

HERITAGE OF HONOR:

AN ANALYSIS OF BAPTIST ALLEGIANCE TO THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY

BY

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SOUTHERN SHORE

*I stand upon the Southern shore,
And wonder if, forevermore,
I must watch as others pass,
And assign to me a lower class.
Must I surrender what I love,
The earth below, the sky above...
The very essence that I am,
Southern boy grown to Southern man?*

*Is everyone else entitled to be
Diverse and proud, except for me?
Am I to stand, head hung in shame,
As self-righteous crowds decry my name?
What is it that my kind have done,
That draws the ire of everyone?
What sins committed, left unchanged,
Leave me from all of you estranged?*

*Why can't I live within the present.
Striving for a better day,
Without the constant penalty of past
That so many others insist I pay?
It was not I who owned the slave,
Nor fought the Southern way to save,
But it was my family, who by their hand,
Made such a mark upon the land.*

*T'was they, while living within their time,
Who saw necessity and not the crime,
Who lived the way that they had learned,
And northern interference spurned.
They stood upon the fortress walls
And reap'd the hail of rifle balls,
To save their land and livelihood,
And live their lives the way they would.*

*For such a cause they fought and died,
Sons and brothers, side by side.
They fought to gain a freedom*

*That to others they denied.
Of this there is no question,
That the slave weighed in the scale,
But lest we think it simple,
That is not the final tale.*

*The cause was not as singular
As some would like to think...
The strong wine of rebellion
Can be a bitter drink...
They fought to keep a way of life,
Of that there is no doubt,
But they also fought, and shed their blood,
To keep the invader out.*

*For those today who ask us
To deny our gloried past,
I pray you search your memory...
When did America last
Occupy another land
And force it to its knees,
Take over all its governance,
And treat it as it pleased?*

*So ask me not to stand here
On my heart's own Southern shore
And seek anyone's forgiveness
For what went on before.
For I stand 'neath Southern sun
And on this Southern sod,
I know that I was born here
By the simple grace of God.*

-Stan Welch

INTRODUCTION

Baptist heritage runs long, bloody, and worthy of respectable acknowledgment. Any honest evaluation thereof reveals a lengthy, rugged, and craggy trail with many sections washed away in the blood of the nameless. A plethora of holy, tireless men have braved this trail, standing without compromise upon biblical truth and the marks of a New Testament church in the face of horrible persecution. In fact, Bible-believing Christians have suffered more bloodshed in history at the hands of the “institutional church” for the proliferation of such *baptistic*¹ marks (i.e. the final authority of Scripture, religious liberty, believer’s baptism, separation of church and state, salvation through faith alone, etc.) than the victims of Adolf Hitler, Saddam Hussein, Pol Pot, Genghis Khan, Ho Cho Minh, Joseph Stalin, Nero, and Attila the Hun put together.² What emerged from the centuries of abuse, however, was a great nation founded upon religious liberty where the Gospel of Jesus Christ could best thrive and produce a harvest of souls devoted to New Testament truth and the Great Commission of the Saviour of the world. Such a “cloud of witnesses” should conjure up in the hearts of all bible-believing Baptists thanksgiving, honor, admiration, and a desire to “lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset” (Hebrews 12:1 KJV). Regrettably, however, this heritage is all but forgotten at the dawn of the twenty-first century. What is even more heartrending is the fact that large legs of this trail

¹The author believes that the Baptist faith best represents the marks of a New Testament church and biblical doctrine. Thus, he sees the terms *baptistic* and *New Testament* to be synonymous, especially with regard to believer’s baptism, salvation by grace through faith, religious liberty, separation of church and state, the final authority of Scripture, etc., all of which are distinctive Baptist doctrines. He also believes that *Baptist* (i.e. New Testament) churches have existed in continuity throughout church history. These groups were called by many names—Waldensians, Albigenses, Lollards, Anabaptists, Tertullianists, Donatists, Montanists, Cathari, Bogomiles, Paulicans, Euchites, Novatians, Lionists, and Baptists just to name a few—but in practice, they bore the marks of a New Testament church (i.e. marks of the Baptist faith as such marks are called today). If two entities look the same, smell the same, taste the same, and behave the same, then they are the same.

²Some have estimated that 50,000,000 Bible-believers were put to death by the Roman Catholic Church between A.D. 500 and A.D. 1500.

are overgrown with the weeds of political correctness, revisionist history, willful ignorance, and sensationalistic slander. A case and point involves the role of Baptists in the Confederate States prior to and during the American Civil War.³ As one author put it, “Those who trade in the sensational have cast a vile shadow upon many noble and decent people by blaming all for the sins of a few.”⁴

This chapter of American Baptist history is largely neglected by the church historians, and when it is succinctly summarized, Southern Baptists, in particular, come away with the idea that they should somehow apologize for and feel guilty about their heritage. A primary example of this can be found in the standard Baptist History textbook utilized in Southern Baptist seminaries today—H. Leon McBeth’s The Baptist Heritage.⁵ The closest he comes to discussing Baptists in the War for Southern Independence involves a pontificating sermon about the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention. This, in and of itself, is filled with oversimplified and inaccurate generalizations that evoke a false guilt while painting Northern Baptists as the great bastions of freedom and champions of equality. McBeth utters the typical mantra: “Slavery was the final and most decisive factor which led Southern Baptists to form their own convention . . . Slavery was the main issue that led to the 1845 schism; that is a blunt historical fact . . . [slavery]

³Although popular, the author dislikes the historically inaccurate title—“American Civil War.” By definition, a “civil war” involves two parties warring for control over the government of a nation. The Southern Confederacy never attempted or desired to gain control over the federal United States government. The “War Between the States” is also inaccurate. States were not at war with each other. Two nations met on the battlefield. The Confederate States of America simply sought political independence; the United States of America refused to grant it. Therefore, “War for Southern Independence” is favored and will be used interchangeably with “Civil War” in this paper.

⁴James Ronald Kennedy and Walter Donald Kennedy, *The South was Right!* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 2000), 83.

⁵H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987).

ultimately led to the Civil War.”⁶ Then, he proceeds to make absolutely no mention of Southern Baptist efforts in the ensuing war; Southern Baptist missionary endeavors in the Confederate army, and the huge revivals that broke out in the Confederate camps due in large part to the work of Baptists. Patrick Cleburne, a fine Christian and Confederate General who was killed at Franklin, Tennessee, would not be surprised, for he once warned: “this heroic struggle will be written by the enemy; that our youth will be trained by Northern schoolteachers; will learn from Northern school books their version of the War; will be impressed by all the influences of history and education to regard our gallant dead as traitors, our maimed veterans as fit subjects for derision.” This truth has born itself out and thus, a valuable chapter in American and Baptist history has been lost, maligned, and/or maimed.

The purpose of this treatise is to analyze and evaluate the role of Baptists in the Southern Confederacy. This will be done by promulgating historical background, demythologizing popular myths, and reassessing Southern Baptist allegiance to the South with corresponding views on slavery. Moreover, sketches of Baptists in the Confederate armies and accounts of Baptist work in the huge revivals that swept through the Confederate camps will be provided. All of this will be done in an attempt to show that Southern Baptist heritage is a heritage of honor, not a heritage of guilt.⁷ It is one that in many ways should be modeled, not forgotten. Although the focus of this paper is on Baptists, more general aspects of the War for Southern

⁶Ibid., 381-383. The ironic thing about this seemingly “anti-Southern Baptist” approach is that McBeth is a Southern Baptist who teaches at a Southern Baptist seminary.

⁷This heritage, of course, is not limited to the Southern Baptist denomination of today but Southern Baptists in general. Many Baptists denominations have broken off from the SBC since its formation in 1845. Despite the fragmentation, however, this heritage of honor is shared by all Baptists from the South and in a sense, by Bible-believing Baptists everywhere.

Independence must be discussed in order to foster understanding. Thus, a deductive approach of sorts will be taken. May Almighty God guide this quest.

CHAPTER ONE:

RELEVANT HISTORICAL BACKGROUND—A SOUTHERNER’S TAKE⁸

“With the churches the break came earlier, and in it a canny statesman might have found some timely instruction. Moral issues contested so strongly that they rend churches are bound to pose a threat to civil order.”⁹ The Baptist churches parted ways along sectional lines almost sixteen years before shots were fired at Fort Sumter. Slavery was an issue, but as McBeth admits elsewhere (contradicting himself with regard to the previous quote), “slavery *helped* lead to the Southern Baptist Convention, although other factors also played a *significant* role.”¹⁰ Thus, a concise retracing of historical background is necessary.

A Clash of Cultures

For years, Baptists in America had been attempting to pool their resources and cooperatively act in the areas of foreign missions, home missions, and literature publication. For these reasons, such entities as the Triennial Convention (1814), the Baptist General Tract Society (1824), and the American Baptist Home Mission Society (1832) were formed. Although committed to these causes across the board, Baptists manifested disagreements along sectional lines from the beginning. As with the war that would come, an inevitable clash of cultures transpired. “The true nature of the South can be better understood by examining the cultural disparity between the North and South. The antebellum United States was, in effect, two distinct groups of people with

⁸This retracing will be done with the perspective of the Southern Baptist in mind.

⁹Bynum Shaw, *Divided We Stand—The Baptists in American Life* (Durham, NC: Moore Publishing, 1974), 111.

¹⁰H. Leon McBeth, *A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1990), 282 [Emphasis Mine].

sharply different values and ways of life.”¹¹ While Baptists in the North valued control, authority, societies, interference in civil affairs, and the individual; Baptists in the South valued impartiality, conventions, noninterference in civil affairs, and the local church. Thus, “sharp differences had arisen between Northern and Southern Baptists before the slavery issue became crucial among them.”¹²

The Roots of Dissension

Society versus convention.

Sectional dissension first manifested itself “because of difference of opinion as to the policy of Christian missions.”¹³ The Northerners insisted upon a “society plan” based upon the cooperation of individuals and unconnected with the churches. Societies, thus organized, would be created to deal with one specific aspect of missions—one for foreign missions, one for home missions, one for literature publication, etc. Southerners, on the other hand, unanimously favored a “convention plan” based upon the local churches. In other words, local Baptist churches would send messengers and contributions to a “central body to plan and carry out Christian ministries beyond the local churches.”¹⁴ The convention would sponsor multiple ministries and emphasize local Baptist churches cooperatively working together, yet without obligation. Northern Baptists claimed that societies would protect the autonomy of local churches, but this was a media smokescreen because the convention plan supported by Southerners never advocated even a tinge of obligation. The problem with the Northern society

¹¹J.D. Haines, “The Nature of the South,” *Confederate Veteran* 1 (2002): 42.

¹²McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 347.

¹³Jesse L. Boyd, *A History of Baptists in America Prior to 1845* (New York: American Press, 1957), 176.

¹⁴McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 347.

plan, according to Baptists from the South, was that it failed to enlist the involvement of local churches in missions. The target was the individual which, aside from deviating from the New Testament pattern and historical Baptist precedent, subtly paved the way for those with the big money (i.e. Northern Baptists) to run the show. Southerners favored a convention plan because, as they saw things, it enlisted the churches, built denominational identity, balanced the various causes sponsored (i.e. foreign missions, home missions, literature publication, education, etc.), gave a voice to all local Baptist churches who CHOSE to join, and preserved the autonomy of each local body, something that had long been important to Baptists. In a sense, a convention would also create a system of checks and balances whereby the allocation of funds could be monitored.

The Triennial Convention.

With the creation of the Triennial Convention in 1814, a compromise was struck, slightly favoring the majority *convention* position.¹⁵ For almost a decade, the organization took on the multiple functions of a convention—foreign missions, home missions, publication, education—and even adopted the title. However, by the mid-1820's, one of the apparent “swing votes” from the North suddenly changed his mind. Francis Wayland, an influential Northern theologian who had long supported the convention plan, cast his lot with fellow Northerners in favor of societies. With a slight majority, Northerners were able to push through measures that completely reverted the Triennial Convention back to a society that focused solely upon foreign missions. On the surface, all seemed fair in the democratic process—those with the most votes determined the policy. However, the Northerners were able to sneak in a measure that relocated

¹⁵Southerners comprised a majority of the delegates and were thus able to approve the convention plan.

the Triennial Convention headquarters from Philadelphia to Boston “thus further diminishing Southern participation.”¹⁶ Moreover, the 1826 meeting was moved from Washington, D.C. to New York. The customary crowds of Baptist delegates from the South (heretofore comprising a majority) were not able to make the long journey north, so knowing this, the Northern caucus was able to slyly take action “to guarantee that the convention would henceforth remain firmly under the control of New England Baptists.”¹⁷ At best, such tactics were questionable, and Baptists from the South saw through the spin. The 1826 session was turbulent to say the least—the Triennial Convention “cleansed” itself of conventional organization and wrongfully discredited the reputation of Luther Rice, one of America’s great Baptist visionaries. To say that the few Southerners who could make the journey to New York went away with a bad taste in their mouths would be an understatement. The changes in the Triennial Convention (renamed the American Baptist Missionary Union) in 1826 not only helped “prevent southern states from enjoying full representation”¹⁸ at future meetings but ensured “that Baptists in the South could no longer share meaningfully in the Northern societies.”¹⁹ Even McBeth admits that these events “probably made schism inevitable” at a time when slavery was still under the table: “Baptists North and South were committed to different patterns of work which would make continuing cooperation almost impossible.”²⁰ Thus, as Northerners withdrew from national cooperation, an “era of good feelings” came to an end.²¹

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., 357.

¹⁸Robert G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists* (Philadelphia, PA: Judson Press, 1950), 309.

¹⁹McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 381.

²⁰Ibid., 360.

²¹Ibid., 369.

The American Baptist Home Mission Society.

A similar situation occurred with the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Following the Triennial Convention's reversal in 1826, Baptists created a supposed "national society" in 1832 that was to support domestic mission efforts. From the start, however, this organization was concentrated in the North and is perhaps best described as a "New York Society." Once again, distance proved a barrier for Southern churches, and they enjoyed little if any representation. Target areas for outreach were also unbalanced. "From several southern states, complaints were raised against the American Baptist Home Mission Society for devoting its major attention to the West, to which emigrants had gone chiefly from New England and the Middle States, while Florida, Louisiana, Arkansas, and other southern states were being neglected."²² As a result, Baptists in the South immediately began to create strong associations and conventions in their respective states that would allow them to engage in their own domestic mission work. Such would later prove greatly successful during the War for Southern Independence.

Slavery Enters the Picture

For years, Baptists from the South had witnessed Northern charisma slowly gain control and profit at the expense of fair representation. The same was happening on the national scene. Unjust tariffs and attacks against state sovereignty were being levied by a national government poised to overstep its constitutional bounds so as to benefit the industrial profit margin of the New England "bigwigs." Lack of fair representation with regard to the churches and threats against state sovereignty with regard to the government cast shadows of concern on the

²²Torbet, 304.

demeanor of Baptists in the South. To them, the two distinct threats went hand in hand. Undoubtedly, what initially manifested itself as threats to representation and sovereignty, would in their eyes, invoke a slippery slope that could eventually threaten what Baptists held so dear—religious liberty. It was into all of this mess that the slavery issue came crashing down.

Political background.

After the Revolutionary War, the thirteen colonies voluntarily agreed to form a Union, adopting a set of laws—the Constitution of the United States. From the very first, however, the States disagreed as to how such laws should be interpreted. Did the federal government only possess the powers specifically granted to it in the Constitution, or did the federal government possess all powers except those expressly denied it in the Constitution? The former “strict construction” argument advocated states’ rights, was obviously the original intent and meaning of the founders, and was popular in the agrarian society of the South.. The later “loose construction” argument was often used to overstep constitutional bounds, sought a strong centralized national government, and was popular in the industrial North. States especially disagreed when “laws which suited one section did not suit the other.”²³ For this reason, the issue of slavery seemed to give the most trouble. As new states and territories began to enter the Union in the early nineteenth century, the balance of power between slave and free states was constantly threatened. The North wanted the political upper hand, and the South feared such a situation would endanger their economic and political rights unquestionably granted by the U.S. Constitution²⁴ while profiting the Northern industrialist economy. Such fear was justified as seen

²³Mary Williamson, *The Life of General Thomas J. Jackson* (Richmond, VA: B.F. Johnson Publishing, 1899), 18.

²⁴See Amendment 10.

in the Nullification Crises, the Missouri Compromise, the “Tariff of Abominations,” the Wilmot Provisio, the Compromise of 1850, and the Kansas-Nebraska Acts.” From the beginning, slavery was recognized by the United States Constitution, and its existence was important for the cash crop economy in the South. It had been a vital part of Northern society as well until it was discovered that slaves had difficulty adapting to the colder northern climate and the industrial booms rendered the institution less profitable than cheap labor.²⁵ It was then that the abolitionist frenzy *conveniently* came to a head. The typical mantra would have us believe that the abolitionists were moral giants driven by their great sense of human equality. Most likely, however, a few ulterior motives were involved.

The system of African slavery was never very profitable in the North. If the Yankees have an eye for anything, they have an eye for profits. Soon after the end of the American War for Independence, the Northern states began a gradual removal of their slave population. The truth is that the only thing that motivated the Yankee was the principle of profit. This is clearly seen by the way in which the North granted freedom to its slave population. *No law was ever passed in the North that granted freedom to a person already in slavery.*²⁶

By the 1840’s, when things started to really heat up in the Baptist societies, the United States was expanding westward at a rapid pace. Calls for “Manifest Destiny” drove the government to seek passage all the way to the Pacific Ocean. Thus, the issue of slavery was always on the table. Should slavery be allowed in the new states and territories? Answers to this question would profoundly affect the political balance that had been stressfully maintained for years. Agreements and compromises would be reached, but nothing seemed to satisfy the abolitionist propaganda machine.

²⁵Cheap labor was more profitable in the Northern factories because factory owners could get away with minimal wages that barely kept families afloat. With slavery, the owner had to provide his slaves with the necessities of life—food, water, shelter, clothing, etc. This, of course, was more expensive.

²⁶Kennedy and Kennedy, 75.

For a brief moment, the crisis, “having seethed and bubbled for months, suddenly went off the boil.”²⁷ Five years after the schism in the Baptist ranks, the Compromise of 1850 seemed to abate severance on the national scene as had the Missouri Compromise twenty years earlier. “Men on both sides, and still more women, relaxed as the horrific shadow of civil war suddenly disappeared, and they could get on with other things.”²⁸ Such was only illusory as John Brown, “Beecher’s Bibles,” “Bleeding Kansas,” and the election of Abraham Lincoln would prove.

Promises to remain aloof.

Throughout such crises on the political stage, Baptists in the North and South sought to remain neutral while the abolitionists stirred up trouble. In fact, this was promised by those in leadership. A statement was issued on November 2, 1840 by the Board of Managers in the Triennial Convention that “members of the Board as individuals might act as they wished, but that as officials of the Triennial Convention, they had no right to do or say anything with respect to slavery.”²⁹ The next year, when the Convention met in Baltimore, the “Baltimore Compromise” was agreed upon. “The understanding was that slavery was a subject with which the Convention had no right to interfere.”³⁰ The same year, the American Baptist Home Mission Society issued a similar declaration—“Our cooperation in this body does not imply any sympathy either with slavery or anti-slavery, as to which societies and individuals are left free and uncommitted as if there were no such cooperation.”³¹ Following these events, the Board

²⁷Paul Johnson, *A History of the American People* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1997), 400.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Torbet, 305.

³⁰Mary B. Putnam, *The Baptists and Slavery, 1840-1845* (Ann Arbor, MI: George Wahr., 1913), 30.

³¹McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 386.

replied to a circular letter of inquiry from the Provisional Foreign Mission Committee. It stated in the following language:

It adverts especially to the alleged doings of the Board at Baltimore, in which we are said to have “yielded that *neutrality* which had previously demanded” of us. It is our painful and humiliating duty to appraise you that the representation is *untrue*. *The neutrality of the Board has not been yielded*, with at Baltimore or elsewhere. During the whole of our proceeding since the first agitation of slavery, it has been our *earnest endeavor*, as it was our *avowed policy*, to mind *exclusively* the missionary duties to which we had been called . . . The Board have always, as they do now, “refused to take sides in the controversy between the abolitionists and the slaveholders” . . . We disclaim all “subserviency!” either to the South or the North. As individuals even, we are no apologists for slavery. We are not contending for the right of others to hold slaves, but for our own right to be free.³²

As one can clearly see, Baptist leaders were at least promising to remain aloof to the controversy so that concentration could be given to the work of missions and the work of the New Testament church. Thus, Baptists in the South should have had no reason to fear that their rights, representation, and reputations would be trampled.

At the 1844 meeting of the Triennial Convention in Philadelphia, eighty delegates from the South made the long and difficult journey to extend the hand of cooperation. W.B. Johnson, a Southerner, humbly declined reelection to the office of President because it had been held twenty-one out of thirty years by someone from below the Mason-Dixon line. In doing this, southern Baptists hoped to possibly “appease the Northerners.”³³ The radical abolitionists, however, had come for a fight and would have no compromise. After bitter discussion, ranting, and raving, neutrality was again promulgated—“That in cooperating together as members of this Convention in the work of Foreign Missions, we disclaim all sanction, either expressed or implied, whether slavery or anti-slavery, but as individuals we are perfectly free both to express and promote our own views on these subjects in a Christian manner and spirit.”³⁴ The

³²Boyd, 161.

³³Torbet, 306.

³⁴Boyd, 167.

acknowledgment that individuals could speak their own views rung of classic Baptist religious liberty and apparently appealed to all. The resolution was affirmed unanimously without discussion. The home mission society once again issued a similar declaration in their annual meeting. However, they also appointed a committee to “consider the amicable dissolution of the Society.”³⁵ To say the least, “this action renewed the fears of southern Baptists.”³⁶ Neutrality had been promised and affirmed, but continued slander out of the North created distrust.

Slander out of the North.

All the while, abolitionist societies were being formed in the North to speak out and condemn the southern institution of slavery.³⁷ Slanderous statements by willfully ignorant men attempting to falsely simplify a complex situation with little or no understanding of Southern life were issued forth on a regular basis. Such smear campaigns naturally caused southern Baptists to distrust their northern brothers when it came to neutrality. New York’s American Baptist Anti-Slavery Convention called upon southern Baptists to “confess before heaven and earth the sinfulness of holding slaves; admit it to be not only a misfortune, but a crime . . . forsake, like Abraham, your fatherland, and carry your children . . . to the vast asylum of our prairies.”³⁸ The convention also warned that if Baptists in the South continued to support and participate in the institution of slavery, “we cannot dare and we dare not recognize you as consistent brethren in Christ.”³⁹ It sounds like quite a few Baptists forgot to read Paul’s epistle to Philemon, or the rest

³⁵Torbet, 307.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Examples include the *American Baptist Anti-Slavery Convention* in New York and the *American Baptist Free Mission Society* in Boston.

³⁸McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 385.

³⁹Ibid.

of the New Testament for that matter. Anyway, such slander was common and daily, casting “a vile shadow upon many noble and decent people by blaming all for the sins of a few.”⁴⁰ Eventually, the sensationalistic won the day, and policies, previously promised to be neutral, were influenced.⁴¹ Shortly after the adjournment of the 1844 Triennial Convention meeting, where neutrality was once again reaffirmed, word got out that the foreign missions board had attempted to force the resignation of one of its missionaries—John Bushyhead, a Cherokee Indian who was working under the auspices of the Board as a missionary to his own tribe—because he was a slave holder. Conveniently, as far as the Board was concerned, Bushyhead died before the issue could be openly brought to a resolution. Nevertheless, “the conviction was widespread in the South that thenceforth no owner of slaves could expect appointment as a missionary, agent, or officer of the Foreign Missions Board” because such were considered less than qualified and worse yet, less than Christian.⁴² Their was suspicion that the northern-controlled societies would not do what they had promised to due, and rightfully so.

Cases of Ill-Treatment

Such suspicion proved true in two specific cases of ill-treatment. It began with the home missions society. Georgia Baptists were not convinced with regard to the promises of neutrality, so they decided to introduce a “test case” of sorts. They submitted the name of James E. Reeve,

⁴⁰Kennedy and Kennedy, 83.

⁴¹Those who are ignorant of the facts or choose to be ignorant of them, cow to the half-truths of sensationalism. Modern-day examples of this in America are abundant—radical environmentalism, feminism, pro-choice advocacy, multiculturalism, and the Israeli/Palestinian debate. Those who play with the sensations of others at the expense of truth know they can count on others’ loyalty and their pocket-books. Where there is ignorance, one can gain power with half-truths. The profit-minded industrialists of the North knew this, but those in the South knew the facts and would not fall for the sensationalism directed against their life and culture. In Baptist circles, Northerners used the sensationalism to gain power.

⁴²Shaw, 118.

a slaveholder, to the board for appointment and raised the money for his salary. To stop the mouths of the gainsayers, the Georgia Baptists openly admitted that they were presenting a test case to settle the matter once and for all—Would slave owners be given the same consideration in the appointment process? The Board responded by reaffirming its neutrality but refused to consider the nomination. They then issued some nonsensical spin that “Slavery or anti-slavery were questions beyond the province of the Society to discuss. Reeve’s appointment was declined on the ground that this application was a *test*, and that such a test, whether submitted by abolitionists or slaveholders, could not be considered.”⁴³ The language was clever—“*Resolved*, That in view of the preceding considerations it is not expedient to introduce the subjects of slavery or anti-slavery into our deliberations, nor to entertain applications in which they are introduced.”⁴⁴ However, the Georgia Baptists did not buy it. It was obvious that only the applications of slaveholders could introduce the subject. If test cases could not be considered, then what was to prevent the Board from assuming any application of a slaveholder to be a test case and therefore, unworthy of consideration? The slope was getting slippery. To alleviate some of these fears, the Board did appoint a slaveholder in February of 1845, several months after the Reeves incident.⁴⁵ Whether or not the whole matter was executed in good faith is irrelevant. The precedent was set, and the foreign mission society would soon follow suit.

“Troubled by rumors that no slaveholder could be appointed as a foreign missionary, and stung by the Georgia Test Case,” Baptists in Alabama sought to settle the matter once and for

⁴³Robert Andrew Baker, *Relations Between Northern and Southern Baptists* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), 81.

⁴⁴McBeth, *A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage*, 257.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

all.⁴⁶ They sent a series of hypothetical questions to the foreign missions board with a demand for clear answers. If no clear answers could be given to these “Alabama Resolutions,” then Alabama Baptists threatened to withhold funding from the society. The Board responded in the following matter:

In the 30 years in which the board has existed, no slaveholder, to our knowledge, has applied to be a missionary. And, as we send out no domestics or servants, such an event as a missionary taking slaves with him [as if slave owners would insist upon doing this], were it morally right, could not, in accordance with all our past arrangements and present plans, possibly occur. If, however, anyone should offer himself as a missionary, having slaves, we could not appoint him. One thing is certain, we can never be a party to any arrangement which would imply approbation of slavery.⁴⁷

The answer was in, and the rumors were proved true. These two “final straws” or cases of ill-treatment would serve “to break the back of Baptist unity.”⁴⁸ This issue was only about slavery on the surface. Underlying, was the blatant fact that the societies did not do what they said they were going to do—remain neutral. If they could not be trusted in this matter, how could they be trusted in other matters. It is virtually impossible to work in partnership with those that cannot be trusted. Thus, a break was inevitable.

Rupture.

Rupture finally came. Attempts were made at the 1845 Triennial Convention meeting in Providence, Rhode Island (another northern city Southerners had difficulty traveling to) to repair the breach, but all was to no avail. Even the President of the northern-dominated convention—Francis Wayland—admitted, “You will separate of course. I could not ask otherwise. *Your rights have been infringed.* I will take the liberty of offering one or two suggestions. We have

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷A.H. Newman, *American Church History* (New York: Christian Literature Co., 1894), 447.

⁴⁸McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 386.

shown how Christians ought not to act, it remains for you to show us how they ought to act.”⁴⁹

Southern Baptists thus severed themselves from the northern societies to form the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845. They did not cite the right to hold slaves amongst the reasons, however. They believed that the decision of the boards in the above matters were unconstitutional, manifest violations of the compromise violations, inconsistent with previous admissions, and unjust to southern supporters who had given liberally to the respective treasuries.⁵⁰ It was an issue of trust, a trust that was violated on the *matter* of slavery. What would prevent such trust from being violated on other issues in the future? Southern Baptists did not wait around to find out. The *Religious Herald*, a Baptist newspaper in Virginia, undoubtedly spoke for the whole of southern Baptists when it affirmed: “We have cherished no unfavorable suspicions against them [northern Baptists]. But we are disappointed, and pained at their decision—a decision which tramples alike on the constitution and the rights of Southern members. And now, brethren, what shall we do? To remain united with the Board is impossible. Self respect forbids it.”⁵¹ Interestingly, James B. Taylor, himself *not* a slave owner and president of the Virginia missionary board, promulgated a statement that severance from northern Baptists was sought after

not because we reside not at the South but because they have adopted an unconstitutional and unscriptural principle to govern their *future* course. The principle is this: that holding slaves is under all circumstances incompatible with the office of the Christian ministry. On this point we take issue with them; and verily believe that when the mists of prejudice shall have been scattered, we shall stand justified in the eyes of the world.⁵²

Unfortunately, the clouds of prejudice never cleared.

⁴⁹Boyd, 82 [Emphasis Mine].

⁵⁰McBeth, *A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage*, 262-263.

⁵¹Ibid., 263.

⁵²Putnam, 61 [Emphasis Mine].

In the sixteen years after the schism, as the nation prepared for war, Baptists in the South, having formed their own convention, began engaging in their own cooperative missionary efforts. When secession came, Southern Baptists naturally cast their lot with the newly-formed Confederacy. Considering this fact and the aforementioned severance among Baptists, one would be tempted to say that Southern Baptists were “the bulwarks of slavery” and thus the immoral fathers of an immoral heritage.⁵³ Such presuppositions, however, ignore the fact that the great majority of Baptists in the South owned no slaves, and many opposed the institution altogether. Why, then, would they cast their lot away from the Northern abolitionists? Apparently, McBeth’s simple assessments, as noted in the introduction of this treatise, are only-half-true. The issue was far more complex than he would have us to believe. All of this, of course, will become more evident as popular myths about the Civil War era are demythologized, both in a general sense and in a “baptistic” sense.

⁵³Shaw, 121.

CHAPTER TWO:

DEMYTHOLOGIZING POPULAR MYTHS ABOUT CIVIL WAR AMERICA

In order to understand why Southern Baptists would seemingly support the institution of slavery and cast their allegiance with the Confederate States of America, one has to wade through the plethora of “historical” myths about Civil War America that are often naively accepted without question.⁵⁴ The existence of such fables becomes apparent when one considers the *overall* situation and acknowledges *all* the facts. As one author correctly pointed out: “The military action of 1776 was called the ‘*American Revolution*’ or the ‘*War for Independence*,’ and yet the military action of 1861 has been called the ‘*War of Rebellion*.’ Why this is, no writer has ever explained. It seems to be ‘hallowed ground’ with so many sacred cows on it that ‘modern, twentieth-century, educated man’ simply cannot discuss the matter.”⁵⁵ Well, we are going to discuss the matter, and we are going to deal in facts. These facts will show that Southerners and Southern Baptists alike were not the dreadful, slave-beating racists that a radical abolitionist perspective would have us to believe. Moreover, the Northern “freedom-fighters” were not the great bastions of morality and equality that the revisionist history books claim them to be.

Myth #1—Slavery was the Primary Cause of the Civil War

This simplistic take on a defining era in American history permeates the textbooks while undoubtedly assigning virtue to the North and vice to the South. “This lie has been, and still is, either stated or implied over and over until today most Southerners themselves accept their

⁵⁴The author recognizes that most, if not all history, is biased. This, however, is an attempt to get at the truth of the historical matter with documented facts. Sensationalists and propagandists do not typically deal in facts.

⁵⁵Peter Ruckman, *The History of the New Testament Church* (Pensacola, FL: Bible Baptist Bookstore, 1984), 74.

assigned position as national villains without so much as one word of protest.”⁵⁶ Certainly, as one author proclaims, “no reputable historian would want to risk his reputation in referring any historic event to a single cause.”⁵⁷ In fact, such cannot be said about the American Revolution, World War I, World War II, Vietnam, or any other war in American history. Yet, it is perpetuated about the War for Southern Independence.

General assessment.

A few demographic facts will expose this myth of the radical abolitionist spin. Even liberal estimates admit that only about one-third of white Southerners ever owned slaves at all.⁵⁸ A more accurate analysis of 1860 census records, however, yields evidence that slave owning planters (large plantation owners with multiple slaves) comprised a mere 4% of the entire Southern population and slave owners altogether a mere 8%.⁵⁹ With regard to the Confederate armed forces, it has been estimated that 70%-80% of soldiers and sailors were not nor ever had been slave owners.⁶⁰ This too is a liberal estimate. One is forced to ask the question, “Who in his right mind could honestly claim that the Southern soldiers and sailors, the vast majority of whom were not slave owners, went to war against a numerically superior foe and endured four

⁵⁶Kennedy and Kennedy, 34.

⁵⁷Edwin Rozwenc, ed., *Slavery as a Cause of the Civil War* (Boston, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1963), iii.

⁵⁸Boyd, 157.

⁵⁹Sons of Confederate Veterans Chaplain Ron Vaughn, interview by author, 10 July, 2001. Some estimate figures to be as low as 6%. One author writes, “In looking at the participants in the slave system of the Old South, we are looking at very few members of the Southern society. In 1860, there were 5.3 million whites in the South. Of that number, approximately three hundred thousand (six percent) were slave holders. The number of slave holders who could be classified as aristocratic planters was only 150,000 (three percent). The rest of the slave holders owned five or fewer slaves and worked beside their slaves in order to make a living” (Kennedy and Kennedy, 83).

⁶⁰Kennedy and Kennedy, 34.

long years of hardships, all in order to allow a few rich men to keep their slaves?"⁶¹ The answer is obvious

Many of the Southern military heroes were not slave owners. A partial list includes Robert E. Lee, A.P. Hill, Joseph E. Johnston, J.E.B. Stuart, and Thomas J. Jackson. Of these, Lee and Jackson are perhaps the best known and most reviled by the uneducated. Truthfully, both men loathed the institution. Jackson, in fact, owned no slaves ever and had part of his monthly pay sent back to his hometown to be used as funding for schools and churches for the free blacks and slaves in the area. On Sunday mornings, Jackson spent his time at the local black church teaching Sunday School to the children. General Lee, on the other hand, owned no slaves himself, but had inherited several from his wife's family. In numerous letters to his wife during the war and before, he encouraged her to free them and assist in getting them employment for pay. Meanwhile, Mr. Lincoln's wife, Mary Todd, had several brothers who all owned slaves, and retained them right up until the passage of the 13th Amendment! General Grant was also the victim of inherited "house servants", and retained them until the passage of the 13th Amendment.

Other interesting facts that decry the absurdity of this myth are abundant. For example, Jefferson Davis, later president of the Confederacy, wrote to his wife in February of 1861 that no matter what the outcome of the inevitable conflict, the slave property of the South would eventually be lost. Moreover, his inaugural address did not even mention the "peculiar institution."⁶² One author reveals:

Since, therefore, the abolition of slavery never appeared in the platform of any great political party, since the only appeal ever made to the electorate on the issue was scornfully repulsed, since the spokesman of the Republicans [Lincoln] emphatically declared that his party never intended to interfere with slavery in the states

⁶¹Ibid., 34-35.

⁶²Kennedy and Kennedy, 35.

in any shape or form, it seems reasonable to assume that the institution of slavery was not the fundamental issue during the epoch preceding the bombardment of Fort Sumter.⁶³

No, Southerners did not see things this way. They seceded because of “injustice and grievous wrong extended to her by her sister free States.”⁶⁴ The *South Carolina Declaration of the Causes of Secession* made this plain when it went on to say that the threats to wage a war against slavery demonstrates that “the guarantees of the Constitution will then no longer exist; the equal rights of the States will be lost. The Slave-holding states will no longer have the power of self-government, or self-protection, and the Federal Government will have become the enemy.”⁶⁵ You see, it was not slavery they were afraid of losing, but the guarantees of the Constitution. If slavery went first, what would go next? Religious liberty? The same Southerners went to war to defend themselves against an invading army. In May of 1861, the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Savannah, Georgia adopted a report that declared the movement of Northern soldiers onto Southern soil to sustain the Union as “an invasion designed to destroy whatever is dear in the heroic traditions of the South.”⁶⁶ In examining the various extant letters and journals of ordinary Confederate soldiers, one would be extremely hard-pressed to find rallying cries or motives to protect slavery. After the war, one soldier wrote, “I declare I never met a Southern soldier who had drawn his own sword to perpetuate slavery . . . What he had chiefly at heart was the preservation of the supreme and sacred right of self-government!”⁶⁷

⁶³Rozwenc, 58.

⁶⁴Ibid., 13.

⁶⁵Ibid., 30.

⁶⁶Frank Moore, ed, *The Rebellion Record—A Diary of American Events* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 1:68. Ironically, this statement was from the pen of a Northerner.

⁶⁷Kennedy and Kennedy, 35.

Baptist assessment.

Liberal calculations based upon national census and church records estimate that around the 1840's, there were approximately 400,000 Baptists in the South while a mere 115,000 slaves were owned by Baptists.⁶⁸ Even if things stood at a one to one ratio, which it obviously did not, it would still mean that only about 29% of Southern Baptists owned slaves. Such, however, is a large overstatement. The great majority of slave-owners owned more than one slave, so the 8% of the overall Southern population can safely be applied to Baptists. In other words, let's assume that 32,000 Baptists (8%) out of a population of 400,000 in the South owned slaves. That would still only mean that the average slave owner possessed less than four slaves. Thus, the percentage was probably lower because some slave owners owned far more than four slaves and most Baptists in the South were characteristically poor without the ability to afford slave labor even if they desired it. And, McBeth would have us to believe that 400,000 Baptists in the South severed ties with their Northern brethren over an institution that involved only a sliver of their Baptist population? Things were not that simple. In 1861, a company of Indiana volunteers in the Union Army stumbled across a log cabin in the mountains somewhere down south. There, they encountered an elderly woman. After the usual small talk, one soldier asked her, "Well old lady, are you a secesh [secessionist]?" She replied "No!" The soldier then asked if she was for the Union. She again replied, "No!" "What are you then?" asked another of the company. She answered back with a profound statement: "A Baptist, and I always have been." The soldiers then left her peaceably.⁶⁹ Such an incident speaks volumes about Southern Baptist motivation.

⁶⁸See McBeth, *A Sourcebook For Baptist Heritage*, 262 and Shaw, 113.

⁶⁹Moore, 3:26.

In conclusion and for the sake of emphasis, let us once again consider: Why would ninety-two out of every one hundred Southern citizens go to so much trouble over something that had no economic or political effect on their lives? Moreover, why would the great majority of Confederate soldiers risk their lives for something that did not concern them? With regard to the Baptists, why would Southern Baptists go to so much trouble, heartache, and economic risk for an issue that most of them could not relate to personally? These rhetorical questions clearly show that there was something bigger and more complex that Southerners and Southern Baptists were willing to stand up against. McBeth's "other issues" are the real issues. Just as the Northern-controlled United States government was attempting to control the South for economic and political gain (i.e. unjust tariffs, propagandizing of slavery, harnessing of states' rights, ostracism in national government, etc.), the Northern-controlled Baptist societies were attempting to control, harass, and ostracize Southern Baptists for political and economic gain. There is another side to the story. Decrying slavery and sensationalizing its realities was an effective propaganda ploy for covering up the real issues. Such propaganda appealed to people's emotions and blinded them to, in the words of McBeth, the "blunt historical fact."

Myth #2—The Blame for Slavery in America Rests on the South

General assessment

Revisionist historians would have the naïve American to believe this. However, such flies in the face of many undeniable facts. Consider a few of them:

1. The Northern state of Massachusetts was the first state to use the force of its government to protect slavery.⁷⁰

⁷⁰See Kennedy and Kennedy, 62-72.

2. The Southern state of Virginia first attempted to prohibit the importation of slaves.⁷¹
3. “Not one slave was ever captured, transported to America, or sold under the authority of the Confederate battle flag. All slaves came over, and were sold under the authority of the Stars and Stripes.”⁷²
4. The Constitution of the Confederate States of America was the first written constitution in the history of mankind that expressly forbade the slave trade, making it illegal.
5. No law ever passed in the North granted freedom to a person already classified as a slave.⁷³ No, the property rights of the Northern slave owners were always protected and slavery was abolished there by a system of gradual emancipation. Thus, northern “property” owners could remove their property to the South, sell their slaves, and thereby rid themselves of the human responsibility while making a handsome profit.
6. Blacks in Africa kidnapped their own people and sold them into slavery to Yankee ship merchants who in turn sold the slaves in Southern markets.
7. Many free blacks and Indians across ante-bellum American owned black slaves.

I guess one could go on with such facts, but the point has been made. There is plenty of guilt to go around, and it does not solely rest upon the South and/or Southern churches.

Baptist assessment.

To place blame for slavery in Baptist circles upon the heads of Southern Baptists is likewise ludicrous. Most Southern Baptists had no personal interest in the institution, and those that did were involved more to advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ amongst the unregenerate than any group of puffed-up pontiffs passing judgment from their comfortable society meetings in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, or Baltimore.⁷⁴

Myth #3—Slavery was a Terrible Existence in the South

Unfortunately, most ideas about slavery in the South are colored by the sensationalist portrayals of those such as Harriet Beecher Stowe in her well-known book *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The fact is, Stowe never even set foot in the South except for a short visit to Kentucky, itself a

⁷¹Ibid., 72-74.

⁷²John Weaver, “Why Some Hate the Confederate Flag Part 1,” *Confederate Veteran* 5 (2001): 60.

⁷³Kennedy and Kennedy, 74-77.

⁷⁴Proof of this was in the revivals that swept through the South during the War (see J. William Jones’ *Christ in the Camp*).

border state. None of the stuff in her abolitionist propaganda came from first-hand experience. She claimed, rather, that it came from visions of God while sitting in church. If the typical *Uncle Tom's Cabin* assessment of slavery is to be accepted without question, then many facts, statistics, and common sense strategies make little sense. Moreover, large piles of personal testimony and extant documents will have to be disregarded. The truth of the matter is, slavery was, for the most part, a much better existence in the South than the position of black freedmen in the North. Perhaps Senator James Hammond of South Carolina stated it most effectively when he said on the United States Senate floor, "The difference between us is that our slaves are hired for life and well-compensated. Yours are hired by the day, not cared for, and scantily compensated."⁷⁵ Reader, please understand, I am not attempting to defend the system of slavery. I am simply seeking the truth about its history and its existence in the South prior to the War for Southern Independence.

General assessment.

Census figures reveal that enslaved blacks in the South had a higher standard of living, higher life expectancy, and lower infant mortality rate than freed blacks in the North and factory workers in Europe.⁷⁶ Moreover, simple logic forces one to recognize that if PRODUCTIVITY and ECONOMIC PROSPERITY (charges levied by the abolitionist propagandists) were important on Southern plantations, a master would be foolish to beat his slaves to a pulp so that they could not work the next day. This would cost him money. Anytime controlled labor is garnished with corporal punishment, any trace of incentive is destroyed. Communism in the

⁷⁵Geoffrey C. Ward, *The Civil War—An Illustrated History* (New York: Knopf, 1990), 6.

⁷⁶Sons of Confederate Veterans Chaplain Ron Vaughn, interview by author, 10 July, 2001.

former USSR proved this. Sure, there were incidents of cruelty, but these were the exceptions and not the rule. The fact is, most slaves were treated with extreme kindness and given great responsibilities. There are plenty of extant written testimonies of former slaves that document this. In fact, about 70% of ex-slaves had only good things to say about life as a slave in the Old South.⁷⁷ Simon Phillips, a slave from Alabama, once wrote, “People has the wrong idea of slave days. We was treated good. My massa never laid a hand on me the whole time I was wid him . . . Sometime we loaned the massa money when he was hard pushed.”⁷⁸ Elijah Hopkins of Little Rock, Arkansas said, “In slavery times, a poor white man was worse off than a nigger.”⁷⁹ Slave children were even known to sing a song that started with the line “I’d rather be a nigger than a poor white man.”⁸⁰ Reams of such testimony could be produced, but the point has been made.⁸¹

Many naïve Americans have the idea that slavery in the South horribly broke up black families in the South on a regular basis—another aspect of the *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* mentality. It does not take a genius to figure out that such a situation would also destroy incentive and create economic drawbacks for the Southern planter. If families were broken up, it was the exception and not the rule. Most of such occurrences happened on account of the master’s death.⁸²

It has also been claimed that there was much sexual exploitation of the slaves in the South by their white masters. However, mulattos only comprised 10.4% of the slave population in the

⁷⁷Kennedy and Kennedy, 96.

⁷⁸Ibid., 97.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹For many more such testimonies, the reader should consult Kennedy and Kennedy 81-118.

⁸²Sons of Confederate Veterans Chaplain Ron Vaughn, interview by author, 10 July, 2001.

South in 1860. Blacks first came to America as slaves around 1620, and 240 years only produced a mulatto population of 10.4% (a percentage well within the statistical norm)? Something just does not add up.⁸³

One also has to ask the question about why slave rebellions never seemed to have their desired effect. John Brown knew this all too well. The fact is “we jes’ went on peaceful an’ happy til de war come an’ rooted ebery blessed thing up by de roots.”⁸⁴

Finally, it should not be forgotten that many slaves and free blacks joined the Confederate ranks to help repel the Northern invasion. If slavery were such a horrible existence, no black in his right mind would fight to preserve something he hated. The critics argue that slaves were forced to fight by their white masters. The absurdity of this is evident when one reasons that it is not a wise practice to issue arms and ammunition to a soldier being forced to serve, especially since that soldier could easily use those arms to liberate himself if he so desired! Nonetheless, abundant personal testimony refutes such ill-founded assessment. Consider the following two testimonies. Dick Poplar was a well-known slave cook from Petersburg who entered the Confederate army, carrying his specialty with him. However, being a cook did not prevent his capture at the hands of Union soldiers. He spent close to twenty months in a POW camp all the while maintaining that he was a “loyal Jeff Davis man.” The black Union guards tried their best to make him change his mind, but he refused to turn his back on his homeland. “A word from him at any time would have set him free.”⁸⁵ Levy Carnine provides another prime example of willful loyalty. Carnine went along with his master when he enlisted in the Louisiana Pelican

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Kennedy and Kennedy, 81.

⁸⁵Ibid., 94.

Rifles at the outbreak of war. He served as a personal bodyguard until his master was killed. Then, relieved of his duties, he saw that his former master received a proper burial and *voluntarily* offered his services to the colonel of the same regiment. Carnine stayed with the colonel until he too was killed in battle. Once again, the slave “carried out his duties to a dead master by burying and marking the grave of another Southern soldier.”⁸⁶ Levy then returned to the Pelican Rifles of his own accord and served faithfully, fighting with them in battle on several occasions. After the fall of Vicksburg in July of 1863, many of the Confederate soldiers lost communication with their families in the western Confederacy. Levi volunteered to cross Yankee lines, posing as a free black, so that he could carry letters and correspondence back to his comrades’ families in Northwest, Louisiana. “A more difficult task could not be asked of a friend, but Levi was up to it and brought home to Northwest Louisiana mail and news to the soldiers’ friends and families. Levi became a local hero.”⁸⁷ After the war, Levi was made an honorary member of the *United Confederate Veterans*. When he died, the local unit insisted that he be buried with all the other Confederate soldiers and completely covered the expenses for his funeral. “Levy Carnine became one of the very few black men to be buried in the white cemetery at Mansfield, Louisiana, where his grave is marked with the words, “Levy Carnine, C.S.A.”⁸⁸

Alas, for time would fail one to speak of Thomas Williamson, Julia Mason, Neptune King, Richard Mitchell, J.C. Leeper, James Clarke, Levi Oxendine, Alexander Harris, Andrew Williams, George Dwelle, Amos Rucker, Isham Marshall, Richmond Elder, Tim Billing, Hunter

⁸⁶Ibid., 95.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid., 96.

Beneaux, Bill Yopp, Moses Pringle, Tom Strother, Jim Lewis, Charles Lutz, Jean Baptiste Pierre-Auguste, Evariste Guillory, Sr., Evariste Guillory, Jr., and countless other “blacks in gray.” Such stories would inevitably lead one to the same conclusion to which Arthur Fremantle, a British envoy to Lee’s Army, came. While accompanying the Army of Northern Virginia on its Gettysburg campaign, Fremantle noted innumerable examples of voluntary black loyalty to the Southern cause. One time, he saw a black Confederate soldier guarding a group of Yankee prisoners. Such led him to remark:

This little episode of a Southern slave leading a white Yankee soldier through a Northern village, alone and of his own accord, would not have been gratifying to an abolitionist, . . . Nor would the sympathizers both in England and in the North feel encouraged if they could hear the language of detestation and contempt with which the numerous Negroes with Southern armies speak of their liberators [i.e. the Union armies].⁸⁹

Baptist assessment.

Numerous testimonies also illustrate the kindness Baptists showed toward their slaves. For our purposes, one interesting story will suffice. One of the South’s greatest Baptist preachers was a black man by the name of John Jasper. He did not make his impression as a colored reverend on the basis of political activism and civil rights agitation, but “as a proven warrior of the Christian Church.”⁹⁰ Jasper was born a slave in Virginia and was led to Jesus Christ by the influence of his Baptist master, Samuel Hargrove. Jasper never had a negative thing to say about Hargrove. Once, when sharing his testimony, Jasper mentioned his master’s reaction to the news of his slave’s salvation: “John, I wish you mighty well. Your Saviour is mine an’ we are bruthers in de Lord.”⁹¹ During the war, Jasper could be found throughout Richmond preaching the Gospel to the wounded in Confederate hospitals. After the war, blacks and whites flocked to

⁸⁹*Civil War Quarterly*, vol. VIII, 47,50.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 111.

⁹¹William Hatcher, *John Jasper* (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1985), 27.

hear his dynamic preaching. Jasper's warm friendship with his master lasted until Hargrove died. Even years later, the former slave would speak of his "Christian massa" from the pulpit of his own church, often thinking of his former friend. He once proclaimed:

Oft'n as I preach I feel that I am doin' what my old marster tol' me to do. If he was here now I think he would lif' up dem kin' black eyes of his, an' say: "Dat's right, John; still tellin' it; fly like de angel, an' wherever you go carry de Gospel to de people." Farewell, my ol' marster, when I lan' in de heav'nly city, I'll call at your mansion.⁹²

The close relationship between black Baptists such as Jasper and white Baptists such as Hargrove were far from unusual. Illustrations of Christian masters and Christian slaves honoring the biblical injunctions in the master-slave relationship are found in stories from one end of the Old South to the other.

In conclusion, slavery was not the dreaded evil spoken of by the abolitionist fire-breathers. "I supposed dem Yankees wuz all right in dere place, but dey neber belong in the South . . . An' as for dey a-setting me free! Miss, us [slaves] wuz free as soon as we wuz born. I always been free!"⁹³

Myth #4—Southerners were Racist Bigots who Hated Blacks

Enough has already been said to refute this myth. Nevertheless, historical revisionists often need bombardment of the truth.

General assessment.

From Jefferson Davis at the top to the lowliest Southern farmer, a myriad of testimonies could be presented to show that whites did not hate their black slaves.⁹⁴ Doubtless, racism did exist, but it was not the driving force. "Slavery was a significant difference between the North

⁹²Ibid., 28-29.

⁹³Kennedy and Kennedy, 96.

⁹⁴See Kennedy and Kennedy 81-118 for more information.

and South. But, this was largely due to economic factors, not racism. Racism was equal both in the North and South.”⁹⁵ In fact, segregation was first practiced in the North: “Southern slaves were often treated better than were Northern factory workers. Segregation was a Northern invention, as Whites and Blacks worked side by side in the South, albeit not as equals. Cruelty to slaves was greatly exaggerated by the Northern press enabling Abolitionists to whip people into a frenzy.”⁹⁶ No black in his right mind would risk his skin for a people that *hated* him because of the color of it. Obviously such hatred was not the norm, for many blacks put their lives in harm’s way on the battlefield, a black Confederate corporal in the 14th Tennessee Infantry being a case and point. He picked up his fallen regimental colors during Pickett's charge at Gettysburg and boldly led his white compatriots towards the deadly stone wall.

Baptist assessment.

The idea that Baptists, in particular, hated the black slaves, is a farce dreamed up in cloudland. Slaveholding Baptists, in a general sense, were ardently concerned about the spiritual well-being of their slaves. Richard Furman, one of the most influential Baptists of his day, spoke for Baptists as a whole in 1822 when he wrote: “That a master has a scriptural right to govern his slaves so as to keep them in subjection; to demand and receive from them a reasonable service; and to correct them for the neglect of duty, for their vices and transgressions; but that to impose on them unreasonable, rigorous services, or to inflict on them cruel punishment, he has neither a scriptural nor a moral right.”⁹⁷

⁹⁵Haines, 43.

⁹⁶Ibid., 63.

⁹⁷McBeth, *A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage*, 254-255.

Interestingly, many blacks (both slave and free) were members of Baptist churches.⁹⁸ The history of Palestine Baptist Church in Mississippi relates such truth. This church was organized in 1786 by eleven white men and one black man. Amazingly, it still serves the community today. In 1858, Palestine listed 175 members—one hundred white and seventy-five black. “These black members were a vital part of the ongoing evangelical work of the church.”⁹⁹ Interestingly, the first Baptist church west of the Mississippi River was founded by a black preacher—Joseph Wills.¹⁰⁰ In 1835, First Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia had two thousand blacks on its membership role, “five times the number of whites.”¹⁰¹

J. William Jones, a Baptist preacher who served in the Confederate Army as a chaplain under Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson provided many anecdotes in his profound work *Christ in the Camp*. These “illustrate a phase of Southern society and the kindly relations and sympathies between master and slave which none can appreciate who did not witness them.”¹⁰² One such story relates how a man’s slaves gathered together in the middle of the night to pray for their master who had gone off to war. “Earnest prayers ascended that his health and life might be spared, and that God would grant him a safe return.”¹⁰³ Another incident, related by A.E. Dickinson, general superintendent of the Baptist Colportage Board during the War, is worthy of repetition:

When in Augusta, Georgia, some months ago, I made a public appeal in behalf of the soldiers in Virginia . . .

⁹⁸Shaw, 112-113.

⁹⁹Kennedy and Kennedy, 112.

¹⁰⁰Francis B. Simkins, *A History of the South* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959), 159.

¹⁰¹Shaw, 113.

¹⁰²J. William Jones, *Christ in the Camp*. Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1986.

¹⁰³Jones, 25.

The next morning an old Negro man came through the drenching rain to my place of abode, and made the following remark: “My heart was so sorry when I heard you tell of dem poor soldiers in Virginia—how dey starving for de Gospel; and to think dat here I hab de preached word all de time, *and there dey is fighting for me*. My heart is monstrous ‘flicted when I think of my young massa out in de army, and I wants to send him de Gospel.” So saying, he placed a gold dollar in my hand and expressed his regret that it was “so little.”¹⁰⁴

One is immediately reminded of the widow and her two mites in Mark 12:41-44. “For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living. (Mark 12:44 KJV).”

Myth #5—Northerners were Noble Freedom Fighters

“No Yankee myth is more historically ridiculous than the myth of the egalitarian North.”¹⁰⁵

This myth begins with Abraham Lincoln and filters on down to the entire Union Army.

Undeniably, there were many God-fearing, Bible-believing men on both sides of the line during the Civil War (the great tragedy of the war), but Northerners, as a whole, were not the noble, morally superior, freedom fighters that revisionist history makes them out to be. Numerous atrocities against the South and its people (slaves included) could be documented. In fact, Alexis de Tocqueville, having traveled throughout the United States making personal observations about democracy in America, noted: “The prejudice of the race appears to be stronger in the States that have abolished slaves than in the States where slavery still exists. White carpenters, white bricklayers, and white painters will not work side by side with the blacks in the North but do it in almost every Southern State.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 162 [Emphasis Mine].

¹⁰⁵Kennedy and Kennedy, 53.

¹⁰⁶Mildred Rutherford, *Truths of History* (Athens, GA: M.L. Rutherford Publishing, 1907), 92.

General assessment.

To begin with, Abraham Lincoln was not the great emancipator and champion of equality who sought to free the slaves from their Southern dictators. This myth is exposed by Lincoln's own words. In a letter to a Northern abolitionist, Lincoln wrote:

My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some slaves and leaving others alone I would do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race I do because I believe it helps to save the Union . . . I shall do less whenever I believe that what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I believe doing more helps the cause.¹⁰⁷

Lincoln's *Emancipation Proclamation*, by his own admission to Secretary Salmon P. Chase in a letter dated September 2, 1863, was nothing but a military ploy and carried no legal weight whatsoever. The passage of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution in late 1865 ended slavery, not Lincoln. As for the *Emancipation Proclamation*, it only freed slaves in states over which Lincoln's government had no control (i.e. Confederate States). The slaves in the Union border states and those in the Union conquered counties in Louisiana and Missouri remained in bondage. In fact, U.S. Grant's slaves did not receive their freedom until the passage of the 13th Amendment. When asked about this, Grant responded, "Good help is so hard to come by these days."¹⁰⁸ More could be said about this, including Lincoln's largely unknown white supremacist ideas and his legacy of being the only president to order a mass execution.¹⁰⁹

Census records show that the free black in the North fared much worse than the enslaved black in the South. According to 1860 figures, the percentage of increase in the black population

¹⁰⁷Johnson, 469.

¹⁰⁸Kennedy and Kennedy, 27.

¹⁰⁹For details see Kennedy and Kennedy, 26-32.

was 23% in the South. In the North, it was a grim 1.7%.¹¹⁰ The ratio of disabilities among blacks was also significantly greater in the “land of freedom.” Interestingly, many Northern States, including Lincoln’s home state of Illinois, enacted laws to keep run-away slaves out of their borders.¹¹¹ And this was supposed to represent moral superiority?

When it came to invading Southern soil, the Yankee armies were far from noble. Unlike Robert E. Lee, who commanded his troops to refrain from pillaging innocent civilians, Union officers allowed their troops to ransack towns, harass civilians, steal property, and force Southern blacks to labor in the Union armies. The last time I checked, forcing one to do labor against his will is slavery. Sherman’s horrendous “March to the Sea” from Atlanta, Georgia is well-known. But, little is ever mentioned in the textbooks about his march through the Carolinas (much worse), rape and murder at New Manchester, Georgia; lynching in Missouri; the “terrible swift sword” in Louisiana; the Yankee human shield policy; and the numerous atrocities committed against black Southerners. Consider the following: In Petite-Anse Island, Louisiana, Union soldiers broke into the home of a ninety-year old man. They took all his clothing, valuables, and even the covers from his bed. They left him virtually naked and cursed him upon exit.¹¹² In Opelousas, Louisiana, a unit from Massachusetts ransacked a Methodist church and turned it into a “den of infamy.”¹¹³ In December of 1864, a letter was sent to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton from General Rufus Saxton describing the attitude of Yankee soldiers toward the slaves. He wrote:

¹¹⁰Ibid., 77.

¹¹¹Ibid., 54-55.

¹¹²David C. Edmonds, ed., *The Conduct of Federal Troops in Louisiana* (Lafayette, LA: Acadiana Press, 1988), 38.

¹¹³Ibid., 51.

I found the prejudice of color and race here in full force, and the general feeling of the army of occupation was unfriendly to the blacks. It was manifested in various forms of personal insult and abuse, in depredations on their plantations, stealing and destroying their crops and domestic animals and robbing them of their money . . . The women were held as legitimate prey of lust.¹¹⁴

Countless other examples of atrocities could be listed, including the cruel Indian policies, but the point has been made.¹¹⁵ The author's purpose here is not to stigmatize all Northerners as debauched monsters like the history textbooks have long portrayed the men of the South. No, he simply seeks to show that there was sin in both camps. The North was not morally superior to the South. In fact, many of the Union soldiers, if they were alive today, would disagree that they fought to free the slaves. They would most assuredly say, "We fought to preserve the Union."¹¹⁶

Baptist assessment.

Baptists also suffered at the hands of Union armies. In areas of Union occupation, Baptist ministers were "forbidden to preach unless they took an oath of allegiance against the United States."¹¹⁷ Records show that at least ten Southern Baptist preachers were imprisoned for various infractions. Some died while incarcerated, and at least one was executed for keeping company with John S. Mosby and his Rangers.¹¹⁸ In Nashville, the presses, type, paper, and publication materials for the *Tennessee Baptist* were destroyed when Union troops entered the city. The editor, J. Graves, had to suspend publication for the remainder of the war. He announced that he was going to enter the military and raise his own legion to take back what was

¹¹⁴Kennedy and Kennedy, 140.

¹¹⁵For more information, see Edmonds, *The Conduct of Federal Troops in Louisiana* and Kennedy and Kennedy, 119-146.

¹¹⁶Haines, 43.

¹¹⁷Shaw, 118.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

taken from him.¹¹⁹ Whether or not Graves succeeded is unknown. The *Baptist Recorder* published in Louisville, Kentucky was also suppressed, and its editor was sent to military prison.¹²⁰ So much for free speech?!?

Northern Baptists encouraged such suppression by petitioning the War Department for permission to “take over and operate abandoned Baptist churches in the areas of the Confederacy under Federal control.”¹²¹ Though honorable motives could have been involved, the War Department immediately recognized the political advantage in allowing such a move. The American Baptist Home Mission Society was told that they could assume control over any and all Southern Baptist churches “in which a loyal minister of said church does not now officiate.”¹²² By that order, Northern Baptists could have conceivably taken over all Baptist churches in the South, for one would be hard pressed to find ministers in Dixieland that could have qualified as “loyal ministers.” The whole thing smelled like a move to “make the church an instrument of the government . . . [and] smacked of one more form of occupation.”¹²³ One case, in particular, demonstrated this. In the summer of 1863, a missionary was sent by the ABHMS to look after Baptist interests in New Orleans. Finding a Southern Baptist church “neither desirous of his services, nor willing to surrender the house to him” he was able to obtain an order from the Union Provost Marshall for forcible possession.¹²⁴ Once the church was seized, sixty out of the original sixty-five members left in protest. It was not until after the war that the

¹¹⁹Moore, 4:99.

¹²⁰Moore, 6:25.

¹²¹Shaw, 130.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Ibid., 131-132.

church was restored to its rightful owners. Such incidents angered Southern Baptists, and such responses were more than justified. In fact, they did much to thwart any attempts at reunification after the War.

The “freedom-loving” Northern Baptists were also accustomed to breathing out slaughter.

Portions of a *New York Evening Post* article dated May 7, 1861 are worthy of reproduction:

Dr. Armitage referred to the fact that the pastors of the First Baptist Church . . . had all been noted for their zealous patriotism. One of the most eminent of them—Spencer H. Cone—had, in the war of 1812, himself gallantly defended that emblem of civil and religious liberty [Seems like that is what the South was fighting for], the stars and stripes, at Fort McHenry; and at this moment members of this church are in the camp, equally ready to defend it against all aggression [The Union armies were the aggressors; they invaded the South]. No free government or constitutional liberty have [sic.] ever been secured or perpetuated by any nation without the seal of its own blood [The South would agree]. If the liberties thus purchased for us by our fathers, and the government which they founded—the best the world has ever seen—are to be insulted and trampled upon [If anyone was trampling upon liberties guaranteed by the Constitution, the Federal Government was.], shall we not strike down the traitor [Sounds like someone forgot to read Ephesians 4:32], even though he be one of the family—even though he be our own brother. “I too,” said Dr. Eaton, “am emphatically a man of peace, for I am a preacher of the Prince of Peace; but [Oh, so there is a catch?] in this crisis, my friends, it is my firm conviction that the best and surest way to perpetuate the blessing is promptly to send down, if need be, half a million men to those seditious brethren of ours, and compel [What happened to religious liberty?] them to keep the peace [This sounds strikingly familiar to the Roman Catholic Church’s strategy from A.D. 500-1500, a strategy that resulted in the systematic butchering of 50,000,000 bible-believing Christians who stood against popish heresy]. We cherish no malice against them—God forbid. But their traitorous hands are now clutching the very life of our body politic, and we must use prompt and vigorous action in defense of our very national existence.¹²⁵

The inherent contradictions are obvious and need no further comment. It is almost humorous.

Northern Baptists were condemning their Southern brothers for involvement in an institution that Scripture never condemns while at the same time encouraging clear violations of Ephesians 4:32.

One can understand why Southern Baptists would formally respond in the following manner:

While the two sections of the land are thus arrayed against each other, it might naturally have been hoped that at least the churches of the North would interpose and protest against this appeal to the sword, this invoking of war, this deluging the country in fratricidal blood; but with astonishment and grief we find churches and pastors if the North breathing out slaughter, and clamoring for sanguinary hostilities with a fierceness which we would have supposed impossible among the disciples of the Prince of Peace.¹²⁶

Noble freedom fighters do not breathe out slaughter and demands to suppress the very liberties they claim to be fighting for.

¹²⁵Moore, 1:57.

¹²⁶Ibid., 1:238.

Myth #6—Slavery was Unscriptural

The sixth and final myth about Civil War America that requires brief treatment is the “sacred cow” that slavery in antebellum America was unscriptural. Let it be emphasized once again that *I am not defending the institution of slavery. I am simply attempting to explain why it existed and how it existed in the Old South.* Such has been one of the primary motivations for this treatise from the beginning. There were many God-fearing, Bible-believing Baptists in the South who defended slavery whether they had a personal interest in the institution or not. These at least deserve a hearing.

One would be extremely hard pressed to find any condemnation of the institution of slavery in the Holy Scriptures. It simply is not there; this is blunt historical fact. What one does find is an Old Testament that directs the Israelites as to how they should purchase their slaves of the heathen nations and treat them honorably and a New Testament where proper master-slave relationships are clearly defined (cf. Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-4:1; I Timothy 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10; I Peter 2:18-25). Never are slaves encouraged to revolt, run away, or overthrow their masters. The one time that a slave does run away, Paul directs him to return to his Christian master after he himself became a follower of Jesus Christ (cf. Philemon 12). Likewise, masters are commanded to treat their slaves with respect and honor (Ephesians 6:9). These are plain Scriptures that cannot be swept under the rug. Thus, one can understand why Southern Baptists in the Old South “grew irritated by the propaganda of northern abolitionists.”¹²⁷ Not only did this propaganda subvert the final authority of Scripture, but it condemned all Christians who own slaves as something less than Christian—“The Southerners were told bluntly that slavery was

¹²⁷Torbet, 302.

wrong, and therefore unchristian, and that their defense of it brought the whole denomination and all who bore the name Baptist into disrepute in the eyes of God and the world.”¹²⁸ According to such argumentation, the Apostle Paul would have to be considered “unchristian” as well. As if this were not enough, all such “holier than thou” preaching was sent down from those who would not even let blacks into their states and churches. Oh how sensationalistic hypocrisy doth rear its ugly head!

Southern Baptists pointed to the Scriptures to defend their institution. The BOOK was their final authority in all matters of faith and practice. Northern Baptists claimed to do the same, arguing that the Scriptures “taught the inherent dignity and worth of every individual in the sight of God.”¹²⁹ The Baptist slave owner never denied this fact: “For though they are slaves, they are also men; and are with ourselves accountable creatures; having immortal souls, and being destined to future eternal reward.”¹³⁰ Neither were Bible-believing slave owners so naïve as to think that there was no evil in the institution. Men are sinful, and there were cases of cruelty and brutality. However, such cases did not render the institution itself a sin in the eyes of Southern Baptists. “To prove it to be a sin, they insisted, a new Bible would have to be produced.”¹³¹

Once again, I want to reiterate that *I am not arguing for the slave system*. I am quite thankful that I do not have to live as a slave and that none of my fellow Americans do either. The blessings of liberty are immeasurable. Yet, one cannot say that slave owners, Baptists and other Christians alike, were evil men for partaking in an institution that existed as it had for

¹²⁸Shaw, 116-117.

¹²⁹Ibid., 309.

¹³⁰McBeth, *A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage*, 254.

¹³¹Boyd, 162.

thousands of years prior, affecting as many, if not more, whites than it did blacks. This especially applies to those masters who showed kindness to their slaves and did much to bring them to a personal knowledge of Christ Jesus. There were Biblical injunctions to follow, and many God-fearing men put these into practice. Thus, the only thing they can be accused of is obeying the Holy Word of God. Also, one cannot fault Southerners who recognized the liberties granted by their Constitution. Many did not join the abolitionist movement that sanctioned John Brown, "Beecher's Bibles," and "Bleeding Kansas," because they saw such as a clear violation of Romans 13:1 and I Peter 2:13-15. These recognized that the ends never justify the means. In much the same way, no Bible-believing Christian would be able to justify the bombing of abortion clinics on Scriptural grounds. Northern Baptists and the radical abolitionists had no legitimate Scriptural platform from which to launch their slander.

CHAPTER THREE:
REASSESSING THE SITUATION

In light of all that has been discussed up to this point, we must pause briefly to reassess the situation. We all know the opinions of the revisionist historians who seek to evoke a false guilt in the consciences of Southerners. But, let's seek some honest answers for once.

Why Did the South Fight?

In plain words, the South and its many Southern Baptist supporters fought to preserve the Constitution of the United States and the liberties contained therein. They also fought to resist an invasion upon their soil that was directed against their homes. As previously mentioned, “The Southern states in 1861 did nothing but claim the *original rights given to the thirteen colonies in 1776.*”¹³² If protecting the institution of slavery were the sole aim, then secession made absolutely no sense. On the eve of war, Southerners and Democrats together possessed a majority in both houses of Congress, guaranteed at least until 1863. There really was no possible way that slavery could be outlawed in the South via legitimate political channels. Once again, “If protecting slavery was the aim, secession made no sense. It made the Fugitive Slave Act [something Southerners supported] a dead letter and handed the territories over to the Northerners. The central paradox of the Civil War was that it provided the only circumstances in which the slaves could be freed and slavery abolished.”¹³³ Even Jefferson Davis, the Confederacy's own president admitted this.¹³⁴ It is also worth noting that for every six slaves

¹³²Ruckman, 74.

¹³³Johnson, 459.

¹³⁴Kennedy and Kennedy, 35.

freed in the South after the War, one Southern soldier was dead. This was a mighty high price to pay for something that was inevitably going to come to an end anyway.

No, the South fought against what they saw as threats to their Constitutional liberties.

Perhaps Jefferson Davis himself stated things best:

You free-soil agitators are not interested in slavery . . . not at all . . . It is so that you may have an opportunity of cheating us that you want to limit slave territory within circumscribed bounds. It is so that you may have a majority in Congress of the United States and *convert the government into an engine of Northern aggrandizement* . . . you desire to weaken the political power of the Southern states. And why? *Because you want, by an unjust system of legislation, to promote the industry of the North-East states, at the expense of the people of the South and their industry.* . . . You were the men who imported these negroes into this country. You enjoyed the benefits resulting from their carriage and sale; and you reaped the largest profits accruing from the introduction of the slaves.¹³⁵

This accusation proved itself true after the War when radical Republican Congressmen via Reconstruction invoked virtual slavery on the Southern States and turned them into little more than an economic colony of the North. Even Justo Gonzalez, a well-known church historian whose treatment of the South echoes the bias of McBeth, admits this.¹³⁶

Unquestionably, the theme of the War for Southern Independence was this: “the Northern majority used unconstitutional, illegal, and immoral methods to change the Original Constitutional Republic into a centralized national government that it now controls.”¹³⁷ The issue of slavery was just an example of this; it was one of many issues that demonstrated the above in the minds of Southerners. Unfortunately, their fears were eventually realized, and what we have today is:

. . . a gargantuan centralized bureaucracy which has conquered and subdued the whole country. Instead of States’ Rights, we now have unfounded mandates from Washington, D.C. Instead of law, we have executive orders and bureaucratic regulations that for all practical purposes destroy law. Instead of following a strict

¹³⁵Johnson, 434, 453 [Emphasis Mine].

¹³⁶Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, Vol. 2 (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1985), 251.

¹³⁷Kennedy and Kennedy, 219.

construction and interpretation of the Constitution (the original intent and meaning of the founders), if it is referred to at all, is interpreted [*sic.*] to mean whatever fits the social agenda of a liberal, socialistic judiciary.¹³⁸

Is it any wonder why the rule of law and morality have gone down the tubes? Is it any wonder that the Vietnam quagmire, *Roe v. Wade*, the Presidential Election of 2000 fiasco, and the spineless responses to September 11, 2001 have soiled our nation's history? The revisionist historian would do well to heed the words of a Confederate soldier as portrayed in the 1993 movie *Gettysburg*: "I don't know about some other folk, but I ain't fighting for no darkies one way or the other. I'm fighting for my rights. All of us here, that's what were fighting for. Why you folks [Yankees] can't just live the way you wanna live and let us live the way we do, live and let live I heard some folks say. Be a might less fuss and bother if more folks took it to heart."¹³⁹

Why Did Baptists Fight for the South?

Undoubtedly, Baptists in the South supported secession and went to war for the same reasons that the rest of their Southern brethren did (92% of which owned no slaves). Many loathed the institution of slavery; many wanted the Union to be preserved¹⁴⁰; and many prayed that secession and war could be averted. However, when their soil was invaded and their homes and families stood threatened, they came to the same conclusion that their beloved General, Robert E. Lee, came to when offered command of all the Union armies to put down the rebellion. "If I owned the four millions of slaves in the South, I would give them all up to save the Union,

¹³⁸John Weaver, "Why Some Hate the Confederate Flag Part 2," *Confederate Veteran* 6 (2001): 64.

¹³⁹*Gettysburg*, VHS, 254 min. (Atlanta, GA: Turner Pictures, 1993).

¹⁴⁰The Southern Baptist Convention drew up a report in May of 1861 that firmly stated, "*Resolved*, That impartial history cannot charge upon the South the dissolution of the Union. She was foremost in advocating and cementing that Union. To that Union she clung through long years of calumny, injury, and insult. She has never ceased to raise her warning appeals against the fanaticism which has obstinately and incessantly warred against that Union" (Moore, 1:238).

but how can I draw my sword upon Virginia, my native state?"¹⁴¹ How thus, could Baptists draw their swords against their native states whether it was North Carolina, Virginia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, or Arkansas? Moreover, how could Baptists, who knew the serious warning of I Timothy 5:8, sit back and not protect their own?

Perhaps more important than any of this, however, was the imminent threat that Baptists could see looming with regard to their religious liberty. The idea that control of a government rested in the hands of one agent (the federal government in the political realm, and the Northern societies in the Baptist realm) was nothing more than a "throwback to the erroneous notion of the divine right of kings."¹⁴² This was scary to say the least, for where the divine right of kings is conceded, the loss of religious liberty soon follows. Innumerable examples of this can be gleaned from the pages of history. If the pressures of the radical abolitionists coupled with the laws of a federal government that had overstepped its constitutional bounds could prevent Southerners from practicing Ephesians 6:5-9, Colossians 3:22-4:1, I Timothy 6:1-2, Titus 2:9-10, I Peter 2:18-25, what would stop the same from wresting the Bible away altogether? This was a risk Southern Baptists were not willing to take. In many ways this fear has been realized today. The Bible has been effectively removed from schools and tolerance, it seems, is extended to all but Christians. People cannot even display the Ten Commandments anymore without running into some sort of trouble. The reaction of Christians all across the South to the possible threat against religious liberty was really no different from the colonists' reaction to the British Quebec

¹⁴¹M.L. Williamson, *The Life of General Robert E. Lee* (Richmond, VA: B.F. Dickenson, 1895), 41.

¹⁴²Kennedy and Kennedy, 203.

Act that threatened religious liberty prior to the American Revolution. It is interesting to note that after the War for Southern Independence, Southern Baptists at the 1866 convention in Russelville, KY reasserted their views on “the principles of ‘Soul Liberty’ which our fathers were the first to publish, for the maintenance of which they suffered persecution, in which they have for ages gloried, and which we should be the last to abandon.”¹⁴³ Such was in response to the fact that their churches had been taken from them by Northern Baptists under military authority, clear violations of the liberties for which Baptist have long been willing to die.

All in all, Southern Baptists and all “Christians of the South not only thought they were right in resisting the invasion of their soil and the coercion, by the Federal Government, of sovereign States, but that they went forth to battle, or sent their sons, in firm reliance upon ‘the Lord of hosts.’”¹⁴⁴

Who Deserves the Blame for Slavery?

As mentioned, there is plenty of guilt to go around. The bottom line is this: slavery existed in this country, and all over the world through the ages. It was not pretty, but it is our history and part of our heritage as Southern Baptists and as AMERICANS. To rise above it, we must educate ourselves, take pride in the fact that a strong, proud people survived it, and our nation is the better for remembering it's mistakes. Lay the blame for those sins, if it is to be done, at the feet of ALL who were responsible (African blacks, European traders, Muslim traders, Northern ship merchants, Northern slave owners, Southern slave owners, free blacks, and American Indians). ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! A nation that existed for only four years (the CONFEDERATE

¹⁴³Shaw, 132.

¹⁴⁴Jones, 21.

STATES OF AMERICA) and a convention that was not formed until 1845 (the SBC) cannot possibly be the only responsible party in an institution that had existed in this country alone for almost a hundred years prior. As mentioned, the great majority of the men who fought for the Confederacy owned no slaves¹⁴⁵, nor did they fight for the rights of the eight percent who did! They were Americans who fought and died for their homes, families, and their rights guaranteed by the Constitution, the same way you and I should today if called upon to do so.

The time has come for America to put away the deviousness of the past and look at the question of slavery with an open mind. If the South is an evil place because it had slaves, then so is the North. If Southerners were wrong for owning slaves, then what about the Northerners who sold them those slaves? If the South is to be castigated because a small minority of its citizens made money from slave-grown cotton? If all Southerners are evil because of the mistreatment of their slaves by a few slave holders, then what about the Yankee capitalists who mistreated their Irish laborers? Is free enterprise to be condemned as evil because some capitalists abuse their workers? Sober reflection will be enough to convince anyone that there is more to the issue of slavery than the Abolitionists would have us believe.¹⁴⁶

The only difference between the North and the South is that “the North had the opportunity to end slavery without disrupting its economy and social fabric. This was a luxury the Yankee never allowed the South.”¹⁴⁷

Who Deserves the Blame for Secession?

Ironically, a Northerner once answered this question plainly and accurately: “Had [President] Buchanan in 1860 sent an armed force to prevent the nullification of the Fugitive Slave Law, as Andrew Jackson threatened to do in 1833, there would have been a secession of fifteen Northern States instead of thirteen Southern States . . . Had the Democrats won out in 1860 the Northern States would have been seceding States not the Southern.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵This includes the author’s own ancestors and his wife’s ancestors, most of which were Southern Baptists.

¹⁴⁶Kennedy and Kennedy, 117.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 80.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 313.

As for the Baptists, had the Baptists from the South slyly removed meetings and societies to the South so as to minimize Northern participation, Northern Baptists would have undoubtedly seceded to form their own entity.

A Positive Outlook on Slavery?

With all the sensationalistic and radical abolitionist slander that abounds, is it possible to step back and consider that slavery could have proved positive in the long run for blacks in America? Booker T. Washington, a former slave, founder of the Tuskegee Institute, and one of America's greatest black reformers, educators, and writers thought so. He once said, "Negroes inhabiting this country, who themselves or whose ancestors went through the school of American slavery, are in a stronger and more hopeful condition, materially, intellectually, morally, and religiously, than is true of an equal number of black people in any other portion of the globe." This statement is conveniently swept under the rug during "Black History Month." Doubtless many blacks that enjoy the freedoms, liberties, and opportunities that abound in America today would still be in a poverty-stricken and chaotic Africa were it not for the slave-status of their ancestors. In the same manner, many whites would still be living in a decadent Europe were it not for their ancestors who were brought to America as indentured servants (a fancy title for slave).

As for Christian blacks, there ought to be a solemn spirit of thankfulness for the slavery of their ancestors. For it was through this institution that many a heathen came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The same could be said about the innumerable Christian slaves that existed in the Roman Empire. If my ancestors far distant were slaves at some point (and I am sure they were, whether in Rome, the dark age fiefdoms of Europe, or the Ottoman Empire) and

this status somehow brought about their spiritual salvation, then praise be to God, for “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Romans 5:20 KJV). Perhaps an old school teacher writing to elementary age children stated it best: “When the Negroes were first brought from Africa, they were heathen savages; but, after a few years, they learned the speech and customs of the whites; and, more than all, the worship of the true God. In thinking of this, we have to admit that slavery must have been permitted by the Lord in order to bring a heathen people out of darkness into the light of the Gospel.”¹⁴⁹ Many Baptists of that day and time would have agreed.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹M.L. Williamson, *The Life of General Robert. E Lee*, 39.

¹⁵⁰For evidence of this and possible positive aspects of slavery, see Richard Furman’s *Treatise on Slavery* (McBeth, *A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage*, 252-255).

CHAPTER FOUR:
BAPTISTS AND THE CONFEDERATE ARMY

“As ministers and laymen, Baptists entered enthusiastically into the Confederate army. Baptist state conventions in the South made strong pronouncements upon the justice of the southern position.”¹⁵¹ In fact, the Southern Baptist Convention in a “Resolution on the State of the Country” in 1861 pronounced its approval of the Government of the Confederate States of America, charging the United States Government with an insistence to devastate Southern land with fire and the sword and send hordes of armed soldiers to pillage their homes for the purpose of forcing seceded States back into an unnatural Union.¹⁵² This was unacceptable to Baptist patriots, so they marched forth to due their duty.

Aid From the Churches

Throughout the four-year struggle, Baptist Churches across the Old South gave aid to the Confederate armies, both in materials and in manpower. For example, the Second Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia agreed unanimously in 1862 to donate its church bell to be cast into a cannon to be used for the public defense of Richmond. To show that this was not an empty promise, the church immediately removed the bell to have it put to the use promised. The congregation also took up a sum to purchase enough metal to cast an entire battery. This would later be named the *Second Baptist Church Battery*. The *Richmond Dispatch* would report on April 1, 1862: “The congregation of the Second Baptist church, in Richmond, Va., have set an

¹⁵¹Baker, 89.

¹⁵²Shaw, 126.

example that may challenge emulation, but for self-sacrificing patriotism cannot be excelled.”¹⁵³

Such incidents were common.

Southern Baptist churches also gave their sons to the battle. A local body in Spartanburg, South Carolina had no less than thirty-four of its members in the Confederate Army. In one of the military companies made up of men from that district, there were at least sixty members of Baptist churches.¹⁵⁴ In one Georgia regiment, there were thirteen Baptist preachers.¹⁵⁵ Robert Ryland, a well-known Baptist preacher of his day and president of Richmond College wrote to his son who had enlisted in the Confederate Army during the early days of the war:

My Dear Son: It may have seemed strange to you that a professing Christian father so freely gave you, a Christian son, to enlist in the volunteer service. My reason was that I regarded this as a *purely defensive war*. Not only did the Southern Confederacy propose to adjust the pending difficulties by peaceful and equitable negotiations, but Virginia used again and again the most earnest and noble efforts to prevent a resort to the sword. These overtures having been proudly spurned, and our beloved South having been threatened with invasion and subjugation, it seemed to me that nothing was left us but stern resistance or abject submission to unconstitutional power . . . That God Almighty maybe your shield and your exceeding great reward is the constant prayer of your loving father.¹⁵⁶

After the War, General Lee, out of gratitude for Baptist contributions to the Confederate effort, gave a handsome sum of money to the Lexington Baptist Church in Lexington, Virginia where the beloved “Marse Robert” was serving as president of Washington College.¹⁵⁷

Baptist contributions even went beyond men and materials. Those that could not fight were on their knees in prayer for their nation and for their boys in gray. There was much prayer, fasting, humility, and repentance. Unquestionably, these attitudes helped bring about the Great Revivals that would break out in the Southern camps. Immediately after the first seven states

¹⁵³Moore, 4:78.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., 2:439.

¹⁵⁵Jones, 32.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., 28, 31.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., 66.

seceded from the Union, the Georgia State Baptist Convention sent a message of endorsement to the new Confederate government and requested “the said Government to proclaim a day of fasting and prayer ‘that God will deliver us from the power of our enemies, and restore peace to our country.’”¹⁵⁸ In May of 1863, when the Southern Baptist Convention met in Augusta, Georgia, it adopted the following humble resolution: “That while we justify ourselves in this conflict with our enemies, we acknowledge that our sins have deserved the terrible calamities that God has sent upon us, and view them as a solemn and imperative call to penitence, humiliation [*sic.*] and a hearty turning to God.”¹⁵⁹ Throughout the war, the SBC set aside numerous days for fasting and prayer, calling upon all Baptists to participate. In Talladega, Alabama, for example, the *South-Western Baptist* reported that a prayer meeting lasted for two months. “When the hour comes, at 9 o’clock on every Thursday morning, the doors of every business house are closed, and the house is usually filled with sincere worshippers who congregate to pray for our country. The meetings are alternatively held in three church houses.”¹⁶⁰ Far more examples involving Baptists than those listed could be produced, but one must move on.

Baptist Generals

At least four faithful Baptists are known to have achieved the rank of General in the Confederate Army. Perhaps the most well-known is Stephen D. Lee.¹⁶¹ His military record in the war was quite remarkable despite numerous trials, tribulations, and seemingly

¹⁵⁸Moore, 1:52.

¹⁵⁹Shaw, 127.

¹⁶⁰Jones, 31.

¹⁶¹He was of no relation to the great General Robert E. Lee.

insurmountable struggles. It began with the opening shots at Ft. Sumter where Lee assisted General P.T.G. Beauregard in the takeover. He saw action at Seven Days, Second Manassas, Antietam, and Vicksburg. At Vicksburg, he was captured only to be later exchanged. Lee was then given command over cavalry in the Department of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. During the Atlanta Campaign, after John Bell Hood was given command over the Confederate Army of the Tennessee, Lee was promoted to Lieutenant General and given command over Hood's old corp. He commanded troops at Ezra Church and later in the terrible defeats at Franklin and Nashville, Tennessee. At Nashville, he was wounded. This, however, did not stop him from coming back to the battlefield to help defend against Sherman's cruel march through the Carolinas. Stephen D. Lee was there for the opening shots at Sumter and there for the closing shots as Joseph E. Johnston's Confederate Army of the Tennessee surrendered to Sherman's forces at Bennett's Place in Durham, NC two weeks after Appomattox.¹⁶² He was more than a military hero, however, he was Bible-believer and a defender of the Baptist faith. Years later (1889), Lee would deliver the official commission at the formal establishment of the *Sons of Confederate Veterans* organization. As a Baptist and former Confederate hero, he charged, "It is your duty to see that the true history of the South is presented to future generations."¹⁶³

M.P. Lowery was a Baptist preacher prior to the outbreak of war. He volunteered for military service in defense of his home state and was shortly promoted to the rank of colonel. He saw action at Perryville, Kentucky; Chickamauga; and the Confederate defeat on Missionary

¹⁶²This was the largest Confederate troop surrender of the entire war. It was not finalized until April 26, 1865. Contrary to popular belief, the war did not actually end at Appomattox Courthouse.

¹⁶³Kennedy and Kennedy, 17.

Ridge outside Chattanooga, Tennessee. Having achieved the rank of brigadier general, he was given command of Patrick Cleburne's division after Cleburne was killed at Franklin, Tennessee. The last major action that Lowery saw was in the awful Confederate defeat outside of Nashville. After the war, Lowery went back into the ministry. A writer who once observed the influence of religion in the Army of the Tennessee made reference to Lowery: "He is a Baptist preacher, and like the commander of the Division [Patrick Cleburne], is a hero of many well-fought battle-fields. He takes great interest in the soldiers' religious welfare, often preaches to them, and feels that the ministry is still his high and holy calling."¹⁶⁴ When one thinks of M.P. Lowery's temporary absence from the ministry, which really was no absence at all, a statement once made by Confederate General Leonidas Polk—the "Fighting Bishop" who also temporarily set aside his pastoral duties to defend his home—comes to mind. "I felt like a man whose home is on fire and who has to leave his business to put it out."

Alexander Hawthorne was a successful lawyer before the war. Being a patriot and faithful Baptist Bible-believer, he left his law practice to help defend against the Northern invasion. He saw action as a Lieutenant Colonel at Shiloh—the bloodiest battle in American history up to that time; more casualties were reported there than the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and the Mexican War combined. He also fought in the stalemate at Murfreesboro, Tennessee. In the horrible Red River Campaign, Hawthorne was promoted to Brigadier General. His brigade fought tirelessly and faithfully to the end. After the Confederate surrender, Hawthorne fled to Mexico and later to Brazil where he engaged in missionary work until 1868. Upon return to the

¹⁶⁴Jones, 535.

United States, he remained severed from his old law practice and took on the tasks of a Baptist preacher.

The fourth and final Confederate General known to have been a Baptist was Cullen A. Battle. Battle fought in Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and saw heavy fighting at Seven Pines, Antietam (the bloodiest single day of fighting in American history), the incredible Confederate victories at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg (the bloodiest battle altogether in American history). After Gettysburg, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. By the time Lee and Grant were dueling it out in the woods of Northern Virginia, Battle had been given command of a brigade and promoted to the rank of general. He led troops in Robert Rodes' division at the battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Courthouse. In the Shenandoah Valley, he helped fight against overwhelming odds at both Winchester and Cedar Creek. At Cedar Creek, which saw Confederate resistance in the valley crumble, Battle was severely wounded and therefore incapacitated for the rest of the war. Had he been healthy, he doubtless would have been on the front lines until the end.

All four of these faithful Baptists had one thing in common—they stood to defend their homes against bleak odds. They simply did their duty as family men, citizens, and leaders. One is reminded of Paul's exhortation in I Timothy 5:8: "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (KJV). Such provision undeniably involves protection.

Baptist Leaders

Many men destined to become great Southern Baptist leaders served in the War for Southern Independence in one form or another. Doubtless the life experience gained from such

involvement was able to color their respective ministries and add to their effectiveness. Just a few examples will be considered.

J. William Jones was a well-known Baptist preacher who served as a chaplain under Stonewall Jackson in the Army of Northern Virginia. He would write many books about history and the Civil War. Moreover, he would serve as Secretary of the Southern Historical Society. He was probably the premier biographer on both Robert E. Lee and Thomas J. Jackson. More importantly, however, his intensive efforts helped preserve the truth about the revivals that swept through the camps of the Southern armies. All of this was recorded in his legendary work *Christ in the Camp*. He did not just write about revival, he participated in it. In the introduction to the book, Rev. J.C. Granberry, a Methodist Bishop and former chaplain in the Army of Northern Virginia, wrote: “Dr. Jones was no small part of the religious movement he narrates; a quarter of a century does not fade in the memory of an actor in such extraordinary scenes.”¹⁶⁵

During the latter half of the nineteenth century in America, no Baptist preacher enjoyed greater popular renown than did John A. Broadus. Many have ranked him as one of the leading preachers of his time. In 1858 Broadus was asked to become a member of the first faculty of the new Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Greenville, South Carolina. After an initial decline so as to dedicate himself to preaching and pastoral work, he finally agreed to join the faculty when the school opened in 1859, realizing that his gifts could be best used to teach others. For the next thirty-six years, Broadus was Professor of New Testament Interpretation and Homiletics, and his life would be inextricably bound to the school. Broadus would “rise to the forefront of biblical scholars, writers, and preachers, and has a reputation second to none on the

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 13.

Continent.”¹⁶⁶ During the War for Southern Independence, Broadus temporarily set aside his duties at the theological school and entered the Army of Northern Virginia as a chaplain. He preached to many soldiers and in many small churches. Despite his many accomplishments, Broadus “never did grander preaching, or more effective service than when he thrilled the crowds of Confederate veterans who flocked to hear him when he was preaching in the camps of Lee’s army.”¹⁶⁷ After the War, an aged Robert E. Lee was given the opportunity to hear Broadus preach at Washington College in Lexington, Virginia. The old General and college president commented: “It was a noble sermon—one of the very best I ever heard—and the beauty of it was that the preacher gave our young men the very marrow of the Gospel, and with a simple earnestness that must have reached their hearts and done them good.”¹⁶⁸

B.H. Carroll was instrumental in the establishing of a Southern Baptist seminary in Texas. “In the spring of 1905 on a train near Amarillo, Carroll was seized by a sudden clear idea: Texas needed a theological seminary and God was calling him to establish one.”¹⁶⁹ As a result of such vision, Baylor Theological Seminary was shortly established. Three years later, it separated from the university, moved to Fort Worth, and became known as Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Carroll served as its first president. He was also a great preacher. One biographer wrote,

Dr. B.H. Carroll is, in the highest, broadest, and best sense of the term, a genuinely great man. In gift he towers a very giant among his fellows, while in breadth of learning and research he ranks with the profoundest scholars of the time. But crowning all is his great heart power, his gentleness and humility, and his

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 264.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., 264.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., 60.

¹⁶⁹McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 669.

consideration for the feelings of others. These graces, so unobtrusive, yet so conspicuous to those of us who have been near him and shared his confidence, emphasize his likeness to that disciple whom Jesus loved.¹⁷⁰

During the War for Southern Independence, Carroll joined the 17th Texas Infantry. He served throughout the war in the Trans-Mississippi theater and was severely wounded at the Battle of Mansfield in Louisiana. Carroll was known for the campfire debates he held with his fellow soldiers. He would argue such topics as the delusions of the South, the effect of the fall of Vicksburg, the military savvy of U.S. Grant, and the perpetuity of war should the Confederacy succeed. Immediately after the conclusion of hostilities in 1865, Carroll gave his life to Christ in a Methodist camp meeting.¹⁷¹ He would go on to become one of the great Southern Baptists.

James Burton Gambrell was highly involved in Southern Baptist life. He served as superintendent of missions in Texas, editor of the *Baptist Record*, editor of the *Baptist Standard*, faculty member of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention, and finally, president of the Southern Baptist Convention. During the Civil War, he was a scout for Robert. E. Lee. He fought valiantly at Gettysburg and was promoted to captain. He finished out the War in the western theater.

Isaac Taylor Tichenor was an exceptional Baptist preacher who did much to facilitate a home missions arm of the Southern Baptist Convention. He served as secretary of the Home Missions Board for seventeen years. In many ways, his leadership saved the Southern Baptist Convention in times of struggle. For a year during the War for Southern Independence, Tichenor served as a chaplain in the 17th Alabama. He did not, however, confine his duties to preaching. He was able to establish himself as a sharpshooter, and during the bloody Battle of Shiloh, in

¹⁷⁰J.B. Cranfill, *Sermons and Life Sketch of B.H. Carroll* (Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1895), vii.

¹⁷¹*Ibid.*, viii-ix.

particular, he went to the front of his regiment and demonstrated an effective leadership that stabilized the wavering lines. Later, Tichenor himself would recall the battle in a letter to

Alabama Governor Thomas Watts:

During this engagement [Shiloh] we were under a cross fire on the left wing from three directions. Under it the boys wavered. I had been wearied, and was sitting down, but seeing them waver, I sprang to my feet, took off my hat, waved it over my head, walked up and down the line, and, as they say, “preached them a sermon.” I reminded them that it was Sunday. That at that hour (11 ½ o’clock) all their home folks were praying for them; that Tom Watts—excuse the familiar way in which I employed so distinguished a name—had told us he would listen with an eager ear to hear from the Seventeenth; and shouting your name loud over the roar of battle, I called upon them to stand there and die, if need be, for their country. The effect was evident. Every man stood to his post, every eye flashed, and every heart beat high with desperate resolve to conquer or die. The regiment lost one-third of the number carried into the field.¹⁷²

Toward the end of 1862, Tichenor would be appointed a missionary with the Domestic Missions Board and serve under General Braxton Bragg.

“And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of” James Boyce, Basil Manly Sr., Basil Manly, Jr., William Hatcher, J.B. Jeter, Robert Ryland, George Taylor, A.C. Willis, Charles Bitting, William Wiatt, W.F. Broadus, W. L. M. Curry, James B. Taylor, Samuel Chapman, and McGhee Heck “who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens (Hebrews 11:32, 33-34 KJV)”—faithful Baptists clad in gray.

¹⁷²Jones, 537.

CHAPTER FIVE:

BAPTISTS AND REVIVAL IN THE CONFEDERATE CAMPS

Pages and pages could be written about the profound revivals that swept through the Confederate camps during the War for Southern Independence. Such an abundant harvest of spiritual fruit has rarely manifested itself with as much abundance. Yet, this profound work of the Holy Spirit is typically overlooked in the revisionist church history books. Moreover, a work in which Baptists contributed so profoundly is not given so much as a mention in McBeth's *The Baptist Heritage*. Something is seriously wrong. Anyway, time nor space will provide for an in-depth study here. One would do well to read J. William Jones' *Christ in the Camp*. This profound work details these revivals with unsurpassed precision.

A Great Awakening?

In many ways the revivals that sprung up in the armies of the South could rightly be termed a "Great Awakening." In 1863-1864 alone, it has been estimated that there were more than 150,000 converts to Christianity. A.E. Dickinson, the General Superintendent of the Virginia Baptist Colportage Board, once commented:

Modern history presents no example of armies so nearly converted into churches as the armies of Southern defence [*sic.*]. On the crest of this flood of war, which threatens to engulf our freedom, rides a pure Christianity; the Gospel of the grace of God shines through the smoke of battle with the light that leads to heaven; and the camp becomes a school of Christ. From the very first day of the unhappy contest to the present time, religious influences have been spreading among the soldiers, until now, in camp and hospital, throughout every portion of the army, revivals display their precious saving power. In one of these revivals over three hundred are known as having professed conversion, while, doubtless, there are hundreds of others equally blessed, whose names, unrecorded here, find a place in the "Lamb's book of life."¹⁷³

The amazing thing about this Great Awakening was the spirit of unity that existed amongst the various evangelical denominations engaged in the harvest. One preacher reported, "We had a Presbyterian sermon, introduced by Baptist services, under the direction of a Methodist chaplain,

¹⁷³Ibid., 157-158.

in an Episcopal church. Was not that a beautiful solution of the vexed problem of Christian union?"¹⁷⁴ This cooperation would continue throughout the war. J. William Jones marveled at the number of his infant-baptizing brethren who would ask him "to come and baptize men who had professed conversion at their meetings and wanted to unite with the Baptists."¹⁷⁵ In the Army of the Tennessee, a chaplain proclaimed, "We know no distinction here. Baptists, Cumberlands, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Methodists, work together, and rejoice together at the success of our cause."¹⁷⁶

Colportage Work

A vital aspect of the Great Awakening in the Confederate camps was the colportage work of the Baptists. J. William Jones wrote, "Earliest in the important work of colportage was the Baptist Church, one of the most powerful denominations in the South."¹⁷⁷ A.E. Dickenson headed up the Baptist publication effort in Virginia. In 1861, he reported: "The Baptist Colportage Board, located in Richmond, has published upward of seven hundred thousand pages of religious tracts addressed to soldiers, and have arranged for the publication of twelve thousand pocket Testaments, two thousand of which we expect to receive next week."¹⁷⁸ Even President Jefferson Davis offered his support to the labors of Baptists such as Dickenson. He said, "I most cordially sympathize with this movement. We have but little hope for, if we do not realize our dependence upon heaven's blessing and seek the guidance of God's truth."¹⁷⁹ The need for

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 223.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., 224.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., 548.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., 156.

¹⁷⁸Moore, 3:58.

¹⁷⁹Jones, 42.

Bibles in the Confederate armies was always great. The Union blockade cut off access to Northern and European Bible publishers, so efforts to print and gather the precious words of God were desperate. Nevertheless, it succeeded. People would trudge miles and miles to bring Bibles into camp, Confederate blockade runners would slip them into Confederate ports, and printing presses would work overtime. As a result, Jones could proclaim with confidence, “I have never seen more diligent Bible-readers than we had in the Army of Northern Virginia. The efforts made by our Confederate people to supply our armies with Bibles and religious reading were worthy of all praise, and a whole volume would not suffice to give even a meager record of the labors of the different societies formed for that purpose.”¹⁸⁰ And, Baptists were at the top of the effort. It is only appropriate to conclude this topic with a brief story related in a Southern Baptist paper on March 17, 1864:

Last summer, a chaplain arrived in Staunton with several large packages of Testaments and tracts, which he was anxious to get to Winchester, but had despaired of doing so as he had to walk, when a party of soldiers volunteered to lug them the whole distance—ninety-two miles—so anxious they were that their comrades should have the precious messengers of salvation.¹⁸¹

Mission Work

While Northern Baptists were busy taking over Southern Baptist church buildings and encouraging Union troops to imprison Southern Baptist preachers who remained loyal to the South and destroy Southern Baptist newspapers, the great number of Baptists in the South were busy about the work of the Gospel. Whether they were preaching, fighting, or quiescent in camp for the winter, missions was on the minds of many. In 1861, the Domestic and Indian Missions

¹⁸⁰Ibid., 155.

¹⁸¹Jones, 153.

Board assigned twenty-six missionaries to Confederate regiments in Florida, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia.

Sometimes, the missionary is accompanying the regiment or brigade upon their long marches, and preaches as he finds it convenient. Sometimes he moves from camp to camp, conversing with the men, distributing tracts, testaments, religious newspapers, and holding meetings for prayer, and exhortation; and sometimes he is found for a time within the massive walls of the strong and defiant fort, where he has access to its defenders, always anxious to wait upon his ministry.¹⁸²

The twenty-six original missionaries sent out by the Domestic Board reported after a year that they had preached 482 sermons, made 231 addresses, led 313 prayer meetings, paid religious visits to 1,762 individuals, officiated at 75 baptisms, reclaimed 19 backsliders, led 107 unbelievers to faith in Christ, attended 24 funerals, traveled 2,383 miles and handed out hundreds of thousands of tracts, Testaments, religious newspapers and hymnbooks.¹⁸³

Joining the Baptist missionaries in such efforts were countless chaplains, preachers, and common soldiers. Preaching, believers' baptisms, and Gospel invitations went on more than once across the river from onlooking Federal pickets and under the fire of Federal batteries. One preacher with the Confederate army in Chattanooga, Tennessee wrote,

Yesterday evening, about five o'clock, the enemy began to throw shells across the river again, firing slowly for about an hour; notwithstanding this, at the usual hour (twilight) we had a very large crowd of anxious listeners at the rude arbor the men had erected for the worship of God. A short discourse was delivered, when the penitents were invited to the altar. Fifty or sixty came forward, earnestly inquiring the way of salvation.¹⁸⁴

Baptist Testimonies

In concluding our discussion on the Baptist role in revival that swept through the Confederate armies, a discussion that could go on and on indefinitely, the personal testimonies of

¹⁸²Shaw, 127-128.

¹⁸³Shaw, 128.

¹⁸⁴Jones, 548.

a few lesser known Baptists are worthy of reproduction. All of these are taken from J. William Jones' *Christ in the Camp*.

I know I distributed thousands of tracts, and I have reason to believe much good was done . . . My first protracted effort was made soon after the battle of Gettysburg near Orange Court House. In the meeting God was with us and His people were revived and more than a hundred converted . . . I baptized about forty . . . I think I can safely put the whole number of conversions in the brigade at 500, as other chaplains had gracious revivals, and have reason to infer they had many conversions (R.W. Cridlin, Baptist Chaplain, 38th Virginia).¹⁸⁵

Upon visiting a certain village in South Carolina, 1863, received a letter from an unknown lady asking that I would call on her, alleging a special reason. I was sick, so my lady friend called on me and said: "A devoted friend of mine left home for the army, very wicked; *accidentally* heard a Mr. Bagby preach near Matthias's Point, in Virginia. This sermon led him to consider his eternal interests, which resulted in his conversion, and he fell a few days later in the first battle of Manassas." She wept profusely, while I united my tears of gratitude with hers (George F. Bagby, Baptist Chaplain, 40th Virginia and Army Evangelist).¹⁸⁶

In November, 1864, I conducted a meeting of great interest and power near the Howlett House, in a chapel built by the Twenty-eighth and Nineteenth Virginia Regiments, of Pickett's Division. It lasted two weeks and about thirty professed faith, some of whom were killed soon thereafter (Harvey Hatcher, Baptist Army Evangelist).¹⁸⁷

My constant employment, when I could get them, was to scatter tracts, Testaments, hymn-books, etc. These were always *joyously* received, and I hope did much good (John R. Bagby, Baptist and Lieutenant in the Powhatan Artillery).¹⁸⁸

I baptized fifty odd soldiers, most of them while the army was lying around Orange Court House in the fall of 1863 . . . At the close of our meeting a few of us went down to the river at a ford near Brother Brown's—I don't remember the name of it—and I baptized some eighteen men in the Rapidan, in the presence of enemy's pickets (Dr. T.H. Pritchard, Baptist Army Evangelist).¹⁸⁹

It was not long before I had the privilege of leading a number of noble young fellows into the water . . . Some forty or fifty made profession at this time, and I baptized them, or rather most of them, in a pond, the only one in the vicinity, where we were exposed to the fire of the enemy; but not one of use was hurt on such occasions, though the bullets whistled most unpleasantly around and in the midst (W.L. Curry, Baptist Chaplain, 50th Georgia).¹⁹⁰

Finding that we had gone into winter-quarters, I commenced preaching regularly three times a week to each regiment in the brigade. About the 1st of February, 1863, the good Lord poured out His Spirit upon us; hundreds were seeking the Lord for pardon of sins; almost daily there were some going down into the water, being buried with Christ in baptism (J.J. Hyman, Baptist Chaplain, 49th Georgia).¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁵Ibid., 479-480.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., 493.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., 494.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., 497.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., 498.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., 503-504.

¹⁹¹Ibid., 505.

Countless such testimonies could be listed, but the above words speak for themselves as to the heritage of honor Southern Baptists can be thankful for.

CHAPTER SIX:

MATTERS OF PERSONAL HERITAGE

Before concluding this treatise, I deem it important to briefly introduce some faithful Southern Baptists in my family tree that cast their lot with the Confederacy.

The Legacy of the Greens

My maternal ancestors were part of a long line of those who fought for liberty and defended their homes. In America, this began with General Nathaniel Greene of the Continental Army. During the American Revolution, his efforts in North and South Carolina paved the way for British surrender at Yorktown. On the eve of the War for Southern Independence, my great, great, great grandfather and his brother shared the sentiments of most North Carolinians. There were not many slaves in the Old North State as compared to the cotton producing states of the Deep South, and so, the overwhelming sentiment was for preservation of the Union. As one prominent citizen put it, “Seven-tenths of our people owned no slaves at all, and to say the least of it, felt no great and enduring enthusiasm for its [slavery’s] preservation, especially when it seemed to them that it was in no danger.”¹⁹² However, when newly-elected President Lincoln, overstepped his constitutional bounds and ordered North Carolina to send troops into South Carolina to put down the rebellion, state-wide sentiment reversed itself overnight. North Carolina’s state rights were threatened, and she seceded to the rest of the Confederacy. In 1862, at the age of twenty-four, my great, great, great grandfather—William Henry Green—enlisted in Company K of the 55th North Carolina from Granville County. On June 5, 1863, he was hospitalized in Richmond with some sort of debility, missing out on the action at Gettysburg.

¹⁹²John G. Barrett, *The Civil War in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), 3.

Nevertheless, he returned to the regiment and remained active until hospitalized again in February of 1865. It was said that while serving for three years, he purchased for himself a good name for a high degree of courage, endurance, and faithfulness. William Henry Green did not own slaves, so it cannot be said that he was fighting to preserve slavery. Moreover, he was a faithful Southern Baptist who served as a deacon at Dexter Baptist Church (Granville County, NC) until his death. R.H. Marsh, who delivered the eulogy at his funeral, said, “Few men in his generation have been more respected or more useful, and his death at the ripe age of seventy-two causes general gloom and sorrow.”

William Henry’s brother, Nicholas T. Green, served in Company E of the 23rd North Carolina out of Granville County. He enlisted in 1861 at the age of seventeen. He was wounded and captured at Gettysburg. After being exchanged, he was captured again at Spotsylvania Courthouse. Thereafter, he was imprisoned in Point Lookout, Maryland and later at Elmira, New York. On June 27, 1865, he was released after taking an oath of allegiance. Nicholas too was a faithful soldier as well as a faithful Southern Baptist.

The Legacy of the Mulls

My wife’s maternal ancestors were also Confederate veterans and faithful Southern Baptists. There were at least eight Mulls from Catawba County, North Carolina who took up arms to defend their homes against Northern invasion. John Mull was captured at the Battle of the Wilderness and died a prisoner at Elmira, New York. Peter M. Mull, John’s brother, rose to the rank of captain in Company F of the 55th North Carolina. He fought in the war’s first battle—Bethel Church, Virginia. Later, on September 6, 1862, he was given command of two hundred picked men at Washington, North Carolina. In a battle that ensued, Peter was shot once in the

head and once through the left lung. Amazingly, he survived and continued to serve until just a few days before Appomattox, old wounds finally getting the best of him. “He was considered one of the bravest men in the Confederate Army.”¹⁹³ After the War, the wound eventually healed, and Peter Mull settled down as a farmer/miller in Catawba County. It was said that he was “charitable and warmhearted, and a devoted Christian . . . noted for his great love of truth, honesty, and sincerity.”¹⁹⁴ Ezra Mull, a cousin of Peter and John, was killed in the trenches at Petersburg in 1865. In his will, Ezra left a large sum of money to be used to build a Southern Baptist Church near his home. It was originally named Ezra Mull’s Chapel. The church exists today as Mulls Chapel Baptist Church. In a letter written during the War, Ezra wrote, “We [Co. F, 55th North Carolina Regiment] have religious services twice on Sabbath and prayer meeting every night. Our Chaplain is Rev. Wm. Royall, who seems disposed to do his duty in regard to our spiritual good.”¹⁹⁵ D.F. Mull, Ezra’s brother, fought with Company A of the 23rd North Carolina. He died of disease in 1863 in the Confederate camps outside Fredericksburg, Virginia.

All in all, my ancestors were faithful defenders of their homes and Baptists who loved their Saviour. As far as I know, none of them owned slaves. My heritage is one of honor and one for which I am thankful. Should circumstances ever necessitate, I pray I can faithfully follow their examples.

¹⁹³George W. Hahn, *The Catawba Soldier of the Civil War* (Hickory, NC: Clay Printing, 1911), 312.

¹⁹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵L. Manarin and W. Jordan, eds, *North Carolina Troops 1861-1865—A Roster* (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1998), 13:350.

CONCLUSION

Having waded through a plethora of information, evidence, and reassessment, a simple conclusion comes to light. Southern Baptist allegiance to the Confederate States of America was and is a heritage of honor, not a heritage of guilt. Baptists in the South were not racist bigots fighting to keep their slaves, but patriots who fought to protect the liberties guaranteed to them in the Constitution of the United States. They stood to protect the precious gift of religious liberty before threats against such could even be issued. The heroic deeds of Baptists, however, were not only military, but spiritual. Such young men defended their homelands with immense valor, preached the Gospel in the face of great struggle, and showed the world what it meant to be men. Myths that slander the character of such simply cannot prevail against the facts.

The sacrifices of many and the faithfulness of not a few on BOTH SIDES OF THE LINES demonstrate beyond a shadow of a doubt how Almighty God can use the wrath of men to bring glory to His holy name and usher multitudes into his kingdom. Undoubtedly, when the mists of eternity recede to unveil the cloud of witnesses that dot the bloody trail of Baptist heritage, there, standing with the Tertullianists, Waldensians, Albigenses, Lollards, Bogomiles, Euchites, Paulicans, Lionists, Donatists, Novationists, Montanists, Anabaptists, and other faithful Bible-believers, will be more than a few Baptists clad in gray. If I should ever disown, repudiate, or apologize for the Cause for which they fought, “let the lightnings of Heaven rend me, and the scorn of all good men and true women be my portion. Sun, moon, and stars, all fall on me when I cease to love the Confederacy” and its Baptist heroes.¹⁹⁶ For those who would pass judgment from the comfort of their twenty-first century couches, seek to evoke a false guilt, and give into

¹⁹⁶Weaver, “Why Some Hate the Confederate Flag, Part 3,” 61.

the slander perpetuated by the likes of McBeth, you would do well to heed the warning of Jesus

in Matthew 11:21-24:

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee (KJV).

DEO VINDICE!