poole, *Never Surrender: Confederate Memory and Conservatism in the South Carolina Upcountry* (Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, 2004); Lloyd A. Hunter, "The Immortal Confederacy: Another Look at Lost Cause Religion," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*, ed. Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

This work also explores two primary critiques of Wilson's position on the religion of the Lost Cause and its effect on Southern culture. Like Gaines Foster in *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913*, I argue that the Lost Cause experience was more complex than a conservative attempt to resurrect the Antebellum past. Analyzing the construction of the cause at the local or regional level helps illustrate how cities and citizens across the South experienced the war and its effects in uniquely profound ways. An emerging industrial city like Richmond, on the eve of war, had a far different past than the rest of the South. Such experiences confirm Foster's argument that, "The Lost Cause did not signal the South's retreat from the future, but, whether intentionally or not, it eased the region's passage through a particularly difficult period of social change. Many of the values it championed helped people adjust to a new order; to that extent, it supported the emergence of the New South."<sup>19</sup> Peter Carmichael's study of the last generation of Virginians to come of age before the war represents this new scholarship in the study of religion, the Lost Cause, and the New South. In *The Last Generation: Young Virginians in Peace, War, and Reunion*, Carmichael argues that the new generation of Virginians before the war found it increasingly difficult to obtain a social status tied to the traditions of the Old South. With their belief in the Christian character of Southerners as a preserving force, they championed industrialization and economically progressive reforms. The war interrupted their progressive plans and transformed their Christian character into a national character. It is for these reasons that the last generation's experience of Virginia after Appomattox is unique. As Carmichael notes, "Much of the secondary literature on Reconstruction posits that a Southerner could either be a modernizer

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<sup>19</sup> Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 6.

or a reactionary Lost Cause fanatic. The veterans of the last generation created a hybrid ideology combining both types” ensuring that “the language of Southernism simultaneously inspired admirable acts of progressive reform and self-improvement and spurred them to fight to the death for a cause that was inescapably devoted to human bondage.”<sup>20</sup> This paper foregrounds religion as a tool for analyzing the actions and motivations of the main cultural institutions that maintained Confederate memory and eased Southern concern over New South industrial progress. I argue that Southern evangelical Protestant religion served as a bridge between the past and the present, the old and the new. Politicized by sectional issues, the religious nature of the Lost Cause afforded people the ability to celebrate their past while adjusting to the emergence of a New South. The experiences of the people and institutions of Richmond demonstrate the complexity of the post-war South. Southerners’ faith was a constant in balancing a vigorous defense of the Lost Cause at the same time advancing a future that risked corrupting a vision of the South those who served fought to protect.

Another critique of Wilson’s argument is his emphasis on the church, as opposed to the South’s social organizations, as the main agent of the Lost Cause. While few suggest that Southern churches were not central agents of the Confederate cause, many recent works have illustrated the importance of social organizations like Ladies Memorial Associations and the United Daughters of the Confederacy as leaders of the Lost Cause. While I suggest that both the church and its surrogate institutions were responsible for sustaining the cause during and after the war, these works have succeeded in advancing discussions about the Lost Cause’s gender dimensions. While Wilson does credit the women of the Ladies Memorial Associations and the United Daughters of the Confederacy as Lost Cause promoters, he

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<sup>20</sup> Peter Carmichael, *The Last Generation: Young Virginians in Peace, War, and Reunion* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 15-18.



positions them as conservative actors who acted mostly to preserve traditional gender roles. Drew Gilpin Faust, in her book, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the Civil War*, offers an extensive history of women's war activities including public writing, nursing and hospital work, caring for the dying and fallen soldier, government work, and their role as lay religious leaders. Like Wilson, while Faust acknowledges that these roles afforded women the opportunity to create a new sense of womanhood, she still holds that new sense of self was based in the ideas of the old. According to Faust, women after the war "had discovered little foundation in their own competence or effectiveness for trying to replace male power and authority on their own." While the white women of the South were new women in a new world, "for those who remembered the rewards of class and racial power in the Old South, the desire to cling to eroding status remained strong... The necessities of changed economic and social circumstances and the self-knowledge gained from four years of crisis gave white Southern women the basis for inventing new selves erected firmly upon the elitist assumptions of the old."<sup>21</sup> It is my argument that while many white women, especially members of the elite social class, acted out of a conservative defense of the traditions of the old South, others, especially women in the urban settings of the South who had more opportunities for social networking and public work, challenged the patriarchal assumptions of the Antebellum era, even if unintentionally, and pursued more progressive social actions citing the legacy of women's war activism as a justification for their newfound involvement in public life.

Libra Hilde's, *Worth a Dozen Men: Women and Nursing in the Civil War South*, offers a different view of the impact of women's war-time work. Her discussion of women's

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<sup>21</sup> Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 247 & 254.

hospital work throughout the war and the challenge presented to traditional gender norms in the private hospitals and Confederate wards suggests women were far more conscious of the changes they were causing and the political nature of their post-war activism. As Hilde concluded, "...postwar female politics thus focused on memory and a renewal of religious observance. Although women continued to be the moral force behind men, the war extended this protection from the home to the entire South...they had a political agenda for the South and demonstrated their new understanding of women's influence and place in public and private life. They...call[ed] on their people to carry on the aspect of the war that still raged, the war over memory...Nursing had been a political act, and their postwar work continued in that vein."<sup>22</sup> While Hilde traces the social upheaval in gender norms to women's wartime participation in hospitals as matrons and nurses, Caroline Janney's work illustrates how middle class and elite white women emerged from the war as much more active agents in public society due to their war time activism.

Janney, in her books *Burying the Dead and Not the Past: Ladies Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* and *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconstruction*, argues that women, as leaders of the defense and maintenance of Southern memory, were inherently political actors.<sup>23</sup> They broadened their public role by serving as "surrogate government agencies" for their defeated nation. Through their work in memorial efforts women staged public spectacles celebrating the cause and created an elaborate network for fundraising, engaging in a civic life to a degree largely unseen before the war. Yet, Faust, Janney, and Angie Parrott in her article "Love Makes Memory Eternal: The

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<sup>22</sup> Libra Hilde, *Worth a Dozen Men: Women and Nursing in the Civil War South* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 203.

<sup>23</sup> Caroline Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008) & Caroline Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*.

United Daughters of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia, 1897-1920," all agree that women's postwar activism encompassed far broader public forms than just Lost Cause memorial efforts. The Young Women's Christian Association and Women's Christian Temperance Union are among a number of post-war religious social organizations that saw wide appeal and extensive participation by women that did not have the same conservative framework. Though narrow in her views for the source of the cause, Faust was right in concluding that "the suffrage movement and the celebration of the Lost Cause embodied the paradoxical interplay of old and new in the postwar South."<sup>24</sup> I argue that just as religion afforded members of the last generation a hybrid ideology to celebrate the past while embracing a New South, women's religious faith called them to honor the piety of the Confederate past and the just nature of the cause while also simultaneously affording them new avenues for willing participation in public life.<sup>25</sup> Religion was a way to balance the forces of the old and the new. While gender norms may not have seen rapid changes in the old Antebellum world, evangelical Christianity did guide the moral compass of Southern society and the respectability of Southern white women. After the war, religion served as a constant force to help Southerners make sense of the war and defeat, extending the memory of the Confederacy and reshaping standards for respectable female activism in the public sphere. Through their faith, women were able to live in the old and the new, with one foot in the past but their eyes turned to the future.

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<sup>24</sup> Angie Parrott, "Love Makes Memory Eternal": The United Daughters of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia, 1897-1920," in *The Edge of the South: Life in Nineteenth-Century Virginia*, ed. Edward L. Ayres and John C. Willis (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991); Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 254.

<sup>25</sup> Lee Ann Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860-1890*. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995) argues a similar position for the women of Augusta. While she does contend that the memorial efforts did not alter the gender system of the South, she acknowledges women did learn new skills, raised their children differently, and organized in new ways as a result of the efforts on behalf of the Cause. This paper emphasizes the role of religion in these efforts and highlights a somewhat more progressive community in Richmond compared to the deep South city of Augusta.

Chapter One explores the Antebellum debates over the relationship between church and state and the impact that social change had on the separation of these two spheres. When the Southern churches broke away from their National Assemblies and Conferences and formed their own “Southern” versions of these institutions, there was no political entity that generated a shared purpose or Nationalism among Southerners. This empowered churches as some of the first regional institutions to act as primary agents in the cultivation of a Southern sectional identity based primarily on the defense of the Southern way of life and its peculiar institution; religion became political. Chapters Two and Three demonstrate how the Confederacy was, from its origin, a Christian nation, tied together by the very sectional identity the churches had begun to form before the war. I argue that church and state merged partly because they had to; their continued existence depended upon it. Politicians used religion to justify their actions and to unite Southerners around a common cause, while churches and the religious voice of the South stressed moral character and piety as elements of patriotism necessary to ensure God’s providence for the South’s ultimate victory. Though Antebellum debates over incorporation and slavery had cracked the foundation, war-time conditions and realities finally leveled the wall of separation between church and state. Yet, just as the church had embraced the state, the state ceased to be. Chapter Four reveals how in the aftermath of the war, the church, its institutions, affiliate organizations, leaders, and even the laity once again sustained a sectional identity in the absence of a political entity to bind Southerners together. Southerners turned to religion, as they always had, to understand why God delivered defeat to what they believed was his chosen nation on Earth. The religion of the Lost Cause sustained their providential purpose. In an irony that must not have escaped those who took part, Southerners utilized the sacred, apolitical spaces of the church to

maintain, honor, and defend the cause they had helped create. They depended on the tradition of the separate spheres of faith and politics in order to engage in inherently political acts, yet the change in that relationship over the course of the war had collapsed the distinction between the church and politics as well as sacred and political space. Chapters Five and Six show that as Reconstruction ended, and the need to conceal support for the cause was no longer necessary, religion remained a central tenant of the defense of the Old South while also helping Southerners navigate the contradictions of an increasingly new world. Chapter Five covers the transition of memorial activities from sacred space to public space and details the overt celebrations of the Confederate cause. At the same time, members of the post-war generation were adjusting to the dramatic changes in the world around them. Religion afforded them a bridge between the old world and the new. Their Southern moral character guided them through the challenges of the New South and they called upon the actions of the previous generation of Southern heroes as a source of inspiration. Chapter Six concludes with an assessment of the impact of the South's political religion on gender norms. Over the course of the Antebellum era, evangelical Protestant religion elevated women's roles outside of the home and motivated women to organize as agents of the church. The war transformed their worlds and provided opportunities for participation in what became political behavior through their support of a religious state motivated by faith in a politicized religion. Though for many it may have been unintended, their support of the cause and the South during the war challenged traditional norms and made them political actors capable of defending and furthering the Lost Cause while also supporting progressive social reform like women's suffrage. Their faith empowered both the men and women of the last generation to defend the cause. In the process, these actors challenged traditional norms for respectable

economic behavior and the proper space and role for women in Southern society at the same time they participated in the celebration of Confederate memory.

Perspectives from the institutions of the South—the church and state—as well as the people who heard and embraced their messages help illustrate that Southerners and Southern institutions were quite concerned with the way those who evaluated their struggle in the future would perceive it. This is why, as Faust indicates in her book *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South*, “We must begin to explore Confederate nationalism in its own terms—as the South’s commentary upon itself—as its efforts to represent southern culture to the world at large, to history, and perhaps most revealingly, to its own people.”<sup>26</sup> Religion offered a foundation for these efforts. The South was a Christian nation, and Southerners wanted the world and future historians to know it. As D.S. Doggett declared in an 1862 sermon honoring a state declared day of prayer and thanksgiving, “It has become customary for history to ignore God... The pride of the human heart is intolerant of God, and historians are too obsequious to its dictates. They collect and arrange their materials; they philosophize upon them. But their philosophy knows not God... Those who undertake the task of committing to posterity the record of our times, they be guilty of startling dereliction, if the manifest and acknowledged hand of God be discarded from their pages.”<sup>27</sup> It is my attempt to ensure that this history of the Southern cause does not disregard the influence of God and the church in the construction and maintenance of Confederate memory, even if that memory is not consistent with Doggett's intentions. Yet in the process of defending that memory, the political nature of religion made possible by the

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<sup>26</sup> Faust, *Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, 7.

<sup>27</sup> David Seth Doggett, *A nation's Ebenezer. A discourse delivered in the Broad St. Methodist Church, Richmond, Virginia. Thursday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1862: the day of public thanksgiving, appointed by the President of the Confederate States* (Richmond: Enquirer Book and Job Press, 1862), 9.

church's involvement in sectional debates and in support of the Confederate government also aided the post-war generation in coping with and overcoming the changes all around them. Religion and sacred space remained political and public markers dedicated to the Confederacy became sacred as new generations of Southerners and Americans visited these spaces and considered their history. This was how I experienced Richmond. Its sacred and public spaces involving the history of the war, such as Hollywood cemetery, were physical and ideological symbols of the efforts of Southerners to protect their memory. In doing so, they transformed their lives and the world around them.

### **Chapter One: A Wall of Separation in the Old Dominion?**

The 1850 census provided the first opportunity for a holistic numerical assessment of the importance of evangelical Christianity in the United States. One in seven Americans was a member of a church, membership in the Congregational and Protestant Episcopal Church had declined, and Methodists and Baptists enjoyed significant gains. By 1860, between one-third and two-fifths of Americans formally belonged to a church. Many remained religious even if they were not part of a specific congregation. Religious volunteerism, inspired by the Second Great Awakening and the moral challenges of a new social and economic world, led to the development of a number of mission groups and reform societies that emphasized spiritual and moral character. Some estimates suggest the number of people regularly participating in church life was probably double the rate of membership.<sup>28</sup> Virginia was no exception. By the end of the late Antebellum Era as many as two-thirds of all Virginians attended a Protestant church and most white Virginians practiced an evangelical faith. According to the 1860 census, five of every six people attending church were members of an

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<sup>28</sup> Mark Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*, 11.

evangelical Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, or Episcopal Church. The two largest congregations in the state were Baptists and Methodists.<sup>29</sup> In June of 1861, numbers published in the *Religious Herald*, the oldest religious publication in Richmond, and a Baptist institution, indicated that Virginia dwarfed all other states by far in Baptist worship with 761 churches, 412 ministers, and over 107,000 members.<sup>30</sup> While many differences existed between Virginians and the citizens of the other regions of the country before the Civil War, the significance of religion in their lives was one thing they shared in common. Mark Noll provides a series of effective analogies when describing the scale of organized religion and the extent of its reach on the eve of the Civil War:

In 1860 about 4.7 million American men voted in the decisive presidential election, but during the same year at least three (and maybe even four) times that many men, women, and children were regularly in church on any given Sunday...

In 1860, before mobilization for the Civil War, the number of active duty U.S. military personnel was about half the number of the nation's active clergymen...

In 1860 the income of the nation's churches and religious voluntary associations came quite close to matching the total receipts of the federal government...

In 1860 there were in the United States thirty-five churches for each banking facility...

In 1840 each person in the United States received an average six pieces of mail through the postal system, which was about one-third the total number of sermons that each person, again, on average, heard during the year.<sup>31</sup>

These comparisons illustrate the scope of influence of evangelical Christianity during the Antebellum Era, as well as the power it would hold during the war.

A look at the activities of evangelical Christians and the Protestant churches of Virginia over the Antebellum Era provides some context for the significance of swelling church membership. The increase of Baptists in Virginia can be attributed to gains in the late Eighteenth century, as Baptist churches portrayed themselves as institutions of the

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<sup>29</sup> Irons, *Religion in the Civil War*, 2-4.

<sup>30</sup> "State of the Church", *Religious Herald*, 27 June 1861, 1.

<sup>31</sup> Noll, 12-13.



Revolution and used this legacy to compete against the established Episcopal Church. They petitioned for the ability to serve as chaplains for Virginian troops and launched an attempt to overthrow the Anglican establishment by creating their own lobbying organization, the General Committee of Baptist Associations, which fought to disestablish the Church of England and protest legislation that hinted at state power over the church, such as Patrick Henry's bill Establishing a Provision for Teachers of the Christian Religion. At the urging of the Baptists and other Old School orders of the Protestant churches, the Virginia legislature dismissed these bills and, in 1786 after a decade long campaign, they passed Thomas Jefferson's Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom.<sup>32</sup>

Building Jefferson's wall of separation, however, did not end the battle. Denominational conflicts over the relationship between church and state continued in Virginia from the end of the eighteenth century through the eve of the Civil War.<sup>33</sup> Virginians argued over the protection of religious services, the rights of conscientious objectors, the role of the state in enforcing the Sabbath, the appointments of legislative chaplains, and the election of chaplains to the legislature. Few explicit church-state conflicts, however, were more contentious and divisive in Virginia than the debate over the incorporation of churches and religious bodies and their title to church property.<sup>34</sup> The incorporation debates that erupted in the middle of the 1840s divided religious denominations in Virginia and challenged the understanding of Jefferson's religious freedom statute. The

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<sup>32</sup> Charles F. Irons, "The Spiritual Fruits of Revolution: Disestablishment and the Rise of the Virginia Baptists," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol.109, No.2, 2001, 159-186. This view departs from the common assumption that Baptists had inspired the Revolution in reacting to the established church. In fact, Baptists used the egalitarian impulse of the Revolution to reinforce the social message of the church. On the eve of the Revolution, only one out of a hundred people in Virginia belonged to a Baptist congregation, thus this was a significant change.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas Buckley, "After Disestablishment: Thomas Jefferson's Wall of Separation in Antebellum Virginia," *The Journal of Southern History* Volume LXI, No. 3, August 1995, 445-480.

rhetoric of this law was important. The wording was malleable enough that although it established a social tendency to stray away from the fusing of church and state, it could also be used to defend against actions that allowed for an equal recognition between churches and individuals. While the court routinely rejected petitions for incorporation from churches and religious bodies, not all members of the church or government agreed on the complete separation interpretation of Jefferson's statute.<sup>35</sup> One prominent member of the court of appeals, St. George Tucker, grandfather of the Attorney General for Virginia during the Civil War, John Randolph Tucker, saw no contradiction between Jefferson's statute and the tax he proposed in 1803 to pay for teachers of religion and morality and the building, repair and maintenance of places of worship that promoted those teachings.<sup>36</sup> Despite these differences of interpretation, a large majority of politicians, influenced by the post-Revolution debates on church and state, shared the view that incorporation for religious purposes should be banned. When the Constitutional Convention of 1829-1830 met to write Jefferson's statute into the state's fundamental law, only twelve members cast votes in support of a provision that would allow incorporation of seminaries and religious organizations.<sup>37</sup>

The repeal of all laws related to church and state except the Statute for Religious Freedom left churches and religious groups "in legal limbo without secure title to property or

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<sup>35</sup> As Madison stated in his "Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessment", "the establishment in question is not necessary for the support of Civil Government. If it be urged as necessary for the support of Civil Government only as it is a means of supporting Religion, and it be not necessary for the latter purpose, it cannot be necessary for the former. If Religion be not within the cognizance of Civil Government how can its legal establishment be necessary to Civil Government? What influence in fact have ecclesiastical establishments had on Civil Society? In some instances they have been seen to erect a spiritual tyranny on the ruins of the Civil authority; in many instances they have been seen upholding the thrones of political tyranny: in no instance have they been seen the guardians of the liberties of the people." In *The Papers of James Madison*. Edited by William T. Hutchinson et al. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1962--77 (vols. 1--10); Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977--(vols. 11--).

<sup>36</sup> Buckley, "After Disestablishment", 453.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 453-454.

a recognized status in civil society.”<sup>38</sup> In certain ways, many religious figures in Virginia were pragmatists when it came to church-state relations, altering their views to fit immediate needs and concerns. While Baptists had pushed for separation when trying to unseat the established Anglican Church in the wake of the Revolution, and had arguably benefited more than any other denomination from the membership gains after disestablishment, they were among the most outspoken proponents of incorporation. Virginia Episcopalians were the first group to fervently push for incorporation in the 1840s, and in 1844 a committee of New School Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Episcopalians solicited support across the state for equal recognition. In a tract published by four influential clergymen in Richmond, this group petitioned that recognition was necessary for the maintenance of the church. They claimed they argued only for the same rights and privileges that every other state granted their citizens. By refusing incorporation, they maintained that the state infringed upon religious freedom by tampering with the ability for the church to operate.<sup>39</sup>

Not all religious clergymen, however, favored incorporation. Most feared the prospects of abuse of the church by the state and the concern that churches would become too motivated by profit. Ecumenical fighting increased partisan attitudes in debates on incorporation as Baptists, Episcopalians, Methodists, and Presbyterians became more firmly entrenched in their positions. There was also significant division within their own denominations. Major opposition within the clerical ranks came from Rev. William Plumer, who held considerable power as the most prominent member of the Southern Presbyterian

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 452.

<sup>39</sup>In two reports from the Protestant Episcopal Church: Protestant Episcopal Church, Diocese of Virginia. *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia, Held in Monumental Church, Richmond, Virginia, on the 17th of May, 1843*. Alexandria, VA, 1843. & Protestant Episcopal Church, Diocese of Virginia. *Journal of a Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia, Held in St. Paul's Church, Lynchburg, Campbell County, Virginia, on the 15th of May, 1844*. Richmond, 1844.

Church in Virginia and as editor of the *Watchman of the South*, a weekly newspaper produced by Old School Presbyterian orders. Opponents, led by Plumer, presented the strict separation perspective, arguing that allowing the state's regulation of religious institutions would not only permit the abuse of these institutions by the state, but would also harm the state by authorizing the formation of large, rich, church corporations with limitless holdings of nontaxable property.<sup>40</sup> The Baptist faction was the most visibly outraged by the Presbyterian opposition to incorporation. They had established many institutions such as tract societies, Sunday schools, etc. that needed funding to stay afloat but received less money because of questions surrounding the church's legal claims to various properties. Baptist leaders expressed strong resentment over suggestions that their request represented a violation of church and state. As Baptists were the supposed "sons of the Revolution," and the original defenders of religious liberty in Virginia, this claim called into question their ideological legitimacy. The key for Baptists resided in the specific interpretation of Jefferson's statute. They cared less about incorporation and more about their ability to receive bequests to support their mission work.

Major figures sparred in public debate on the topic. Rev. James B Taylor, Virginia's most influential Baptist minister, countered Plumer's influence, and though he recognized that some groups of Old School Baptists did not support his position he still claimed to speak for seventy-thousand communicants of various Baptists churches. Eight Old School Baptist denominations protested changes in the laws, however, claiming that the founders had left this question between citizens and God where it belonged. The Old School Baptists called on

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<sup>40</sup> Thomas Buckley, *Church and State in Revolutionary Virginia, 1776-1787* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1977).

the legislature to reject any claims that could strengthen a religious aristocracy or unite the church and state. Presbyterian minister Moses Drury Hoge attended several of the sessions and although he found his friend Plumer's arguments and rhetorical style amusing to the point of hysterics on occasion, he believed Plumer had been the winner of the debates. The General Assembly agreed with Hoge. The legislature after that point continually rejected attempts to re-hash the debate.<sup>41</sup> Though proponents of incorporation failed in their bid to win certain legal protections for religious institutions, they had fundamentally brought into question the tenets of Jefferson's wall of separation. Intentionally or not, the public debates waged by religious institutions, including sessions and meetings with lawmakers, brought the church closer to the state.

Aside from denominational bickering, Virginians rejected incorporation based on what they saw as the historic relationship between religion and politics in the state. Lawmakers continually pointed to Jefferson's provision in his Religious Freedom Act that prevented the establishment of religion, and the actions of President Madison in rejecting an incorporation bill while presiding over the government in Washington D.C. They acknowledged that Madison continued to profess the potential evils of this association, especially the potential for the vast wealth that the church could accumulate<sup>42</sup>. Many lawmakers feared that if the general assembly recognized the churches as legal entities, it would actually give the clergy power in state affairs. Thus, even though Virginians believed that religion encouraged the public virtue they deemed essential for republican government, and most Christians as well as laity identified the Old Dominion as a Christian rather than a

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<sup>41</sup>In Moses D. Hoge, *Moses Drury Hoge Journals, 1842-1862* (San Marino, CA: Robert Alonzo Brock Collection). Filming by the Library of Virginia.

<sup>42</sup>Robert S. Alley, *James Madison on Religious Liberty* (Amherst, N.Y: Prometheus Books, 1989).

secular republic, the state still retained control over the church. Instead of building a wall of separation, Virginia politicians kept the churches and their organizations under the thumb of the state. Though Thomas Jefferson's law establishing religious freedom in Virginia had successfully ended the ten year campaign for the disestablishment of the Church of England, the trend during Antebellum Virginia involved the use of the statute by the legislature to subordinate the church to its will. The bitter debates over interpretations of the statute by various denominations prevented the church from doing much about it.

Despite these disputes, no single issue presented a greater challenge to both the church and state than slavery. In defending the divine purpose of slavery, its moral nature, and its capacity to function as a positive good, Southern churches engaged in political debate and action. Though the Confederate state did not yet exist, the framing of slavery as a morally righteous and Christian act helped fuel an increasingly distinct sectional identity founded on the religious defense of slavery. While many Protestant churches in the South openly criticized slavery after the American Revolution, as state governments defended the institution, the churches that had spoken up fell silent.<sup>43</sup> The growing adherence to the separation of the spiritual from the civil in early Antebellum society tempered vocal critics and helped unify the Southern churches. Ironically, the unity gained through the visible consistency of their position on slavery formed the basis of a sectional religious identity that politicized religion and helped fuel secession. Christians of the South began vociferously defending slavery's moral qualities as the abolitionist movement gained steam in the North.

The Protestant churches of Virginia and the religious press weighed in as loud voices in the public debates over the biblical interpretation of slavery. For Virginians like Robert

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<sup>43</sup> For analysis of the Anti-Slavery activities of the Methodist church in the South see Mark Knoll's *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*.

Lewis Dabney, the Bible stood firm against abolitionism. Believing that he had a way to force their hand, Dabney counseled that “we must go before the nation with the Bible as the text, and ‘Thus saith the Lord’ as the answer... we know that on the Bible argument the abolition party will be driven to unveil their true infidel tendencies. The Bible being bound to stand on our side, they have to come out and array themselves against the Bible... They will prefer the Bible to abolitionism.”<sup>44</sup> While these sentiments demonstrate one common theme of evangelical thought on slavery, that the Bible and scripture justified slavery, Dabney also outlined another major tenet. In a series of articles in the *Richmond Enquirer*, he expressed the view that slavery should be a positive institution with honorable owners. “Slaveholders will have to pay a price,” he reasoned, “they must be willing to recognize and grant slaves those rights which are part of our essential humanity, some of which are left without recognition or guarantee by law, and some infringed by law.”<sup>45</sup> Slavery, for Dabney, shaped both the slave and the slaveholder’s character. In his eyes, Southerners must “pay the price” for that. Though the actions of slaveholders often failed to match the lofty rhetoric espoused by religious leaders and the religious press, this did not stop Southern ministers from defending the institution. Some went even further. In one of the last examples of a direct clash between the pro-slavery and anti-slavery wings of the Baptist Church, Reverend Richard Fuller acknowledged the potential abuses of some slaveholders in his letter to the *Christian Reflector* supporting the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention. Yet Fuller defended these actions, claiming the Bible also permitted practices “which [were] a violation of the entire moral principle of the gospel.” Claiming the Roman system of slavery, which

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<sup>44</sup> Thomas Cary Johnson, *Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1903), 128-129.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

the Bible never condemned, involved treatment in tension with the New Testament, Fuller concluded: “the Bible did authorize some sort of slavery; if now the abuses admitted and deplored by me be essentials of all slavery, then the Bible did allow those abuses; if it be impossible that revelation should permit such evils, then you must either reject the Scriptures, as some abolitionists are doing, or concede that these sins are only accidents of slavery, which may, and perhaps in cases of many Christians, so exist without them.”<sup>46</sup> The acceptance of poor treatment, indeed even the racial attitudes that fueled these practices, could all be easily rationalized with allusion to the complete omission of any moral condemnations from the pages of the most sacred of texts.

The biblical defenders of slavery often conflated the defense of the institution with the defense of *African* slavery. Thornton Stringfellow, a Virginia Baptist and author of several of the most influential treatises defending the biblical justification for slavery, conflated scripture and experience in his work, *Slavery, Its Origin, Nature, and History Considered in Light of Bible Teachings, Moral Justice, and Political Wisdom*. While the work cited all of the common sources for the biblical justification of slavery, when he turned his attention to race, the Bible faded into the background. According to Stringfellow, members of “the African race” were suited to “domestic slavery for life...because they are not qualified to use political freedom, and because they receive the full due for this [slave] service and labor, and that in a form accommodated to the service they pay for it.” His ultimate rationale was not biblical: “The African race is constitutionally inferior to the white race. Experience proves this in all the conditions and countries they have ever occupied.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Richard Fuller and Francis Wayland, *Domestic Slavery Considered as a Scriptural Institution* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1845), 10, quoted in Noll, *Civil War as a Theological Crisis*, 37.

<sup>47</sup> Thornton Stringfellow, from *Slavery, its Origin, Nature, and History*, quoted in *A House Divided: The Antebellum Slavery Debate in America, 1776-1865*, ed. Mason Lowance Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 72.



Stringfellow's justification was more political than religious and more historical than it was based in scripture.

He was not the only one to point to experience and common sense rather than the Bible when making a biblical defense of slavery. In an address to European Christians on behalf of the newly formed Southern Presbyterian Church explaining the grounds for secession, James Henley Thornwell, a Southern theologian, made the same subconscious leap. While he claimed that "the only rule of judgment is the written word of God" because "the Church knows nothing of the institutions of reasons or deductions of philosophy," Thornwell's defense of slavery also strayed from biblical and religious justifications. He suggested that, "As long as that race, in its comparative degradation, co-exists side by side with whites, bondage is its *normal* condition." African slaves were "at the bottom of the line" and thus did not deserve anything "out of proportion to [their] capacity and culture."<sup>48</sup> This racial defense of slavery, similar to Stringfellow's position, is evidence of how politics and culture shaped religious attitudes in the Antebellum South. Though the Bible provided a straightforward and simple defense of slavery—all one had to do was open, read, and believe it—the biblical defense of African slavery was much less straightforward, requiring that defenders rely on the political, social, and scientific thought of the time.

Mark Noll suggests that the failure of anti-slavery advocates to question the distinction between slavery and racial slavery was a missed opportunity. "Had American Bible believers faced squarely the illogic of this reasoning," he argues, "especially where it confused slavery with black-only slavery, there is no telling what would have happened."

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<sup>48</sup> Henry Thornwell, "Address to All Churches of Christ", in *The Collected Writings of James Henry Thornwell*, vol. 4, *Ecclesiastical*, ed. John Adger and John Girardeau (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1873), 456, quoted in Noll, *Civil War as a Theological Crisis*, 62.

Noll also concludes that the acceptance of African racial inferiority and slavery explains why after slavery had been abolished “systematic racism continued unchecked as the great moral anomaly in a supposedly Christian America.”<sup>49</sup> In conflating slavery and African slavery, religious leaders and defenders of slavery were already shaping political resistance to Reconstruction and the legitimacy of segregation and Jim Crow. Rev. J.J.D. Renfroe’s message to Lee’s army in 1863 illustrates the religious thought that bound white Southerners in a common resistance to racial equality. Renfroe asked the troops to think of home, noting, “Abolish the institution of slavery, and your children and my children must take the place of that institution. . . In our country color is the distinction of classes—the only real distinction. Here the rich man and poor man and their families are equal in every important respect.” According to Renfroe, the success of abolition and the Confederacy’s defeat would mean “their worthy offspring” would end up “grinding in a factory, scouring a tavern, tilling the soil of the wealthy, and blacking the boots of the dandy.”<sup>50</sup> White liberty, and the convenient fiction of a classless Republican society, rested on the racial subjugation of slavery.

The rising influence of the abolitionist movement and its call for anti-slavery churchmen to secede from their national organizations helped generate a deep sectional divide within the Protestant Christian churches in the United States. During the 1830s and 1840s, each of the major Protestant churches experienced irreparable conflict between Northern and Southern associations and conferences over the issue of slavery. Virginia’s religious leaders played a central role in defending the Southern church. Division between Old School and New School Presbyterians helped fuel the slavery debate at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church held in Pittsburgh in 1835. Located mostly in the states

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<sup>49</sup> Noll, *Civil War as a Theological Crisis*, 63 & 52.

<sup>50</sup> John J.D. Renfroe, , *"The Battle is God's,"* (Richmond: Macfarlane and Ferguson, 1863), 17-19.

south of New York, Old School Presbyterians feared the impact of New School ideology, suggesting their rationalism “made the prophets and apostles succumb to philosophy and impulse” and had the nation headed for “serious disasters, not only to the religious, but likewise the political interests of the country.”<sup>51</sup> Already, Old School members identified the implication of adopting such a mindset—it threatened both the principles of the church as well as the stability and interests of the state and its citizens. Old School advocates pointed to the actions of Northern Presbyterians and Congregationalists as evidence of their fears. Though the revival movement itself began earlier, from the late 1820s to the early 1830s, preachers like Charles Grandison Finney led revivals across New York state and into the mid-West, that initiated a revivalist impulse, which then fueled the founding of the American Anti-Slavery Movement, educational reform, and temperance legislation.<sup>52</sup> The New School theology posited that slavery was a sin, threatening the Old School tenant that it was “infinitely more important that the slaves be delivered from the bondage of sin and Satan than from temporal slavery.”<sup>53</sup> Despite being defenders of the separation of church and state, Old School Presbyterians hinted at their mutual dependence when critiquing New School ideas regarding slavery.

The Pittsburgh meeting represented the first time enough abolitionists attended to successfully lobby for slavery to make the Assembly agenda. One anti-slavery member happily reported that the number of delegates “believing slavery a *sin* and *immediate emancipation a duty*...constitute nearly *one-fourth part* of the Assembly.”<sup>54</sup> Despite the

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<sup>51</sup> John McCardell, *The Idea of a Southern Nation: Southern Nationalists and Southern Nationalism, 1830-1860* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1981), 185.

<sup>52</sup> C. Bruce Staiger, “Abolitionism and the Presbyterian Schism of 1837-1838”, *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (1949): 391-414.

<sup>53</sup> McCardell, *The Idea of a Southern Nation*, 185.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

growing numbers, Southern delegates joined with Northern moderates to delay debate on the issue while a committee could study it and report back to the Assembly. The three members from Southern delegations on this committee recognized quickly the problem the issue caused for the church. While one Southern member, Dr. Samuel Miller, believed he had drafted a report that would appease the South and offer compromise, Dr. John Witherspoon disagreed with this assumption. It was his “candid opinion” that “no report...based on a desire of compromise” could satisfy the “spirit of hostility to any action by the Assembly on this subject.” Dr. James Hoge, the final Southerner on the committee agreed that Miller’s report failed to offer a compromise acceptable to the New School members on the committee, and feared that the Southern delegation would “rise up as one man and leave the Assembly.”<sup>55</sup> Hoge, voicing his fear of division, successfully proposed at the 1836 meeting that the slavery issue be postponed indefinitely. On a vote of 154 to 87, the Assembly voted to postpone. However, despite this decision the issue remained paramount in the minds of members on both sides and led to almost immediate demands that the issue be permanently settled.

Old School advocates accomplished that feat the following year. After correspondence between Southerners and Old School sympathizers in the North before the 1837 Assembly, they organized a move to cut ties with the predominantly New School Congregationalists that had been formed under the Plan of Union. Instead of dividing between Northern and Southern conferences and synods, the Old School wing managed to force a division with the New School orders. Though the cooperation of Northern moderates in this plan helped the Presbyterian Church avoid a geographic as opposed to spiritual split

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<sup>55</sup>Staiger, “Abolitionism and the Presbyterian Schism”, 400.

until 1861, sectional disputes over slavery ultimately fueled the division between the New School and Old School wings of the church. The Virginia delegation played a significant, and to some, surprising, part in executing this plan. The “Act of the Virginia Synod” adopted with “unanimity and soundness” by its members in 1836, espoused Old School principles. Yet the Virginia Synod had never expressed such unanimity prior to the debates over slavery in 1836. Drafted by two Virginians, George Baxter and Revered William Plumer, the vocal opponent of incorporation from Richmond, the Act compelled both men to take prominent roles at the 1837 meeting. Yet, they did not support the “Act and Testimony” that had been circulated by extremists and had not sent delegates to the Old School Convention in 1835. Discussing the evils that afflicted the church, the Act acknowledged the “spirit of abolitionism... which pressed with particular force on the Presbyterian Church in the South.”<sup>56</sup> Though the Virginia synod had joined with the rest of the Old School South in the move to prevent the slavery debate from reaching a critical vote in the Presbyterian Assembly, many members of the Virginia synod still harbored New School tendencies, particularly a desire for incorporation, as the debate over slavery swept through the other Protestant churches of the country.

Baptists, who made up roughly one-third of the South’s population, proved less successful in dealing with church disputes over slavery. Loosely organized, many Southerners sought greater coordination and affiliation among the Baptist congregations. Yet early calls for increased unity were couched in sectional, as opposed to national, rhetoric. Pointing to the insufficient support of activities in the South and West by the Northern-based Home Society, many called for a Southern Baptist Home Mission society. The Baptist

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 406.

publications of Virginia led sectional criticism. One Virginia publication charged that though Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Michigan had all expressed “hostility to the South...these states, while supplying thousands of emigrants to the West, have never collectively given half as much in one year to the Home Mission Society, as has been contributed by Virginia in the same space of time.”<sup>57</sup> Calls for the organization of a separate Southern Baptist convention were rooted in sectional animosity as well as Northerners’ seeming unwillingness to pursue a more organized system. Slavery provided an even more controversial issue that added strength to efforts to pursue a separate, more organized conference.

The 1835 Triennial Convention in Richmond was the last peaceful gathering of Baptists. The convention was held in what would soon become the capitol city of a new nation committed to defending the very institution dividing the Baptists at the time. English delegates of the Baptist Union attended the Richmond convention determined “to promote most zealously and to the utmost of their ability, in the spirit of life, of discretion, and fidelity, but still most zealously to promote the sacred course of negro emancipation.”<sup>58</sup> Southerners responded by making their pro-slavery position clear to their Northern counterparts. The Virginia Baptist Association moved to uphold the rights of its members to hold slaves. The *Southern Watchman* spelled out the early significance of this conflict in words that foreshadowed the larger, brewing conflict. Far ahead of its readers, the publication called Southerners “a distinct and separate people” who had “their domestic

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<sup>57</sup> William Wright Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845-1953* (Nashville: Boardman Press, 1954), 12-16, quoted in McCardell, *The Idea of a Southern Nation*, 188-189.

<sup>58</sup> Mary Putnam, *The Baptists and Slavery* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1913), 10-13, quoted in McCardell, *The Idea of a Southern Nation*, 190.

institutions to protect and vindicate in conformity with the word of God.”<sup>59</sup> Ten years prior to the division of the Baptist church and twenty-five years before Southern states seceded, the Baptist religious press had already begun to generate a political identity for the South distinct from the United States and with a profoundly prophetic purpose. Tensions escalated in April of 1840, when the National Baptist Anti-Slavery Convention was organized in New York. Joining Northern moderates hopeful in suppressing the discussion of slavery, Southern Baptists succeeded in removing an active abolitionist, Elon Galusha, as vice president of the Foreign Board, and replaced him with Richard Fuller of South Carolina. Angered at the removal of Galusha and the failure to address the slavery issue at the Convention, abolitionist supporters among the Baptist congregation organized their own Free Missionary Society in Boston that operated separate from the Foreign Board.

Southern attendance at the 1844 Convention assembled in Philadelphia was low, representing just one-fifth of the delegates present. Each major board confronted an issue with slavery at its core. With little Southern voice to steer an alternative course, the Home Society rejected the first slaveholding candidate since the uneasy compromise years before, while the Foreign Missionary Board denied the opportunity for any “agency, *mission*, or other appointment” to slaveholders. With a rallying cry from Virginia Baptists, the Virginia Baptists Foreign Missionary Society called for a convention of Southern Baptists, and in May of 1845 over three hundred delegates from eight Southern states met to set up a separate Baptist “provisional government” with a constitution that “is precisely that of the original union.” Couched in both religious and political terms, the Southern Baptist Convention’s defense of the split, a platform change against “fanatical attempts” at abolition that mired the

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<sup>59</sup> Quoted *ibid*, 190.

“equal rights between Northern and Southern churches,” perfectly mirrored the Southern defense of secession. Religious tensions had already set the stage for the coming political conflict.<sup>60</sup> Just as defenders of the cause during the war and of the Lost Cause following the war contended that they, rather than Northerners, truly embraced the republican political project of the Founding Fathers, religious leaders saw no need to change the constitution of the church. Northern churches violation of the constitution, not the constitution itself, was the source of conflict both for the Protestant churches and the Confederacy.

The Methodists faced a similar set of circumstances at roughly the same time. Though the early Methodist church had taken a strong anti-slavery stance, by 1800 it had all but abandoned those efforts. Methodists actively sought to resolve the practical issue—church positions for slaveholders—that caused the fracturing of the Baptist church. The church rules or *Discipline*, the code that guided the thirty-seven percent of Southerners who identified as Methodist, were edited in 1824 for the last time prior to 1860. These revisions, however, had a profound importance not just for the division of the Methodist Church, but also in signaling the inevitability of sectional conflict over slavery. Basing the eligibility for holding church positions as a slaveholder on their respective state’s emancipation laws and statues, Methodists hoped that political compromise would fuel spiritual compromise over slavery. Such hopes were not to be. Though Southern Methodists insisted that this meant the church had no jurisdiction over slavery, and that maintaining the distinction was necessary to ensure the maintenance of a strong wall separating church from state, the fact that state laws influenced religious standing and legitimacy on the issue conflated the issues of church and

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<sup>60</sup> Quoted *ibid.*, 192-193.



state. This represented the very mixing that Jefferson had intended to prohibit with the Virginia Statute on Religious Freedom.

Debates over slavery presented another Southern concern with the highly structured Methodist organization, the issue of conference jurisdiction. Just as the Baptist debates mirrored the larger political debate over slavery, the division of Methodists over whether the General Conference or local conferences held jurisdiction on the slavery question mirrored political debates over federalism and state's rights. Abolitionists argued that prioritizing local perspectives, which often quelled discussion of slavery, eroded the authority of the national institutions of the Church, while Southerners contended that separation of church and state dictated that the church had no jurisdiction over issues over slavery. The rejection of nearly every one of the New England Conference's proposals to prohibit and condemn the internal slave trade and exchange, and the General Conference's rejection and censuring of the abolitionist petitions at the 1840 Conference in Baltimore, suggested a legitimization of the South's position regarding jurisdiction. The departure of abolitionists from Northern Methodist churches put pressure on Northern congregations to make no further concessions on the issue of slavery.

When Georgia Bishop, James O. Andrew was asked to resign from the episcopacy unless he disowned and disavowed slaves he had come into de-facto ownership of after marrying a widow who had inherited several slaves from her former husband, the General Conference of the Methodist Churches, meeting in New York in 1844, erupted in heated debate over local and national power and jurisdiction within the Church. Again reflecting the controversies over federalism in the national debate over slavery, the local Southern conferences argued that the General Conference was simply the product of local conferences.

Its jurisdiction, or to use the appropriate political term, its sovereignty, was merely the power ceded to it by the local conferences. Forcing the Bishop to step down violated the rights of local conferences, the morality of slavery, and the separation of church and state. Southern delegates met in response to the 110-69 vote requiring the Bishop to resign his position and decided unanimously to withdraw from the General Conference and set up the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Directly conflating religion and politics, they defended the move on the grounds that, “the Constitution of the Church, like the Constitution of the United States, was framed and adopted in the spirit of compromise. There were, in the Convention, slaveholders, and there were men who were opposed to slavery. These all agreed to offer up their respective peculiarities on one common altar, for the glory of God and for the good of his Church.”<sup>61</sup> Just as defenders of secession and the Lost Cause re-cast their struggles as constitutional, American struggles, Southern Methodists suggested their Northern abolitionist counterparts had shunned these ideals. By 1845, every major Protestant order, except the Episcopal Church, had confronted the slavery issue. Increasingly aware of the distinctiveness of Southern and Northern society, Methodists and Baptists crafted a uniquely political understanding of their actions. As John McCardell effectively put it, “After 1845, to be an upright Baptist or Methodist one also had to be an upright Southerner...The timing of the division made it difficult to disentangle the issues at stake in the churches from the events then in progress on the political stage.”<sup>62</sup>

The formation of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America in 1861 represented Protestant religion fully politicized. Though political events had always

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<sup>61</sup> Alexander McCaine, *Slavery Defended from Scripture, Against the Attack of the Abolitionists* (Baltimore: William Woody, 1842), 27.

<sup>62</sup> McCardell, *The Idea of a Southern Nation*, 200-201.

shaped religious attitudes about slavery and sectional tensions, the sectional division of the Presbyterian Church was fueled directly by the Northern response to secession. When members of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church met in Philadelphia on May 16, 1861, many wondered if the unity of church could be preserved despite political disunity. Though it is remarkable that synods from the North and South had come to Philadelphia in the first place, given the attack upon Fort Sumter just one month earlier, hope for sustained unity dissipated as soon as the convention began. In an attempt to elicit support for the federal government, Northern members of the Church proposed that the General Assembly, “in the spirit of Christian patriotism,” ensure all members “acknowledge and declare our obligations to promote and perpetuate, so far as in us lies, the integrity of these United States, and to strengthen, uphold, and encourage the Federal Government in the exercise of all its functions under our noble Constitution; and to this Constitution, in all its provisions, requirements, and principles, we profess our unabated loyalty”<sup>63</sup> The Gardner Spring Resolutions, as they were called, were by their very nature political. Loyalty and obligation was not tied to God in these appeals. Instead, the Northern members professed Christian character and loyalty to the federal government and the Constitution. The resolutions passed on a vote of 156-66. Although the Assembly’s record makes no reference to the total possible number of voting members, the disparity at the Philadelphia convention suggests that many members of Southern synods had already seen the writing on the wall and elected not to attend. Fifty-eight Southerners, including fourteen of the only sixteen Southern commissioners in attendance, signed a written protest of the vote in favor of the Gardner

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<sup>63</sup> Thomas Cary Johnson, *The Southern Presbyterians*, in Volume XI of *The American Church History Series* (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1894), 328.

Spring Resolutions. In an about-face from Antebellum trends, the issue in question for those who signed the protest was not swearing a Christian duty to the state. Southern Presbyterians were less concerned about the merging of church and state and more concerned that the *federal* government was the required object of their loyalty.

The Southern objection to the resolutions illustrates the church-state minefield members of the Southern clergy tried to navigate while attempting to defend the wall of separation. Regardless of intentions, Southern religious leaders only managed to fully politicize religion:

We make this protest, not because we do not acknowledge loyalty to our country to be a moral and religious duty...but because we deny the right of the General Assembly to decide the political question to what government the allegiance of Presbyterians as citizens is due, and its right to make that decision a condition of membership in our church... It is, however, a notorious fact that many of our ministers and members conscientiously believe that the allegiance of the citizens of this country is primarily due to the States to which they respectively belong; and, therefore, that when any State renounces its connection with the United States and its allegiance to the Constitution, the citizens of that State are bound by the laws of God to continue loyal to their State, and obedient to its laws...the Assembly does decide the great political question which agitates and divides the country... But such a declaration made by our members residing in what are called the seceding States is treasonable. Presbyterians under the jurisdiction of those States cannot, therefore, make that declaration. They are consequently forced to choose between allegiance to their State and allegiance to the church. The General Assembly, in thus deciding a political question, and making that decision practically a condition of membership to the church, has in our judgment violated the constitution of the church, and usurped the prerogative of the Divine Master.<sup>64</sup>

Just as Southern Methodists had done, Southern Presbyterians claimed that the General Assembly had no jurisdiction to decide the political question dividing the nation and to condition membership in the church on their answer. Unlike the Methodists, however, Southern Presbyterians did not point to the local or state presbyteries as the proper agents to settle the jurisdictional dispute. Reflecting how far Southern Protestantism had come over

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<sup>64</sup> In Johnson, *Southern Presbyterians*, 328-329.

the course of a half century, Southern Presbyterians pointed to their duty to God to be loyal to their State and accept and obey *its* laws. Loyalty to anything other than the State, and eventually the Confederates States, carried both spiritual and political punishments in the eyes of the religious leaders of the South. As the Rev. Dr. Plumer of the Richmond area presbytery indicated, “this separation...was based in every case upon the unconstitutional character of the Assembly’s legislation.” Their formal break from the church read, “Resolved, That in view of the unconstitutional, Erastian, tyrannical, and virtually excising act of the late General Assembly...we do hereby, with a solemn protest against this act, declare, *in the fear of God*, our connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States be dissolved.”<sup>65</sup> Over the course of the next few months, forty-seven Presbyteries dissolved their connection with the General Assembly. It is fitting that the first act of the new assembly was “only substituting the term ‘Confederate States’ for ‘United States’” in the official name and in their constitution. What took a quick vote to pass unanimously at the Southern Assembly had been many decades in the making.

The separation of church and state helped evangelical Christians build “the nerve system of national culture.” Disestablishment, according to Mark Noll, was “the negative means that allowed voluntary religious organizations to shape culture in the free spaces of the New World.”<sup>66</sup> Yet the influence of religion in political debates over slavery and the political nature of religious disputes caused cracks to form in the foundation of the wall separating the two spheres. While the Protestant churches attempted to preserve the wall, involvement in the heated events of the time made it difficult to successfully navigate the tightrope walk of decrying the interference of the state in matters of the church while simultaneously pledging

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 335-336.

<sup>66</sup> Noll, *Civil War as an Theological Crisis*, 26.

support for state and sectional causes. The contrast between Alexis de Tocqueville's optimism for the Protestant republican experiment in America in the 1830s and Henry Clay and John Calhoun's observations just a decade later when the Protestant churches divided over slavery, illustrates the complexity of religion's impact on society and how quickly social and political events altered the course of the church and the country. While all three believed that the Christian religion had enhanced the political soul of the nation and had uniquely bound the people together, by the 1840s Clay and Calhoun feared the impact of the loss of this sense of unity. Calhoun proved to be right when he observed that when the bonds of the Protestant churches break, "there will be nothing left to hold the States together except force."<sup>67</sup>

Though extensive, this history of control of religion by the state and division between various Christian denominations is necessary to understand how the war transformed church-state relations in Civil War Richmond. In defining and maintaining a Christian nationalism during the war, evangelical Protestant churches of all denominations constructed a common identity that would unite and elevate the church to a position of power it had not explicitly enjoyed in state politics prior to the war. In addition, recognizing the importance of the church in maintaining support for the cause on the homefront, the state also changed its policies on church-state relations, actively supporting and appointing chaplains for both the army and the legislature, establishing days of national fast and thanksgiving, and promoting leadership influenced by Christian values. The formation of a national identity centered around the narrative of a Christian republic at war in defense of sovereignty and its way of life, politicized religion and provided the new state a history dating back to the Hebrews. In

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p. 28.

the process, the leaders of the official institutions of the church—bishops, reverends, ministers, religious tract societies, religious newspapers, etc. —and the people who acted as the church’s surrogates—Sunday school teachers, nurses, aid societies, home prayer group leaders, etc.—became political actors. The burdens of war mobilized society in unprecedented ways, requiring changes to traditions in both the political and religious spheres. While the government exercised centralized authority through measures such as the draft and the constant expansion of the age range of eligible draftees, the church confronted a long-standing history of non-interference in affairs of the state. The politicization of religion provided a higher order justification for violating long-standing conventions regarding centralized authority and at the same time infused the religious voice with a sense of duty to the mutual dependency of religious and civil liberty.

### **Chapter Two: The Not So Separate Church and State - Politics and Religion in Civil War Richmond**

When John Randolph Tucker spoke to a Committee of the Young Men’s Christian Association of Richmond in May of 1863, he addressed an audience recently charged with an important task—preparing a publication directed to Christians throughout the world in defense of the Confederacy and the Southern church’s role in the war. The address, titled “The Southern Church justified in its support of the South in the current war,” provided an extensive rationale for the actions of the Protestant Southern churches. Though Tucker began the speech with the caveat that “The divorce of Church and State is accepted as an axiom in

this discussion,<sup>68</sup> his rationale for why the Southern churches support of the war was justified called into question the universality of that axiom:

Civil and religious liberty are intimately related...Interference and intrusion here is, therefore, fatal to true religion. The State that dares to mediate between the soul and its God, is a traitor to God—and the church is bound to aid in its overthrow...Civil power, (especially if despotic,) seeks the aid of religion to uphold its influence with its subjects...but I think history furnishes no instance, where religious liberty has survived the destruction of civil liberty! A most mournful evidence of the truth of this is at hand—and will be hereafter adverted to—where a despotism which destroys civil liberty by a revival of the Star Chamber, stifles prayer and religious utterance by the bayonets of its soldiery!...if religious cannot survive civil liberty, it follows that the overthrow of the one is involved in that of the other. When power, therefore, seeks, without lawful authority to destroy civil liberty, the Church, charged with the protection of its religious freedom, is bound to take its part with liberty against usurped power...These general views will be sufficient to show how far the Church is involved in the social and political questions which convulse the world—and that occasions may arise, when duty may call it to the exertion of its energy, for the protection of civil institutions, menaced by usurpation.<sup>69</sup>

Tucker's defense of the Southern church and its role in the war reflected a revolutionary transformation in religious thinking in Virginia. This dramatic change had begun decades before Tucker spoke, though few before him had so eloquently outlined the nature of church-state relations in Civil War Virginia. For over an hour, Tucker defended the Southern cause, likening their struggle to that of the Israelites against the oppressive Pharaoh of Egypt. Given the importance of events that May, another successful defense of the city against invading Northern forces, it is not surprising that members of the church of Richmond had called upon someone to speak on the role of the church in supporting the war.

Yet, John Randolph Tucker was not a normal Christian spokesman and Richmond was not a normal Southern city. Despite his eloquence and command of scripture, Tucker was not an ordained minister or member of any clergy. John Randolph Tucker was, first and

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<sup>68</sup> John Randolph Tucker, *The southern church justified in its support of the South in the present war: a lecture, delivered before the Young Men's Christian Association, of Richmond, on the 21<sup>st</sup> May, 1863* (Richmond: W.H.Clemmitt, printer, 1863), 5.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.



foremost, a politician, one charged with defending the law.<sup>70</sup> From 1857 to 1865, Tucker served as the Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Virginia, whose seat of government was located in Richmond, the Capitol of the Confederacy. The interplay between Tucker's two roles, spokesman for the church and the highest defender of the law in arguably the most important state and city in the South, make Tucker's speech intriguing and illustrative of a larger social trend influencing the South, and Virginia in particular, during the Civil War. In defending the Christian character of the Confederacy, Tucker, like many politicians and members of the clergy, fashioned a new understanding of the relationship between church and state. Once defenders of a wall of separation, politicians and the religious leaders of Richmond increasingly relied on the merging of these two spheres to justify and sustain the cause. While the churches had, decades earlier, divided over the paramount political issue of the day in slavery, secession provided a political entity beyond the state governments to forge their sectional identity. Though the creation of Southern associations established a sectional identity, it was in some ways extra-political; there was no political entity that unified the Southern states that mirrored the Protestant denominations and their religious networks. The election of a Republican president who carried no Southern state, attempts to reinforce federal property in the South, and a call for troops to defend the Union helped forge a political entity to unify the South. Heated debates over slavery in the Antebellum period and the division of the churches along sectional lines gave religious institutions experience in matters of the state. Without a national political entity to defend, they lacked the means to be true political actors. The creation of the Confederate States of America and its

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<sup>70</sup> Davis, John W. *John Randolph Tucker: The Man and His Work in John Randolph Tucker Lectures* (Washington and Lee University Press: Lexington, VA, 1952). Tucker had come from a line of family members who were prominent statesmen of the law and politics.

characterization as a Christian republic fully politicized religion. Religious speakers and congregations reinvented themselves as advocates of this new Christian nation, protected by a Christian army, presided over by Christian statesman, and populated by Christian citizens. In June of 1861, a sermon by Rev. O.S. Barten published in Richmond, contrasted the new Confederate Constitution with the Constitution of the federal government. The key distinction between the two was the failure of the federal Constitution to acknowledge or reference the influence of God, while the Confederate version promoted a much closer relationship between religion and government.<sup>71</sup>

The choice of the national motto, “Deo Vindice” (“God will vindicate”), indicated Southerners’ attempts at achieving a higher form of justification. Though many interpretations of the meaning of the phrase exist,<sup>72</sup> an interview with the chairman of the joint committee on the flag and seal of the Confederate States, Thomas Hemmes, published in the Southern Historical Society Papers in 1888, provides a first-hand account of at least the post-war understanding of the phrase. Opposing the legislature’s recommendation for the national motto, Hemmes suggested “Deo Vindice” was more important to the maintenance of the cause: “The motto proposed [by the legislature] is as follows: *'Deo Duce Vincemus'*— (*Under* the leadership of God we will conquer)... The word *'vincemus'* is objectionable because it implies that war is to be our normal state; besides, it is in the future tense 'we will conquer.' The future is always uncertain, and, therefore, it implies doubt. What becomes of our motto when we *shall have* conquered? The future becomes an accomplished fact, and our

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<sup>71</sup> Grasso and Stout, "Civil War Religion and Communications," 330.

<sup>72</sup> Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention* – suggests the phrase meant “God our Savior;” Literature by the United Daughters of the Confederacy appropriately follows Hemmes interpretation “God our Vindicator” - [http://www.hqudc.org/Southern\\_Cross/index.htm](http://www.hqudc.org/Southern_Cross/index.htm).

motto thus loses its significance.”<sup>73</sup> Hemmes and the committee wanted to be sure the phrasing on the seal reflected the immortalization of the cause. The future was uncertain, but there was no doubt in the present certainty of the cause. There was no need to wait to have the cause vindicated.

Though Hemmes expressed concern about the meaning of the motto when they shall *have* conquered, the immortalization of the cause embodied by the seal’s motto still held true for Southerners when the south *was* conquered. The shift from rhetoric of conquering to vindication helps illustrate the intended purpose of the message. As Hemmes explained, “the committee endeavored to select...a word more in consonance with the attributes of the Deity...They think success has crowned their efforts in the selection of the word 'vindex,' which signifies an assenter, a defender, protector, deliverer, liberator, a mediator and a ruler or guardian. 'Vindex' also means an avenger or punisher...No word appeared more grand, more expressive or significant than this. Under God as the asserter of our rights, the defender of our liberties, our protector against danger, our mediator, our ruler and guardian, and, as the avenger of our wrongs and the punisher of our crimes, we endeavor to equal or even excel our ancestors.” Though Hemmes and the committee were concerned with the future tense of the legislature’s recommendation “we will conquer,” there seemed to be no objection to their own phrasing “God will vindicate.” The recasting of the agent of action, from “we” to “God,” and a change in the nature of the action, “conquer” to “vindicate,” illustrates Southerners’ belief in providence and as well as the importance of the history of their political experiment. God’s will, not their own, would be responsible for the defense, and eventually the legitimation, of their cause. By accepting the providential mission of the

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<sup>73</sup> Southern Historical Society Papers. Vol. XVI. Richmond, Va., January-December. 1888., p.420-421.

Confederacy, Southerners met and even exceeded the moral legacy of their forefathers who had not succeeded in honoring the influence of God in the original Constitution. Southerners wanted more than political independence, they believed, or wanted to believe, that their cause was divinely chosen and that they fought to defend the moral righteousness of their way of life.

While many Southerners believed they needed the support of God to sustain the Confederacy, they simultaneously realized the interconnection between state policy and the continuation of the church. According to Tucker, the church could never be indifferent to actions by governments since state policy can be disastrous to the Kingdom of God. If the welfare of the church was connected to the state, and there could be no church when the state was in disorder or faced with external tyranny, than the Southern church had a duty to pray for and defend the state against Northern usurpation. Tucker's message resonated with the Christian audience. This was the same rationale members of the audience used to defend the division of the Protestant churches. The clergy's reversal on preaching politics and defending the state illustrates the transformation taking place in Southern society. Presbyterian minister Rev. Moses Hoge, who had previously expressed concern about the lack of regulation on the religious voice in politics and the proper place for religious and political discussion, demonstrated how quickly times changed in a Funeral Discourse and Sermon in January of 1862. While it was not customary to speak of politics in funeral discourse let alone while at the pulpit, Hoge's discourse was entirely political in presenting the characteristics necessary for those entrusted with the duty of shaping the Confederacy. In doing so he contributed to the changing nature of church-state relations in Richmond, Virginia, and the Confederacy. According to Hoge, the pious public servant was the very

thing needed to prevent the union of church and state. He preached that the public servant who loyal to God would be true to his country, while men destitute of moral character elected to the highest levels of public office would spell disaster for the best of institutions. Put very bluntly Hoge acknowledged that, “to say that piety has nothing to with politics, and that the two have no relation to each other, is to assert that there is nothing in the meaning of making laws, or in the administration of government which involves questions of right and wrong...Human government is the ordinance of God.”<sup>74</sup> This came from the man who less than two decades earlier had declared victory for the Old School Presbyterian Church in debates condemning the incorporation of churches by the State. The war emboldened the church to push back against state control and the fledgling state was in no position to refuse to acquiesce to certain religious demands.

The ease with which ministers so quickly accepted this new position for the church stemmed partly from the divine sanctioning of the cause through constant reference to biblical comparisons of their circumstances. By tying the Southern cause to the ancient Hebrews, Christianity offered the new state a deep and rich history. These stories equated calling people to support the Confederacy and calling the people of the South to follow Christ. Rev. Thomas Moore, in a sermon delivered to the First and Second Presbyterian Congregations in November of 1861, indicated that war was necessary for the cultivation of many historic biblical cities and like them, the presence of God would save Richmond from an enemy “vast in men, money, munitions of war, forts, fleets and armies.”<sup>75</sup> Throughout

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<sup>74</sup> Moses D. Hoge, *The Christian statesman. A discourse delivered at the funeral of Hon. John Hemphill, LL.D., in the Second Second Presbyterian Church, Richmond, VA., Jan 7<sup>th</sup>, 1862* (Richmond: Enquirer Book and Job Press, Tyler, Wise, Allegre and Smith, 1862), 10-11.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas Verner Moore, *God our Refuge and Strength in this War. A Discourse Before the Congregations of the First and Second Presbyterian Churches, on the Day of Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer, Appointed by President Davis, Friday, Nov. 15, 1861* (Richmond: Hargrave and White, 1861), 13.

the war this change collapsed the distinction between the cause of God and the Confederate cause, and thus fostered trust in the notion that victories and defeats resulted from providence and represented part of God's plan. According to Tucker, the divine hand had divided continents and established nations, thus history showed that Southerners should abandon any idea of a return to the Union in gratitude to God. With questions that seemed more like demands, he stated, "now, rather than return to that Egypt of our bondage, we should die in the wilderness of revolution? And is not the Christian Church justified in its attitude of prayer for the success of our cause, and in its heroic and patriotic maintenance of our civil and religious liberties?"<sup>76</sup> In Episcopal Churches on the Sunday after secession, the scripture reading was from the second chapter of Joel: "I will no more make you a reproach among heathen. But I will remove far off from you the Northern Army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face towards the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea."<sup>77</sup> Though the scripture merely referenced the protection of Judah and Jerusalem by God in his final judgment, many Southerners saw this as a prophecy of things to come. Few hoped the biblical comparison would hold true for the South more than the citizens of Richmond.

On the eve of the Civil War, the rapidly changing city of Richmond had become Virginia's social, cultural, economic, and political center. The emergence of manufacturing, iron works, financial institutions, and central markets tied by railroad lines helped push the population to 37,910 people in 1860 and made Richmond the South's leading industrial and commercial center.<sup>78</sup> By the spring of 1861, Richmond was home to three seats of

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<sup>76</sup> Tucker, *Southern Church Justified*, 31.

<sup>77</sup> Quoted in Ernest Ferguson, *Ashes of Glory: Richmond at War* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, Inc., 2007), 39.

<sup>78</sup> Minton, "Defining Confederate Respectability", 81. The specific demographic breakdown was 23,653 whites, 2,576 free blacks, and 11,699 slaves.

government—local, state, and national. The war-time population of Richmond swelled to over one hundred thousand residents, taking in politicians from afar, transient families and refugees whose homes had been seized and who fled occupied territories, Union prisoners, as well as wounded, dying, and dead Confederate soldiers. Richmond also contained one of the largest urban evangelical populations in the Confederacy. Unlike many cities of the South, organized religion thrived in Richmond during the Civil War.<sup>79</sup> Nearly all of Richmond’s Christian churches increased in size and influence, and Richmond was well known for the quality of its religious leaders. Evidence of the importance of Richmond as a hub of religious activity can be found in the pastime of Congressman Warren Atkins. His main form of entertainment was going from church to church listening to the ministers’ performances, acknowledging that, “this city is greatly blessed with good preachers.”<sup>80</sup> Atkins, like many other citizens of the city, expressed and experienced his religion emotionally. The war granted institutions that could channel that emotion with a significant amount of power for the purpose of sustaining the cause in the hearts and minds of the citizens of the city. Richmond’s religious voices— priests, publications, newspapers, sermons, tracts, and even members of state—and their commentary on events of the day, were influential in constructing a Christian Confederate cause.

Richmond was home to four secular newspapers, six religious weeklies, two religious military newspapers, thirty-three churches of every major denomination, in addition to publishing centers such as the Baptist Tract Association and Presbyterian Committee of

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<sup>79</sup> George Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 243-244.

<sup>80</sup> Quoted in Ferguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 288.

Publication, all focused on a reading public of less than twenty thousand people.<sup>81</sup>

Richmond's media focus, however, transcended the city. Publications from Richmond were distributed throughout the South and many regional religious organizations depended on Richmond's religious voice as a source for both religious and secular news<sup>82</sup>. Men with no editorial experience edited the religious weeklies, most of them preachers with their own congregations, yet they shared a common understanding of the relationship between the war and the church. The unity of opinion in the religious press and the lack of internal disagreement throughout the war made their message unique, especially when compared to the divisions within the secular press over the appropriate amount of criticism that could be leveled against the government without disrupting the cause. These rapidly evolving social forces ensured that no other city, North or South, experienced the war like Richmond. The experiences and observations of those who guided state and church policy in Richmond afford an opportunity to understand the forces that shaped the construction of Confederation nationalism. Though it is true that numerous loud voices do not always succeed in influencing opinion, gauging how regular and how loud these voices were provides some sense of their impact. The Confederate government's declaration of ten days of fast, humiliation, and prayer throughout the war reveals the extent to which the citizens of Richmond, and the South, embraced the prophetic purpose of the Confederacy.

No action or series of actions had as significant an impact on increasing the role of religion in state affairs than the call by President Davis for national prayer and sacrifice on behalf of the cause. A tradition of "civil" or "public fasts" did not exist in the South as it had

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<sup>81</sup> Grasso and Stout, "Civil War, Religion, and Communications," & Charles F. Irons, "Religion in the Civil War." In *Encyclopedia Virginia*, ed. Brendan Wolfe. Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, 17 Jun 2009. [http://www.EncyclopediaVirginia.org/Religion\\_During\\_the\\_Civil\\_War](http://www.EncyclopediaVirginia.org/Religion_During_the_Civil_War). (accessed Feb 10, 2010).

<sup>82</sup> This would partly contribute to the projection of local issues in national debates because many national discourses were published in Richmond.



in the North in the Antebellum period. Printed sermons and references to fast day events rarely appear before the war and the state's history shows little evidence of precedent of such traditions. Virginia's most favored son, Thomas Jefferson, refused to call for a day of thanksgiving and prayer during his presidency, citing the necessity for a wall of separation between church and state. As late as 1856, Governor Henry Wise refused to call for a day of fasting and prayer, maintaining "the Governor of Virginia is not authorized by her laws to call upon the people to bow to any authority in Heaven or on earth besides their own authority."<sup>83</sup> Davis's embracing of the fast as a means of promoting a national identity centered around religious worship departs from the history of resistance to that same practice up until just years before the war. Though lawmakers were determined to maintain the status quo and pre-war conventions, changes like these suggest the war profoundly altered tradition. War time conditions made forms of centralized government necessary despite its departure from Southern tradition. Davis understood that winning the war would require a form of unity and cooperation that many Southerners found distasteful. Though the role of religion in the state departed from tradition, religion still afforded a less controversial break from the old and one that promised to unify Southerners. Days of fast and thanksgiving were public rituals. Participation in the day's services and honoring the purpose of the day offered a demonstration of patriotism, moral character, and respectability.

Davis called for the first national fast day on June 13, 1861. One week before its observation, the Baptist *Religious Herald* outlined five necessary components of an "acceptable fast": Recognize the divine providence of the cause, defend the righteousness of the cause, hold conviction for eliminating individual vice, cultivate a spirit that forsakes all

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<sup>83</sup>Grasso and Stout, "Civil War, Religion, and Communications," 321.

wickedness, and trust in the divine. As people read news reports the day following the first fast that spoke of the Confederate victory at the Battle of Bethel Church, they felt God's providence could not be questioned. One week after the day of fast and thanksgiving, the *Religious Herald* communicated the renewed spirit of the church in light of the victory, "*You can never conquer the South! You may invade her territory, burn her cities, cripple her commerce, desolate her fields, inflict bitter poverty on her children, and deluge her soil with the blood of thousands of her citizens, but you will never subdue her. A spirit of martyrdom pervades the entire people that will make them invincible.*"<sup>84</sup> By refusing to accept the physical and moral defeat of the Confederacy, even in the face of the basest Northern atrocities, the religious press extended the political cause long after the Confederacy became a memory.

Direct references to the divine nature of these fast days increased as the war lengthened. While the first call mentioned taking refuge for religious worship, by early February of 1862 Davis acknowledged the need to pray before "our righteous Lord." His call for a day of fast and prayer in thanks for the adoption of the New Constitution that February admitted the setbacks the South had experienced, yet even more overtly called upon the citizens to embrace these afflictions as individuals and as a nation. They gave thanks out of faith to a political accomplishment. In doing so, Southerners politicized religion. Published in the *Religious Herald* on February 27, 1862, Davis's call stated, "We are not furnished to provide an exception to the rule of Divine government, which has proscribed affliction as the discipline of nations as well as individuals."<sup>85</sup> By September of 1862 it was clear that Davis linked the days of fast, humiliation and prayer to the cultivation of a Christian Confederacy.

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<sup>84</sup> "Acceptable Fast" *Religious Herald*, 20 June 1861, No.25. Also referenced is *Religious Herald* 6 June 1861.

<sup>85</sup> "Call for Day of Fast," *Religious Herald*, 27 Feb 1862. 1.

Giving thanks to God for Confederate victories at Manassas Junction and Richmond, KY, Davis asked that prayers not be those of “exultant triumph,” but rather humility for having been rescued from the brink of defeat. Davis delivered his own message of thanksgiving that day, and in the process intensified his position on the perception of the South as a Christian nation:

Once more upon the plains of Manassas have our armies been blessed by the Lord of Hosts...On the very day which our forces were led to victory...in Virginia, the same Almighty arm assisted us in overcoming our enemies at Richmond, KY...In such circumstances, it is right that, as a people, we should bow down in adoring thankfulness to that gracious God who has been our bulwark and defense, and to offer unto Him that tribute of thanksgiving and praise. In His hand are the issues of all events, and to Him should we, in an especial manner, ascribe the honor of this great deliverance.<sup>86</sup>

Sermons and the religious voice across the South agreed with Davis’s message. As far south as Georgia, in a fast day sermon to Christ Church in Savannah, Rev. Stephen Elliot acknowledged the providence of God in the South’s present victories by, “freeing us from the power of our enemies, and causing us to be gathered today, through all the wide extent of the Confederacy, that we may offer the sacrifice of Thanksgiving and of praise to almighty God for our present deliverance.”<sup>87</sup>

In Richmond, Rev. D. S. Doggett, delivering the fast day discourse at the Broad Street Methodist Church, reminded his congregation that though the present victories were influenced by “the skillful combinations of commanding generals, and to the heroic energy and self-sacrifice of our citizen soldiery,” the real agent responsible for these victories was the hand of God, who provided them with a resounding victory despite the inequity of the

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<sup>86</sup> Quoted in Stanley Kimmel, *Mr. Davis’s Richmond* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1958), 129-130.

<sup>87</sup> Stephen Elliot, *Our cause in harmony with the purpose of God in Christ Jesus. A sermon preached in Christ Church, Savannah, on Thursday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1862, being the day set forth by the President of the Confederate States, as a day of prayer and thanksgiving, for our manifold victories, and especially for the fields of Manassas and Richmond, KY* (Savannah: Power Press, 1862), 6.

contest.<sup>88</sup> Doggett was clearly inspired by what he saw both in the nation and in God's providence: "Never perhaps in the course of national vicissitudes, was there on so large a scale, such an implicit reliance upon divine providence; so general an invocation of the Divine blessing, as there was, from one end of this Confederacy to the other, immediately preceding and during the enactment of those tragic scenes."<sup>89</sup> For at least the first half of the war, most of Richmond's respectable classes, namely middle and upper-class white families and individuals, agreed with this assessment. Though church membership and attendance provides some evidence of their devotion to the cause, the tone and focus of early war sermons suggest at least a large number of people held this view. Though the claim that there had never been as much reliance on God's providence was certainly an exaggeration, such suggestions and an emphasis on lessons of victory as opposed to lessons of defeat illustrates that a providential view of the cause was widely felt among the citizens of the city. Though the defeats of the later years of the war did call into question this view, the religious voices of the city, along with the women on the homefront, remained united on the need to acknowledge and defend the Christian nature of the Confederacy. If jubilation was the spirit of this fast day, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1862, the people needed just a few days for this spirit to dim in the face of news of Lee's withdrawal from Maryland to Virginia after Antietam and Lincoln's announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation.

While chapels were busy throughout the South on these days of fast, universal agreement on the need and effectiveness of fast days never existed. Despite the near unanimous support from Protestant denominations and the religious press, elements of the secular press criticized President Davis as early as 1862. Of the four major secular

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<sup>88</sup> Doggett, *A nation's Ebenezer*, 6.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

newspapers published in Richmond, the *Examiner* and *Whig* continually and harshly criticized Davis and his administration, the *Enquirer* staunchly supported Davis except in editorials, and the *Dispatch* varied between support and criticism of Davis.<sup>90</sup> Though the *Enquirer* and *Dispatch* printed religious news and advertised religious meetings well into the war, the *Examiner* began openly criticizing the religious decrees of the government in May of 1862 when they printed an editorial that called for an end to days of fast. The editorial stated, “It is hoped the latest is the last. The country has had quite enough of them... Though it is well that a government should pay proper respects to the religious ceremony, that has been done and overdone by the Confederacy.”<sup>91</sup> Though the mood of the column was undoubtedly shaped by anger over the institution of conscription just a month earlier, the Battle of Shiloh, the capture of New Orleans, and the start of another campaign by the North to capture Richmond, the issue at the heart of the objection to the fast was clear-repetition. Even this vocal critic of the fast days acknowledged the government’s right to pay respect to its religious basis.

This issue was reinforced in August of 1863 after defeats at Gettysburg and Vicksburg. In a clear rebuke of the mixing of religion and politics, the *Examiner* declared that, “in time of high excitement that the clergy should share the feelings of the community, is natural; and it may be difficult to prevent all confusion of earthly and heavenly considerations in pious discourse; yet the nature of our Government, widely adverse to the union of the secular and sacred arm, forbids it.”<sup>92</sup> The *Examiner*’s public rebuke of Davis and the church channeled the legacy of the Old Dominion. According to the editor, John

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<sup>90</sup> Ferguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 164.

<sup>91</sup>*Examiner*, 19 May 1862.

<sup>92</sup>*Examiner*, 24 August 1863.

Daniels, this civil religion was tantamount to Puritanism. For Daniels, separation of church and state also required separation of religion and politics. Allowing either would mean sacrificing the spirit of the Revolution. He wrote, “This revolution should secure us social as well as political independence. We should get rid of Yankee manners as well as of Puritan laws; and one of the most obnoxious is the vice of political preaching.”<sup>93</sup> That such direct criticism was possible and considered necessary illustrates how far church-state politics had evolved as a result of the war. Both the church and the government had changed and it angered those like Daniels who wished for a return to Antebellum traditions.

While criticism of Davis for his days of fast and his personal conversion were among the main sources of contention in the secular press, the religious voice of Richmond maintained a unified stance in support of the Davis government. Their defense might have been better than his own administration's attempts to control the image and public perception of policies. In the eyes of religious leaders and the religious voice, Richmond and the Confederacy found a leader who embodied the church's call for piety in government. As Rev. William Norwood urged in a fast day sermon at St. John's Episcopal Church in March of 1863, “Thank God! That we have at the helm one who fears and worships God, and acknowledges his supremacy and our dependence on him.”<sup>94</sup> Jefferson Davis grew increasingly reliant on the church as an agent of state policy in the war effort during his Presidency. He converted to the Episcopal Church in May of 1862 after losses at Yorktown, McClellan's advance on Richmond, and the defeat of New Orleans. Baptizing the President and presiding over his confirmation the same day was Rev. Charles F. E. Minnigerode, the

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<sup>93</sup> Quoted in Grasso and Stout, "Civil War, Religion, and Communications", 339.

<sup>94</sup> William Norwood, *God and country: a sermon preached by the Rev. Wm Norwood, D.D., in St. John's Church, Richmond, on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of March, 1863: the day appointed for prayer and humiliation by the President of the Confederate States, from the 19<sup>th</sup> verse of the 103d psalm.* (Richmond: Smith Bailey & Co, 1863), 16.

rector at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Minnigerode later wrote, "That he must be a Christian he felt in his inmost soul. He spoke very earnestly and most humbly of needing the cleansing blood of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit."<sup>95</sup> Minnigerode was no stranger to Davis, as the President frequently attended his services even before his conversion. The two had met on numerous occasions and Minnigerode implored Davis to call upon the God to bless the Southern war effort. During his inaugural address, Davis, at the reverend's suggestion, raised his eyes and arms to the sky and cried out, "With humble gratitude and adoration, acknowledging the providence which has so visibly protected the Confederacy during its brief but eventful career, to Thee, Oh God! I trustingly commit myself, and prayerfully invoke Thy blessing on my country and its cause."<sup>96</sup> The secular press attacked Davis's conversion as well as his appeals to heaven. The policy, however, was clear. Davis had put his Presidency in the hands of his Christian God.<sup>97</sup>

In what should be seen as a show of their newfound political influence, the religious voice of Richmond did not back down in the face of criticism from Daniels and other elements of society, even when those critiques mirrored the arguments many of them made decades earlier in debates over slavery. As vocal advocates and defenders of the civil religion being cultivated by the state, the religious voice found themselves in uncharted waters. In defending Davis and criticisms of his policy they fundamentally shifted the debate. According to the religious voice, to criticize the leadership of this Christian nation was to question God and undermine the cause. The Baptist *Religious Herald* claimed that true patriotism required a steadfast faith in the nation's leadership. In an editorial column

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<sup>95</sup> Quoted in Ferguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 129.

<sup>96</sup> Quoted *ibid.*, 112.

<sup>97</sup> Grasso and Stout, "Civil War, Religion, and Communications," 335.

entitled “Harsh criticism of our Leaders,” the paper wrote, “Rulers and Generals...are only instruments, who can perform nothing for the country’s welfare except as power given them from above; and it feels that instead of lifting up the heel against them by distrust and suspicion, the function of true Christian patriotism lies in the fervent, effectual prayer which may win to their aid this gift of power.”<sup>98</sup> By suggesting that prayer was precisely what was required to promote the cause, the religious press acknowledged the necessity of the policy of fast days in promoting a Christian patriotism. A Methodist soldier’s tract entitled “Our Danger and Our Duty” aimed this same message at the soldiers of the Confederacy. Defending civilian authority, the tract claimed that though the rulers of this nation were not infallible, their errors were to be reviewed with candor because undermining public confidence in the government’s abilities and challenging citizens’ patriotism harmed the security of the cause. They reserved harsh words for those who engaged in such behavior: “The man who now labors to weaken the hands of government, that he may seize the reins of authority, or cavils at public measures and policy, that he may rise to distinction and office, has all the selfishness of a miser, and the baseness of a traitor.”<sup>99</sup>

A New Year’s sermon delivered on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1865, by the Episcopalian Rev. Charles Minnigerode, demonstrated that defense of Davis against the secular press continued late into the war. Minnigerode claimed that “if we could stop every croaker and nerve every patriot” they could turn the tide of the war. He made it explicitly clear who he meant by croakers in a footnote near the end of the published form of the sermon, writing “I think the literature given to our people chiefly in the daily newspapers should be of encouraging and

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<sup>98</sup> “Harsh Criticism of our Leaders,” *Religious Herald*, 3 April 1862, no.47, 1.

<sup>99</sup> James Henley Thornwell, *No. 64 - Our Danger and our duty* (Richmond: Soldiers’ Tract Association, M.E. Church, 186?), 5.



inspiring, not a depressing and often demoralizing tendency; of a character to unite them to a greater cause, not to excite and spread disaffection.”<sup>100</sup> In defending the cause, the willingness of the church to involve itself in politics increased. Minnigerode realized how his defense of Davis would be perceived but remained steadfast in his belief of the need to support the government out of divine obligation:

I trust I'll be forgiven for the introduction of this subject. God forbid that I should speak as a mere man and not as the minister of Christ, that I should introduce politics where Religion alone should raise her voice, discuss measures and men where only principles can be laid down...the apostolic Bishop Meade—with his prophetic eye on the struggle...he foretold his ministers that the time might come when it would be their duty to encourage the timid, and by their proclamation of God's truth, uphold the cause and strengthen the hands of the faithful...What makes the present crisis so painful and so perilous lies not in what the enemy has done to us with his armies, but in *what our coward, faithless, and selfish hearts may do*.<sup>101</sup>

Minnigerode understood how the war had transformed the relationship between religion and politics. The change in tone suggests that Southerners had become less sure of their country's divine purpose. The war and present crisis dictated that the church be even more vigilant defending the cause and strengthening the faith of the nation in government. Presiding over Davis's baptism and confirmation three years earlier, Minnigerode believed in the need for the leader of the Confederacy to be guided by faith. On New Year's Day in the last year of struggle, he continued to defend this relationship. Ironically, the harshest criticism of Davis from the religious press was that Davis had not done enough to recognize the Confederacy as a Christian nation, and not that he had overly promoted government influence over religion. The *Central Presbyterian*, circulated to people who two decades earlier had been the most vocal critics of incorporation of the church, published a column on February 2, 1865 captioned “Day of Prayer and Thanksgiving” :

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<sup>100</sup> Minnigerode, Charles. *He that believeth shall not make haste. A sermon preached on the first of January, 1865, in St. Paul's Church, Richmond* (Richmond: CH Wynne, printer, 1865), 6.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

We are sure it is not because the convictions of the President are not anti-Christian. He probably thinks that in a document of this kind, it is not proper to introduce any sentiment obnoxious to Jews and Deists. This is a mistaken policy...The religion of this country is a Christian religion, and such documents should conform to this fact...the mass of our people expect to observe it under forms of Christian worship, and a failure on the part of the President so to recognize it, is liable to graver condemnation than we care to express under existing circumstances.<sup>102</sup>

As one of the boldest expressions of a newfound sense of power by the religious voice, this issue of the *Central Presbyterian* demonstrated recognition on behalf of the church of their position in the new nation.

The war challenged religious institutions as much as it did the state, and thus had a profound effect on Southerners' religious lives. The conflict disrupted functions of the churches. Synods, conferences, and associations met less frequently or not at all due to the conditions imposed on travel to central locations. Only thirty-five out of what was normally several hundred participants attended the Virginia Southern Baptist state organization's meeting in Richmond in 1863 and the conference lasted a matter of hours instead of a series of days as it had before the war. Many church newspapers and the publishing centers of the major denominations went silent. Churches became makeshift hospitals, barracks, warehouses, and became frequent targets of Union soldiers because of their symbolic importance. Estimates suggest that federal forces destroyed twenty-six Baptist churches in Virginia and that half of the ninety to one-hundred Presbyterian churches damaged or destroyed in the South were located in Virginia. Though Richmond churches, religious associations, and publication centers fared better than much of the rest of Virginia, the war imposed serious constraints on membership, the number of services offered, and the frequency of religious publications. The difficulty of maintaining the religious defense of the cause given the destabilization of the network and nervous system of religious institutions

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<sup>102</sup> "Day of Prayer and Thanksgiving," *Central Presbyterian*, 2 Feb 1865, 2.

helps explain the importance of religion for the citizens of Richmond. Religion continued to defend the cause, albeit it in a more limited capacity, consistently throughout the war and beyond. Because of the simultaneous development of the Southern church and the Confederacy, the war tested the resolve of the church and state in God's providence, and as a result led to a much more active role in sustaining the faith of the general population and promoting the cause, altering the relationship between religion and politics in the South.

### **Chapter Three: “*Richmond is the Cause*” – Christian Patriotism and the “Impregnable Fortress”**

From the moment the government decided to move the Capitol of the Confederacy to Virginia, Richmond embodied the Confederacy. Howell Cobb, President of the Provisional Confederate Congress, eloquently explained the rationale. Acknowledging that Virginia would be the battleground of this struggle, Cobb suggested the entire Confederacy needed to join in solidarity with Virginia and take up arms to protect her.<sup>103</sup> He argued, “We felt the cause of Virginia to be the cause of us all. If she falls, we shall all fall; and we are willing to be at the spot to be among the first victims.”<sup>104</sup> The citizens of Richmond who experienced the trials of the war later affirmed these sentiments in their memoirs. Writing about her experience of Richmond during the Civil War, Sallie Putnam acknowledged that, “Richmond was indeed the Confederate barometer, as well as the heart and brain of our...nation.”<sup>105</sup> T.C. DeLeon later confirmed the sentiments of Putnam. He wrote, “the tremendous efforts to capture the Capitol; the superhuman exertions to defend it in the last four years, *had made*

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<sup>103</sup> The move of the capital and Cobb's words speak to the claim that the Confederate government believed that the war would be over in a matter of months. When it became clear that the war would drag on for much longer than anticipated, the silence from those in the lower south who had previously been so vocal about the need to support Richmond did not go unnoticed. T.V. Moore's sermon in November 1861 questioned the Lower South's resolve: “the furious patriots of twelve months ago...should now be as meek and as mute as mice, leaving others to bear the burdens, sacrifices and dangers of this contest when it has really come.”

<sup>104</sup> Quoted in Kimmel, *Mr. Davis's Richmond*, 25.

<sup>105</sup> Sallie B. Putnam, *Richmond During the War; Four Years of Personal Observation By a Richmond Lady* (New York: G.W. Carleton & Co. Publishers, 1867), 187.

*Richmond the Cause!*”<sup>106</sup> In the end, Cobb accurately predicted that the cause of Virginia would be the cause of the South. As the seat of the new government in Virginia, Richmond was both transformed by and influenced national politics. Attempting to resolve local problems, Jefferson Davis and the Confederate Congress employed national measures that blurred the distinction between local and national politics. Davis declared martial law in Richmond, ordered days of national fast for local victories, quelled a bread riot, and made other adjustments to protect the city. The government’s response to these local issues simultaneously established the national policy of the Confederacy. The city of Richmond became the central city-state of the South and the church emerged as a central institution for cultivating the virtue of the Christian patriots who populated and defended it. This link between Christianity and Confederate nationalism challenged religious traditions and altered Southerners’ sense of Christian duty. Religious and political duty became inseparable.

While much has been written on the Christian nature of military camps and the revivals that swept through the armies, particularly the Army of Northern Virginia during the war,<sup>107</sup> the cultivation of Christian character on the Confederate home-front deserves more attention.<sup>108</sup> The social structure of the Old South, and in particular the Old Dominion, was

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<sup>106</sup> T.C. DeLeon, *Four Years in Rebel Capital* (New York: BiblioBazaar, 2008, Original Copyright 189), 348.

<sup>107</sup> For a good overview of the Christian Soldier see Reid Mitchell, “Christian Soldiers? Perfecting the Confederacy,” in *Religion and the American Civil War*, ed. Charles Wilson, Harry Stout, and Randall Miller, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 297-312; or Chapter 4 of Chandra Manning, *What this Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery and the Civil War* (New York: Knopf Publishing, 2007).

<sup>108</sup>This relies heavily on the writings of Amy Minton, “Defining Confederate Respectability,” which looks at the creation of a public character infused with religion and patriotism in Richmond during the war. I borrow the term Confederate respectability to describe newly formed social norms during the war that emphasized piety and patriotism and the way these norms were maintained well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Richmond; Libra Hilde, *Worth a Dozen Men: Women and Nursing in the Civil War South* (Charlottesville, VA: Univ of VA Press, 2012), details the lives of women who worked in hospitals during the war and in doing so challenged Southern honor and respectability. Hilde also highlights the experiences of women in war time and post-war Richmond; Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), discusses how the very vision of who constituted “the people” in the Southern project of the Confederacy proved incapable of sustaining the national effort required to sustain a war; and Jason Philip, *Die Hard Rebels: The Confederate Culture of*

based on a landed aristocracy, where public displays of wealth and class reflected status. For Virginians, the cavalier image was the ultimate standard of honor and white Southern manhood. To be honorable was tied to social status, wealth, chivalry and bravery, and, for the planter class, slave ownership. The war broadened standards of honor and respect by focusing more on moral character, piety, and patriotism. All whites in Southern society could embrace and display these *public* virtues. As a result, the common citizen and Confederate soldier, as well as women, found themselves in new public arenas that granted them more agency, and thus greater honor and respect. Organized religion and individuals' faiths helped them understand, navigate, and take advantage of these new standards.<sup>109</sup> A look at the capitol city of the Confederacy offers insight on the influence of religious institutions and the simultaneous experience of the citizens' religious faith.

The religious institutions of the city offered residents, visitors, government officials, and the displaced alike an escape and refuge from the physical and psychological pressures of war, as well as explanations for the war's experiences and hardships. Devotion to their religion and moral character became a way for citizens to simultaneously display support for the cause. However, measuring the character of the citizens of Richmond by their devotion alone does not fully account for how their actions demonstrated a commitment to or neglect of the cause. Vocal criticism of actions that hurt the cause, such as the extravagant parties thrown by some members of the social elite, suggest that norms dictating acceptable behavior

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*Invincibility* (Athens, GA: Univ of GA Press, 2007), traces the link between evangelical Christianity and a uniquely Confederate culture formed during the war.

<sup>109</sup> See Peter Carmichael, *The Last Generation: Young Virginians in Peace, War, and Reunion* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005) for analysis of how transformations in Southern manhood for young Virginians pre-dates the war. His work emphasizes the importance of religion in this transformation. As he states, "Many historians have not fully appreciated the evolution of Southern manliness because they have underestimated the softening influence of religion in the 1830s. As a result, they accept the image of the violent, hypersensitive, dissipated Southern youth at the expense of a more complex reading of male identity," (244).

already existed. Recognizing the diverse spectrum of the city's residents, the Richmond press—secular and sacred—built a vision of respectability using language and ideas that appealed to all white social classes. As the *Richmond Sentinel* indicated in 1862, “whatever will promote the cause of public and private virtue, Christian morals, social happiness, popular elevation and intelligence, and a serene dignity of national character, shall at least find unvarying sympathy in the columns of the Sentinel.”<sup>110</sup> Political allegiance on its own was not a sufficient condition of Christian citizenship. Patriotism had both a political and a moral function. Southerners' Christian character acted as a moral compass that guided their behavior and proved their true patriotism. Attendance at church, volunteering with war-time associations, hospital work, and contributions to the war effort provided evidence of citizens' belief in the cause and of the intensity of the faith that compelled them to participate.

As war conditions deteriorated in Richmond, many questioned whether the Christian citizen was as honorable as the Christian soldier. Bishop John Johns' address to the Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in May of 1863 emphasized the moral character of the Confederacy as the source of eventual success. He stated, “The signal successes with which it pleased Almighty God to crown our arms, effectually relieved our beleaguered metropolis...these sufferings furnished occasion for the manifestations of some of the finest phases of character.”<sup>111</sup> In enduring the trials of the war, citizens built moral character. Because individuals understood and responded to the war's greatest triumphs and its most serious tests through the vehicle of religion, faith became a central component in the cultivation of that character. Richmond afforded its inhabitants many triumphs and tests

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<sup>110</sup> Quoted in Minton, “Defining Confederate Respectability,” 81.

<sup>111</sup> Protestant Episcopal Church, Diocese of Virginia. *Journal of the Sixty-eight Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia. Held in St. Paul's Church, Richmond on the 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1863*, (Richmond: Macfarlane & Fergusson, 1863), 16-17.

during the war. No city in the South experienced the war like Richmond. It was a “transient city,”<sup>112</sup> hosting permanent residents and temporary inhabitants of all kinds. In the end, the city proved incapable of providing for all of its inhabitants: the sick and wounded in the hospitals around town, prisoners in the overflowing and make-shift prisons, soldiers constantly marching through and stationed in and around the capital, congressmen who came to Richmond for the three governments simultaneously operating in the capital, and migrants from the frontier and captured cities who sought protection from the advancing enemy. The church-state relationship in Richmond changed in part because it had to in order for both institutions to survive. Transition to political messages became a necessity for the religious voice to promote atonement for individual sin and to develop a sense of nationalism in the face of the mounting hardships faced by the citizens of a beleaguered city.

By 1863, there were five major religious military publications, two of them—the Presbyterian *The Soldiers Visitor* and the Methodist *Soldiers Tract Association*—located in Richmond, and another, the *Army and Navy Messenger*, located in Petersburg, southeast of Richmond. A majority of the literature distributed to the soldiers of the Confederate army, especially the Army of Northern Virginia, came from the Richmond area. Though attempts at delivering religious literature to soldiers had begun in the early stages of the war, the emergence of a religious military press did not occur on a large scale until 1863. The religious press reacted to the expansion of the military establishment in the South. The length of the war led to a realization that the military would be a permanent rather than temporary social institution, and thus it required the same moral cultivation directed at civilian institutions. Congregations independently printed materials for troops, and some

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<sup>112</sup> Ferguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 221.

individuals went to great lengths to supply the soldiers with religious readings. At the suggestion of his brother William, a Charlottesville preacher who regularly preached to Jackson's troops, Richmond's Rev. Moses Hoge sailed to Europe and successfully convinced the English to contribute 10,000 bibles, 25,000 testaments and 250,000 biblical excerpts to the soldiers of the Confederacy. Hoge even sold Confederate bonds to English citizens to raise money for the church. One member of Congregation remarked, "His devotion to God was equally matched by his devotion to the Confederate cause."<sup>113</sup> Though a servant of God, Hoge risked his political life and religious practice by running the Union blockade in possession of Confederate bonds and supplies for Southern troops. Hoge, along with other members of church leadership, private citizens, church tract associations, voluntary organizations and aid associations furnished the awareness, funds, and labor that fed the camp revivals. Conversions in the camp would likely have occurred in the absence of such printed materials, but access to these materials, and the efforts of many of Virginia's ministers who volunteered and preached to the men of the ranks, aided in the cultivation of the Christian character of soldiers. In doing so, they simultaneously demonstrated the moral character of the Christian citizen.

These publications presented military defeats as lessons for the army. Though resources were limited, religious publications helped facilitate evangelism within the ranks and promote the cause and proper behavior at home. At the same time, access to this massive civilian military force and soul searching citizens enabled the church to spread its message by addressing the issues that soldiers and citizens alike were burdened by. According to the Presbyterian *The Soldier's Visitor*, the collective righteousness of the cause depended upon

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<sup>113</sup> Quoted in Ferguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 217.



the Confederacy's Christian status. "Disasters will sometimes occur in spite of all that skill and bravery can do," an article noted. "Reverses in war as well as individual life, often prove blessings, Unvarying success would tend to...lead to forgetfulness of God as our strength and helper...Let all, therefore, cheer up"<sup>114</sup> Only faith in providence and personal atonement for sins would help in preventing such disasters. The Methodist *Soldiers Tract Association* echoed similar sentiments with attempts to inspire a robust patriotism in the army. Outlining a soldier's duty, one tract insisted that a soldier must banish the thought of as even if the enemy overran the nation. Under God, the nation could not fail: "We can conquer and we *must*...The eyes of the world are upon us; we are a spectacle to God, to angels and to men...Let us seize the opportunity, and make to ourselves an immortal name, while we redeem a land from bondage and a continent from ruin."<sup>115</sup> Southern military commanders, most of whom swore to serve God as much as they did the state, tested the soldiers' ability to heed the message.<sup>116</sup> Providing soldiers with literature that reinforced Christian understandings of victory and defeat and offered lessons for their own experiences functioned as a means to link the homefront and battlefield. The character of the Christian soldier in part stemmed from the efforts of the Christian citizen.

By publishing "a Christian Soldiers Letter" on the front page of the *Religious Herald*, in June of 1861, the paper engaged in a common practice of the religious voice. These letters were often used as a tool to increase morale at home. They accomplished this task by

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<sup>114</sup> As Quoted in Kurt Berends, "Wholesome Reading Purifies and Elevates the Man": The Religious Military Press in the Confederacy", in *Religion and the American Civil War*, ed. Charles Wilson, Harry Stout, and Randall Miller, 131-166 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 150.

<sup>115</sup> Thornwell, "Our danger and our duty," 16.

<sup>116</sup> Much focus on this has been dealt with elsewhere. Lee's belief in God was his coping mechanism with the loss of his daughter, daughter in law, and the soldiers under his command during the war. His troops still observed Davis's declared days of fast despite the fact that they were starving. See Ferguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 222 & 193. Jackson will be referenced in this essay later but it is unquestionable the role religion played in his life and his conduct during the war.

establishing a direct connection between the support of the Christian soldier and the development of the Christian patriot and citizen.<sup>117</sup> The Address of the Baptist General Association of Virginia acknowledged the necessary connection between the two. Christian citizens, the address claimed, had responsibilities as important as the Christian soldier: “Whilst our much-enduring brethren in the army are standing between us and the foe, we who remain at home have duties no less serious and imperative to fulfill...History teaches us the mournful lesson, that seasons of great public calamity are usually signalized also by great public demoralization.”<sup>118</sup> According to the Association, the sacrifice of half a million men who took up arms on behalf of the South necessitated sacrifice and the avoidance of sin at home. As citizens of a beleaguered city and a blockaded country, the address urged a Christian philanthropy and patriotism. The Christian citizen, regardless of class, had an obligation to pledge their life, fortune, and sacred honor in the public defense. In doing so they demonstrated their moral character, their patriotism and duty to the cause. The address concluded, “We feel sure that not only will you continue to give out of your abundance, but that, should straitened circumstances come, you will share your scanty store with the needy patriot—Whilst you thus honor the claims of philanthropy and patriotism, forget not your Christian obligations.”<sup>119</sup> Christian benevolence united those with “abundant” and “scanty” wealth in common cause. This ideologically unified white Southerners in a way only race had succeeded in doing prior to the war.

War conditions tested Southerner’s Christian benevolence and adherence to their Christian obligations. With New Orleans captured and occupied by the North, and the Union

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<sup>117</sup> “A Christian Soldiers Letter,” *Religious Herald*, 27 June 1861.

<sup>118</sup> Baptist General Association of Virginia. *Address of the Baptist General Association of Virginia*. (Richmond, June 4, 1863): 6.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

blockade of their ports, Richmond became by far the most expensive, corrupt, overcrowded and crime ridden city in the Confederacy<sup>120</sup>. Inflation was out of control during the war due to the hoarding of supplies and a refusal to enact broad tax policy, while many refused to make the sacrifices asked of them by both the government and the church. According to Presbyterian minister Rev. T.V. Moore in November of 1861, if the current “crusade” of “cowardice and greediness at home” proved successful, the results would be catastrophic.

Our best and bravest men would be slaughtered like bullocks in the shambles; our wives and daughters dishonored before our eyes; our cities sacked; our fields laid waste; our homes pillaged and burned; our property, which we are perhaps selfishly hoarding, wrested from us by fines and confiscations; our grand old Commonwealth degraded from her proud historic place of “Ancient Dominion,” to be the vassal province of a huge central despotism, which, having wasted her with fire and sword, would compel her by military force to pay the enormous expense of her own subjugation... Is this picture overdrawn?... Has not the work already begun?<sup>121</sup>

Sin, as conceived of by Moore, was a crime not just against God, but also the state. Thus, cultivating a Christian patriotism was a practical necessity for the both the church and state. These calls for sacrifice to cultivate Christian virtue increased in number and intensity until the end of the war.

Victory and defeat were both part of God’s providence, though the latter often led to efforts to further reform society and eliminate vice. In the eyes of the religious voice of Richmond, every victory showed that God had protected his chosen people and every defeat inflicted punishment for those same people’s sins.<sup>122</sup> Constance Cary, a Richmond citizen, acknowledged in correspondence with a friend that most significant pieces of war news came to Richmond on Sundays.<sup>123</sup> News of the first victory in Virginia, albeit a small one, at the Battle of Bethel Church, made its way through Richmond on a Sunday as people streamed

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<sup>120</sup> Ferguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 191.

<sup>121</sup> Moore, *God Our Refuge*, 21.

<sup>122</sup> James Silver, *Confederate Morale and Church Propaganda* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1957), 33.

<sup>123</sup> Ferguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 128.

out of churches across the city. The same scene was re-enacted the day Richmond learned of Lee's surrender four years later. The religious voice treated news of early victories as prophecy. Episcopal Rev. William Butler, in a Thanksgiving day sermon on July 21, 1861, interpreted victory at the First Battle of Manassas as the answer to which side God would choose in the conflict. He declared, "God...has placed us in the front rank of the most marked epochs of the world's history," he declared. "He has placed in our hands a commission which we can faithfully execute only by holy, individual self-consecration to all of God's plans."<sup>124</sup> Victory proved the South's status as God's chosen Christian nation.

Yet just as quickly as the spirit of victory filled the air of Richmond in July, when Rev. T.V. Moore delivered his sermon in November of 1861, he still used the memory of Manassas to lift the spirits of the populace and assure them of God's providence. The South had lost control of a few key forts along the Eastern coast and as a result, the Northern blockade increasingly imposed a stranglehold on Confederate commerce. In addition, rumors of Northern plans to launch another campaign on Richmond circulated in the secular press. Moore implored people to continue to support the cause, "The swamps that sheltered Marion's men...the blue mountains of West Georgia where Washington meant to make a last stand for liberty, and the storied heights of Yorktown...down to the vanquished columns on the plains of Manassas, a people who are fighting for their altars and their firesides, in the fear of God, can never, never, never be conquered."<sup>125</sup> Only belief in God's providence would produce victories for the South. Moore invoked the memory of the American Revolution as an inspiration for Virginians to support the cause. His comparison between the

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<sup>124</sup> Quoted in Stout and Grasso, "Civil War, Religion, and Communication", 323.

<sup>125</sup> Moore, *God Our Refuge*, 24.

legendary battles of the Revolution and the fields of Manassas was an early attempt to memorialize the importance of Southern victories and the Confederate cause.

Recasting the South's present war as a second coming of the American Revolution emerged as a common theme of both the religious voice and the state in Civil War Richmond. By defending their own legitimacy using the memory of the founding generation, religious leaders and the religious voice of the South conflated moral and civic character. On the day of Virginia's secession, former President John Tyler delivered a fiery address asking God's divine providence to guide the South's "holy efforts" in the spirit of the "Revolution of 1776."<sup>126</sup> The South, and Virginia in particular, had strong associations with Patrick Henry, George Washington, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson, and believed themselves to be the heirs of the liberties established by these great statesmen. Virginians occupied the Presidency for thirty-two of the first forty years of the new nation and every religious denomination in Richmond touted this legacy in promoting the cause. Justifying the South and the church's role in the war, Episcopalian Rev. William Norwood likened the struggle against Northern oppression to the tyrannous control of the colonies by Great Britain. He stated, "We were in effect suffering taxation without representation... We thus, in fact, had the very cause for separation which our history has considered so sacred in the case of our revolutionary forefathers."<sup>127</sup> Presbyterian Rev. Moses Hoge, agreed, "When men can appeal to Heaven, as our fathers of the Revolution did, for the justice of their cause, and invoke the aid of the God of Battles, then will a nation become as illustrious as in the gentle arts of peace."<sup>128</sup> According to Hoge, the appeal to heaven and acceptance of God's providence had

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<sup>126</sup> J.B. Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary* (Philadelphia: Thomas Gale, 1866), 19, 22-23.

<sup>127</sup> Norwood, *God and Country*, 8.

<sup>128</sup> Hoge, *The Christian Statesman*, 22-23.

guided their forefathers cause, and would be central to their own. The Methodist *Soldiers Tract Association* likened the current struggle to the Revolution but made an important defensive distinction: “We are upholding the great principles which our fathers bequeathed us, and if we should succeed...we shall perpetuate and diffuse the very liberty for which Washington bled, and which the heroes of the Revolution achieved. We are not revolutionists—we are resisting revolution.”<sup>129</sup> The Baptist *Religious Herald* went so far as to criticize historians of the Revolution for overlooking religion, which they defined as central to understanding the experience of those who fought and lived on its front lines. This allusion allowed the religious voice to shift their rhetoric from a focus on civil liberties to religious liberties, and argue the need for a political defense of religion because the two were mutually dependent. Ironically, the religious voice blurred the line between church and state and did so while citing the memory of the very men who had tried to build a wall between the two.

Like Manassas and comparisons to the symbolism of the Revolution, a mood of redemption and independence followed the news of victory in the Seven Days conflict. Richmond citizens faced increasing hardships and material shortages. New Orleans and Nashville were in the hands of the North and the enemy threatened the outskirts of the capital before being repulsed. Some Southerners prematurely believed the battle had secured their independence,<sup>130</sup> though nearly all pointed to God’s providence as the agent that swept the Northern army away from the capital. The press hailed Richmond as the “Impregnable Fortress.”<sup>131</sup> From the Revolution, to Antiquity, and the Bible, the religious press compared

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<sup>129</sup> Thornwell, *Our danger and our duty*, 4.

<sup>130</sup> Ferguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 156.

<sup>131</sup> “Impregnable Fortress,” *Religious Herald*, 10. April 1862. The section titled “Impregnable fortress” suggested that the “major city” of the South, Richmond, was protected by God.

the South's glories to historic victories of the world's greatest armies. In a thanksgiving sermon that September, Methodist Rev. D.S. Doggett likened the defense of Richmond to the biblical story of Mizpeh. The allusion is significant. Mizpeh had been saved by God's hand from the enemy's superior army as they reached the very gates of the city. Doggett proclaimed that Northern forces, upon reaching the city and having lined up for battle, "a concealed battery, from heaven, opened its dreaded artillery upon the impious invaders, and swept with destruction their serried ranks...The enemy was thoroughly routed. The victory was complete."<sup>132</sup> Remarking on the success of Confederate forces, Doggett acknowledged that the enemy had been driven from every battlefield and the character of the war had been reversed with the enemy now on the defensive.

Thus, when the Council of the Episcopal Church delivered its report on the state of the Church in May of 1863, the South believed it was at the precipice of a transcendent moment in history. According to the council, "God be blessed, the day is dawning. Dark as the political horizon may be, the heart of the church of Virginia is beating too vigorously to be content with mere business meetings."<sup>133</sup> They argued that the position of the church had rarely been more favorable. The government demonstrated a deep appreciation for religion, many of its prominent members were considered religious scholars and held a religious profession, and the army from the Generals to the common soldier in the camp professed a belief in God. The news reached Richmond that Hooker had crossed the Rappahannock near Chancellorsville, as Rev. Charles Minnigerode was preaching at St. Paul's Church. Loud noise from Capitol Square filled the church as one by one congregation members left the service when notified of a family member's death. Minnigerode's own wife interrupted him

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<sup>132</sup> Doggett, *A nation's Ebenezer*, 5.

<sup>133</sup> Council of the Episcopal Church, "Minutes", 33.

during service and he was summoned outside to learn of the arrival of their son's body at the train depot among the dead. After hurrying to the station and learning that the person in question was not their son, Minnigerode returned to finish the sermon.<sup>134</sup> The Minnigerode's were lucky that day, but Mary Anna Jackson was not.

Lodging with the Hoge's, Mary Anna learned of her husband's wound and rushed to the farm where he lay bedridden and dying. He died soon after she arrived. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson's death on the precipice of Southern glory and following a Southern victory at Chancellorsville was a huge blow to both the church and state. The death of Stonewall Jackson, a deeply religious statesman and soldier known for his rare military acumen, was a unique setback for the message of Christian Nationalism promulgated by the religious voice of Richmond. Sallie Putnam, who viewed the body at his funeral service in Richmond lamented, "Only a thin glass lay between me & the grey, lifeless features of him who was our country's boast. God has broken our idol & left us desolate. The city is one house of mourning."<sup>135</sup> All activities in Richmond stopped in anticipation of Jackson's casket making its way back to Richmond. No event until the surrender hit Richmond as hard as Jackson's death.

Funeral processions became a common sight in Richmond due to its proximity to the war and the prominent statesman from Richmond who served in the military. As of September 1862, Richmond had received 99,408 sick and wounded soldiers from various campaigns. Eight percent, or 7,603 died.<sup>136</sup> As one soldier stationed in Richmond noted, regardless of the outcome of the war, Richmond would emerge from the conflict as a Mecca,

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<sup>134</sup> Ferguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 204.

<sup>135</sup> Putnam, *Richmond During the War*, 224.

<sup>136</sup> Ferguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 169.



a Holy City, because of the significant number of its defenders buried there.<sup>137</sup> Sallie Putnam, addressing the matter in succinct fashion, agreed when she wrote that, “Death held a carnival in our city.”<sup>138</sup> This unique wartime experience with death dramatically altered standards originally held for funeral services and religious discourse on the subject. The immediacy of death in the city that was so much a part of the lived experience of the citizens of Richmond heightened the importance of the call for conversion and acceptance of God’s providence, causing some ministers to break out of pre-war customs. A sermon titled “The Christian Soldier” by Rev. Robert Lewis Dabney, in commemoration of the death of Lieutenant Abram Carrington, provides an excellent example. “My conception of the proper objects of funeral discourses has usually forbidden all eulogistic reference to the dead...[but] To pass over such a Christian character as that of our brother, and let his memory drop in silence,” Dabney commented, “would be ingratitude to God.”<sup>139</sup> Dabney felt compelled to alter pre-war conventions by the urgent need to recognize the Christian patriot and soldier to maintain belief in the cause.<sup>140</sup> Brigadier General John Pegram’s funeral procession through Richmond, a mere three weeks after his marriage at St. Paul’s Church, was the last grand procession of the war in Richmond, and to some prophesized the Confederacy’s tragic demise.

The psychological impact of death re-emerged in the wake of Lee’s campaign in Pennsylvania following victories in May of 1863. As the city absorbed the news of devastating twin defeats in Gettysburg and Vicksburg in early July, a significant element of

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<sup>137</sup>Emory Thomas, *The Confederate State of Richmond: A Biography of the Capital* (BatonRouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 175.

<sup>138</sup> Putnam, *Richmond During the War*, 151.

<sup>139</sup> Dabney, 11.

<sup>140</sup> Dabney would later become one of the most vocal Lost Cause religious historians. See Wilson, *Baptized in Blood* Chapter on Dabney, pages 179-189.

the religious voice refused to accept any diminished trust in the ultimate righteousness of the cause. The *Religious Herald*, the religious weekly with the widest circulation, never referred to Gettysburg as a loss. On July 9th, the paper presented news of the battle in an column entitled "Defeat of the Federal Army," which proclaimed that, "One Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of this week our army, under General Lee, were closely engaged with the Federal Army, commanded by General Meade the successor of Hooker...we have every reason to believe that we achieved a decisive victory."<sup>141</sup> One week later, on July 16<sup>th</sup>, the *Religious Herald* published its last account of Lee's mission in Pennsylvania, supposedly based on a letter Lee sent to Davis. Discussing its contents, the *Herald* reported, "The President received a letter from General Lee...which confirms the statement which have been made that our army has been uniformly victorious in its encounters with the enemy in Pennsylvania. The letter states in effect that the engagement at Gettysburg resulted in defeating the enemy completely."<sup>142</sup> The paper never retracted two weeks' worth of positive accounts of the battle. Though every major secular publication in Richmond reported on the defeat of Lee's army and the losses sustained over the course of the three days of battle, the religious press remained resistant to the realities of the battle. That each report of the *Religious Herald* maintained complete victory suggests that the religious press was so convinced of the righteousness of the South they could not imagine defeat. Yet as the war clearly took a turn, the tone of the religious press and Southerners changed. Though the religious press might have been more convinced than the general public that God was on their side, they served a population that became increasingly doubtful of providence.

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<sup>141</sup>"Defeat of the Federal Army," *Religious Herald*, 7 July 1863.

<sup>142</sup>"Lee's Message to Davis," *Religious Herald*, 16 July 1863.

By 1864, many Southerners felt that God might have abandoned them. Defeats in battle as well as fears of potentially disastrous new campaigns raised serious questions about the continuance of their way of life. Many struggled to make sense of the reality of the Confederacy's odds and the work of providence. As a result, the voice of religious institutions shifted towards a narrative of suffering and sacrifice. In their eyes, God was challenging the South. It became their duty to convince citizens of the importance of these trials and to assure them of God's continued, though deferred, support. The religious press no longer concealed challenges and setbacks on the battlefield. Instead, the press used news of military defeat on the battlefield to defend the honor and legitimacy of their cause—these were Christian martyr's dying to defend God and country—and to foster providential explanations of defeat. To do so, religious leaders needed to distinguish success from righteousness. Thomas Dunway, a Baptist minister to a Virginia congregation in April of 1864, made the case clear: "...an idea which I have heard some advance, when they say that if our cause is just and right it will succeed in any event; and if it fail it is conclusive that our cause is a bad one, and God is displeased with our institutions...an accurate acquaintance with the ways of providence as manifested in the Scriptures, will disabuse our minds of this error."<sup>143</sup> The *Religious Herald* stepped up its rhetoric in order to battle the desperation creeping into Richmond public opinion. Editorial structure correspondingly shifted in early 1864, with fewer columns on general Christian subjects and a greater emphasis on captions that guided the public on how to think about the war. On March 9, 1864, a story entitled, "How to Receive the News,"<sup>144</sup> received front-page billing. In April, another front-page

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<sup>143</sup> Daniel Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion: The Religious Reconstruction of the South, 1863-1877* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 40.

<sup>144</sup> "How to Receive the News," *Religious Herald*, 9 March 1864.

story, “The Lessons of Defeat,” prepared the public for the potential losses that might be sustained as General Grant launched a new campaign against the city. The article warned against turning small setbacks into disasters, as this wavering of faith in God’s providence would affect the war effort. The author counseled, “If defeats come—let us bear these things in mind—for if we turn our backs on God it will be said—We are they who turned the day against the South—and by our open fighting against the God of Heaven!”<sup>145</sup>

When Grant opened the final campaign against Richmond in 1864, he was a different general than at the beginning of the war, just as Richmond had become a different city. People in Richmond were so accustomed to enemy movements at this point that they no longer occasioned excitement. During Grant’s offensive movement towards Richmond, a reporter from the *London Times* confirmed this attitude, noting that “If a man landed here from a balloon after a six months’ absence—if he were...told that two enormous armies are lying a few miles off and disputing its possession, he would deem his informant a lunatic...Richmond trusts and believes in St. Lee as much as Mecca in Mahomet.”<sup>146</sup> Political news seemed to excite the city more than enemy troop movements. Lincoln’s re-election bid and McClellan’s campaign of “Armistice & Peace” sent citizens to the churches to pray for Lincoln’s electoral loss. On September 8<sup>th</sup>, the *Religious Herald* published on the front-page, a small column entitled “Sixty Days of Prayer”; a reference to the sixty days before the Union presidential election.<sup>147</sup>

By the end of 1864, the mood in Richmond had deteriorated to general despondency. The siege on Petersburg wore thin on the city’s already stretched resources. In a December

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<sup>145</sup> “The Lessons of Defeat,” *Religious Herald*, 21 April 1864.

<sup>146</sup> Quoted in Ferguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 275.

<sup>147</sup> “Sixty Days of Prayer,” *Religious Herald*, 8 September 1864.

29<sup>th</sup> issue, the *Herald* apologized for its four week absence on account of the printers being stationed to guard duty in and around the town.<sup>148</sup> Rev. Charles Minnigerode's New Year's sermon in early 1865 stressed the importance of maintaining hope through self-sacrifice in the name of the cause and a steadfast belief in God's providence in order to overcome the recent reversals of fortune. The rhetoric of the passage went beyond improved individual fortunes and claimed that current dangers would be turned into blessings and Richmond citizens would witness the growth of their national strength and their preparedness for the final victory. Minnigerode proclaimed, "If this sentiment was realized by all—rulers and people alike—and followed up in a God-fearing spirit...there would be no cause left for fear; but from our reverses we would rise in new strength and...enter upon the course which must bring victory and peace!"<sup>149</sup> The religious voice called on the Christian patriot and citizen to have the same faith in the Confederacy as they did in God. In fulfilling this objective, patriots of the cause would become "*Christian Heroes.*" Minnigerode pre-empted those who might be shocked by the claim, "Yes, *Christian Heroes!* For however the wording, the infidel, and all 'who make haste', may sneer at it, the only true basis, the only perfect guarantee for loyalty and faithfulness in our earthly relations and earthly duties is FAITH IN GOD."<sup>150</sup> The final victory would not be on the battlefield or in the halls of government, and Minnigerode proclaimed that Southern honor and memory would emerge victorious despite the trials of wartime and military defeat. The South would ultimately win a moral victory, earned by its pious citizens even in the face of defeat.

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<sup>148</sup>*Religious Herald*, 29 December 1864.

<sup>149</sup>Minnigerode, *He that believeth shall not make haste*, 8.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

In mid-late February 1865, Presbyterian Rev. Joseph Stiles spoke at the 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church on Broad Street in downtown Richmond. Stiles, known as a witty and ardent defender of the Confederacy, often preached to troops in the field. For two hours, he spoke of cities under siege throughout history and pleaded that his congregation use these as a model for their lives should times become seemingly unbearable. As Stiles noted of a Roman Sentinel at the gates of Pompei, “The earth beneath him heaved and rocked, but he kept his post! The air was whirling madly around him, but he kept his post!...Behind him the terrified people were fleeing in dismay, and he kept his post! My countryman! That old sentinel is the model man for you!” And yet, as if it were a divine rebuke of their prayers, the message of Confederate lines breaking around Petersburg arrived during Sunday mass. The news interrupted church services across the city. Reading a note passed to him with news that Richmond would be evacuated and that he should leave with politicians headed out of town via train that evening, Moses Hoge resumed and finished his service, reminding his congregation that “God is with us in the storm as well as the calm.” Once again, by fate or curse, news of Lee’s surrender reached Richmond during services on Palm Sunday.<sup>151</sup>

After four long years, the demands of war had altered the political and religious traditions of those who inhabited the city of Richmond and many others across the South. Though the Virginia of the Old Dominion had been known for its association with figures like Jefferson and Madison, who attempted to build a wall of separation between church and state, the lived experience of Richmond at war led to dramatic changes in society, especially in regards to the involvement of religion in politics. In defending the Confederate cause, both the church and state changed. Whereas the Antebellum period had been defined largely

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<sup>151</sup> Quotes from Ferguson, *Ashes of Glory*, 320.

by the state's monopoly of power over the church, the need for a higher order justification promoting the cause fundamentally altered the interaction of the state with the church. The church also changed. Years of denominational bickering over the degree to which the church should be removed from government gave way to a period of tremendous consensus. The uniquely evangelical nature of the message generated consensus and sustained the cause even after the South's military defeat and political dissolution. Cultivating a Christian patriotism that chastised sin and promoted respectable moral character became a practical necessity for the both the church and the state. Calls by the state for sacrifice to cultivate Christian virtue increased in number and intensity until the end of the war. After the war, the former State's surrogates, its religious institutions, those whose supposedly apolitical existence continued to promote the cause during Reconstruction, carried the political torch of the defeated Confederacy. Religion offered people a way to understand defeat and a space in which to defend the legitimacy of slavery and the Confederate cause during Reconstruction, and remained a central component of the battle over the memory of the Confederacy and the Southern interpretation of the war. At the same time, religion was a way for many Southerners, especially women, to negotiate between the world of the Old South and the new world brought about by the end and outcome of the war.

#### **Chapter Four: Lost Cause Religion and the Contest for Confederate Memory**

In many ways, the end of the Civil War left the religious institutions of the South in the same position in which they found themselves before the war. Southerners had rallied to the cause driven by a sectional identity based upon the superior character, honor, and moral qualities of their citizenry as well as the legitimacy and superior nature of their way of life. The division of the Protestant churches of the South in the late Antebellum period helped

promote this identity before a political entity existed that afforded people a national citizenship celebrating this lofty sense of self. Yet, in defending slavery and Southerners' claims that the onslaught against their sovereignty was as much a Constitutional issue as it was a moral dispute, membership in the Southern churches before the war was, in many ways, political. Churches and religious leaders, who helped lead the South to secession and ranked among the most vocal proponents of the Confederacy and its cause during the war, were the perfect agents to help Southerners navigate the seemingly hopeless and increasingly complicated world of defeat. Without a political entity to pledge their allegiance to, white Southerners claimed loyalty to the South more generally based on a regional cultural identity sustained by evangelical Christian values and their memory of the cause. While much has been written about the religion of the Lost Cause and the proper characterization of religion's influence, there is no question that its tenets were shaped, perpetuated, and defended by Protestant Christian views of the South's unique character and institutions. Armed with their memory of the martyrs of the South and the Christian character of the Southern army and citizens, the religious institutions of the South returned to their pre-war defense of the Southern way of life to defend the cause. Tracing the tenets of the Lost Cause to pre-war and war time values and attitudes helps illustrate that the cause for which Southerners had fought, sacrificed, and died was anything but dead. While the political entity that had legitimated these views may have been lost, the cause itself had, since its inception, transcended politics. Though the symbols of the state became part of the culture of the Lost Cause, its message was identical to the message of the Antebellum and war-time church. Since the religious institutions of the church were as important to the cause as the government, the cause survived even after its political manifestation was no more. As one Methodist pastor put it,



“If we cannot gain our *political*, let us establish at least our *mental* independence.”<sup>152</sup> With the state gone, religion seemed to offer them even more. Though Southerners could never politically unite and faced debilitating class division, religion helped generate unity for the cause offering a community of believers, a conviction of righteousness, and a space for remembrance that could be political and avoid political scrutiny.

Established three months after Congress passed the Reconstruction Acts by Congress, the *Southern Opinion* was a Lost Cause publication. Operated by avowed secessionist and the wartime editor of the *Richmond Daily Examiner*, H. Rives Pollard, the paper openly defended the cause even under the shadow of Reconstruction. The heading atop each issue declared, “My country—May she always be right; but right or wrong—My country.” Despite acknowledging the potential for doubt, Pollard’s main goal was vindication. He understood the need to separate the righteousness of the cause from success and victory. According to Pollard, while the South might be “politically dead,” it was not “socially or intellectually dead” and thus former Confederates must “foster in the hearts of our children the memories of a century of political and mental triumphs” and preserve the righteousness of the memory of the cause. Rives was not the only Pollard concerned with who controlled the narrative of this memory. Edward A. Pollard, also an outspoken secessionist who assisted his brother Rives in editing the *Daily Examiner*, is often credited with coining the phrase “the Lost Cause.” An author of many works on the Southern perspective of the conflict being waged around him, Pollard published *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederate States* just a year after the war’s end. Pollard’s work and the scholarship of the Lost Cause promulgated four main ideas: slavery was a benign institution that was part of

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<sup>152</sup> Robert Crozier, *The Confederate Spy: A History of the war of 1861*, quoted in Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion*, 44.

God's plan for the South; the Constitution and state's rights, not slavery, motivated and made secession necessary; the Southern cause was morally righteous, the North had been the aggressors and should respect and honor Southerners; and finally that the fighting quality of Southern soldiers was unparalleled, they lost only because they were outmanned and faced an insurmountable resource disadvantage.<sup>153</sup> Evangelical Christianity helped shape and promote each of these Lost Cause tenets, all framed in a religious rhetoric and language the vast majority of white Southerners understood. They had heard it before.

Attempts at shaping the public memory of these subjects in Richmond pre-dated the war and were as central to wartime discourse as they were to post-war understandings of the cause. Due to the new relationship between church and state that formed in wartime Virginia, and having supported, endorsed, and housed the secessionist government, the Southern church felt the need to justify its actions throughout the war. In doing so, it shaped the Lost Cause, well before it was ever lost. The most contentious of the Lost Cause tenets, a defense of the legitimacy and morality of slavery, dominated sermons and publications of the Richmond religious voice dating from the sectional divide of the churches in the 1840s through the end of the war. Rev. T.V. Moore, in a sermon delivered in November of 1861, had already begun to defend the Southern church against claims that slavery was the South's largest sin, *the* sin. He stated, "An institution has been planted on our soil, the ethical nature of which, as a relation in human society, it is too late to argue, for God has recognized it twice in the Decalogue, and devoted an entire epistle to an incident connected with it the New Testament, without hinting at its unlawfulness."<sup>154</sup> What is significant here is not just the biblical defense of slavery within Antebellum conflict on the issue. The claim that

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<sup>153</sup> Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*.

<sup>154</sup> Moore, *Guide Our Refuge and Strength*, 19.

slavery “was planted on our soil” reveals the Southern church’s perception of itself as the leader of a new Christian history. They inherited slavery from the old world and, though contentious, and it seemed to offer an opportunity to claim a unique history. In a fast day sermon in 1862, Bishop Elliott defined slavery as a transcendent burden for Southerners. According to Elliott, “We do not place our cause upon its highest level until we grasp the idea that God has made us guardians and champions of a people whom he is preparing for his own purposes and against whom the whole world is banded.”<sup>155</sup>

In March of 1863, Rev. William Norwood’s sermon assured Southerners they had succeeded in their providential mission of civilizing slaves. Norwood claimed the North had no more right to interfere with slavery in the South than they did with serfdom in Russia or the tenant system of England. Moving from a legal defense to a moral defense, he claimed, “The condition of slavery has resulted benevolently, so far as the slaves were concerned, by civilizing and Christianizing them, and elevating them in all respects to the enjoyment of greater moral and physical blessings than had ever before been enjoyed by any considerable portion of the negro race in any age or country.”<sup>156</sup> This lofty rhetoric functioned to prove the legitimacy of slavery. Defending the Southern church’s support of the Confederacy in 1863, John Randolph Tucker argued that the presence of slavery had solved questions that plagued other free societies. The institution made political institutions more stable and enabled the South to avoid a conflict between capital and labor. Tucker concluded that emancipation failed by destroying the Christianizing influence on both slaves and their masters. Providence entrusted the slaves to the Southern people, and Southerners had improved their own moral character through a sense of benevolent personal responsibility for

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<sup>155</sup> Elliott, *Our cause in harmony*, 14.

<sup>156</sup> Norwood, *God and Country*, 8.

their slave's care and development. Those who pushed for emancipation interfered with the conscience of the Southern slaveholder in meeting his duty of cultivating the moral character of the slave, which interfered with the relationship between an individual's soul and God—the worse of all travesties. For Tucker, if Southern men and women were unprepared to defend their religion, civilization, and home, then, “the South would have proved unworthy of a place among nations, and derelict to the mighty trust, which God had confided in their keeping.”<sup>157</sup> If slavery was in fact the reason why they lost, it was because of the treachery of the North in removing the institution that, according to Tucker, allowed them to fulfill the responsibility God entrusted to them.

Nevertheless, many people believed the South had neglected this providential purpose, especially as they experienced significant military reverses. “God will not be mocked by us,” one preacher warned, “If we take His word to defend slavery, we must submit the institution to His government.”<sup>158</sup> The message that slavery was not sinful if slaveholders transformed slavery into a Christian institution resurrected Antebellum debates. Following the war, some Southerners developed the tradition of explaining military reverses as the result of their own lack of faith and sins, and many believed God was punishing them for neglecting their duty to their slaves. Yet they still had time to carry out their divine mission and save their existence. A committee report to the Virginia Synod in 1862 outlined how, “If the Southern Zion shall fully awake to the magnitude of this great work and address itself diligently to its discharge, then will she receive the rich smiles of her Divine Head, and the abundant tokens of his favor; then will the relation of master and slave, as it obtains with

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<sup>157</sup> Tucker, *The Bible or Atheism*, Richmond, 186? Digitized by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for the *Documenting the American South* project, 2000, 17. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/impls/religion.html> (accessed Feb 10, 2010)

<sup>158</sup> *Biblical Recorder*, September 24, 1862, quoted in Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, 76.

us, be vindicated in the eyes of the world; and then will our beloved Confederacy occupy a pinnacle of moral grandeur, and become a praise and a blessing in all the earth.”<sup>159</sup> Such attitudes help explain why many Southerners, who were as loyal to the cause during the war as the leaders of the post-war lynch mobs, believed they still carried the paternalistic duty to evangelize and promote the betterment of free blacks. Plagued by questions about the religious future of freed slaves, many Southern churches sought to re-establish the bi-racial churches that reflected Antebellum religious arrangements. They argued that most free blacks had left the Southern churches due to the “sinister purposes” of Northerners who sought to stir alienation among the freemen of the South. Efforts to aid blacks in the creation of separate religious organizations managed by whites and eventually their assistance in organizing black associations, conferences, and presbyteries demonstrates that many religious institutions and their congregations still felt the call of providence.<sup>160</sup> However, promoting the betterment of freedmen out of obligation to God’s will did not mean relinquishing the moral high-ground in debates over the legitimacy of slavery and racial equality.

Post-war Southern churches took up a vociferous defense of the peculiar institution in large part because political outlets could not. In February of 1866, a contributor to the Baptist *Religious Herald* took issue with the suggestion that the war had been God’s way of bringing about the end of slavery. His objection was a racial one. “Can it be” the contributor asked, “that is was the *design* of God in the late terrible civil war to overthrow an institution which he himself ordained, established and sanctified, and which he ‘designed’ should exist

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<sup>159</sup> A. W. Miller, "Report on the State of the Church: A Paper Read Before the Synod of Virginia...1862", *Southern Presbyterian Review*, XV (January 1863), quoted in Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, 77.

<sup>160</sup>Stowell, *Reconstructing Zion*.

forever?” The writer scoffed at the notion, “that an inferior race might be released from nominal bondage and endowed with a freedom which, to them, is but another name for licentiousness, and which must end in complete extermination...I can not, I will not believe it...It was Satan that ruled the hour.”<sup>161</sup> This logic was not new. As shown earlier, the religious defense of racial inequality can be traced to debates that emerged well before the Civil War over the legitimacy of slavery. As the war neared an end, the religious voice explicitly expressed this argument with greater insistence, illustrating a deeper anxiety over the uncertain racial environment of the post-war period. In November of 1864, responding to its own question, “Now what are we fighting for?” the *Richmond Inquirer* spelled it out directly in terms that demonstrate the cause remained paramount even after defeat, “We are fighting for the idea of race.”<sup>162</sup> In a three-hundred and fifty page justification of slavery in 1867, *A Defense of Virginia, and Through Her, of the South*, Robert Lewis Dabney, an outspoken defender of slavery before the war, recognized that the religious history of Southern slavery was at stake. Responding to the assumption that the slavery question had been answered, Dabney replied, “Would God it were dead! But in the Church, abolitionism lives, and is more rampant and mischievous than ever, as infidelity... faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ dare not cease to oppose and unmask it...Because we believe that God intends to vindicate his Divine Word, and to make all nations honour it...we confidently expect that the world will yet do justice to Southern slaveholders.”<sup>163</sup>

Warnings of the dire threats to the Southern place in history appeared regularly in appeals to the public by religious and political leaders, helping fuel efforts to preserve the

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<sup>161</sup> John Leland, "The War - God's Design to Abolish Slavery," *Religious Herald*, 22 February 1866, quoted in Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion*, 43.

<sup>162</sup> *Daily Richmond Enquirer*, April 15, 1861, quoted in Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, 60.

<sup>163</sup> Robert Lewis Dabney, *A Defence of Virginia, and Through Her, of the South* (New York: E.J. Hale and Son, 1867), 6.

memory of the South. Dr. Hunter McGuire of Virginia warned veterans that northern histories of the war were intent on arguing that “the Southern soldiers, however brave, was actuated by no higher motive than the desire to retain the money value of slave property... They right believe that the world, once convinced of this, will hold us degraded rather than worthy of honor, and that our children, instead of reverencing in their fathers, will be secretly if not openly ashamed.”<sup>164</sup> Confirmation that the cause of slavery and the South did indeed have a higher moral purpose became a critical component of ensuring their Southern honor and what they perceived as their rightful memory. Speaking at the dedication of the restored White House of the Confederacy in 1896, former Confederate General Bradley T. Johnson provided such a defense of the cause, interweaving the unmatched character and strength of the Southern people, blaming the North for the war, and the righteousness of slavery fused with the message of white racial superiority. Distinguishing between slavery and slave power, Johnson noted that “the Southern race ruled the continent from 1775 to 1860, and it became evident that it would rule it forever as long as the same conditions existed.” Though Johnson acknowledged that “Slavery was the source of political power and it was selected as the point of attack,” abolitionism and emancipation, not slavery, were the true crimes of the era. Uniting the tenets of the Lost Cause, Johnson restored honor to the South, “Against his will, [the freedman] has been turned loose in America, to do the best he can, in the contest with the strongest race that ever lived. Nothing was ever devised so cruel, as forcing on these children, the power and responsibility of the ballot. It requires power they have not got; it subjects them to tests they cannot stand, and will cause untold misery to them in the future... the great crime of the century was the emancipation of the

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<sup>164</sup> Quoted in Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 206.

Negroes.”<sup>165</sup> For Johnson, the North had interfered with the South’s providential mission from God, the protection and betterment of African slaves. His critique of emancipation showed the ease with which Lost Cause preachers moved from Antebellum defense of slavery to the racial nature of the Lost Cause message.

At the same time, Southerners, including the religious voice, made herculean efforts to disassociate slavery with the cause of the war. Rev. T.V. Moore argued that the war was the natural result of a diversity of interests in the previous union. He stated, “The deep, original cause of that mighty disruption that is now going forward was the diversity of interests that were included in a single government, interests so vast, and connected with other diversities...that all could not be harmonized under one organization.”<sup>166</sup> To others, the violation of the Constitution and thus, the defense of the heritage of Virginia, brought about the bitter conflict. According to John Randolph Tucker, the occasion of the war was secession, not the cause. The cause of secession, and thus the cause of the war, was the “outrage perpetuated, and threatened, upon the Constitutional rights of these States.”<sup>167</sup> Quoting the 10<sup>th</sup> amendment, Tucker re-emphasized the memory of state’s rights as to justify and defend secession. Interviewing the citizens of Richmond after its fall, a Northern reporter named John Richard Dennett captured the fine-line Southerners walked to move the debate beyond slavery. One Richmond citizen stated, “The North had repeatedly violated the Constitutional guarantees of slavery. Yes, sir, we had a most perfect right to secede, and we have been slaughtered by the thousands for attempting to exercise it. And yet it is a fashion

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<sup>165</sup> Johnson, *Address Delivered*, 12-13; *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 23 February 1896, quoted in Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 208-209.

<sup>166</sup> Moore, *God Our Refuge and Strength*, 11.

<sup>167</sup> Tucker, *Southern church justified*, 9.



to call us traitors.”<sup>168</sup> Slavery itself was not the main issue for the South, but rather the violation of the Constitutional guarantee of slavery justified their actions. This sentiment also reveals the relationship between Southern honor and the legitimacy of the cause; any wavering of one threatened the other.

Portraying the North as the violent aggressors in contrast to the unequalled moral Christian soldier of the South, Tucker also defended the South with the logic of the final two tenets of the Lost Cause. According to Tucker, the South had not made war. In attempting to hold a federal fort in the South, with its guns “loaded and pointed at our cities and homes—as the securities of Despotism, for its continued oppression,”<sup>169</sup> the North had been the aggressor. The South was summoned to arms by the dictatorial actions of President Lincoln:

These States sought only to be free and independent. They preferred no claim against the United States. They said, we cannot live under your Government in safety—seek your own welfare in peace—let us seek ours without war—we will settle all questions amicably—since we cannot live together without conflict and contention...Could anything be more reasonable and just? Could the South propose terms more Christian in their character? But Pharaoh was resolved not to let the people go! Eight sovereign States, were denounced as insurgents, and were told to return to their homes—or war was declared. The riot act was read to eight commonwealths; and a bill of indictment was found against 12,000,000 of people!...We appeal to Christendom—to Christians everywhere—could the South submit to the rule of the North, whose menace of wrong was thus backed by violence? Could the Christian Church in the South fail to pray for the defense of rights threatened by a usurping Government, or refuse to unite in resistance to that usurpation sustained by the force of arms?<sup>170</sup>

To Tucker, the war had been managed without mercy and contrary to accepted norms of civilized warfare. Northerners burned and plundered homes, raped women, dragged ministers through the streets, and took from the earth what barely fed those who lived there. He deemed the defense of their homes, families and the cause against invading soldiers as moral, righteous, and virtuous. Appealing to virtue and their moral conduct, defeated

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<sup>168</sup> Quoted in Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 54.

<sup>169</sup> Tucker, *Southern church justified*, 24.

<sup>170</sup> Tucker, *Southern church justified*, 25-26.

Confederates, emerged, in this view, as the better men. The Council of the Episcopal Church in May of 1863 declared, “It is true, I think, that no such body of soldiers has been assembled, presenting so much evidence of good character and Christian principle.”<sup>171</sup> Rev. William Norwood added, “Thank God!...that we have so many godly men guiding our armies; that we have so many praying soldiers fighting our battles...If ten righteous men would have saved Sodom, will not the noble and valor and patriotism of our army, aided by the prayers of hundreds of thousands of God’s children, save us from the destruction that our enemies threaten?”<sup>172</sup> According to this logic, under the leadership of General Lee and the late Christian hero, General Jackson, the Southern soldier was unparalleled. With the staunch support of the Christian patriot at home, he could not be stopped. Tracing the roots of the Lost Cause to wartime reflections on the legitimacy and providential purpose of the cause helps to understand how these ideas became so deeply entrenched in Southern culture. They were not simply post-war reactions to defeat. Since the Antebellum period, the religious institutions and leaders of the South had defended slavery and the Southern way of life. Dividing from their Northern counterparts to protect the moral character and integrity of the most important of Southern institutions, the churches of the South helped to form the distinctively “Southern” identity that remained resistant to change well after the war.

Their resistance and the defense of the tenets of the Lost Cause had no better platform than the project to create and sustain a uniquely Southern memory of the war. While speaking to the Oakwood Memorial Association and the Lee and Pickett Soldiers’ Camps, Reverend R. A. Goodwin, rector of the historic St. John’s Church, captured the defiant tone of Confederate memory at the turn of the century. In his sermon, “No Fight for Right and

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<sup>171</sup> Protestant Episcopal Church, 1863, 88.

<sup>172</sup> Norwood, *God and Country*, 16.

Truth and Honor Was Ever Truly Lost,” he declared, “God is in our history as truly as He was in the history of Israel, and we should hear his word,” as, “only by knowing and keeping in mind the past could they have faith to meet present perplexities, and disturbing doubt about the future.” Seeing God in history enabled Southerners to honorably come to terms with military defeat without compromising their ideology. Though their armies and government had been defeated, their moral legacy and character would live on. According to Goodwin, “Without the welding together of our people by the fiery trials of war, of reconstruction, of threatened servile domination, we could not have been the conserving power we have been. If this government is still to stand for liberty and freedom, it will be the South which will preserve it, and in the good providence of our God, bringing the good out of evil, our sufferings will help to bring a blessing to all people.” Southerners thus sacrificed themselves for the good of all mankind. In doing so, Goodwin decreed that their “real cause was not lost,” as, “No fight for right and truth and honor was every truly lost.” The Confederate past was vindicated, and the focus became ensuring that the new cause, the memory of the Confederacy, was never lost. As Goodwin implored, “By the good hand of God the past has made the present, we must see to it that the future shall be worthy of the past and the present.”<sup>173</sup>

Invisible shadows weighed heavily on the first memorials erected to honor the Confederate dead in Richmond. One quarter of the South’s male population between the ages seventeen and fifty perished in a losing effort, blacks freely walked through the streets

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<sup>173</sup> Rev. R.A. Goodwin, rector of St. John’s Church Sept 1893 to Feb 1914, “No Fight for Right and Truth and Honor Was Ever Truly Lost,” (From Richmond, VA, *Times-Dispatch*, June 20, 1909 but delivered on May 9, 1909), in *Southern Historical Society Papers*, ed. J. William Jones (Richmond, VA: Southern Historical Society, 1909), 338-339; 345; 340. Goodwin’s tombstone on the St. John’s ground reads: “Thanks be to God Which Giveth Us the Victory Through Our Lord Jesus Christ.” This would be the immortalized last words of this sermon. From Virginia Historical Society.

with firearms while Southerners had been stripped of their weapons, and widespread concerns existed about the neglect of the Confederate dead throughout the region. As the federal government quickly established National Cemeteries for their fallen heroes, the shallow and untended graves of Confederates scattered across the South languished. Reconstruction policies also significantly limited the ability of Southerners to symbolically and openly honor the Confederacy. Confederate flags were prohibited in public ceremonies, as were decorated military uniforms, and Southerners could not honor the Confederate cause in public addresses. The government actively tried to purge any symbols of the former Confederacy from public spaces. Due to strict restrictions on activity in the public sphere, Confederate “Cities of the Dead,”<sup>174</sup> sacred spaces dedicated to the memory of the Confederacy, became active places of resistance to what were deemed radical restrictions. Southerners’ faith not only compelled them to volunteer, it afforded them a seemingly apolitical cloak to continue what would otherwise be seen as open political defiance and support for the Confederacy.

At the end of the war, it seemed all of Richmond was a sacred space integral to the collective memory of the South. Confederate gravesites were scattered throughout the city, the two largest being the Oakwood and Hollywood Cemeteries. The Ladies Memorial Associations working to preserve these two cemeteries were among the largest and most active of all of the Memorial Associations of the South.<sup>175</sup> Spanning over sixteen acres with significant sections devoted to Confederate dead, Hollywood Cemetery was the final resting

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<sup>174</sup>This term is borrowed from William Blair’s *Cities of the Dead* though it also appears in Wilson’s *Baptized in Blood* and Foster’s *Ghosts of the Confederacy*. The term initially described the cemeteries of the South that were the focus of Confederate Decoration Days, but recent works including Blair and Caroline Janney’s *Burying the Dead But Not the Past* have extended the term in describing spaces of cities dedicated to the memory of the Confederacy.

<sup>175</sup>Confederate Southern Memorial Associations, *History of the Confederate Memorial Associations of the South* (New Orleans: Confederate Southern Memorial Association, 1904).

place of eighteen thousand Confederate soldiers from across the South, including roughly three thousand soldiers reinterred from the battlefields of Gettysburg. Jefferson Davis, J.E.B. Stuart, and George Pickett topped the list of the twenty-five Confederate generals eventually buried in the cemetery, more than at any other in the South. The Confederate Soldiers Monument, a ninety foot tall granite pyramid erected in 1869, served as a silent testament to the past and to their honor and sacrifice. The end of Reconstruction ensured that such monuments would not be confined to cemeteries for long. Many sacred monuments dotted the city's landscape by 1920. Two statues devoted to Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, one to Lee, the Davis Memorial, the J.E.B. Stuart equestrian statue, and the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument all attracted huge crowds who took part in unveiling ceremonies that served as dedications to the public memory of the Confederacy. Richmond also remained the home of key institutions that preserved the history of the Confederate past. It housed the Confederate Memorial Institute, the White House and Museum of the Confederacy, Battle Abbey and the Virginia Historical Society, the Southern Historical Society, and eventually became the headquarters of the United Confederate Veterans, United Daughters of the Confederacy, and the convention for the Confederated Southern Memorial Association.<sup>176</sup> Richmond seamlessly transitioned from the capitol city of the Confederacy to the capitol of the Cities of the Dead and quickly became a staging point for a battle over public space and the collective memory of the Confederacy. Because of its Revolutionary history, political legacy, proximity to the war, and importance to the cause during the war, Richmond played a key role in defending and honoring the Lost Cause.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*.

<sup>177</sup> Though a chapter devoted to Richmond in Reiko Hillyer, *Designing Dixie: Tourism, Memory and Urban Space in the New South* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014) suggests that the colonial and Revolutionary heritage of Virginia was central to its urban development, it cannot be denied that the Lost Cause impacted Richmond

The white citizens of Richmond, however, were not the first to use the city's public spaces to celebrate the history of the war. The city's first major commemoration occurred on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1866. The controversy surrounding the event, and future events like it, symbolized the emerging public battle over the memory of the war. When Richmond fell, black Union troops were the first to march through the city. In a symbolic public act, the city's black residents greeted the 36<sup>th</sup> U.S. Colored Troops with cheers and sat in awe of the sight of the Provost Marshall hoisting the American flag over the state capitol. Amid the destruction caused by the fires that spread throughout the downtown area during the evacuation, Richmond's black citizens remembered April 3<sup>rd</sup>, Evacuation Day, as the symbolic origin of their freedom, while white Southerners remembered the humiliation of defeat. Organized by black community leaders, Evacuation Day became a civic celebration of freedom in Richmond that surpassed the number of participants in similar events for the celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation. The reaction of Richmond's white citizens illustrates the social tension over the use of public space for memorial commemoration. On March 26<sup>th</sup>, 1866, an editorial in the *Richmond Dispatch* noted, "The 3rd of April is indeed no time for rejoicing of anybody here. It was a day of gloom and calamity to be remembered with a shudder of horror by all who saw it...It is not in their interest and should not be their disposition to insult the people amongst whom they live, and upon whose kindness and friendship they must depend for employment and success in life."<sup>178</sup> These sentiments did

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city space. While Hillyer's sources center primarily on the message and materials that were projected to *external* donors, investors, and visitors of the New South urban spaces, this paper focuses on sustaining a *Southern* nationalism and culture within the community and residents of the city. Hillyer's conclusion is not entirely inconsistent the argument that religion fueled both a moral compass to New South opportunities and a source for sustaining a *Southern* nationalism. Rather, it suggests they were aware of the need to navigate the challenges of the New South and at least promote a reconciled vision of progress through historicism to external parties. This does not mean they weren't still furthering a sectional identity internally.

<sup>178</sup> *Richmond Dispatch*, 26 March 1866, quoted in Blair, *Cities of the Dead*, 35.

incite violence. Days before the celebration an unknown and likely white resident set fire to the Second African Baptist Church, a freedmen's school, and the meeting location for those planning the event. However, nothing on this scale occurred on the planned day for the celebrations. Fifteen-thousand onlookers watched as over one-thousand black men in uniform with arms at their side marched through the city streets while several hundred rode their horses from Broad Street to Capitol Square. Though there were no major clashes, Richmond citizens proclaimed that those who left work to "engage in the jubilee" would "not be employed again by their old masters."<sup>179</sup> Still using the language of slavery to describe now paid or indebted employees, the citizen's choice of rhetoric illustrated both their resistance to these celebrations and their insistence on stubbornly clinging to racism and the institutions of the past. For the white citizens of Richmond, such joyful celebrations of freedom were an affront to their honor and to the memory of a city that had resisted subjugation by enemy forces for the entirety of the war.

The secular press reiterated this defensive position on the first anniversary of Independence Day after the war. Under the watchful eye of Northern troops, a day set aside for national celebration of the independence of the United States was mostly a celebration of emancipation by the city's black residents. The edition of the *Richmond Times* circulated on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1866 tried to limit the public significance of the day's events stating, "We will let him [the freed slave] have the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation all to himself, and lend him the square for a day to do honor to his freedom but the ringing of the liberty bell on Independence square, July 4, 1776, in no way intoxicated Cuffee with visions of Liberty and Equality before the law." Reminding blacks of their place, it claimed, "That Declaration

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<sup>179</sup> *Richmond Times*, 18 April 1866, quoted in Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 90.

of Independence was altogether a white man's affair...[it] was the work of a Virginia slaveholder, and host of mighty Virginians sustained its indignant protests with sword and pen." White Richmonders, mostly powerless to prevent the use of their public space by blacks for these celebrations, nonetheless made it clear that they claimed the legacy and public memory of the square. White slaveholding Virginians created the space and the event that newly freed blacks celebrated, albeit with slave labor. Most whites saw these events not as a celebration of black freedom but rather as evidence of their own direct subjugation. The Editor of the *Richmond Times*, in the days leading up to the events noted, "Such anniversaries are fraught with nothing but sad and bitter memories...that our State Governments and Legislatures have been arbitrarily suspended; that our towns have been burnt, and our sea coasts ravaged by foreign mercenaries; that our laws have been nullified...; that our people have been tried and punished by illegal tribunals; that domestic insurrections have been incited by false doctrines, and that our petitions to Congress for redress have been derided and laughed at."<sup>180</sup> For the residents of Richmond, these celebrations haunted their memories of the war and stoked a sense of injustice. Former slaves and black soldiers, many who donned the Union blue and carried rifles, were free to march through the streets of Richmond in the public spaces so cherished by the white citizens of Richmond, while any attempts to honor the Southern cause were publicly regulated. As many watched these scenes unfold, their selfish need to defend their cause and celebrate their own memory of the war became a priority for white Southerners. The religious voice and the sacred spaces of Richmond provided an effective refuge and front for sustaining Confederate nationalism in the face of these direct challenges.

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<sup>180</sup> *Richmond Times*, 30 June , 1866, quoted in Blair, *Cities of the Dead*, 28.



Honoring the dead emerged as another source of tension for defenders of the cause as cemeteries became a hotly contested space. After the war, many soldiers' bodies still lay where they had fallen, often in shallow, hastily dug or mass graves. Within a year, the Federal government began the process of establishing National Cemeteries and reintering the bodies of fallen Union soldiers. At least seventeen of these sites were located in Virginia, with many—Cold Harbor, Seven Pines, Fort Harrison, Hampton, and Glendale—surrounding the city of Richmond. These cemeteries contained only the Union fallen. The dead thus took on significant political and symbolic importance as their burial, or lack thereof, were perceived in uniquely political ways. On May 5th, 1866, the *Richmond Daily Examiner* outlined frustration regarding the burial of the dead. “The ‘Nation’s Dead’, as our stricken opponents are called are abundantly cared for by their Government. We, it is true, poor and needy, have to contribute to the magnificent mausoleums that enshrine their crumbling relics. The nation condemns our dead. They are left in deserted places to rot into oblivion,” the author argued.<sup>181</sup> The editor made clear political distinctions when referring to the Government as “*their* government” and invested the dead with political relevance. How a nation honored its dead had implications for the moral status and respectability of its citizens. The Norfolk Virginian clearly expressed such sentiments. Speaking of the monuments being raised in the National Cemeteries throughout the state, the paper asked a serious question of Virginians, “...as the splendid shaft rises above the Northern dead, how sad and painful to think of the unmarked ground that holds the ashes of those dearest to us; how cruel the words of Henry Ward Beecher...pointing his finger to the neglected mounds around our hospitals

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<sup>181</sup> *Richmond Daily Examiner*, 5 May, 1866, quoted in Blair, *Cities of the Dead*, 53.

and in our fields, and asking, ‘Who shall comfort those who sit by dishonored graves?’<sup>182</sup> This observer invoked terms that resonated deeply with Virginian culture; their honor was threatened. Through the controversy surrounding National Cemeteries, sustaining the moral character of the South became an important theme in debates about the burial of the dead. The creation of National Cemeteries signified to Southerners that Northerners recognized the Confederate dead as traitors. Just as they were called to action during the war, Southerners believed it was their duty to honor the dead by preserving the memory of the Confederate hero and immortalizing their sacrifices.

Motivated by a faith in God and the cause, and determined to defend the honor of their past, citizens of Richmond defended their history and moral character through memorial activities. In language that reflected the description of the South and Richmond in particular during the war, the Hollywood Memorial Association desired that Hollywood Cemetery become a “Mausoleum, to the Martyrs of the South” a “‘Mecca of the South’—to which, annually, shall come from every Southern State, Pilgrim widows and Orphans, Fathers and Mothers, Brothers and Sisters, relatives and friends, bringing their tribute of flowers, bedewed with Southern tears!” The citizens of Richmond recreated the war-time city of their memory behind the gates of Hollywood cemetery. Motivated by Northern actions, the volunteers and visitors to Hollywood cemetery gave of themselves once again to the ongoing battle for victory over the memory of the war. They saw their efforts to defend the memory of the Confederacy as one “of the Holiest and most sublime features in the History of the Southern Cause.”<sup>183</sup> Indeed the very arrangement of the graves—organized by grouping the

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<sup>182</sup> *Norfolk Virginian*, 31 March, 1866, quoted in Blair, *Cities of the Dead*, 53-54.

<sup>183</sup> "Letter to the Women of Virginia," c. 1866, HMA correspondence, MOC, quoted in Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 93.

graves of Confederates from the same states together—immortalized the cause of state’s rights. As a result, cemeteries, holy places of death for Confederate soldiers and perpetual life for the Confederate cause, sustained Southern nationalism long after the war ended.

Ceremonies surrounding the burial and memorialization of the dead did not follow a consistent timeline. Organizers tended to choose dates central to particular localities and with local significance. Yet, all of these ceremonies shared three common characteristics: the positioning of their celebrations in the cities’ sacred spaces—churches, cemeteries, etc.; the rhetoric of religion through jeremiad sermons, psalm readings, and prayers; and the leadership of women’s Memorial Associations. Decorations Days and Memorial Days offered the people of the South the opportunity to honor the memory of the past even amidst tight Reconstruction era restrictions on public displays of Confederate nationalism.

Richmond residents celebrated the first Decoration Day twice with two different Memorial Associations leading the events. On May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1866 the Oakwood Memorial Association sponsored a Decoration Day to honor the memory of Stonewall Jackson. The day began at the historic St. John’s Church with a reading of psalms, a prayer, and a message that emphasized the need to honor the Confederate dead by tending to and caring for the graves of those who had fallen. Following the sermon, the public procession made its way from St. John’s to Oakwood Cemetery where orators spoke of the need to bury the dead and honor their service. Appeals to the moral character of the South through religion enabled individuals to obey the law and yet symbolically embody and promote the Confederate cause. The sermons that day illustrated the political weight of religion during Reconstruction. Rev. J.E. Edwards pointed to the unity of the South through Confederate dead in Richmond. Soldiers who lay in untended graves had come from across the South to defend the capitol,

linking all Confederates to the city. He stated, “The blood of people of every Southern State has been mingled together; they were comrades on the march and in camp; were one in thought and one in purpose...the South is now united by a band of graves—a tie that can never be sundered.”<sup>184</sup> Because the war had politicized religion and vice versa, these sermons embodied the Confederate cause.

Building on the wartime message of the lessons learned from losses and God’s faith in the South even after surrender, it became common for ministers of the South to engage in a Christian interpretation of the history of Confederate failure by professing the moral qualities of defeat. Methodist minister J.L. Gilbert, writing in 1869, mused about the future form of the success of the Confederacy. Confederate defeat was, “a necessary disciplinary ordeal, chosen by God, in his wisdom, by which he designed to prepare the Christian Churches of these States for their high and holy mission, as custodians of an unadulterated evangelism, and as his honored instruments for the development of a pure Christian civilization throughout this continent and throughout Christendom.” Defeat became a preparation for what was to come. Southerners looked to the past to prove to themselves they were worthy of their future. Religion was an important force ensuring that Southerners understood their self-identified status as God’s chosen people, even in the face of defeat. God would eventually bring good from evil, but first he demanded their conviction and belief in providence. Therefore, religious Southerners saw their participation in memorialization as an active preparation for the future. As Bishop Stephen Elliott proclaimed in May of 1866, “Arouse yourselves, children of God; and while you humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, forget not that you are Christ’s servants, bound to do His work in the church

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<sup>184</sup>Rev. J.E. Edwards, “Memorial Sermon,” *Richmond Dispatch*, 11 May 1866.

militant upon earth, and to advance His kingdom wherever He may spread the banner of the Cross. Instead of permitting suffering to overcome your faith, let it rather lead you on to perfection.”<sup>185</sup> Like the Biblical chosen people, Southerners endured defeat and in the process experienced a hardening of their evangelical religious ethos, which prepared them to combat evil on Earth and defend their social community in the name of God. Though the religious voice preached being humble in the eyes of God to achieve victory, Southerners demonstrated anything but humility in their treatment and discourse regarding Northerners or freed slaves.

The second Decoration Day in Richmond during the first year after the end of the war was arguably more open in its celebration of the Confederacy but relied on the same conventions as the Oakwood celebration earlier that month. Organized by the Hollywood Memorial Association, it was easily the largest recorded celebration of the first anniversary of the end of the war in the South, with an estimated twenty thousand people in attendance. The procession itself was comprised solely of soldiers; civilians and even the hosting members of the Association made their way to the cemetery by various means and not as part of the formal march. Twenty-three military companies donned their military uniforms, without insignia or buttons as the law required, for the event. However, the women who organized and participated in the event clearly made an impact on observers. One account in a local paper recalled, “It was a strange and splendid spectacle...The carriages, filled with lovely women, were covered with flowers; wreaths and garlands decked the roofs of the omnibuses usually devoted to baser burdens, and all the treasures of Spring seemed to blush

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<sup>185</sup> Quoted *ibid*, 74:79.

and tremble.”<sup>186</sup> The marchers in the formal procession gathered at various places throughout the city, and processed separately from their different starting points to Grace Church, where they formed a single line behind a military band to Hollywood Cemetery to honor the fallen Confederate soldiers. The symbolic nature of the procession—soldiers organizing from different parts of the city and being united by a church—highlighted the importance of religion and faith in unifying the Southern people in defense of the cause. There were no poems read or orations delivered, but their unified public act, the spaces they traversed, and the march through the city’s streets, publicly projected a unified defense of the cause. As time passed, and citizens of Richmond faced less scrutiny from Reconstruction governments, the overt celebration of the Confederate cause through the honoring of the dead became the norm of these celebrations.

Not all who followed the events were convinced by the attempts to couch these celebrations in the supposedly apolitical space of the church. Late in May after the first celebrations, Thomas Williams of Pennsylvania proposed a measure in Congress calling for the President to make good on his word to punish treason. Dismayed by rumors that services in Richmond had “not only been tolerated by the national authorities, but in some instances approved by closing the public offices on the occasion of floral processions to their graves, while the privilege of paying honors to the martyred dead of the armies of the Union who perished in the holy work of punishing the treason of those who are thus honored...has been denied to the loyal people of those communities by local authorities,” Williams insisted that the displays were “calculated to make loyalty odious and treason honorable, and to obstruct, if not entirely prevent, the growth of such a feeling as is essential to any cordial or permanent

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<sup>186</sup> *Richmond Times*, 1 June 1866, quoted in Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past*, 63.

reunion of these States.”<sup>187</sup> Southerners and Northerners used the same rhetoric to express their concerns. Both had engaged in a Holy struggle and both were concerned about the ability of the sympathizers of that struggle to honor the dead. By phrasing his criticism in the language of treason, Williams threatened the very thing these celebrations were meant to protect—the honor of former Confederates. Just as Southerners responded to Northern criticism of slavery in the Antebellum Era, as well as to Northern invasion, the events of May 10<sup>th</sup> and May 30<sup>th</sup> in Richmond enabled citizens to believe their loyalty and honor were upheld. The spiritual and psychological need for Southerners to reaffirm their wartime identities, like these Decoration Days, had outright religious and political dimensions. Through memorial activities, Southerners re-experienced and challenged the death of the Confederacy. While it ceased to be a viable political entity, the Confederacy remained a potent ideological one well into the twentieth century with profound implications for race relations. Religion afforded Southerners one of the only spaces where they could continue to nurture Confederate ideology. They did not agree on much over the course of the war and faced deep class divisions, but they did share a religious, evangelical vision and a commitment to white supremacy. With the state gone and a public that felt the need to insist on their righteousness and the legitimacy of what they fought for, religion offered the perfect platform and a community of believers to tap into. The church, in sustaining the cause, took on the political mission of the Confederacy and still remains a political actor in debates over the memory of the Confederate cause to this day.

### **Chapter Five: Old South Memory, New South Reality - “A Point Between the Eternal Past and the Everlasting Future”**

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<sup>187</sup> *Congressional Globe*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 28 May 1866, quoted in Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 95.

The end of Reconstruction brought about a renewed sense of the cause and a willingness to espouse it publicly. No longer in need of the protective sphere of religion, celebrations of the cause openly emphasized the self-sacrifice and honor of white Southerners. However, this in no way diminished the significance of religion in Lost Cause celebration. Quite the contrary, open public displays of Confederate memory utilized the conventions of memorialization popularized during Reconstruction. Given the centrality of religion to the moral character of the Confederate soldier and citizen, celebrating the cause meant celebrating the South's religious character. When celebrations of the memory of the Confederacy shifted from sacred space to public space, religion went with it. Since the 1840s the Southern churches had stepped beyond their physical and spiritual spaces to vocalize their position on heated political issues. In doing so, they constructed a sectional identity for Southerners that became an integral part of their culture. The presence of the church and church leaders in public celebrations of the cause of their former state completed the politicization of Southern religion and its transfer to public culture. Religion served as a conduit for the passing of the Confederacy from an outright political entity during the war, to a suppressed political memory during Reconstruction, and finally to a central component of the public culture of the South. This renewed popular interest in the cause was fueled by the rise of a new generation of Southerners who experienced the war as children and young adults and who desired that their children, who had not lived during the war, understand their continued devotion to the cause and its meaning. Thomas Munford, speaking to a crowd of Virginians in the mid-1880s, demonstrated not only the sectional attitudes of the cause, but also the need to pass the torch to a new generation. He stated, "To our children and their children's children, let it be our pride to teach them, as is done in every land where patriotism



and self-sacrificing spirits are honored and esteemed, that the Confederates shed their blood for their Mother, Virginia, defending a cause she knew to be right and just.”<sup>188</sup> Led by this new generation of Southerners, historicism became a central element of honoring Confederate memory in the post-Reconstruction South.

With Reconstruction over and the threat of punishment for public displays of Confederate loyalty fading, the memorial movement began to assert an even larger presence in the public spaces of Richmond. The shift from monuments erected in the cemetery to the city street represented a significant transition in the public memory of the war. In this era, monuments placed in cemeteries decreased from seventy percent to just over half. The number of memorials with funeral and death as the main motif dropped from over seventy percent to forty percent. From 1886 to the end of the century, more than sixty percent of monuments featured the common Civil War soldier. Between 1900 and 1912, just one quarter of all memorial celebrations had any funereal aspect, eighty percent featured the lone Confederate soldier, and more than eighty five percent were placed in open public places such as the town square or the courthouse lawn.<sup>189</sup> Civil War memory was no longer confined to sacred spaces. Instead, the memory of the war took on a much broader public nature as residents of the city interacted with the memory of the past each and every day. The fallen soldier of the ranks was a role model, the pillar of a community, law-abiding and loyal, and a standard of respectability for the common man to match. This did not mean that the leaders of the Confederacy received no attention in post-Reconstruction memorial ceremonies. Quite the contrary, memorials to Confederate leaders simply became a means of illustrating the character of the common soldier. Lee and Jackson were celebrated for their

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<sup>188</sup> Thomas T. Munford, Munford-Ellis Family Papers, quoted in Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 154.

<sup>189</sup> Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*.

leadership but also for the way they reflected the attributes possessed by *all* soldiers of the South—courage, piety, and patriotism.

The establishment of monuments dedicated to Lee and Jackson highlighted their symbolic importance for the honor of the Confederacy. Close to fifty thousand people gathered in Capitol Square to dedicate the statue to Stonewall Jackson in Richmond on October 26, 1875. The activities that day began, as they had during Reconstruction, with citizens attending prayer meetings in the morning at the city's churches and then stationing themselves throughout the city for a good view of the day's events. The procession began at eleven and proceeded through the city streets to the capitol grounds close to two hours later. Jackson was the most significant martyred Christian hero and the cast present to celebrate him reflected this view. Seated on the platform to honor him was Robert Lewis Dabney, the famous Presbyterian theologian who resisted Reconstruction and served on Jackson's staff; Reverend J.D. Smith of the General's staff; and D. S. Doggett, a Methodist Bishop and famous wartime minister, who gave the invocation. Doggett's prayer acknowledged God's providence and connected memorialization to religious character: "Grant that the monument erected on this spot, to the honor of thy servant, may ever stand as a permanent memorial to thy praise, and a perpetual incentive to a high and holy consecration to thy service, in all the avocations of life. May it silently and effectually inculcate noble ideas and inspire lofty sentiments in all spectators for all time to come. Above all, may it teach the youth of the land the solemn lesson of thy word, that the foundation of true greatness is fidelity to thee." Even the secular speaker that day framed the remembrance in terms of faith, as Governor

Kemper's address hailed Jackson as *the* noble "Christian warrior."<sup>190</sup> The day's events demonstrated two important elements of post-Reconstruction memorialization: the religious devotion of Southerners remained vital and central to the honoring of fallen heroes and the paramount importance of historicism and the need to preserve the cause for posterity.

The Virginia Legislature chose the orator for the event and they unanimously voted for Rev Moses D. Hoge to deliver the featured speech. The son and grandson of prominent Presbyterian clergymen, Hoge played a key role in support of the Confederacy as he served as a spiritual advisor to politicians, delivered the daily prayer for the Confederate Congress, and volunteered as a chaplain in the camps outside of Richmond, preaching three times a week and sometimes daily to crowds of upwards of one hundred thousand people before they left for their first military experiences. Hoge's words to the public that day illustrated the important role of moral character in sustaining Confederate patriotism. The South had lost the war, that Hoge could not deny, but to what end? Hoge defined the true memory of the Lost Cause. Addressing the crowd's participation in the event he declared, "We lay the corner-stone of a new Pantheon in commemoration of our country's fame...Defeat is the discipline which trains the truly heroic soul to further and better endeavors...and if history teaches any lesson, it is this, that a nation cannot long survive when the fundamental principles which gave it life, originally, are subverted."<sup>191</sup> While the Jackson statue celebrated the honor of Jackson and the Confederate past, for Hoge and many Southerners' it

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<sup>190</sup> Description of the day's events taken from Wilson's *Baptized in Blood*. Doggett prayer as quoted in Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 21.

<sup>191</sup> Quoted in Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 23. Wilson's note on the document is telling both to the importance of religious speakers at such events and the celebration of Confederate memory. According to Wilson, "the religious press praised Hoge's oration and the day's events...The *Central Presbyterian* stated that all true Southerners endorsed Hoge's remarks. It printed the oration because of its moral lessons, and urged that it be placed in textbook's used by Southern children. It observed that the crowd in Richmond had been like a "congregation of worshipers in the sanctuary." Wilson, 186-187. Impressions like these suggest religion helped transition the celebration of Confederate memory from the private sacred sphere to the public sphere.

also reflected the honor of those in the present who helped raise the monument and preserved the cause. Honoring the memory of the Confederacy in this way ensured that its motivating principles lived on. The monuments served as a constant reminder of the cause these men fought for as well as a call for those in the present to move forward while embodying the virtues and character of the past. Hoge clearly believed the importance for Southerners to remain committed to the task. Speaking to a group after the memorial at Jackson's statue, Hoge asked why the crowd greeted Jackson's daughter with wild exuberance at the ceremony. Before the group could answer him, he answered for them. "For why?" he asked, because, "General Jackson was dead but his daughter still lived. The Old South was dead, but the New South was alive; and though now like the slender girl standing on the frail railing of a temporary platform, yet through the loyal devotion and loving service of these young men, she shall yet stand before the world like the bronze Athena."<sup>192</sup> The generation of the New South was alive. Armed with a devotion to the cause of those before them they would carry the history and memory of the Confederacy with them into a new world and future. The lessons of Jackson and Lee served as their moral guide and compass.

No one who served the South, even the "Christian warrior," Stonewall Jackson, earned greater reverence than General Robert E. Lee. A fierce and cunning warrior, devout patriot, and pious Christian gentleman, Lee was the perfect figure to serve as a lesson from the past for those in the present. Col. Archer Anderson delivered the address at the unveiling of the Lee Monument in Richmond on May 29, 1890. According to Anderson, Lee represented, "the perfect union of Christian virtues and old Roman manhood... Let this monument, then, teach to generations yet unborn these lessons of life! Let it stand, not a

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<sup>192</sup> Hoge, *Moses Drury Hoge*, 403-405, quoted in Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 82.

record of civil strife, but as a perpetual protest against whatever is low and sordid in our public and private objects!...Let it stand as a great public act of thanksgiving and praise, for that it pleased Almighty God to bestow upon these Southern States a man so formed to reflect His attributes of power, majesty, and goodness.”<sup>193</sup> Like the Jackson monument unveiling, Anderson used the celebration of Lee to speak of the character of future generations. Typical of the celebrations of the new generation, Anderson consecrated the monument as a lesson of *life*, not death. Its dedication would stand as a public testament to the moral character of the South through the memory of Lee the Christian patriot. The symbolic power of the ceremony, combined with the tenor of the oration, returned people to the past of their heroes; at the same time it helped ease social tension and restore Southern pride and honor. By embodying the moral character of the heroes of the past, Southerners prepared themselves and their children for a new future that continued to honor the legacy of their fallen comrades. Though Reconstruction was long over, the celebrations of the Lee Monument in Richmond threatened vocal Unionists in the North and former slaves now saddled with Jim Crow. The Indianapolis *Journal* insisted that the celebration of the Lee Monument “is to be deplored because it will tend to restore the old South, and to make the generation now coming into control of the South adherents of the lost cause of the Confederacy rather than American patriots.”<sup>194</sup> Northerners and Southerners alike understood the significance of the new generation coming of age after the Civil War. This new generation’s understanding of the war and its causes critically shaped the tone of post-Reconstruction memorial efforts. It was the duty of those who had experienced the old South to impart the lessons, morals, piety,

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<sup>193</sup> "The Unveiling of the Statue of General Robert E. Lee, at Richmond, Va., May 29th, 1890," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 17 (1889), 312.

<sup>194</sup> *Indianapolis Journal*, 28 May, 1890, quoted in Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 181.

and honor of the old to a new generation facing new challenges. Religion and faith helped Virginians and Southerners alike navigate between the old and the new.

Anderson's remarks at the dedication of the Lee Camp Home in 1885 captured, in beautiful prose, both the quandary and the opportunity of those who stood poised between the old and the new. Son of Confederate General Joseph Reid Anderson and president of the Tredegar Iron Works of Richmond, Archer Anderson enlisted as a private soldier during the war and rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and Chief of Staff of the Army of Tennessee under Joseph Johnston. He later became a renowned speaker and historian of the Lost Cause while also serving as treasurer and secretary for Tredegar under his father, and as president after his father passed away. As a former soldier and Lost Cause spokesman, as well as director and manager of a significant industrial center in Richmond, Anderson constantly negotiated these two, often conflicting, identities.

There was something ennobling in the ability to shake off the thousand artificial wants with which our modern life has hampered us; something in the rough contact with earth and elemental powers which gave strength of heart and tempered body and mind to the sternest duties. No man ever went through that Spartan discipline without discovering that there was a moral purification as well as high physical training in the absolute rejection of the superfluous and the rigid adherence to the essential, which marked the life of the Confederate camps. A great modern writer is fond of recurring to his quaint definition of the present time as the confluence of two eternities, a point between the eternal past and the everlasting future. It seems to me that a good soldier during the four years of that war was always consciously stepping on a series of such points; consciously carrying his life in his hand, with the record of his past made up and not a doubting glance into the dim future; consciously living every hour in the confluence of two eternities.<sup>195</sup>

Like soldiers in camp, post-war Southerners stood at the crossroads between the “eternal past and the everlasting future.” Faced with the artificial wants of a rapidly industrializing modern society and armed with the character building power of restraint fashioned in the crucible of war, his generation was caught between two worlds. While it is easy to see the

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<sup>195</sup> Archer Anderson, *Address on the Opening of Lee Camp Soldiers Home, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1885* (Richmond, VA: JW Fergusson & son, printers, 1885), 8.

Lost Cause and New South movements as two distinct developments in the post-war South, Anderson's understanding of his world suggests that for some it was possible to be part of both simultaneously. For Anderson, though the future might appear dim, the Southerner had "not a doubting glance" as the "record of his past" would guide him through any challenges. Virginians had the heroes of their fathers and grandfathers age—Washington, Jefferson, and Madison—as well as the defenders of their own cause—Lee, Jackson, and the "good soldier—for evidence of their ultimate future triumph over any odds. Any successful navigation of these eternities required that the record of the past be maintained and its memory preserved. Those whose legacy was immortalized as part of the South's honorable past embodied the key attributes of piety and moral character. For Virginians, and Richmond residents in particular, the industrial, market driven modern society of the future offered the promise of potential prosperity for all white Southerners, and yet also threatened the "Yankeeism" of the South by promoting accumulation of excess wealth and the social vices associated with industrialization. The faith and character of Southern heroes provided moral lessons for successfully charting a path into the future.

For many residents of Richmond, and Virginia more generally, the future had already arrived when Anderson spoke in 1885. Anderson was a member of the last generation of Southerners to come of age before the Civil War. While members of this generation idealized the values of a plantation, slave-based society and defended it honorably before, during, and after the war, they fought for a vision that was increasingly unsustainable. The declining importance of slavery in the economies of the Upper South threatened their chances for living a respectable life in a society steeped in tradition. In response to these trends, they pushed for an economically progressive platform for Virginia that involved industrialization,

commercialization of agriculture, and market growth. Yet, members of the last generation<sup>196</sup> did not consider themselves progressives demanding a radical departure from the status quo as members of the old South characterized them. Though slavery became less important for the economic development of Virginia, Anderson's generation still depended on the institution and the science of racial inferiority to maintain their own elevated status and power. They shared their parents' piety and faith, and looked to Virginia's political history as a source for the lessons in character needed to spiritually protect them in an increasingly material world. They simply pointed to the facts, which painted a bleak picture of the state of Virginia's economy. The opportunity afforded to Anderson as a manager of the Tredegar Iron Works demonstrates the relative uniqueness of Virginians' experience of the Antebellum South. Tredegar physically symbolized the Last Generation's understanding of the pre-war period. Virginia had to industrialize to progress. The largest ironworks in the Confederacy and one of the largest on the continent, Tredegar employed nearly seven hundred black and white laborers. It served as the main source of all of the heavy manufacturing for military materials during the war.

Tredegar's production value derived from Virginia's extensive natural resources and infrastructure. Before the war, Virginia possessed one-fifth of all of the railroads of the South and its assessed value of farmland and buildings. Richmond was the largest manufacturing center in the Confederacy, containing more than twelve iron foundries, fifty iron and metal works, and several huge flour mills. As a result, Richmond increasingly became a model for urbanization and the influence of the market economy in the South, even as the South looked to Virginia and its legacy as the Old Dominion, the birth-place of the

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<sup>196</sup> Term borrowed from Peter Carmichael, *The Last Generation: Young Virginians in Peace, War, and Reunion* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005).



Revolutionary heroes and noble aristocracy, to provide ideological support for the Confederacy and the Southern cause. As a first time visitor to the capitol after the war noted, “...with her manufacturing industries ready for full and prompt development; with every required mineral lying at the surface of her soil; with an intelligent and industrious people inducted into new industries, Virginia has but to diversify and symmetrize her manufactures to take the lead among the manufacturing States, and to insure an advance in growth of wealth and prosperity, only paralleled by her previous leadership in history and statecraft.”<sup>197</sup> For many advocates of the New South in Virginia, taking the lead in industrial growth was a natural development for a state that had always been a leader in politics and culture.

The South’s last generation to mature before the war sought a different vision for Virginia that embraced progress through technological advancement, scientific inquiry, and education. Unrestrained, these forces could lead them down the path to material sin. The Christian character of Virginians would provide a bulwark against the potentially corrupting nature of industrial society. They were moved to action by their desire to restore the Old Dominion to a position of glory, and, in part, because they felt they had no other options given the economic and political outlook for Virginia. In the three decades prior to the war, more than three hundred thousand Virginians left for the Deep South due to economic decline and exhausted farmland. Virginia had fallen to fifth in state-by-state population counts by 1860. In 1810, Virginia sent twenty-three representatives to Congress. By 1860, only eleven individuals represented the state in Washington.<sup>198</sup> Concern over the moral and civic character of Virginia resonated with a people whose history helped form the political and

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<sup>197</sup> Robert Henry Thurston, *The Mechanic Arts and Modern Education: an address delivered before the Virginia Mechanics Institute in the hall of the Young Men’s Christian Association, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1894* (Richmond, VA: W.E. Jones, 1894), 5.

<sup>198</sup>Carmichael, *The Last Generation*.

cultural foundation of the new nation. These concerns prompted early efforts to promote industry and the education of future generations in the mechanic arts. They preached the social gospel of self-improvement and sought to utilize the memories of Old Virginia, not just to dwell in the past, but to move forward and forge a new history for Virginia in its honor. Though the 1850s saw great strides in economic growth, the war ultimately interrupted their message. Their efforts during Reconstruction to push the state in the direction of greater industry and market growth guided by the Christian character of Virginia's political legacy and more recent-past suggests that the culture of the Lost Cause and the New South movement were not as incompatible as some recent works suggest.<sup>199</sup> While there is no question that evangelical Christianity united Southerners through a sectional identity that preached redemption and white supremacy, the religion of the Lost Cause was also about preserving the moral character and piety of Southern citizens and soldiers as a central part of the memory of the Confederacy. Honoring the memory of the past meant embodying its values in the present. Though they ceased to be Confederates in name, they could be Confederates in character. Religion was a central force in their lives that helped them negotiate between the old and new.

Evangelical Christianity thus helped foster moral and material progress in the South, especially among younger, trained men. The promotion of Christian character such as industriousness, efficiency, honesty, hard work, and thrift became a central role of Virginia's

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<sup>199</sup> One of the most recent works on the impact of the war on Southern religion and the relationship between religion and the Lost Cause, David Goldfield, *America Aflame: How the Civil War Created a Nation* (New York: Bloomsbury press, 2011), re-emphasizes the view that Southern religion served only to slow the progress of the South and return to old norms. He states, "The South not only lost the war but also forfeited its place as a participant in forging the nation's future. While the rest of the nation hurtled toward the future...The Confederacy died and the South was reborn, more pure, more chaste, more obedient to the old values...Southerners walked backward into their future." (403). While this is true in many ways, especially norms relating to race, this view is too universal and overlooks regional differences and the influence of religion promoting a new future.

universities and vocational training institutes. *The Virginia University Magazine* reflected this new spirit. The author wished, “that some of the spirit of sister States could be infused into Virginia to lead her to develop all her resources, and become first in the march of progress and richest in material glory, as she is richest in the glowing memories and reminiscences of the past.”<sup>200</sup> For many members of the last generation of Virginians, conservative economic thinking had kept Virginia in a stagnant economic position during the Antebellum Era. Educating the future and promoting the mechanical arts was a necessary step to help Virginia progress. The war provided the perfect opportunity to test such ideas. As Lost Cause historian John Warwick Daniel noted, “The whole country was converted into an arsenal and hospital...and under trial and hardship which would have broken a feeble race, her genius burst forth in exploits of mechanical invention and economical skill not less splendid than her feat of arms.”<sup>201</sup> Many of the last generation of Virginians born before the war, those who fought to defend the Confederacy, and those who celebrated and sustained its memory after the war, were the very leaders who also had already begun charting a new course of progress for Virginia before the first shots were fired.

Don Doyle’s, *New Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Mobile, 1860-1910*, demonstrates how urban industrial and economic centers in the post-war South were shaped by an urban business class that embraced a vision of economic development and social progress.<sup>202</sup> As an early hub of industry and growth, Richmond’s development was on an even faster track toward the New South vision championed by

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<sup>200</sup>As Quoted in Peter Carmichael, “New South Visionaries: Virginia’s Last Generation of Slaveholders, the Gospel of Progress, and the Lost Cause”, in *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*, ed. Gary Gallagher and Alan Nolan (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), 115.

<sup>201</sup>As quoted *ibid.*, 118.

<sup>202</sup>Don Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Mobile, 1860-1910* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

successful leaders in the interior railroad hubs of Atlanta and Nashville. Though industrialization and commercial values were not seen as inherent evils, Southern character and morality, sustained by Protestant evangelical religion, served as the moral compass that guided respectable Southern men to avoid falling prey to the sins of industry and commerce. Samuel Shepherd's *Avenues of Faith: Shaping the Urban Religious Culture of Richmond* supports the claim the development of Richmond and its New South vision was intricately tied to the religious culture of the city. Shepherd points to interdenominational cooperation among the Protestant churches, the growth of lay leadership positions for both sexes, specialization, and social Christianity as religious sources of the city's urban development.<sup>203</sup> Richmond's YMCA and its relationship with the Virginia Mechanics Institute is a great example of the interplay of these forces.

The Young Men's Christian Association of Richmond provided an important space, mission, and source of motivation for the development of the character of the future young men of the city, and thus helped promote a vision of the New South. The first YMCA in the United States was established in Boston in 1851. Richmond's chapter formed in 1854 as a bible study group for young evangelical men but quickly expanded, opening its first space in an office building across from Capital Square. Its lecture hall hosted important religious and secular events, their library was a regional attraction, their youth and adult education classes focused on moral character and bible study, and the athletic space helped promote physical growth as an element of character. By 1882, Richmond boasted the sixth largest

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<sup>203</sup> Samuel Shepherd, Jr. *Avenues of Faith: Shaping the Urban Religious Culture of Richmond, Virginia, 1900-1929* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2001).

YMCA in the entire United States. Its growth led to the opening of its first building that same year.<sup>204</sup>

Organizations like the Richmond YMCA were important institutions that helped the citizens of the city maintain their moral character while promoting economic growth. W.R.L. Smith, pastor of the Second Baptist Church, wrote “The sudden disappearance of our YMCA, with its diversified activities would be a grievous loss to the city...It is delicately and helpfully interwoven in the fabric of our social, intellectual, and religious life, and we cannot do without it.” The importance of the future and the moral character of youth helped explain its impact. C. Clifton Penick of St. Marks Episcopal Church, acknowledged, “Our hopes of success – social, national, religious – is wrapped up in the character growing of our young men. What we make them, they will largely make the future...Outside of God’s own Church few organizations have produced more widespread and helpful influence than the YMCA.” Building the character and honor of young men, the next generation, was important to a society whose past was filled with such noble heroes.<sup>205</sup> Speaking at the graduation ceremony of the Virginia Mechanics Institute in the lecture hall of the YMCA, James Dunlap acknowledged the connection between religion, useful work, and character. “And as even now its celebration is held in this structure, devoted to the offices of fraternal Christianity,” he declared, “so shall the benefits of its instructions – the advancement of the mechanic and useful arts, and the mental and social improvements of the industrial classes – flourish under the sheltering strength, and, in grateful return, become the support of a broad and advancing

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<sup>204</sup> YMCA of Greater Richmond. Records, 1854-2004 (bulk 1920-1998). Accession 41642, Organization records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.  
<http://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaxtf/view?docId=lva/vi01261.xml> (Accessed March 10, 2012).

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid*, *Views*, “From Richmond Pulpits” section.

Christian civilization.”<sup>206</sup> The Christian vision of the mechanical arts emphasized the whole person, cultivating skill and character. Useful work guided by Confederate respectability, what students at the Virginia Mechanics Institute learned, provided the moral strength needed to resist the impulses of the new modern age.

The Virginia Mechanics Institute was founded in Richmond in 1854, the same year as the opening of its YMCA. Courses of study were established in 1856 and its first building, which housed a night school, school of design, and a library, was built in 1857. The building housed the War, Navy, and Patent Offices of the Confederacy during the war and was destroyed by the fires during the evacuation of Richmond. Reorganized as a night school in 1884, it met at the YMCA and held its graduation in the YMCA lecture hall each year until the second building opened in 1902.<sup>207</sup> The addresses to the graduates of the Institute each year, like the sermons at memorial ceremonies, provide a unique look at public displays of moral character through the promotion of work. Rabbi Edward Calisch, a prominent speaker of Richmond and a known reformist, addressing the Mechanics Institute in May of 1899, saw the times as pivotal for the city. As Calisch stated, “Battle-scared and war-worn Richmond is rising from the sack-cloth and ashes of her woe, and while she gives full heed of tender appreciation and loving memory unto the heroic past, yet she recognizes that the years are circling by, and not forever can we indulge in the luxury of grief. There are vast enterprises lying dormant in her bosom that need but the touch of industry and pluck and skill to wake them into being... This school is as essential to Richmond’s future greatness and prosperity as

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<sup>206</sup> James Dunlap, *The Promotion and Encouragement of Manufactures, the Mechanic and Useful Arts. An address delivered before the Virginia Mechanics’ Institute in the hall of Young Men’s Christian Association, May 18, 1888 by the late James N. Dunlop.* (Richmond, VA: Whittet & Shepperson, Printers, 1889), 31-32.

<sup>207</sup> Valentine Richmond History Center, “Virginia Mechanics Institute”, Online Collections of the Richmond History Center, <http://collections.richmondhistorycenter.com/detail.php?t=people&type=related&v=22796> (Accessed on March 11, 2012).

is abundance of capital. Nay, more so.”<sup>208</sup> The school helped promote moral character and the skills necessary to mold young men into useful workers. The graduates honored and paid tribute to the memory of their heroic past, but steadily looked towards the future promise of the untapped potential of Virginia. Faith thus provided a guiding force to navigate an increasing mechanical world. The education of mechanical arts trained not only physical skills, but also moral strength and character. Though the New South was never fully realized, the same evangelical Christianity central to the Lost Cause vision also helped promote an economically progressive agenda that embraced the possibility of Virginia’s future prosperity guided by the moral character instilled in this generation by its model citizens and heroes.

That said, evangelical Christians were not united in belief on the future progress of the South. While members of the generation who came of age right before the war believed Christianity could be the moral compass that guided them through a new age, many defended secession on the very basis that the South served as the moral counterpoint to the corruption of material wealth of the industrial and commercial North. Some of the most widely known Southern ministers, including Benjamin Palmer and Robert Lewis Dabney, were vocal critics of the New South movement. Their influence on the Lost Cause has long been noted. They defined industrial growth and rapid accumulation of material wealth as “Yankee evils” that threatened the South’s moral character. Benjamin Palmer, the renowned Presbyterian Minister, in a speech to students at Washington and Lee University, warned of an impending crisis from the social effects of industrialization on the Southern sense of honor. The critics of the New South movement and those who defended the need to industrialize in Virginia

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<sup>208</sup> Rabbi Edward Calisch , *The Promotion and Encouragement of Manufactures, the Mechanic and Useful Arts. An address delivered before the Virginia Mechanics Institute in the hall of the Young Men’s Christian Association, May 16, 1899.* (Richmond, VA. J.L.Hill Printing Co., 1899), 9.

used the same religious rhetoric to argue their position. Dabney and Palmer believed industry would exert a corrupting influence on Southern moral character while Anderson and his generation saw the same moral character as an antidote to the sins of an industrial society that was inevitable and already at their doorstep. Even the staunchest defenders of the Old South could see the writing on the wall. In 1882, Dabney, a defender of the Old South, bridged the views of the old with the progressive ideals of the new, “living in the confluence of two eternities.” In a speech on the New South at Hampden Sydney College in Virginia, Dabney acknowledged the inevitability of the defeat of the Old South and the emergence of industrialism. Progress was inevitable and offered the potential to use acquired wealth as a means to greater ends. However, Dabney continued to warn of the threat of materialism. Recognizing that the Old South was a thing of the past, Dabney saw Lost Cause values as one of the few hopes for preserving Southern virtue. He stated, “The problem you have to learn...[was] how to combine the possession of great wealth with the personal practice of simplicity, hardihood and self-sacrifice. That people which makes selfish, material good its God, is doomed. In this world of sin the spirit of heroic self-sacrifice is the essential condition of national greatness and happiness...If the generation that is to come ever learns to be ashamed of these men because they were overpowered by fate, that will be the moral death of Virginia, a death in which their will wait no resurrection.”<sup>209</sup> Dabney’s main concern was the moral character of Virginia’s future generations, its youth. While recognizing the inevitable end of the Old South, he maintained the need for restraint of personal economic gain. Preserving the memory of the Confederacy went hand in hand with ensuring that Southerners would not succumb to industrial vices. In this way, the war tested

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<sup>209</sup> Robert Lewis Dabney, *The New South: A Discourse Delivered at the Annual Commencement of Hampden Sidney College, June 15, 1882* (Raleigh, NC, 1883), 13,16.



Dabney and Anderson's generation. Defeat threatened Southern honor and called God's providence into question. Each eventually arrived at the same conclusion, extolling the importance of faith and moral character in promoting righteous industrial growth. Faith and honor would restrain unbridled accumulation of wealth. The Old Generation could pass this lesson on to the new.

The celebration of the unveiling of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Richmond represented the final passing of the torch from one generation to the next. It was dedicated on May 30, 1894, the same day as the Hollywood Memorial Association's celebration of its first Decoration Day twenty-eight years earlier in Hollywood Cemetery, and the same year as the founding of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Perched atop Libby Hill in Richmond's first neighborhood, Church Hill, the monument overlooked the James River and the city's downtown political district. This same view was said to have inspired the founder of Richmond, William Byrd II, to name the city after a village east of London on the Thames. This was not the sacred space of early memorial efforts. On the contrary, the celebrants of the cause placed the monument along a main thoroughfare for the general traffic of people in and out of the city and could be seen by all from downtown. Rather than honoring Confederate leaders, this monument hailed the Christian soldier as the symbol of the South. The tall, thin monument, raised to the sky, with a statue of the Confederate soldier at rest but still on guard mounted on top, sanctified his memory as sacred and reminded those who gazed upon it that common soldiers had acquitted themselves honorably.<sup>210</sup> The keynote speech of the event carried overt political challenges to the Union cause and unabashedly criticized Reconstruction. No longer a veiled celebration of the cause or moderated honoring of

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<sup>210</sup> Description of the day's events as outlined in Foster's, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*.

Confederate heroes, the speaker, Rev. R.C. Cave, employed rhetoric that admonished Northern accounts of the war and defended the righteousness as well as continued existence of the Southern cause: “Against the South was arrayed the power of the North, dominated by the spirit of Puritanism, which...worships itself and is unable to perceive any goodness apart from itself, and from the time of Oliver Cromwell to the time of Abraham Lincoln has never hesitated to trample upon the rights of others in order to affect their own ends.” With Reconstruction over and reconciliation wavering, Southerners were no longer afraid to speak their mind and solidify their version of historical events as the correct ones. According to Cave, “brutal force cannot settle questions of right and wrong...The South was in the right...and the cause was just.”<sup>211</sup> Cave had fought for the cause and devoted his life to the Church and cause after his service in the army. In addition to his religious duties, Cave was also a Lost Cause historian and author of *The Men in Gray*. Like Archer Anderson, he was a member of the last generation of Virginians to come of age before the war. Born in February of 1843, Cave had just turned eighteen when the war broke out. As an enlisted private in the Confederate army, he represented the very soldier he was memorializing, the common man of the ranks. As such, the memory he believed needed defending was his own. Like Anderson, Cave understood the importance of this moment in history. He too, stood poised between “the eternal past and everlasting future.”

Drawing on the memory of the past for a lesson to those in the present, Cave’s message to the citizens of Richmond and the people of the South highlighted three important points central to the argument of this paper. First, Cave emphasized the importance of Virginia in the public memory of the Confederate cause. The vestiges of the past served as

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<sup>211</sup>Robert Catlett Cave, *Dedication Confederate Soldiers and Sailors Monument, Richmond, VA, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1894* (Richmond, VA: Confederate Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Monument Association, 1894), 14.

public reminders of the virtues that needed to be maintained by the present generation and promoted in future generations. Cave proclaimed that, “Virginia, Mother of States and statesmen and warriors, who had given away an empire for the public good, whose pen had written the Declaration of Independence...foreseeing that her bosom would become the theatre of war, with its attendant honor nobly chose to suffer than become an accomplice in the proposed outrage upon constitutional liberty.”<sup>212</sup> By linking the common soldier of Virginia and the South to the political legacy of a state rich in its history of heroes who embodied the protection of individual liberties, Cave emphasized what many advocates of the cause had long noted, the soldier of the ranks shared the honor and values of Virginia’s heroic past. In a fitting commentary for the ceremony that day, Cave argued that it was not Jackson himself who truly embodied a wall of stone on the fields of Manassas. Rather, “It was Jackson’s line of Virginians that resembled a stone wall,” and in their common brotherhood they embodied the patriotism, heroism, and courage of the entire Southern people.<sup>213</sup> Their heroic actions on the battlefield, standing as a stone wall against the onslaught that challenged their way of life, would literally be immortalized in stone in the public space of the city they fought to protect, offering and enduring for future generations to live by.

Cave also reaffirmed the importance of religion, both in the past and future, in sustaining the memory of the Confederacy. During Reconstruction, when federal authorities prohibited Confederate symbols, religion and its sacred spaces helped sustain the last traces of the political existence of the Confederacy. The key to post-war identity was one’s willingness to make the religious political, to celebrate the cause in public through the

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid, 19.

memorial efforts of the institutions that had always been responsible for these activities. Sacred space was a protected space. Yet, the war politicized religious institutions and they remained this way well into the twentieth century. Though Southerners could not fly the Confederate flag or wear their grey uniforms with “stitchings of treason,”<sup>214</sup> they could gather in churches and in the Confederate Cities of the Dead. After Reconstruction, with these restrictions removed, religion remained central to memorial efforts. That a reverend delivered the keynote address at a Soldiers Monument in an openly public space in 1894, when Southerners no longer needed religion to conceal the political motivations of the memorial movement, illustrates the lasting power of faith in preserving the memory of the past. Religion followed memorial efforts and celebrations of the cause from the sacred spaces of the city to its public spaces, thereby completing the politicization of Southern religion and its transfer to public culture.

Finally, Cave emphatically declared that though defeated the struggle had not been in vain. Former Confederates turned to history, to monuments, to recall and honor the memory of their past. Yet his vision was not entirely backward looking, for the patriotism and honor of the present generation was tied to protecting the principles for which they had fought. One did not simply memorize history, one embodied the virtues of the past in the present while looking with hope towards the future. As Cave stated:

There have been many times of oppression, when human rights were trampled in the dust by despotic power and the hopes of men seemed dead. But the student of history will find that every chaos has been followed by a cosmos. The agony and sweat and tears and blood of every age have brought forth a new and better era...The land in which we live is dearer to our hearts since it has been hallowed by their sacrifices and watered with their blood. Though dead, they speak, admonishing us to prove ourselves worthy of kinship with them, by being heroes in peace as they were heroes in war.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Blair, *Cities of the Dead*.

<sup>215</sup> Cave, *Dedication Confederate Soldiers and Sailors Monument*, 22.

Confederate character had not vanished, nor had the obligation of the citizens of the South to uphold such character in the present circumstances. In thinking towards the future, Richmond citizens called upon the legacy of their Revolutionary and Confederate fathers, and to a growing extent, mothers, and monuments served as visible reminders of these individuals and the virtues they represented. It became the responsibility of each generation of people who walked past these monumental history lessons to consider the future in light of the high standards set by the past. Monuments helped mold a landscape of collective memory. As such, monuments served as symbols of power, strength, honor, courage and duty—all elements of the moral character that would save and vindicate the South. The women who helped fund and organize their development and unveiling became a central part of that memory. The involvement of women in the processions in 1894 shows that women of the Ladies Memorial Associations saw themselves as patriots performing a religious and civic duty. They both honored the fallen and asserted their own legacy as part of the cause.

Cave acknowledged the crucial work of women in the maintenance of Confederate memory. According to Cave, the success of the monument was the result of, “the generosity of our men and aided by the noble women of the South, by whose patriotic efforts we were enabled to accomplish our cherished designs.”<sup>216</sup> His speech illustrates how the Civil War changed women’s involvement in public activities and the social acceptance of that shift. Through nursing work and wartime voluntary associations, women publicly committed themselves to the Confederate cause and in the process redefined the nature of political space. While women performed domestic functions in their newly found public roles, ones that reinforced Antebellum assumptions of domesticity and home nurture, defining an

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 10.

identity outside of the space of the domestic sphere expanded female agency. Wartime necessity and the providential call to support the cause permitted women's presence in previously male public roles and in the process redefined Antebellum notions of respectability. Women remained devoted to domestic ideology, but the war and its linking of the feminine sphere of religion to the political sphere of the state had legitimized their public labors and patriotism. As their role in public affairs expanded, women, just as much as men, found it necessary to demonstrate their honor in memory of the Confederate past.

### **Chapter Six: Political Religion Made Political Women - Intended and Unintended Consequences**

Recounting a conversation with a visitor from the West who characterized Richmond as a "Real Person," Mary Johnston tried to describe what he meant. A "Real Person" is someone who "always has literary value. A Real Person is music, art, letter, history, science, politics, philosophy, and religion." Mary Johnston's literary rendering of Richmond illustrated the role of virtue and character, history and experience, as well as memory in the path to progress, the path from the old to the new:

There is a somber tint aroma that cries "Richmond—Richmond!"...here are the Old churches, Monumental, St. Paul's, Old Saint John's, and many beside, and around each cling the memories like dark ivy. Here are the great statues, the bronze men and horses...There are faults. It is understood. But a Real Person must have great virtues. It is profound virtuousness to become a Real Person...And all around Richmond move the ghosts of battles long ago...From Hollywood—and that is a place of dreams—how the river sounds, the turbid river...The old Capitol building, the old Capitol Square, how dear they are, what life has flowed around and through them! Richmond has known war and has known siege. It had long years of a palmy, halcyon life, and then it had siege and hunger and dread. It has rocked to the guns. It has burned and it has risen like the phoenix. Now it goes its way to the New Times...The past is here in its essence, the present makes essence, the future come on with the vaster fields of richer bloom. We shall have a full garland...Here are combinations and movements, a gracious, warm homeliness of ways, the new springing up from the old, the old carried on with the new, the provincial and local melting into the general and the universal...Past and present and future, the Genius will arise, and the place will fit the Genius, and Genius fit the place.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Mary Johnston, "Richmond and Writing", October 1987, reprinted from *The Reviewer*, 15 February 1921, in Betty Brinson Papers, 1894-1999, Biographies of Notable Women, Series 3, Box 1, Folder 35: Mary Johnston (1870-1936), author, suffragist, archives at Virginia Historical Society.

Johnston's rendering of Richmond highlights the complexity and contradictions of the experiences of women of the post-war generation. Well versed in a history of the city they had not directly experienced, the women of Johnston's generation depended on the efforts of the war generation to preserve the memory of the past. This history shaped their understanding of the future, allowing them to celebrate the city's history while simultaneously embracing the changes in the present. To Johnston, Richmond was its historic churches, its stone memorials to the heroes of the past, its grand cemeteries, and cherished public spaces while simultaneously being its new future, its new combinations and movements. The new "had risen like the Phoenix" out of the old, yet the new carried the old forward with it.

Mary Johnston was born in a small Virginia town in 1870, five years after the end of the war. Her father, Major John William Johnson, fought in the Civil War as a member of the Confederate artillery, including service under his cousin General Joseph E. Johnston at Vicksburg. Due to her family ties and her father's experience, Mary grew up steeped in the Lost Cause. At the same time, her life reflected the realities of the New South after the war. When she was sixteen, her family moved to Birmingham, Alabama in search of economic opportunity. Her father, like his cousin Joseph Johnston, had early success in the railroad business, rising to the position of president of the Georgia Pacific Railroad Company. Her mother's death forced her to take charge of the household and she often accompanied her father on trips around the country and to Europe. In 1892, her family moved to New York and after suffering from severe illness and the onset of economic panic in 1893 she began writing. One of the most successful writers of the early twentieth century, her first six novels sold more than one million copies. Mary's second book, *To Have and To Hold* (1900), a

story of the women of Jamestown, was the bestselling novel that year. It sold over five-hundred thousand copies, was made into two different films, and helped her become the first woman to make the *New York Times* bestsellers list. After moving back to Richmond in 1902, Mary's interest in Virginia and its past grew stronger. At least fifteen of her thirty novels were concerned with all or part of the history of the Old Dominion. The battle scenes in her Civil War novels, *The Long Roll* (1911) and *Cease Firing* (1912) were seen as among the first to so vividly and realistically describe the war and its impact.

Though Johnston grew up on the Lost Cause, she distinguished the need to honor and preserve Southern history from calls to resurrect Antebellum society. She achieved a level of success mostly unparalleled for Southern female writers of her age, and Johnston was also an active progressive reformer. She helped form the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia with Ellen Glasgow and Lila Meade Valentine in 1909. Her 1913 book, *Hagar*, has been lauded as a feminist novel framed in a more contemporary Southern setting. A story of a girl born in Virginia after the war, the book celebrates this young girl's awareness of the changes occurring all around her. The point of the novel, reiterated in an article she wrote for the *Southern Women's Magazine* in 1913 titled, "A Message to Southern Women," was to honor the past by seizing the moment. "Cherish the South as our dear, individual home, our own personal, glowing hearth, but know that the world is your country, and all men are your brothers and all women are your sisters," she wrote. "Realize your Time! We are living in a great, revolutionary age, and age of vast movements, out of which will come a different end, and we believe, a better world...the more Southern women are consciously numbered within



its ranks, the prouder I, for one, shall be of the South.”<sup>218</sup> Johnston, like many women of the South, was the product of social forces unleashed more than half a century earlier by the women of the previous generations. Pre-war religious activism and war-time involvement in government service, hospital work, voluntary associations, and care for the dead challenged the boundaries between the masculine public sphere and feminine domestic sphere. While the women of the war generation may not have intended to upset existing gender norms, the normalization of women’s involvement in many activities previously deemed unfit and character demeaning for women opened the door for new opportunities and new views of womanhood.<sup>219</sup> Seen in this light, women’s sustained importance to the Lost Cause and the simultaneous emergence and growth of progressive women’s associations both resulted from the challenges to the system brought about by the war and the war generation. Both movements celebrated the piety and moral character of the heroes of the past and drew upon the same religious rhetoric. Both were largely inspired by the same evangelical Christian faith. For these reasons, many women capably navigated both worlds. Mary Johnston was the second cousin of a senior General in the Confederate Army and vividly framed the war in her novels, a war she never directly witnessed. She was also the daughter of the president of a Railroad company. She urged the women of the South to take up the call of suffrage for women, yet addressed her appeal to *Southern* women using the rhetoric of Southern pride. At the very least, the co-existence of the Lost Cause and progressive reform as public outlets for women’s political activism, and the religious calling of both, demonstrates the staying

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<sup>218</sup> Mary Johnston, "A Message to Southern Women," *Southern Women's Magazine*, 1913, in Betty Brinson Papers, 1894-1999, Biographies of Notable Women, Series 3, Box 1, Folder 35: Mary Johnston (1870-1936), author, suffragist, archives at Virginia Historical Society.

<sup>219</sup> See Lee Ann Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender* for a similar position for the women of Augusta, Georgia.

power of faith in Southern women's lives as well as how far women had come since the evangelical awakenings of the Antebellum Era.

Though men remained the dominant public voice of religious institutions following the Revolution, women's roles within the church expanded and Antebellum religion was slowly "feminized". The assignment of piety to the feminine sphere reflected Enlightenment views of natural gender differences. Men were distinctively rational, while women were of a moral, emotional character. These distinctions helped people explain why women converted to the faith in greater numbers than men and comprised a clear majority of church membership. Prioritizing heart over mind and love over reason, the evangelical awakening afforded opportunities to women within the institution of the church at the same time that the market revolution diminished their roles within the household economy. They organized spiritual networks, led prayer groups, took part in administrative decisions, and formed voluntary associations that operated as arms of the church. Virginian's Martha Marshall and Hannah Clay became lay exhorters, testifying to their experience and witness of the Holy Spirit. Her peers described Marshall as a woman of "good sense, singular piety, and surprising elocution" who could bring "a whole concourse into tears by her prayers and exhortations."<sup>220</sup> Evangelical churches gave women a greater voice, and yet exercising that voice led to controversy surrounding women's presence in the public spaces of the church. By sponsoring their involvement in a variety of religious organizations and activities, the church afforded women the opportunity to demonstrate their leadership. According to Marilyn Westerkamp, religion provided a space "between the public world of the marketplace and the private world of the home, a safe and appropriate space for women...one

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<sup>220</sup> Quoted in Marilyn Westerkamp, *Women and Religion in Early America: The Puritan and Evangelical Traditions* (New York: Rutledge, 1999), 98.

through which they could move onto the public stage.”<sup>221</sup> The same language that described women’s religious role in the private sphere—piety, devotion to and authority over family, and purity—could also be used to justify their entry into the public sphere, albeit in more limited roles.

Benevolent societies and reform organizations existed in the South, but lacked the size and scope of Northern movements and were often most active in cities like Richmond. Many citizens saw danger in the growing role of women as the active stewards of religion and sought to police the boundaries of women’s involvement in religious activities. Given the evangelical criticism of slavery, and Southern society’s reliance on a rigid patriarchy, Southern men feared the influence of radical ideas on their women who could potentially be lured to challenge the social order of the South. David Campbell, a Virginia planter who spent most of his time in Richmond, encouraged his wife to find side pursuits that to occupy her time while he traveled but strongly disapproved of her involvement in Methodist meetings. In his attempt to police his wife’s behavior based on such perceived threats, he asked, “Have you not often seen my anxiety about you at those places, and why would you be willing to go to them and run the hazard of being jostled about in a crowd of fanatics without my protecting arm? —Indeed why go there at all?”<sup>222</sup> John Randolph, in a letter to his niece in 1828, spoke of Southern concerns about the number of women involved in revivals and the impact on their character. “Our women, such is the invariable law of this disease, all of them, to the neglect of their domestic duties and many to the injury of their reputations, are running mad after popular preachers; or forming themselves into clubs of one

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>222</sup> David Campbell to Maria Campbell, 3 January 1823, Campbell Collection, quoted in Catherine Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), 12.

sort or another that only serve to gratify the love of selfishness and notoriety,” he commented.<sup>223</sup> Prominent Virginian George Fitzhugh was keenly aware of the potential threat posed by women’s presence in the public sphere. In his work *Sociology of the South*, Fitzhugh argued that it would be the end of slavery or a change in the status of women that would bring about the demise of Southern civilization. Though the war led to changes in both spheres, women supported and aided Antebellum efforts defending the institution of slavery. The church divided over the legitimacy of this system and women, who often provided the direct care of slaves and served as Christianizing influences, were essential to the narrative that defined slavery as a benign and providential institution. Slavery politicized religion, and in turn provided women with new avenues for political agency. The lack of comparable concern regarding women’s post-war work and organizing in the religious public spaces of the city demonstrates how far women had come since the Antebellum Era.

From the beginning of the war, Southerners turned to religion for consolation and legitimacy. Government officials believed in the divine purpose of the Confederacy and set about branding the state as a Christian nation. Though a significant departure from Antebellum standards of church-state relations in Virginia and the South, political nationalism became synonymous with a Christian cause. This mixing of church and state, religion and politics, had profound implications for white Southern women. For half a century women had become more active agents of the church and their involvement was accepted, albeit closely monitored. Fashioning the Southern war as a Christian cause offered women a source of legitimacy and a language with which to approach public affairs and issues, opened avenues for women to enter the masculine world of politics, and provided a

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<sup>223</sup> J.R. Randolph to Betsy Coalter, 25 December 1828, John Randolph Papers, quoted in Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress*, 161.

framework for understanding and coping with the reality of war. Out of necessity, women took on unaccustomed responsibilities on behalf of God and family, which led to new understandings of themselves and of Southern womanhood.

The formation of women's associations in response to the demands of war provided a variety of services to address the needs of the Confederacy and afforded women the opportunity to organize as a community. Though they may have intended to operate within existing norms, the nature of these organizations, women associating independently of men, transformed Southern womanhood. While men in the South questioned women's religious authority and sought to police involvement in benevolent societies prior to the war, the realities of war left the state and the church dependent upon and in desperate need of women's labor and involvement. Churches provided the setting and the manpower, or more accurately womanpower, necessary to sustain aid efforts on behalf of the cause. Just days after Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for federal troops from Virginia, women of the Grace Baptist Church in Richmond made clothing for soldiers through a newly formed sewing circle. The secular and religious press called on white women in the South to produce goods to alleviate wartime shortages. Their rallying cry defined such actions as patriotic and pious, granting women agency in the political experiment of the new nation. "Homespun" clothing and garments served as a testament to women's faith in the cause and their commitment to the war effort. The *Richmond Enquirer* appealed to women's moral character and ability to sacrifice, writing "Away with running the blockade for Yankee goods. Let it be a point of honor to provide and wear our homespun." Though the homespun movement was largely

symbolic, women's work in textile production did promote the cause and provided a new departure for many elite women.<sup>224</sup>

Barred from defending the cause on the battlefield, the religious nature of the cause suggested women had a duty to help strengthen the nation's Christian purpose. Not all women could devote their time to volunteer work, but all women could pray. This became a rallying cry for the Christian patriots at home. A popular ballad, published as sheet music in Richmond in 1864 illustrated this essential role. Titled, "Pray, maiden, pray!" it was dedicated "to the patriotic women of the South." Long a convention of women's roles as leaders in the evangelical Protestant churches of the South, the war transformed praying from a solely spiritual act into a political act. The war called men and ministers alike to serve, battles converted churches into hospitals and barracks, and sustaining pre-war standards for religious services proved difficult even for the well-established churches of the city. The organization of regular prayer groups across the South illustrates the role women played in sustaining the faith and, symbiotically, the cause on the home front. From the early days of the war, public mourning became the primary task of women. Mourning slain soldiers gave their deaths a broader Christian significance; even in death political sacrifice had a spiritual purpose. By mourning the dead, women simultaneously served the will of God and the will of the state. The popular painting, *The Burial of Latane*, illustrates the change in women's roles, emphasizing women's cultural responsibility for mourning. The painting depicts the funeral of a young Confederate officer after the Seven Days campaign in 1862. Due to the proximity of the conflict to home, neither the family nor their minister could be summoned to properly mourn his death. A matron, not a minister, led the service, looking upwards to God

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<sup>224</sup> Mary Ann Harris Gay, *Life in Dixie During the War*, quoted in Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 49.

and holding the prayer book as white women joined slaves with shovels in mourning. The painting symbolically rendered the world of mourning as a woman's world. Mirroring the symbolism of the wartime shift in women's mourning responsibilities from a domestic and private ritual to a public ritual, the painting itself was moved from where it first hung in the artist's private studio to the public space of capitol building because of the throngs of visitors it attracted. Care of the dead in Richmond, however, could not keep up with the rising death totals for long.

The omnipresence of sickness, wounds, and death during the multiple campaigns to defend the city, and the limited quantities of supplies and labor to meet the demand, challenged the moral character and honor of the sick and dying as well as those who cared for them. The line between the battlefield and the homefront quickly blurred and the demand for the physical and moral care of the sick and dying quickly outstretched the supply of available caretakers, ministers, funeral processions, burial plots, and even coffins. As the wounded poured into Richmond and death became a constant presence, women acted as agents of the church in attempting to provide a proper Christian death and burial to fallen soldiers.

Leadership in prayer and mourning brought women into the state's hospitals. Religion offered meaning in their lives and helped prepare both dying men and the women who readied them for the transition. Official and volunteer nurses who held men's hands as they died in Confederate hospitals and who presided over their last moments, found refuge and consolation when soldiers died professing their faith. Helping men come to terms with their fate often meant fusing providence and the reality of war. A Virginia Baptist preacher in a Richmond hospital told a dying soldier, "Consider then, that you are where you are, and as you are, by the will of God. It was no chance bullet which made that fearful wound."

Such statements illustrate the enormous psychic impact of the unprecedented carnage on the nurses and chaplains who cared for and mourned the sick and dying. Preachers and chaplains, overwhelmed with patients, turned to women, both nurses and volunteers, to deliver the last word to sick and dying soldiers. Once this service concluded, it became equally important to record the words of the dying and prepare notes to send home with details regarding a loved one's final moments. Assuring families that their men had "died a Christian" and "triumphant" death assured pious mothers, family members, and church communities that their loved ones were with God. Out of necessity and in the midst of an ongoing emergency, the Protestant leaders of the church called on women to serve the cause, and women, in turn, were drawn into public life.<sup>225</sup> The experience of funerals, transporting the dead, and eulogizing fallen soldiers brought the reality of the battlefield home to local communities and the cities on the home front. Of all Southern cities, Richmond, the site of the Confederacy's primary settled hospitals, had the most sustained contact and experience with medical care and huge numbers of sick, wounded, and dying men.<sup>226</sup> It was the Christian duty of the city's citizens to bury as well as remember fallen soldiers. The ubiquity of so many men dying far from home elevated the role of nurses and chaplains in maintaining tradition and ensuring the proper Christian treatment of the dying and dead. In doing so, these demands altered the experiences and opportunities of women and reflected the importance of faith in sustaining the cause. Female matrons and nurses saw themselves as the spiritual and not just physical healers of the sick and the wounded. They endeavored to heal body and soul. Though war-time conditions challenged their sense of appropriate work

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<sup>225</sup> Quoted in Rable, *Gods Almost Chosen Peoples*, 173 & 177.

<sup>226</sup> The CSA had two large hospital systems that cared for soldiers, one in Richmond and one that moved around and served the Western theater. See Hilde, *Worth a Dozen Men* for details on the mobile hospital network and the CSA hospital system.



for respectable white women, their duty as women required they act, especially in the midst of immense suffering. As Libra Hilde rightly concludes, “Because women approached their work with expectations rooted in their religious beliefs and translated their experiences through the lens and language of nineteenth century Christianity, the division of labor in the hospitals and the duties of female hospital workers cannot be separated from religion.”<sup>227</sup>

In the early stages of the war, women and benefactors established private hospitals to compensate for the overcrowded and overburdened military hospitals. For the first year of the war, private hospitals in homes, churches, warehouses, tobacco factories, and schools provided hospital care for a number of the sick, injured, and wounded in Richmond. Private hospitals drew their volunteer support from the city’s women who could more easily be led to serve in institutions that did not require them to leave the domestic sphere to perform such service. Studies suggest that patients in private hospitals under the direct management and control of women offered superior care than Confederate hospitals. Private hospitals provided higher quality and more ample food and supplies and more attention and assiduous care for each patient. An investigation of the Medical, Commissary, and Quartermasters Departments in August of 1861 found that hospitals with female control of care registered lower mortality rates than general hospitals. The *Richmond Dispatch* reported sixteen hospitals under the care of women in October of 1861 that ranged from a capacity of 12 to 120 beds. The paper reported a mortality rate of .032, or between one and two percent if discounting patients brought to the hospitals when already terminally ill. Richmond Hospital Inspector William Carrington confirmed the success and importance of women in medical care. He identified the Clopton Hospital as having the lowest death rate, “it being...about 1

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<sup>227</sup> Hilde, *Worth a Dozen Men*, 48.

in 51—less than 2 per cent, whereas in the large GenlHosls it is generally from one in 9 to one in 20.”<sup>228</sup>

The gap between the start of the war and the centralization of Southern hospitals under the direction of the Confederate government afforded women the opportunity to gain valuable experience in hospital work and management. They proved themselves better caretakers of the Confederate wounded than convalescent soldiers, the military standard. Their transition to formal matron positions improved care in government run institutions. Virginians Maria Clopton, Sally Tompkins, and Fannie Beers are all played key roles in private institutions that helped them transition to serving as matrons of government hospitals. Clopton ran a private hospital from May to October of 1862, reporting just 11 deaths out of the 565 patients. The government recognized Clopton for her work and permitted her to choose wards she would supervise in the Winder Hospital to be renamed the Clopton Wards. Fannie Beers initially volunteered in the large hospitals but found the private facilities offered superior care and comfort, for both patients and caregivers. Despite her views she eventually became an official matron at Buckner Hospital in the Spring of 1862. Her observations comparing private and government hospitals illustrates the importance of women in sustaining the cause. She recalled, “For the first time my heart utterly misgave me... This was not a *State* hospital, but under the direction of the Confederate Government, which, at the time, was full of perplexity and trouble, yet like all new governments exceedingly tenacious.” Images of gangrene, un-kept bedding, and lack of supplies made women like Beers long for the advantages of private hospitals before most were closed during the centralization of hospital care.

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<sup>228</sup> William A. Carrington, Surgeon & Inspector of Hospitals, Inspection Report for Clopton Hospital, quoted in Hilde, *Worth a Dozen Men*, 28.

Sally Tompkins, the most distinguished of Confederate nurses, established the Robertson Hospital in Richmond in the home of Judge Robertson who left with his family for the country. Her service over the course of the war reflects the devotion of many Southern women, the politicization of their work, and the deep religious faith and conviction that motivated women to act and care for wounded and dying Southern soldiers. Tompkins saw God's providence in the events of the time. A letter to her sister after the first battle of Manassas demonstrated her deep evangelical faith, "I am so excited by the news of glorious victory that I cannot sleep...It took place today and thanks God we have gained it. Surely there were fervent prayers offered today and blessed be God he has answered them. Oh, may His goodness humble and make us live nearer to him." Judge Crump of Richmond observed that "She ruled her hospital with a stick in one hand and a bible in the other."<sup>229</sup> Those who could walk gathered each evening to pray before retiring to bed. She policed the social activities of her patients. One man who returned after celebrating his recovery with a night on the town in Richmond discovered in the morning that his clothes had disappeared. She refused to return them until he promised not to transgress again. She monitored her wards for "Hospital Rats," and when a man recovered suitably to return to duty, she encouraged him to do so and gave him "a knapsack or blanket roll filled with clean, durable clothing, a prayer book, and bible bound in oil cloth supplied by the "Ladies of Robertson Hospital."<sup>230</sup> Her capacity to provide this standard of care was sustained by the efforts of her friends who gave money, time, and food from their own tables to the cause. Dubbed the "Angel of the Confederacy" by former patients and the community, her religious conviction and sense of

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<sup>229</sup> Mrs. John G. Williams, "August Program: Captain Sally Tompkins, CSA", *UDC Magazine*, July 1982, in Betty Brinson Papers, 1894-1999, Biographies of Notable Women, Series 3, Box 2, Folder 47: Sally Tompkins (1833-1916), Civil War nurse, archives at Virginia Historical Society.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*

duty to the cause helped her hospital achieve the lowest death rates of war, North or South. When the government took over the administration of hospitals in the South and closed private institutions, Jefferson Davis commissioned Tompkins as a military officer with rank of Captain so she could continue her private hospital work. She was the only female commissioned officer in the Confederacy. Other private hospitals were closed or converted into government facilities, but Tompkins nonetheless represents the experience of hospital matrons and shifting gender norms. When the Confederate Congress created official hospital matron positions for women, the government politically legitimated women's labor on behalf of the cause.

Legislation creating the job of matrons in Confederate hospitals provided new opportunities for sanctioned leadership in the public realm and defense of the cause. Phoebe Pember, a war widow from a prominent South Carolina family, assumed matron duties at Hospital #2 of the Chimborazo complex in Richmond. She understood the perception of hospital work as a threat to feminine decency and work for lower-class women. According to Pember, "The natural idea that such a life would be injurious to the delicacy and refinement of a lady—that her nature would become deteriorated and her sensibilities blunted, was rather appalling...only a few, very few ladies, and a great many inefficient and uneducated women, hardly above the laboring classes, applied for and filled the offices." Hospitals became a battleground for gender and class conflicts. For many like Pember, the Christian duty to serve was a higher calling than concerns over female delicacy, modesty, and respectability. Kate Cumming noted "a good deal of trouble about the ladies in some of the hospitals of the department. Our friends here have advised us to go home, as they say it is not respectable...It seems strange that the aristocratic women of Great Britain have done with

honor what is a disgrace for their sisters on this side of the Atlantic to do.”<sup>231</sup> Cumming and Pember may have been an exception for the women of their class, but their understanding of their duty indicates a changing perception of women’s roles.

The nursing activities of women of the South extended far beyond the hospital ward. Despite efforts to standardize and centralize hospital labor, wartime demands and the pervasive need for assistance created numerous opportunities for volunteer efforts. Visitors distributed food, tended to the cleanliness of the wards, wrote letters for incapacitated and illiterate men, and often read the Bible to wounded and dying soldiers. The extent of the ongoing military crisis expanded the responsibilities of unofficial visitors and the demands placed upon them. Because Richmond was in a constant state of military crisis, it offers an ideal site to observe the hospital activities of women. The extensive network of government hospitals created a constant population of patients from the front lines. The demands of caring for the severely wounded often overwhelmed eager, untrained women willing to aid the cause. Acting as a volunteer in the hospitals during the bloody Seven Days battles of 1862, Sara Agnes Pryor demonstrated the enthusiasm for the cause that led many women into hospital work as well as the concern that nursing threatened feminine delicacy. After presenting herself to the skeptical matron as a volunteer and proceeding down the row of patients, Pryor immediately fainted at the sight of a nurse holding a pan beneath the stump of a soldier’s amputated arm. Recognizing that her feeble contributions had only interrupted “those who were really worth something,” Pryor resolved to, “conquer [her] culpable weakness,” and by the end of the week received a promotion to care directly for a single

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<sup>231</sup> Quoted in Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 101.

patient. She overcame what many around her called her “fine-lady faintness.”<sup>232</sup> Though Mary Chestnut decried Treasury Department service, she reluctantly participated in volunteer hospital work. After “fainting fits” in a Richmond hospital, Chestnut resigned herself to aiding the hospital efforts by raising supplies. She eventually returned to hospital work, devoting half of each day in the “feeding department” of a wayside hospital. Though she gave herself to the work, she expressed concerns about the effect of hospitals on young female volunteers, especially their interaction with common soldiers. “I cannot bear young girls go to the hospitals, wayside or otherwise,” she wrote. Chestnut’s volunteer participation combined with her clear concerns about female delicacy demonstrates the difficulty the war generation had in negotiating the old and the new. Hospital work and a sense of duty to the cause brought Chestnut, a white, conservative woman of the ruling class, out of her traditional sphere. She labored as an active participant in the war, and yet carried the attitudes of the old in her concern for the young women in the wards. Her actions challenged gender norms and roles even as her attitudes did not. As Libra Hilde concludes, “Wartime nursing emerged from Antebellum mothering, and yet, as nurses used traditional skills in defense of a political cause, they became the female equivalent of soldiers...Confederate ideology, with its emphasis on home, opened the door for this transformation even as it unexpectedly challenged the patriarchal assumptions of the Old South.”<sup>233</sup> Women became overt political actors who reflected and inspired the pious character of the citizens of the South.

Religious character was simultaneously the subject and motivation of women’s war work and memorial efforts. Their service to the cause and memorials to those who died for it

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<sup>232</sup> Sara Agnes Pryor, *Reminiscences*, quoted in Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 105.

<sup>233</sup> Hilde, *Worth a Dozen Men*, 13.

sought to demonstrate the piety and moral character of patriotic Southerners while also fulfilling their Christian duty to serve. Prior to the war, women's domestic roles included caring for the sick and dying, and the presence of female family members at the bedside aided family members and friends in achieving an honorable Christian death, an extension of the church in the home. The war tied these same tasks to a political cause, and women's observance of these roles shifted from the private to the public sphere. Tradition motivated women to participate in war work, but women's actions simultaneously undermined such traditions. As the church became increasingly wedded to the state, women, the vocal surrogates of the church and the vast majority of its membership, intentionally or not, became political actors. As hospital workers, volunteers, and members of Aid Societies, women performed normally domestic duties in public ways and in public spaces. War conditions tested both the limits of civil authority as well as social standards of acceptable behavior and women's service to a political cause that sought legitimacy through religion became central to the success of the cause and its providential mission. Women's participation in memorial activities after the war was thus a logical extension of their war work and evidence of a sustained change in Southern gender norms. While significant disagreement existed over how much political agency and what rights women deserved, the celebration of women's involvement in sustaining the memory of the Confederacy after the war ended offers stark evidence of shifting acceptance of women's public activism and agency.

While historians differ on the impact of the war on southern gender roles,<sup>234</sup> women's wartime nursing, and the extension of that work in Memorial Associations after the war,

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<sup>234</sup> Gaines Foster in *Ghosts of the Confederacy* suggests that the transfer of responsibility for Confederate tradition to women at the turn of the century suggests that tradition overall had become less central to society. One could also argue, however, that the prominence of women's roles outside of the home as a respectable part of Southern public society suggests larger changes in the social structure of the South. It is not that the Confederate tradition had become

radically altered standards of respectable female behavior. Nursing confronted domestic ideology that discouraged contact with unfamiliar men and the exposure of women, especially middle and upper class women, to embarrassing situations. Women employed duty, self-sacrifice, and Christian benevolence as justifications for extending domestic responsibilities outside of the domestic sphere and in the process they radically reshaped public responsibility for the honor and memory of the Confederate cause. Southerners used home care as the standard by which they judged wartime hospital care.<sup>235</sup> As a result, expectations of a proper death necessitated direct patient care to assure proper transition to the afterlife. The concept of an honorable death became intricately connected to proper medical and spiritual care, necessitating the new role of women in state based care. The public and omnipresent nature of death in Richmond, required women's involvement in public life in order to maintain Antebellum standards. Southern gender roles presented a dilemma. If women remained confined to the home, the Confederate sick and dying would die without Antebellum standards of female care. Women's public display of patriotism through hospital work thus promoted Antebellum civility and altered the nature of female gender roles in public.

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less centralized, rather that women became more central to promoting Confederate tradition. Foster suggests that, "Memorial activities did not offer a coherent historical interpretation of the war and therefore did little to define the Confederate tradition." McCurry, Janney, and Hilde all provide important scholarship that challenge this assumption. Many works have suggested that the Civil War did not alter the gender system of the South. See George C. Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Lee Ann Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender*; and Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention*. As Faust suggests, "Women's contributions as nurses in the Civil War have often been hailed as a landmark in their progress towards equality and toward an expanding sense of achievement and self worth. Civil War nursing itself has been regarded as the beginning of women's entry into the health professions. For the South, neither of these celebratory characterizations are accurate...The Cummings, Pembers, and Newsoms of the South wrote their memoirs and faded away...Taken as a whole, the hospital work of white Southern women was not calculated to foster new confidence about themselves and their abilities. As many of the South's most dedicated nurses made clear, women's overall record was one of failure, not success" (111). Libra Hilde, *Worth a Dozen Men*, and Caroline Janney, *Remembering the Civil War and Burying the Dead But Not the Past* provide an alternative to this view. Hilde's work demonstrates the expansive nature of women's work in hospitals and the challenges to the social order this presents. Her work is directly tied to Janney's, who discusses how the war politicized women's activities and generated new understandings of themselves seen through activities such as participation in memorial activities.

<sup>235</sup> Hilde, *Worth a Dozen Men*.



The end of the war produced a very new world for the white women of the South, especially upper middle class and elite women. As Lucy Buck observed early in the war, “We shall never any of us be the same as we have been.”<sup>236</sup> The political, economic and social structures of the South—the wall of separation, limited government, slavery, patriarchy, planter class dominance and aristocracy—all experienced significant challenges. Religion afforded Southern women a guide to help make sense of this new world and a way to balance the forces of the old and the new. The end of the slave system destabilized the source of wealth for many of the prosperous families of the South. Many increasingly relied on women’s work outside the home. By the 1880s, women comprised the majority of Southern school teachers.<sup>237</sup> Though they found comfort in jobs that reflected pre-war domestic duties, their presence in the public spaces of the South represented the paradox of this era for women. Teaching generated new understandings of womanhood while also enabling women to play a significant role in imparting lessons on the future generation of Southern children. As more respectable women sought employment in the aftermath of the war, educational opportunities for women also increased. One of the first examples of resistance to federal authority after the war emerged due to the greater acceptance of women in education.

Religious newspapers, particularly the Sunday instructional papers, were vital in reviving a Southern sectional identity as they promoted both the celebration of religion and continued loyalty of Southern Christians to the cause. When men left for war, women took on the task of teaching Sunday schools. Their role as caretakers of religion afforded them public jobs that were still within the feminine sphere. Richmond Sunday religious

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<sup>236</sup> Lucy Rebecca Buck, 18 April, 1862 in *Sad Earth, Sweet Heaven*, quoted in Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 249.

<sup>237</sup> Faust, *Mothers of Invention*.

publications were widely distributed and among the few to survive for nearly the entire course of the war. Women relied on church publications to tell children stories of valor and sacrifice and provide important lessons for how to live their lives. In July of 1863, the *Children's Friend* called itself "a favorite with the children all over the Confederacy." Its message reinforced the tenets that later formed the Lost Cause. Explaining to children why they could not furnish pictures, the magazine feared that "our enemy's blockading ships had captured them...they will no doubt keep them, for what do they care for the children in the Confederacy? Have they not driven many little children with their dear mothers from their homes, and burned their houses, so that they have now no home?" The paper suggested the children "pray that God would forgive the sins for which he is now chastening us, and put an end to this dreadful war...[if] you become Christians, you will be real soldiers; and you will be certain to get the victory."<sup>238</sup> Such lessons helped inspire the post-war generation's involvement in Lost Cause activities. In December of 1865, the Presbyterian General Assembly resumed publication of the *Children's Friend*, which had ceased printing at the end of the war when its offices burned in the Richmond fire. Literature like the *Children's Friend* sustained the providential purpose of the cause and its lessons for children. The fallen soldier served as a moral compass for the way Southern children should live their lives. Confederate heroes became heroes of character. One article, "Tommy and His Rules," related the story of a father who taught his son to avoid lying by encouraging him to be "like a man I read about, not long ago...who belonged to Lee's Army, and was killed during the war," and whose mother could boast that her son had only lied on one occasion. Appealing to his son his father proclaimed, "Ah! Tommy, if only your dear mother could say when you

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<sup>238</sup> "Our Second Volume," *Children's Friend*, August 1863, quoted in Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion*, 115-116.

are grown, that you never told a lie, from baby up to man!.”<sup>239</sup> The re-emergence of religious materials like this helped re-invigorate the Sunday school movement and instilled the legacy of the cause in the younger generations. More respected as teachers due to their war-time service, and armed with religion as the guiding force for Southern children, the return of the Sunday school movement after the war illustrates both the change in gender norms and the power of the cause. Though men returned from war, they did not resume control of Sunday school teaching. Both because of their war-time work and its purpose of promoting Confederate memory, Sunday school teaching was seen as honorable and proper work for women. The sacred space of religion, the meeting location and private reading of religious material, and the extension of feminine responsibility for instruction of family members, helped limit criticism of the movement and its content. This same dynamic was true of women’s post-war memorial work.

The first overt celebrations of the Lost Cause after the war were the Decoration Days hosted by women’s Memorial Associations across the South. Though many historians initially argued that the turn of the century marked women’s ascension as the primary protectors of Southern memory, recent work shows that Ladies Memorial Associations of the South helped vindicate the cause and keep its memory alive from the very end of the war.<sup>240</sup> LMA’s were influential in forming and promoting a white Southern identity from the bonds of nationalism generated by the war. Just as religion was both a motivating force and a

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<sup>239</sup> “Tommy and His Rules,” *Kind Words*, February 1866, quoted in Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion*, 121.

<sup>240</sup> Caroline Janney’s, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past*, foregrounds the women of the Ladies Memorial Association in the study of women’s roles in the Lost Cause. She argues their activism, almost thirty years before the formation of the conventional groups associated with increased women’s presence in society – the DOC, Daughters of the American Revolution, Women’s Christian Temperance Union, etc. – illustrates the early gendering of the only patriotism possible in Reconstruction South – the honoring of the dead. With works such as Libra Hilde’s, *Worth a Dozen Men*, that trace the social upheaval in gender norms to women’s wartime participation in hospitals as matrons and nurses, this new line of scholarship illustrates how middle class and elite white women emerged from the war as much more active agents in public society.

central component of the character they promoted for war time support of the cause, the women of the Ladies Memorial Associations of the South promoted and were driven by evangelical Christianity. Churches filled an important role in their organization and memorial efforts. The Oakwood Memorial Association used churches to build their membership. The group held its first meeting in April 1866 at the Third Presbyterian Church. They appointed officers to represent the various congregations—Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, and even Roman Catholic—of Union and Church Hills and these officers each promoted their association through church organizations and aid societies.<sup>241</sup> Just as women and ministers worked in concert caring for the sick and dying soldiers in Confederate hospitals during the war, women and religious leaders again found common ground in the work of their former and defunct state. They understood the dynamics of these celebrations, walking the thin line between memory and disloyalty, and utilizing religion as a means to transfer political messages in public. Women invited ministers to lead ceremonies and aid in the memorials, lending moral legitimacy to the subversive symbolic impact of the memorializing. Rev. Charles Minnigerode opened the first meeting of the Hollywood Memorial Association with a solemn prayer. Speaking of their sacred mission, he blessed the activities of the organization. The history of the Hollywood Association submitted to the Confederated Memorial Association of the South confirmed their belief in the sacredness of their mission. By instituting the customs of a mass meeting and memorial services in each of the cities churches the Sunday before Memorial Day, the women of the Hollywood Memorial Association asserted that they had, "...done much to excite the interest and enthusiasm of the younger generation and to implant in their hearts a love that will never die for those heroes

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<sup>241</sup> Blair, *Cities of the Dead*.

who suffered defeat and death with a nobility of spirit that victory could never have given.”<sup>242</sup> Through their faith, women fulfilled their mission and in the process preserved Confederate memory and honor.

The celebration of memorial days under the direction of Southern women helped shield the honoring of the Confederate cause from outside criticism as treasonous activity, by concealing it in the private, domestic sphere. Major Uriel Wright of Alexandria captured this position. By framing memorial work as women’s work, Wright meant to cloak the political nature of these celebrations. “The mothers and daughters of Virginia are the chief mourners and actors in these touching obsequies,” he wrote, “not political causists” and had not stopped “to enquire whether the teachings of Jefferson, Madison, or Mason furnished the true intention of the Constitution, and correctly marked the boundaries of State and Federal powers.”<sup>243</sup> Women’s actions and statements suggest the exact opposite was true. Women’s memorial efforts carried on their work to sustain the cause, to prove the political and moral legitimacy of the Confederacy. The passage of the Military Reconstruction Acts made celebration of the cause through memorial work a dangerous task and also illustrated how women’s work was political, and evoked a political response. The LMA in Raleigh, North Carolina recalled that “indeed the threat was made that if the Ladies Memorial Association, chiefly women in children in mourning, did form a procession, it would be fired on without further warning.” Though Virginia experienced a lesser degree of outside control, fear of punishment under Reconstruction laws led nearly every LMA in the state to cancel their official processions and orations. Illustrating the strength of the network of women in Richmond devoted to the cause, and a perhaps a stronger presence of faith to drape over the

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<sup>242</sup> CSMA, *History of the Confederated Memorial Associations of the South*, 300.

<sup>243</sup> *Winchester Times*, June 13, 1866, quoted in Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 96.

proceedings, the Hollywood Memorial Association and Richmond businesses worked in tandem to celebrate the second Decoration Day in Hollywood, and the first under the Reconstruction Acts. Stores closed as if it were Sunday and sixty thousand people, mostly women and children, made their way to Hollywood Cemetery. The presence of women in the success of this event at the height of Radical Reconstruction did not go unnoticed. James Henry Gardner of Richmond noted that even without the parades and speeches, if the day “had not been under the control of the Ladies...[a] thousand bayonets would have bristled to prevent the celebration.”<sup>244</sup> Gardner’s observation suggests that people understood that women granted political protection to celebrations of the cause. Hollywood Cemetery embodied Richmond as the impenetrable fortress once again, only this time women served in the trenches defending it from outside forces.

Women led the effort to establish Confederate national cemeteries and raise monuments to honor the dead and the past. Re-interring soldiers from where many lay in large mass graves and scattered across the battlefields surrounding the city, they treated each grave with equal importance, separated unidentifiable and unknown remains, and left spaces for the erection of future monuments to honor the past. Unique to Southern care of the dead was the grouping of the graves by state, effectively memorializing the cause of state’s rights through the cemetery. The women of the LMAs quickly realized the astronomical costs for such endeavors. One of their primary duties, one they proved to be much more capable at than men, was raising money to support their efforts. They utilized their religious networks and the connections gained from regional conferences to make calls across the South to raise funds for the honoring of the re-internment of close to thirteen-thousand fallen soldiers from

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<sup>244</sup> James Gardner to Mary Gardner Florence, June 1, 1867, James Henry Gardner Papers, quoted in Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 98.

the fields around the city. In an appeal to the women of the South, the Richmond Hollywood Memorial Association reminded people that unity in memory was necessary for the preservation of the cause. “The end we propose is the *cause of the South*...the permanent protection and adornment” of Confederate dead in Hollywood Cemetery. In their fundraising materials, they claimed their mission was to, “rescue from the oblivion to which they are passing the graves of the great host which perished in the war and sleep undistinguished in our cemetery...their history will transmit from age to age, propounding without number illustrious examples from which the noblest of every age may catch new inspiration.”<sup>245</sup> The women of the Association understood their duty to preserve the honor and memory of Confederate soldiers for future generations. Dedicated in 1869, the Confederate Monument in Hollywood Cemetery, a ninety foot pyramid to honor thousands of soldiers, illustrated women’s motivation and cause. Inscribed “To the Confederate Dead,” “Numini at patria easto” (In eternal memory of those who stood for God and Country), and “Memoria in aeterna” (in everlasting remembrance), the monument immortalized the cause. By sustaining the memory of the past they inspired honorable behavior in the present and future and proved their own moral character. A souvenir pamphlet produced by the Ladies Memorial Association in 1916 titled, “Our Confederate Dead,” illustrated the civic importance of the memorial movements. The pamphlet read as a religious almanac of the affairs of over five decades of memorial work by the Ladies of the Hollywood Memorial Association. Its closing subject, the dedication of a monument to women in Hollywood Cemetery on May 31<sup>st</sup>, of 1915, Memorial Day, honored women for soliciting funds and placing and perpetually caring for eighteen-thousand Confederate soldiers’ graves. By maintaining and perpetuating

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<sup>245</sup>Hollywood Memorial Association, “*To the Women of the South*” (Richmond, VA: Hollywood Memorial Association, 1866), from the Virginia Historical Society.

the memory of Christian soldiers, they ensured the perpetual remembrance and care of the Confederate cause.<sup>246</sup> Just as the fallen soldier's memory would be eternal, the women of the LMAs ensured their efforts would be seen in the same light.

The members wrote and published a three-hundred page auto-biography of the Ladies Memorial Association of the South in the early twentieth century to ensure their place in history and, "preserve it as the immortal testimony that the women of the South were as true to their duty to 'rise and build' as her men were to suffer and die."<sup>247</sup> Association historian, Margaret Cary Green Davis, noted:

...nothing need be said of the trials that beset and perplexed the women of the Confederacy in their efforts to rescue from oblivion the memories of the men who stand recorded as the world's greatest heroes, but through trials and persecutions these women persevered and today their noble deeds are told in history and song, and side by side with the Veterans they gather each year in reunion...their devotion rewarded by the recognition and appreciation of the world, who loves a faithful woman; faithful eye, even more so, than the usual acceptance of the word, have women of the Confederacy been to their heroes, traditions, and the Cause for which they struggled four long eventful years...[D]etermined effort to perpetuate in history the testimony of the broken hearted women and maimed heroes of '61-'65 [is] a sacred duty which must be fulfilled before the march of time decimates our rapidly thinning ranks and leaves us naught with tradition and song. To future generations of the people of the South and to the Sons and Daughters of the women of the Confederacy, who first banded themselves together in memorial work, may this...carry its messages and legacy of devotion to the memory of a Cause and the heroes of who fought for it, the Deathless Dead of the Southern Confederacy.<sup>248</sup>

By preserving the "Deathless Dead" they sustained the cause. Memorial Associations maintained almost complete control over the memorializing of the Confederate dead, directing most of the activities of these events. Davis predicted a difficult road ahead, but she believed all Southerners revered women's efforts and accomplishments. Women emerged from war with a sense of their own importance in national and public life, illustrating the dramatic changes in Southern society as a result of the war. Davis voiced a typical concern

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<sup>246</sup> Ladies Hollywood Memorial Association, *Our Confederate Dead: This Souvenir is authorized by the Ladies Hollywood Memorial Association of Richmond, VA.* (Richmond, VA: Ladies Hollywood Memorial Association, 1916), from Library of Virginia.

<sup>247</sup> CSMA, *History of the Confederated Memorial Associations of the South*, 7.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31.



of this generation, as older women worried about the maintenance of memory with the passing of the wartime generation and the “thinning ranks” of the Association. The women who came of age after the Civil War brought different experiences that shaped their understanding of the past and the present in unique ways compared to those who came of age before and during the war. The women of this new generation developed their perception of the Old South from their parents’ memories. The leadership of a new generation tested the legacy of the Confederacy. However, the women of Davis’ generation, who maintained their Memorial Associations as the United Daughters of the Confederacy became the dominant women’s group of the South in terms of membership, succeeded in instilling the proper role of the memory of the past in their younger counterparts. The past served as an inspiration for the continued virtue of the present and the future.

The formation of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) was an outgrowth of the Ladies Memorial Associations and other women’s groups active after the war. A hereditary association, they admitted only those with documented proof of kinship to those who served the Southern cause. Despite their restrictive membership, the ranks of the UDC swelled at the turn of the century. During its first year, twenty chapters were chartered and in three years that had risen to one-hundred and thirty-eight chapters. By 1912, they had over eight-hundred chapters and forty-five thousand members in the “memorial army.” By 1919, the UDC had nearly sixty-four thousand members and over one-thousand chapters stretching from Atlanta to Los Angeles. Five years later, they boasted a membership of over one-hundred thousand women. The story of the UDC in Richmond is no different. During the three and a half decades of its height of influence, the women of Richmond sponsored at least six chapters and thousands of women joined the cause. All of the Richmond chapters also

operated their own auxiliary chapters, the Children of the Confederacy, which helped make participation in the celebration of the cause a life-long affair. A broad array of white women joined the UDC between 1894 and 1919. They belonged to a variety of other organizations, such as the Ladies Memorial Associations, Daughters of the American Revolution, Young Women's Christian Association, Women's Christian Temperance Union, and a host of other benevolent and literary societies. They were comprised of religious women and the majority were born after 1850. This fact ensured that the women of the UDC, who carried the torch of the LMAs as the protectors of Southern memory, would do so without having a personal memory of the war. Reconstruction, not the war, was their general experience, and many had no memory of this period either. That women of the South continued to feel a duty to honor the memory of the Confederacy illustrated the success of the women of the war generation in sustaining the political memory of the cause. Cloaked in religious symbolism, nostalgic Antebellum values, and the feminine sphere of mourning, the Confederate cause continued to inspire Southerners who felt the impact of the war in their daily lives but had not experienced it directly.<sup>249</sup>

Though the UDC carried on the memorial and monument work of the LMAs, they also assumed a broader purpose in comparison to the war generation's sense of obligation. As the charter of the organization suggested, its goals were: "To fulfill the duties of sacred charity to the survivors of the war...; to collect and preserve material for a truthful history of the war; to protect the historical places of the Confederacy; to record the part taken by the Southern women in untiring efforts after the war...; to perpetuate the memory of our Confederate heroes and the glorious cause for which they fought...; to endeavor to have used

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<sup>249</sup> Angie Parrott, "Love Makes Memory Eternal."

in all Southern schools only such histories as are just and true.”<sup>250</sup> Their efforts focused mostly on raising funds for Confederate monuments, sponsoring Memorial Days, caring for Confederate widows, sponsoring essay contests and fellowships for Southern students, maintaining Confederate museums and artifact collections, and contesting the history of the war taught in schools. The organization’s motto— “Love Makes Memory Eternal”— suggested that women would ensure the memory of the old survived the changes brought about by the new. Nowhere could this conflict between the old and new, between tradition and progress, be seen more clearly than in Richmond, Virginia. The city contained an extensive network of the ritualized symbols and monuments of the Confederacy alongside clear changes in the political, economic, and social systems upon which this memory was based. As one visitor to the city noted, “Standing there in the shadows of the classic Old Capitol one had a stronger feeling of the blending of generations. This is the very heart of the Old South, and yet it is also the heart of a modern city. On every side rise tall buildings; the clang of traffic and the roar of business ring in our ears.”<sup>251</sup> The women of the UDC understood outwardly resisted these changes. As the women of the Richmond UDC put it, “The ‘New South’ is a term distasteful to us. We are not desirous of putting off the old and putting on the new, for we would prefer to believe that the old South shall never die, but shall ensure for aye in our hearts and lives and institutions, and its gentle spirit shall ever pervade and embrace our whole reunited country.”<sup>252</sup> Yet, wishing the old South “shall never die” did not mean resurrecting the old South. As Mary Johnston similarly described it, the old co-existed with the new. While women of the UDC may have spoken openly in this way, it did

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<sup>250</sup> Constitution of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, 1903, VSL., quoted in Parrott, "Love Makes Memory Eternal," 221.

<sup>251</sup> Quoted *ibid.*, 222.

<sup>252</sup> Historical Records of the UDC, vol.6, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Memorial Library, The Museum of the Confederacy, quoted in Parrott, "Love Makes Memory Eternal," 222.

not stop them from joining other associations and groups that actively campaigned against this mission. This suggests that the memory of the old South was far more important, and realistic, to sustain than the political, economic, and social structure of Southern society.

The women of the Richmond UDCs proved themselves capable agents of Southern memory and effectively picked up where the women of the LMAs left off. The unveiling of the Jefferson Davis monument in Richmond on Monday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1907 represented their successful efforts. In 1896, members of the Richmond Memorial Associations, as well as the United Confederate Veterans (UCV) announced plans for a marble statue dedicated to Davis. After three years of failed fundraising efforts, the UCV asked members of the UDC to take up the call and “assume the responsibility of erecting the monument, and relieve the obligation of the veterans, as they found they had promised more than they could accomplish.”<sup>253</sup> The Daughters not only reduced the operational cost of the project from two-hundred and ten thousand to seventy-thousand dollars, they also engaged in a national campaign to raise funds. The Richmond bazaar and jubilee alone raised five-thousand nine-hundred and fifty dollars, more than any other UDC chapter. Governor Claude Swanson of Virginia lauded the efforts of the women who helped organize the monument, declaring, “this magnificent memorial is a gift from the United Daughters of the Confederacy, whose loyalty to the Confederate cause is ardent and lasting, and whose splendid qualities and patriotism are sufficient to stimulate and make great and glorious any people.”<sup>254</sup> The women of the UDC earned praise for the continuation of memorial work, but their efforts were much wider in scope.

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<sup>253</sup> *Minutes of the 6th Annual Convention UDC, 1900*, quoted in Parrott, 219-220.

<sup>254</sup> Quoted in Parrott, "Love Makes Memory Eternal," 220.

The labors of the UDC were intricately tied to the education of the new generation in a variety of forms—historicism and the collection of artifacts, teaching in public schools, essay contests and scholarships, and the publication of educational materials, including textbooks. The content of these materials emphasized the valor and honor of Southern soldiers, the virtue and character of Southern people, and efforts to deny slavery as the primary cause of the war. As one Richmond chapter noted, “In this day of public school education, a fair and just account of the war between the sovereign states must and shall be given the rising generation and every woman in our ranks has an influence to wield in the matter.”<sup>255</sup> Through their materials, the Richmond UDCs worked to ensure that students understood that to “say or teach, that slavery was the cause of the Civil War, with its assumption of superior moral status on one side and obstinate turpitude on the other, indicates a failure to grasp fundamental facts about American history.” Their work and the importance of framing the history of the South carried out an old debate in a new era. Since the division of the churches over slavery and debates over its legitimacy, concern over the history of slavery and how it would be viewed was a paramount for Southerners. Greater emphasis on the moral superiority of the Southern people and the legitimacy of slavery pervaded efforts at protecting Confederate memory. As Richmond UDC members indicated, “We have amongst us some who can tell us from their own experiences what the institution of slavery was, and what it meant to them and to the negroes under their control. In those days we never thought of calling them slaves. That is a word that crept in with the abolition crusade. They were our people, our negroes, part of our very homes.”<sup>256</sup> The UDC prioritized preserving a history free of questions about the honor and legitimacy of the

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<sup>255</sup> *Minutes of the 6th Annual Convention UDC, 1900*, quoted in Parrott, "Love Makes Memory Eternal," 223.

<sup>256</sup> *Historical Records of the UDC*, vol. 2, EBML, quoted in Parrott, "Love Makes Memory Eternal," 224.

Southerners who served or their cause. While many of the war generation could conceive of the “faithful slave,” those devoted to their masters and to the cause, the women of the post-war generation had only the memory of Reconstruction and post-war race relations. They had never known slavery. Rather than the docile, obedient stereotype of the “faithful slave,” the image of blacks as lazy recipients of Freedmen’s Bureau welfare and as violent rapists shaped the thoughts of women who came of age after the war. The defense of racial difference by white Southerners after the war succeeded while the cause to defend and protect slavery failed. As was the case for the women of the war generation, whether intentional or not, women’s activism during and after Reconstruction continued to unravel gender conventions even while it sustained the racial and class-based standards of the old South.

When their own efforts resulted in a potential threat to their work, they policed such transgressions. The Richmond chapters of the UDC vocally protested a group of historians’ choice of Christine Boyson as the winner of a UDC essay contest on the “South’s Part in the War Between the States.” Boyson, a native of Minnesota, attacked many of the central elements of the Lost Cause. She argued that the Old South had “backward” ways and that “intellectually, the [Antebellum] South was practically dead.” Moreover, she threatened the legacy of the most honorable of Confederate heroes, Robert E. Lee, claiming he could be seen as a “traitor” who had aided “the enemies of his own country.”<sup>257</sup> These statements challenged the very nature of the work and ruffled the feathers of the women who had taken up the challenge. Boyson, in essence, criticized the foundation of the organization that created the essay contest. The vocal opposition to the essay eventually led to a formal, albeit

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<sup>257</sup> Morgan P. Robinson, “Concerning the Boyson Essay and Its Defense,” In *Historical Records of the UDC*, vol. 4, EBML, quoted in Parrott, “Love Makes Memory Eternal,” 227.

reluctant, apology from the judges. Yet, while women promoted the Lost Cause and romanticized the Antebellum past, their actions, like those of the women who served the cause during the war and Reconstruction, helped to dismantle some of the foundations of this memory. By promoting public education, fundraising, and sponsoring scholarships and essay contests, they continued to unleash changes in gender relations and roles for Southern women. The women of the UDC were both the product of and agents of change, even as they defended the memory of the old South.

The transition of control over Southern memory from the war generation to the post-war generation embodied the interplay between old and new. The next generation of Southern women assumed the sacred duty of sustaining a Southern memory of the cause, but they also inherited the changes, still underway, in Southern womanhood. Concerns regarding the moral character of Southern society that had driven women during the Civil War to participate in what amounted to political acts on behalf of the cause had given women, intentionally or not, a political identity. Though many women sought in the Lost Cause a way to re-instill traditional norms, the forces unleashed on Southern society during the war—devastation of the agricultural system of the South, rapid industrialization, sickness and death due to war, and the necessary involvement of women in affairs of both church and state as a result, altered the structure of Southern society. The social vices that came with these changes, namely alcoholism, corruption, labor conflicts, etc., created new problems for a new generation. Within this dynamic, the interplay of the old and the new, the involvement in the Lost Cause activities and progressive reform movements, can best be understood. The foundation of the cause, the moral character of the South and its providence, was as much a part of the Confederacy of their memory as was women's involvement and support of the

cause. Women's participation in both Lost Cause activities and progressive reforms illustrates the lasting importance of protecting the moral character of society through political activism as the primary responsibility of the white women of the South. The women of the war generation had already challenged existing gender norms and their example enabled women of the post-war generation to promote the Lost Cause and support women's activism in the public sphere, as well as conceive of a sense of womanhood different than pre-war norms. Women did not need to break from every tradition of the pre-war South in order to embrace some elements of the new world. Women's pride in white Southern heritage and their defense of the cause provided the post-war generation the means to both contain and resist the social changes unleashed by the war as well as embrace those changes as a means of promoting the moral character of society. Religion and religious duty to preserve the moral character of society helped the women of the post-war South navigate the similarities and contradictions between the old and the new.

In an address to the Young Women's Christian Association at their jubilee in February of 1916, John Stewart Bryan, son of Joseph Bryan, Richmond's foremost capitalist, owner and editor of the *Richmond Dispatch*, and a soldier in Mosby's Rangers; illustrated the importance of honoring and remembering, rather than resurrecting, the past. "It is when we try to re-create the past that we find we are attempting the impossible," he told to the crowd, "So soon do we forget the way by which we came, and the wilderness in which we suffered, that not even imagination can bring back to us in all their intensity the doubts and sorrows, the hesitations and fears that were *ours* in the past." According to Bryan, re-creating the past was impossible because, "In the past the problem to be solved lay before us, but now we



know the answer.”<sup>258</sup> Calling upon the intensity of the suffering, doubt, and sorrow of the past, Bryan saw those memories as his own. Born in 1871, his understanding of the war came only from his parents who were ardent supporters of the cause. As a member of one of the elite families of Richmond, whose wealth was not tied to the plantation system, he likely avoided much of the suffering of Reconstruction and the changes that swept through the South after the war. Though clearly a member of the post-war generation who only knew the South the war created, his sense of ownership of the past illustrates the success of the efforts of the generation who came of age before the war.

Bryan’s mother, Belle Bryan, a prominent voice of the Lost Cause and a leader of more progressive groups in Richmond, exemplifies how war-time activism and intense faith inspired women to step outside of the confines of the domestic sphere to change society and confront the continuity and contradictions of the old converging with the new. A mother of six children, she sought a more public role for herself, a taste she acquired as a volunteer in the hospital her father established at their Brock Hill residence and through her schooling. She carried her wartime service with her after the war. In 1877, she helped established the Young Women’s Christian Association, and in 1889 she became President, a post she held for the next decade. The following year she established the Belle Bryan Day Nursery, which supported unwed working women with children. In addition to participation in these reform efforts, Bryan was also a leader in movements to preserve Virginia, and the South’s, past. As a principal organizer of the effort to preserve Jamestown and the house of George Washington’s mother in Fredericksburg, she was elected president of the Association for the

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<sup>258</sup> Biographies of Notable Women, "Address of Mr. John Stewart Bryan at YWCA Jubilee - February 6, 1917", in Betty Brinson Papers, 1894-1999, Series 13, Box 5, Folder 143: Young Women's Christian Association, Richmond, Va., Branch, History of the YWCA, archives at Virginia Historical Society.

Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. She also led the movement to honor Confederate memory. A member since the 1860s, Bryan was named president of the Hollywood Memorial Association in 1890. She headed the effort to save and restore the White House of the Confederacy and establish the Museum of the Confederacy, which earned her the title of president for life. As if being president of three organizations was not enough, Bryan also became the first president of the Confederate Memorial Literary Society, and served until her death in 1910. Carrying the torch of honoring Confederate memory for the next generation of women, Sally Archer Anderson, daughter of Lost Cause and New South advocate Archer Anderson, took up the cause soon after Bryan's death until 1952.<sup>259</sup> Bryan's involvement in public life and the interplay between her leadership in a more socially progressive organization like the YWCA while she simultaneously presided over some of the most powerful organizations of Confederate memory in the South, illustrates the long term impact of the war-time activism of women and the faith that fueled their devotion to the cause and their own advancement.

The oldest branch of the association in the South, the YWCA of Richmond was founded in 1887 as the country grappled with the impact of shifts from an agricultural to industrial society. Following a similar call that drove women to participate in Lost Cause activities, evangelical Christianity inspired the women of the YWCA. Conceived at a parlor meeting in the home of Emily Fairfax Whittle, wife of the Episcopal Bishop, the YWCA had

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<sup>259</sup>Betty Brinson Papers, 1894-1999, Series 10, Box 4, Folder 124: "Belle" Bryan Folder, Virginia Historical Society. Despite their acceptance of some of the changes in Southern society after the war, both would likely be horrified to learn of changes to the Museum they preserved. The merging of management of the American Civil War Center at the Tredegar Iron Works with the Museum of the Confederacy led to a name change and plans are in the works to merge the contents at an entirely separate location. The new name, the American Civil War Museum, removed the Confederacy from the main title. The press release announcing the change, acknowledging what would likely be resistance from Confederate memorial groups, did indicate that "branding for the new institution will include a tagline reading, 'Confederacy, Union, Freedom.'" <http://www.civilwarnews.com/archive/articles/2014/febmar/museum-021405.htm>

similar organization and structure to successful wartime and post-war women's groups and memorial associations. Emily Whittle served as the first president of the branch with vice presidents from each major Christian denomination in the city. The first charter stated, "The object of said Association shall be to promote the spiritual and temporal welfare of such indigent and dependent women as it may see fit to assist, and especially of young women as must rely on their own exertions for livelihood." Like nurses and volunteers during the war and the leaders of memorial efforts after the war, the women of the YWCA sought to instill religious and moral character in the young women of the South. In 1894, membership in the Association numbered a total of six-hundred and sixty-nine women. One-third came from the city's Episcopal churches while the other two-thirds represented the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist denominations. Membership rose to well over two-thousand women by 1914. One of these women, Lucy Randolph Mason, became a leader of the organization and director of its progressive wing.<sup>260</sup>

Daughter of Rev. Landon Randolph Mason, Lucy was a descendent of George Mason who authored the Virginia Bill of Rights. Her father was a member of Mosby's Rangers, serving with Belle Bryan's husband during the war, and the rector of Grace Episcopal Church after the war. Like Mary Johnston, Mason grew up surrounded by the history and religion of the Lost Cause. Despite her upbringing and her link to Virginia's historic legacy, Mason challenged Southern assumptions about gender. She first volunteered with the YWCA while working as a stenographer for a Richmond law firm. In 1914, she became the industrial secretary of the YWCA, championing workers compensation laws and protective labor legislation for women and children. Though she resigned the post in 1918 due to her

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<sup>260</sup> Betty Brinson Papers, 1894-1999, Series 13, Box 5, Folder 143: Young Women's Christian Association, Richmond, Va., Branch, History of the YWCA, Virginia Historical Society.

father's ailing health, and her sense of obligation to care for him, she continued to volunteer with various social and political organizations. She returned to the YWCA as its director in 1923, but her work in the suffrage movement brought her the greatest acclaim. She served as president of the Richmond Equal Suffrage League and the Richmond League of Women Voters.<sup>261</sup> Like Belle Bryan's son, Lucy used the rhetoric and memories of the old as a guide to her actions in the world of the new. She wrote, "We are living in an age of immense and fundamental changes, in which is taking place a shifting of the very bases of society and the transference of entire spheres of industrial production and social activity. Nothing is as it was even twenty years ago. It is peculiarly true of this century that 'the old order changeth, yielding place to the new', and in time, as always in the past, the new order will be recognized as a higher product than the old." For the women of the South, the first part of this statement was not in doubt. The priority and ordering of the old and new, however, caused a dispute between Lost Cause advocates and champions of a more progressive new South. When Mason spoke of the significance of religion in the campaign for the right to vote, her rhetoric echoed Lost Cause writings. "There is in the suffrage movement," she wrote, "a deep strain of spirituality and altruism, which gives it a peculiar moral significance, and fully justifies faith in its ultimate vindication."<sup>262</sup> If the words "Lost Cause" replaced "suffrage movement," the message would ring true for many women of the South, illustrating the interplay between the religious character that connected progressive and conservative visions of the South.

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<sup>261</sup> "Found Women: Lucy Randolph Mason," in Betty Brinson Papers, 1894-1999, Biographies of Notable Women, Series 3, Box 2, Folder 41: Mason, Lucy Randolph (1882-1959), YWCA official, suffragist, National Consumers League officer, Virginia Historical Society.

<sup>262</sup> Lucy Randolph Mason, "The Religious and Social Aspect of the Suffrage Movement," 3, in Betty Brinson Papers, 1894-1999, Biographies of Notable Women, Series 3, Box 2, Folder 41: Mason, Lucy Randolph (1882-1959), YWCA official, suffragist, National Consumers League officer, Virginia Historical Society.

Mason also consciously realized and justified what many women unintentionally acted upon in their war and post-war public activity—the need for female political agency in a time of a tremendous change. As she stated, “The same causes which operate to widen woman’s sphere make it necessary that she should become a factor in our representative form of government. When the duties which were once performed exclusively by women pass into the domain of politics, it is imperative that the way should be opened for them to continue to render the service which has always been their right and due.” Contextualizing this imperative to match the time, Mason continued, “Under our present industrial system, it is impossible for women to retain a grasp on their social duties in independent seclusion; and with a call to enter a wider field of service, there comes the necessity for adding the active to the passive Christian virtues, if they are going to make of their religion a social lever.”<sup>263</sup>

While many women of the war generation strongly disagreed with the idea that suffrage was their “right and due,” their actions provided a justification for Mason to make her claim to political agency. Women were called into a wider field of service during and after the war. For women like Mason, suffrage represented the obvious extension of the full political agency necessary to effectively carry out their mission, a mission that originated in their understanding of Christian virtue and character inherited from the war generation. The women of the Lost Cause, the women who pursued a more progressive future, and especially the women who participated in both, shared this understanding and history. The women of the South during the war had embraced an active, rather than passive, duty to the cause. Though many sought to limit the impact of this political activism, others, like Mason, were inspired to push for full political agency. While Antebellum norms called for the separation

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid., 4.

of church and state, wartime conditions and the need to sustain the political cause after the war to justify their support and reiterate their claim as God's chosen people, politicized religion in a way that would and could not be easily undone. That religion was invoked to both defend and motivate people to sustain the Lost Cause and progressive reform well after the war, suggests that religion in the South remained highly politicized.

The United Daughters of the Confederacy's success in winning permission to build a monument honoring the Confederate dead in Arlington National Cemetery demonstrates southern women's ability to achieve reconciliation on their own terms. The UDC noted, with a hint of scorn, that the United Confederate Veterans failed to consult Southern women when they unsuccessfully petitioned Congress in 1899 to inter the remains of Confederate soldiers still scattered about Washington D.C. at Arlington. Kate Behan, president of the Confederate Southern Memorial Association, an alliance of the LMA groups formed due to declining memberships, protested both the site and the previous unwillingness of the government to allow monuments to Confederates and their cause. Janet Weaver Randolph, the founder of the Richmond chapter of the UDC, proposed that the Confederate remains be brought back to Richmond and interred at Hollywood Cemetery as the Hollywood Memorial Association had earlier succeeded in doing with the remains of Southern soldiers from Gettysburg. Despite these concerns, by 1906, efforts to bury former Confederates were underway in a section of Arlington separated from the Union dead, and Congress also authorized the assumption of responsibilities for tending to the graves of more than thirty-thousand Southern soldiers who died in Union hospitals and prisons. With the legislation having already passed and determined to continue to control the memorialization of the Confederate dead, women of the UDC pressed for, and were granted, a request to build a Confederate monument to the fallen

soldiers. It would become a symbol of the cause. One speaker at the unveiling of the cornerstone for the monument in 1912, James Tanner, used the event to promote reunion. He spoke directly to members of the new generation who took up the torch to preserve the South's memory. Tanner praised their efforts at honoring the dead, but called for an end to sectional tension. "We have settled some things forever and founded a republic that shall endure forever," he said, "To you of the younger generation, I appeal for the establishment of true community of feeling between the North and the South."<sup>264</sup>

Though many, including President Wilson declared the monument, when finally unveiled, an "emblem of a reunited people," the women of the post-war generation generated their own meaning from the event. Unveiled on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1914, Jefferson Davis's birthday, on land formerly owned by Robert E. Lee, the daughters saw the monument as a symbol of defiance and a testament to the soldiers of the Confederacy and the women who served the cause. The monument featured the bronze figure of a woman who extended both a wreath as well as a plow stock and sickle. The coat of arms for each Confederate state, as well as Maryland, decorated the circular pedestal below, and the richly ornamented band above the base of the statue contained life-size relics of soldiers at war, women and children on the homefront, and faithful slaves. One of the monument's inscriptions read: "Victrix Causa Diis Placuit Sed Victa Caton" ("The Victorious Cause was Pleasing to the Gods, but the Lost Cause to Cato"). The inscription referenced the tragedy *Cato*, where the hero of the story is presented as a symbol of virtue and republicanism for resisting the tyranny of Julius Caesar. The inscription vindicated the providential nature of the Lost Cause and furthered many of its

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<sup>264</sup> *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 13 November, 1912, quoted in Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 262.

central tenets.<sup>265</sup> The sacred monuments were certainly political, as were the actions of the UDC. A half a century's of sustained action led to greater acceptance of women's participation in public causes, and religion fueled their involvement in these efforts. Religion also motivated many of the same women to engage in more progressive reform and demand greater political agency for women. The Confederate monument in Arlington represented the battle over the memory of the war and the preservation of Southern history as well as a changing of the guard that protected Confederate history.

Evangelical protestant churches did not re-unite in the nineteenth century. While there was some cooling of tensions—the desire to maintain sectional identities persisted well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Virginia Baptists Association openly resisted reunification as they had resisted Reconstruction. If Northerners assisted the South, they insisted, “it will be sure to come in a way and through channels that it will be neither safe, wise, nor honorable for us to accept.”<sup>266</sup> Southern standards of honor and an unwavering commitment to the cause and interpretations of the war stalled any religious reunion. Religion served as a foundation for a sectional identity in the South after its political and economic identity had been overthrown. Although they had no state to which to attach their names, Southern churches and religious institutions, as well as their surrogates—benevolent societies, religious organizations, priests and the women who served the church—continued to act as political agents when defending the origins of and memory of the cause. The contested site of religion forced Southerners to confront the meaning of the Civil War and to act upon that understanding. In doing do, they kept sectional tensions alive well into the twentieth century, and in some ways continue to do

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<sup>265</sup> Description of details surrounding the unveiling of the monument from this section can be found in Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*.

<sup>266</sup> "Is Reunion with the Northern Church Desirable?," *Southern Presbyterian*, 22 February 1866, quoted in Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion*, 166.



so. As the war generation passed the torch to a younger generation that had no direct experience of the war and its causes, religion and its institutions continued to offer support for the cause while also inspiring the actions of men and women to carry old traditions into the new world. Their strong devotion to a cause they never directly knew gave them a sense of purpose and motivation to confront the challenges they faced in the present.

Citizens of Richmond experienced the war uniquely, though they shared a great deal with the rest of the South, the reality of life in Richmond influenced state policy and the legacy and memory of the Confederacy. Richmond had come a long way since the beginning of the war. Richmond was transformed as the capitol of the Confederacy and remained a symbol for the rest of the South in the post war years. Influenced by its proximity to the conflict and the lived experience of the war, Richmond experienced dramatic social and political changes that had a lasting impact on the South. The wall of separation between church and state had taken Jefferson and Madison decades to build, a century for their sons to maintain and uphold, and just four years for the war to ultimately destroy. The joint effort of the state and church to sustain the cause reduced Jefferson's wall to rubble and forever altered the relationship between church and state. In the process of bringing down the wall of separation, agents once considered apolitical gained a sense of confidence and legitimacy acting on behalf of the cause. In the defending the old, moreover, they ushered in the new. Their faith helped them maintain their obligation to the cause and to the South, while also providing a moral compass to guide them through the challenges of a new social and economic order. Whether it be men defending industrialization by appealing to Virginia's past and seeing religion as a moral compass to guide them safely beyond the sins of capitalism or women championing their right to vote by pointing to the actions of pious and

patriotic Southern women during the war, faith helped Southerners navigate the complex intersections between the old and the new.

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