

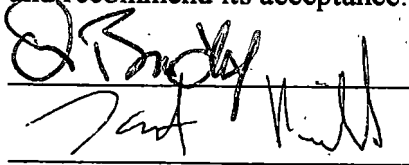
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Walter Bailey entitled "An Uncertain Shepherd: Ideology and Doctrine of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States, 1861-1865." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.



Stephen V. Ash, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:



Accepted for the Council:



Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of the Graduate School

AN UNCERTAIN SHEPHERD: IDEOLOGY AND DOCTRINE OF THE
PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE CONFEDERATE STATES, 1861-
1865

A Thesis
Presented for the Master of Arts
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Walter Forrest Bailey
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an intellectual history that examines how the ideology of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States evolved during the years of the Civil War 1861-1865. Previous to this study, most historians who have studied this church have either provided little examination of the responses of its doctrine and ideology to the pressures imposed by the war or characterized its clergy as monolithically evangelical. In the latter portrayal, an evangelical church supposedly attempted to merge church and state behind a millennialist effort to convert the Confederacy into the earthly realization of God's kingdom on earth. Although this latter conception accurately depicts the views of the Confederate Church's dominant evangelical party, others within the Church made very different assumptions from those of the evangelicals. A high church party rejected millennialist ideas and never really accepted the evangelical justification for separating the Southern Church from its parent Northern Church. In place of the evangelical emphasis on the Confederacy as earthly redeemer, the high churchmen focused on the Church alone as a redeemer whose kingdom (God's kingdom) was not of this world. In addition, other voices within the Church such as that of South Carolina rector James Warley Miles defy categorization by party and further refute the notion that the wartime church was an evangelical monolith. Although the evangelicals strove to seize from the North the exceptionalist mantle of divine redeemer nation and place it on the Confederacy, high church resistance to evangelical efforts to merge church and state and the doctrinal autonomy afforded voices such as Miles's prevented the Church from forming a doctrinal consensus on its proper response to the war. High church resistance to the evangelical program ultimately left the Confederate Church without a viable justification for separating from the parent church and for that reason the Confederate Church collapsed as

an independent body soon after the war and its dioceses rapidly rejoined the parent church.

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Introduction

It would be an understatement to say that religion played an important role in the Civil War. For decades before war finally erupted in 1861, churchmen in both the North and South had shaped the developing sectional crisis with religious justifications for the positions and grievances of their respective sections. Throughout its history the American republic had been uniquely defined by the tenets of Protestant Christianity. Although its founders had created safeguards against the establishment of a state-sponsored church, many Americans since the seventeenth-century had defined their nation as specially chosen by God, and the assumption that God's purpose shaped the history of the Republic had often been implicit in the expressions of Americans across social classes and geographic regions before the Civil War. During the conflict, clergy on both sides sought to define its meaning and justify the war effort of their section. Confederate clergy were confronted with a special challenge: they had to justify the creation of a new nation and the severing of bonds that held together both sacred and secular life in the antebellum United States.

For most Confederate divines, this process was made easier because their churches had already separated from the parent Northern denominations before the war. One denomination, however, the Protestant Episcopal Church, faced the more difficult task of determining its role in the creation of Confederate identity while attempting to separate from its parent Northern church. Southern Episcopalians had to formulate a wartime ideology very different from that which preceded the conflict while simultaneously creating a new organizational structure. This thesis provides an interpretation of how the Southern Protestant Episcopal Church responded to these challenges.

Before the 1960s studies of churches in the Confederacy appeared infrequently. The earliest--and still in some respects a noteworthy--history of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederacy is Joseph Blount Chesire's The Church in the Confederate

States: a History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States. Chesire's narrative provides a good basic understanding of the church's history, emphasizing issues of church organization. However, his work offers little help in identifying the church's role in shaping Southern attitudes toward the war. Willard Wight in his 1957 Ph.D. dissertation, "Churches in the Confederacy," examines the role of all Christian denominations in the Confederate war effort. His work is helpful in showing how Southern clergy provided unflagging leadership in support of the war despite Confederate reverses, but it lacks the focus on the Protestant Episcopal Church needed to trace relationships between its doctrine and the responses of its clergy to problems imposed on Southern society by the war. Like those before it, Wight's study also offers only a limited examination of the development of Confederate church ideology in response to the war.¹

Other studies published during and after the year Wight submitted his dissertation have provided closer examinations of church ideology in the Confederacy but again without the focus needed to determine how Episcopalian divines in particular responded to the war. James Silver in his 1957 study, Confederate Morale and Church Propaganda, concludes that Confederate clergy attributed defeats to the sins of the Southern people. Though Silver does more to identify a role for Southern churchmen in forming an ideology of war for the South, his study shares with that of Wight the weakness of a broad-brush view of all Southern denominations. Moreover, Silver's effort to portray Confederate divines as propagandists who pushed the South through the war obscures the doctrinal substance of their contributions and the extent to which the sacred and secular spheres worked together in the production of Confederate ideology.²

¹Joseph Blount Chesire, The Church in the Confederate States: a history of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1912); Willard E. Wight, "Churches in the Confederacy" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1957; Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1958), Text-fiche.

²James W. Silver, Confederate Morale and Church Propaganda. Confederate Centennial Studies, ed. W. Stanley Hoole, no. 3. (Confederate Publishing Company, 1957. Reprint,

Drew Gilpin Faust's 1988 study, The Creation of Confederate Nationalism, is an intellectual history of the creation of the Confederate identity that corrects some of these problems. She argues that Southern opinion leaders merged religion with nationalism by accepting as a corporate body a reciprocal covenant with God: God made Southerners his favored people in return for their acting as agents in the fulfillment of his plan to create in America a republic of virtue and disciplined freedom. Southern opinion leaders, she says, invoked a jeremiad against the North for allegedly departing from this plan by replacing republican virtue and hierarchical rule with corruption and democracy. They identified the Confederacy as God's means to restore his design. Yet they also saw providing for the spiritual needs of their slaves--by giving them religious instruction and legally recognizing slave marriages--as essential parts of this design. Faust concludes that Southerners interpreted their battlefield defeats as God's chastisement for their failure to uphold this part of the covenant. Her study has the strengths and weaknesses of a thoughtful generalization. It offers an insightful interpretation and a useful starting point from which to undertake more focused studies of Confederate religious ideology but also offers broad-brush conclusions that do not always apply to Episcopalian divines.³

Using Faust's argument as a point of departure, Ronald Glenn Lee in his 1990 thesis, "Exploded Graces: Providence and the Confederate Israel in Evangelical Southern Sermons, 1861-1865," concludes that Southern clergymen of all denominations constituted a sort of grand evangelical party. This party, according to Lee, insisted on the transformation of the Confederacy into God's covenant nation, an earthly, temporal, and political realization of a redeemer nation that was to initiate God's millennial kingdom. However, according to Lee, Confederate battlefield defeats, corruption within the

Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964).

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

Confederacy, and the failure to reform slavery forced Confederate clergy to abandon their expectation for an earthly, political realization of the covenant. They then supposedly transformed the realization of the covenant into a purely eschatological phenomenon: the Confederate cause would be only realized and vindicated in heaven.⁴

Lee's argument is attractive because it offers an explanation that ties together a broad array of wartime sermons from clergy of different denominations, including the Protestant Episcopal Church. He concludes that Episcopalian clergy shared a common mentality with Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist clergy that made denominational distinctions all but meaningless. Although he gives valuable insight into the views of evangelical millennialists (who represented the wartime Southern Episcopal Church's largest and most prominent faction) close examination of his sources and others available in the microfilm series Confederate Imprints yields a more complex picture of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederacy. With a small but significant high church party and a theology often resistant to evangelical Episcopalians' efforts to thrust their church fully into the Southern evangelical mainstream, the Confederate Episcopal Church was not so monolithically evangelical or millennial as he claims.⁵

This thesis offers an interpretation of the sources in Confederate Imprints that partly contradicts and partly affirms Lee's argument. Evangelical millennialists within the Church did indeed try to merge the sacred and secular spheres of the Confederacy into a covenant nation they held to be specially chosen to initiate Christ's reign on earth. Yet there were also clergy within the Church who refused to abandon high church doctrine and other beliefs inhospitable to millennialism.

⁴Ronald Glenn Lee, "Exploded Graces: Providence and the Confederate Israel in Evangelical Southern Sermons, 1861-1865" (M.A. thesis, Rice University, 1990).

⁵Confederate Imprints, 1861-1865, based on Marjorie Lyle Crandall, Confederate Imprints, a Check List, 1955 [and] Richard B. Harwell, More Confederate Imprints, 1957 (New Haven: Research Publications, 1974).

This study seeks to demonstrate the diversity of the Protestant Episcopal Church during the Civil War and to show how, under the pressures of war, doctrinal differences between different factions within the Southern Church prevented it from forming a consensus on its proper response to the war. In contrast to what Ronald Lee has characterized as a monolithically evangelical church, the Church had multiple voices among its clergy, including those of evangelical millennialists, high churchmen who vied with the evangelicals to define their church's wartime ideology, and others who do not fit either category. While both evangelicals and high churchmen shared a common doctrinal heritage, language, history, and desire to support the Confederate cause during the war, the conflict exposed major differences in outlook between the two major parties. Evangelicals millennialists abandoned pre-war reticence to combine church and state ideology, merging the two in order to participate in the construction of Confederate national identity and take a leadership role in the Confederate war effort.

On the other hand, pre-war doctrinal assumptions different from those of the evangelicals forced high churchmen to maintain throughout the conflict their pre-war insistence on keeping church and state ideologically separate and thereby also functionally separate. Although the Southern church's clergy struggled to maintain unity during the war, the pressures of the war drove them further apart. High churchmen proved unable to accept results of evangelical led efforts to separate from the parent Northern Church during the war, because evangelicals made these efforts primarily to satisfy the imperatives of secular politics and high churchmen could not abandon the Church's prewar theory that decisions on its organization were doctrinal decisions that could not be initiated by the state.

Finally, this study examines another voice of the Confederate Church who does not fit into either of the two major parties: James Warley Miles. Though he shared with the

two major parties a desire to support the Confederate cause and at points shared views with each, Miles's views do not really fit consistently with those of either party. While the war drove the major parties apart over the question of separation from the parent Northern church, Miles's views demonstrate that the Church had enough diversity even before the war to accommodate a wide variety of viewpoints.

Pre-war doctrine and the unanticipated pressures of the war, prevented the Southern dioceses' different voices from coming together to form a viable splinter Southern church like those of the other major Southern denominations that left their parent Northern churches before the war. This study explains how pre-war doctrine and the pressures of the war itself together prevented the Confederate Church from forming a doctrinal consensus around the Church's role in the Confederate war effort. Part of this failure became a failure of the Confederate Church to produce a doctrinal consensus on the justification for its separation from the parent Northern Church. When Confederate defeat removed the main evangelical justification for separation (political separation had supposedly forced the Southern Dioceses out of the parent church), high churchmen who had never really accepted it to begin with were left with no reason not to return to the parent church. Without a viable justification to remain a separate church, the evangelicals soon followed the high churchmen back into the parent church.

The peculiar circumstances of the American Church's founding provided part of the framework for the Civil War doctrinal disputes within the Confederate Church. The Protestant Episcopal Church formed after the American Revolution. Before the Revolution, the colonial Anglican churches depended on the British Church for organizational authority, since the colonies had no resident bishops. Without that authority, the Church in the newly independent country had to complete a thorough reorganization and obtain sanction for its own bishops from the mother church. William

White, rector of Christ Church, Philadelphia during the Revolution, produced a pamphlet in 1782, The Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered, that provided much of the basic organizational ideas for the Episcopal Church. Using White's ideas, the American churches outside Connecticut chose to organize under a federal constitution before obtaining an episcopate and included lay representatives as members of the Church's governing body.⁶

Although the Connecticut Church later put White's lay representative idea into practice, it sought a path to obtaining an episcopate different from that of the Church in other states. While churches outside Connecticut worked to join together before attempting to obtain bishops, the Connecticut Church simply selected Samuel Seabury to be its bishop and sent him to England to obtain consecration. However, upon arrival Seabury was told by the English bishops that they could not ordain him, because they lacked authority to send a bishop to Connecticut without that state's consent, because the Connecticut Church's laity had not given assent to Seabury's election, and because no precise diocese organization and jurisdiction had been established. Seabury then obtained consecration from Scottish bishops in late 1784, but was not immediately accepted as a bishop when he returned to the United States, in part because the Scottish bishops were regarded by some Americans as schismatic from the Anglican Church.⁷

The churches in the other states held a general convention in 1785 at which delegates produced a plan to obtain an American episcopate that would satisfy the objections that the English bishops had expressed to Seabury's consecration. Under the plan, the General Convention was to request that the English bishops confer bishop's orders on men chosen by state conventions. The latter were required to gain the assent of

⁶William Wilson Manross, A History of the American Episcopal Church, 2d ed. (New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co., 1950), 172.

⁷Ibid, 190-194.

the laity and obtain certification of the assent of civil authorities for each prospective bishop. The plan resulted in the English bishops' agreeing to consecrate several American bishops, including William White, and the remainder of the new church's episcopate was formed under this plan. It was only with some difficulty that Seabury's consecration was later recognized by the governing body and bishops created under the plan.⁸

The circumstances under which the American Church was created would be revisited by evangelical bishop Stephen Elliot of Georgia during the Civil War. Because most of the early American Church's episcopate had been created with the sanction of the state, Elliot would attempt to show that wartime separation of the Southern Dioceses from the National Episcopal Church could be initiated legitimately by the action of civil government. Elliot was to make this effort in a desperate attempt to keep his church unified behind the evangelical conception of the proper relationship between church and state. Yet more than any other, this issue came to divide high churchmen from evangelicals during the war.

⁸Ibid, 195-199.

Chapter 1: Evangelical Millennialism and the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederacy.

“Because of the degree to which spiritual influences have been abused in our land, we have been tempted to run into the other extreme, and to forget that we are living under what the Apostle calls the dispensation of the Spirit, and that the Church’s work must derive all its power from His presence.” Pastoral letter from the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States, November 22, 1862.¹

The bishops who led the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States agreed on these words in order to ensure that the newly independent Southern Church would emphasize evangelical fervor. Although the Southern Church separated from its Northern counterpart during the Civil War, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States alone among major denominations had entered the war undivided by the sectional dispute. Conjoined to the Northern Church though it might have been, by the eve of the Civil War the Southern Church had, as the words of its bishops suggest, developed into a body with a stronger evangelical party than that of its Northern counterpart. Unlike evangelicals in other Southern denominations, evangelical Episcopalians faced an orthodoxy within their own church that hampered their ability to mobilize their church to

¹In referring to “spiritual influences” which had “been abused in our land,” the Bishops referred to the surge of evangelical revivalism in antebellum America that began to redefine American religion in the second quarter of the nineteenth-century but that, in the view of conservative clergy in established denominations such as the Episcopal Church, often transgressed the proper boundaries of order and discipline established by God. Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Pastoral letter from the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church to the clergy and laity of the Church in the Confederate States of America. Delivered before the General Council, in St. Paul’s Church, Augusta, Saturday, Nov. 22d, 1862 [4519] (Augusta, 1862), 14.

sanctify the Confederate cause. Nevertheless, along with evangelicals from other denominations they participated in the creation of Confederate national identity.²

The evangelical role in the formation of Confederate nationalism can be called an effort to merge church and state through Christian millennialism. Drew Gilpin Faust argues that Christianity was the most basic foundation for justifying the existence of an independent Confederate nation. Antebellum Southerners, she says, had long claimed to be the most pious of Americans. The need to find a justification for secession added force to this claim. Southerners appropriated the millennial idea of a redeemer people chosen by God to serve as instruments to initiate Christ's thousand-year reign on earth. By converting the Confederacy into God's special chosen redeemer nation, this rhetoric asserted a higher purpose for the Confederacy than that of merely winning independence: that of defending Southern society as the truest exemplar of God's original plan for the United States. Faust suggests that Confederate clergy sought to establish continuity between the ideals of the American Revolution and their own struggle against the North by asserting that the South had continued to advance God's purpose for the Revolution while the North had perverted it. This merging of millennialism and republicanism made the South the sole guardian of God's purpose.³

Millennialism itself is a slippery body of concepts. Church historian Diana Hochstedt Butler identifies two principal types of millennialism found in the writings of nineteenth-century evangelical Episcopalians: postmillennialism and premillennialism. Postmillennialists believed that by spreading the gospel, Christians could help the world

²C.C. Goen provides an examination of denominational schisms in the late antebellum period. C. C. Goen, Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denomination Schisms and the Coming of the American Civil War (Macon, GA: Mercer university Press, 1985). Diana Hochstedt Butler concludes that the Southern wing of the nineteenth-century Protestant Episcopal Church was strongly evangelical. Diana Hochstedt Butler, Standing Against the Whirlwind: Evangelical Episcopalians in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 149.

³Drew Gilpin Faust, Creation of Confederate Nationalism, 23-27.

increase in righteousness until the present grew into the millennium. Following a thousand years of peace on earth, Christ would come back to the earth and set up his kingdom. Premillennialists, on the other hand, supposedly believed that human efforts to bring on the millennium would be unavailing; Christ would have to destroy the earth in order to initiate the millennium from heaven.⁴

Whatever the form of millennialism clergymen accepted, Butler suggests that belief in a millennium was central to the evangelical view. In the nineteenth-century evangelical Episcopalian "typology," the nation assumed the role of a new Israel. Furthermore, the priests of the Church functioned in the role of the "prophets of ancient Israel," leading efforts to convert the nation into an instrument of evangelism, both a model of righteousness for the world and a vehicle for spreading the gospel within its boundaries. Both roles prepared the world for Christ's millennial reign. Since most Southern evangelical Episcopalians focused on the work of the Confederacy as earthly redeemer rather than assuming that God would destroy the world to prepare for the millennium, my study identifies them as primarily postmillennialists. Finally, any form of millennialism could be used to justify war, since millennialism assumed an apocalyptic struggle against evil as part of the necessary preconditions to the establishment of righteousness needed to initiate the millennium.⁵

⁴Butler, Standing Against the Whirlwind, 45.

⁵Butler suggests that, at different points in their careers, the same Episcopal clergymen often moved from one form of millennialism to another. The broad scope of her study affords her the ability to employ this sophisticated interpretation but it is probably unjustified here. This study, unlike Butler's, attempts to piece together isolated statements made over a relatively short chronological period (statements that most often lend themselves to description as one consistently expressed form of millennialism) making an effort to trace the evolution of a individual clergyman's millennial views problematic at best. Therefore, in most cases it identifies a given clergyman as either simply postmillennialist or simply premillennialist. It is quite possible, that a more complete record might reveal more complexity in the millennial views of the Episcopal clergy, but such sources are not available and would probably take this study beyond its intended scope in any case. Butler, Standing Against the Whirlwind, 44-45; Robert Bruce Mullin, Episcopal Vision, American Reality: High Church Theology and Social Thought in Evangelical America (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1986), 55 (quote).

Butler concludes that Northern evangelical Episcopalians, such as Bishop Charles McIlvaine of Ohio, saw God's earthly kingdom as invisible, composed of believers throughout the world and not limited to one nation. However, my study concludes that Southern evangelical Episcopalians were different. In order to imbue the Confederate cause with God's unique favor, Confederate clergy had to make the Confederacy, alone among nations, God's special kingdom. Faust suggests that in giving the Confederacy a mission to do the evangelical work necessary to initiate Christ's millennial reign, Confederate clergy made the Southern people party to a covenant with God, a spiritual contract in which God made the Confederacy his favored nation in return for its people playing a special role in the fulfillment of his plan.⁶

From the outset of war in 1861, evangelical Episcopalian divines accepted this role and sought to define the Confederacy as God's chosen covenant nation. Evangelical bishop Stephen Elliot of Georgia used an analogy between the Confederacy and ancient Israel to identify the Confederate cause as God's cause, arguing that God had been both the God and temporal king for the Israelites. Elliot asserted that a godly Confederate Israel, like the original chosen nation, would follow God into battle against the Union army and would accept laws made by God as its own. He argued that God would be with the Confederacy "because of his everlasting covenant with you." Although he conceded that the coming of Christ had loosened the close connection between God and His people, and that the New Testament gospel was thus a different system from that established by Old Testament Law, he argued that the former was simply the realization of the latter. This merging of Old and New Testament theology allowed Elliot to claim for the Confederacy the role of the Old Testament Israel as covenant nation and to join it to the millennialism of the New Testament. He then held that the Old Testament sanction for

⁶Butler, Standing Against the Whirlwind, 45-48; Faust, Creation of Confederate Nationalism, 28-29.

fighting a just war justified the Confederate war effort, and he predicted that the Civil War would usher in the apocalyptic day of final judgment.⁷

Virginia Episcopal rector William C. Butler saw the millennial role of the Confederacy as that of God's nation chosen to reach "that perfect form of human government in which the just, constitutional rights of each and all are guaranteed and given to each and to all." Butler asserted that the South had been placed at the lead of history and given a unique commission from God that Confederates had to fulfill by working to realize "all of God's plans." Butler identified the South's republican form of government as God's plan and its full realization as a precondition for the establishment of Christ's millennial reign. Elliot echoed Butler in another sermon in July 1861, asserting that God's cause was that of the Confederacy. To evangelical Episcopalian divines, the Confederacy would fulfill its part of the special covenant with God by acting as "instruments in his hands for the fulfillment of an important part of the economy of grace." The Confederate political and social system had become the goal of God's plan for the world and the means to initiate the millennial reign of Christ.⁸

Evangelical Episcopalian divines assured their people that God governed all things and that God's plan to establish His kingdom in the world necessitated the victory of the people whom He had chosen to lead the world in righteousness. Stephen Elliot asserted that, by its righteousness, the cause of the Confederacy had made God its "guide and overruling governor," and that under His direction the Southern people were moving

⁷Stephen Elliot, "The Silver Trumpets of the Sanctuary." A sermon preached to the Pulaski Guards in Christ Church, Savannah, on the second Sunday after Trinity, being the Sunday before their departure to join the Army in Virginia. By the rector of Christ Church [4146 second sermon] (Savannah, 1861), 3, 4 (quote), 5. The numbers enclosed in brackets after each title refer to the microfilm series Confederate Imprints, 1861-1865, based on Marjorie Lyle Crandall, Confederate Imprints, a Check List, 1955 [and] Richard B. Harwell, More Confederate Imprints, 1957 (New Haven: Research Publications, 1974).

⁸William C. Butler, Sermon: preached in St. John's Church, Richmond, Virginia, on the Sunday after the battle of Manassas, July 21, 1861. By the rector [4131] (Richmond, 1861), 19; Stephen Elliot, A sermon preached in Christ Church, Savannah, on Sunday, July 28th, 1861, by the rector [4144], 8 (remainder of source citation did not survive).

forward in war "as did the people of Israel when he led them with a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night." The righteousness of the Confederate people was realized in their political system but also had to be realized in each individual in order for the Confederacy to serve its millennial role as the light of the world.⁹

In order to convert the Confederacy into God's chosen covenant nation and turn the temporal Confederate cause into God's cause, Episcopal divines had to place the church in a role of political leadership. If God's principles were those of the Confederate States, evangelical Episcopalians held, then the Confederacy had to accept divine leadership in order to realize His purpose. This nationalistic merging of church and state was a unique characteristic of the Confederate clergy. Evangelical covenant theology was based on a covenant between God and individuals. Yet the evangelical Episcopalian clergy defined the covenant between God and the Confederacy as an agreement between God and the Southern people as a corporate body, in order to allow the Church to take a position on the war as a political struggle. God had given His special favor to a corporate body, rather than merely to individuals, in return for its agreement to fulfill His plan. This corporate identity merged religion and nationalism, church and state.¹⁰

However, given the Episcopal Church's traditional stand that the Church should be separate from state influence, evangelical Episcopalian divines had to argue strenuously to

⁹Edward Reed, "A People Saved by the Lord." A sermon delivered at Flat Rock, July 28, 1861 [4185] (Charleston, 1861), 9, 12; Stephen Elliot, "Our Cause in Harmony with the Purposes of God in Christ Jesus." A sermon preached in Christ Church, Savannah, on Thursday, September 18th, 1862, being the day set forth by the President of the Confederate States, as a day of prayer and thanksgiving, for our manifold victories and especially for the fields of Manassas and Richmond, Ky. By the rector [4150] (Savannah, 1862), 15 (quote); Stephen Elliot, "Ezra's Dilemma." A sermon preached in Christ Church, Savannah, on Friday, August 21st, 1863, being the day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer, appointed by the President of the Confederate States. By the Rector and Bishop of Georgia [4142] (Savannah, 1863), 5, 7; Stephen Elliot, "Gideon's water-lappers." A sermon preached in Christ Church, Savannah, on Friday, the 8th day of April, 1864. The day set apart by the Congress of the Confederate States, as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer [4143] (Macon, 1864), 21.

¹⁰Faust, Creation of Confederate Nationalism, 28.

accomplish the merging of church and state necessary for the Confederacy to play its special role in the fulfillment of God's plan. Acknowledging that the Church ordinarily had no role in political events, Stephen Elliot asserted that the war had forced church and state together because it had placed moral causes at issue affecting the people as both citizens of the state and as Episcopal communicants within the state's geographical boundaries. Virginia rector O.S. Barten derided the U.S. Constitution for its failure to recognize God's power and the role of His Church, but defined the relationship between church and state in the Confederacy carefully. He denied that he sought a "union of church and state" but professed a desire for a "union of religion and government," a distinction intended to satisfy the traditional American opposition to a state-sponsored denomination while converting evangelical clergymen into political leaders. In an 1862 sermon, Elliot urged Southerners not to attempt to shield themselves "from the scorn of the world" by calling the war a purely political conflict, asserting that the war had moral causes that required the action of a Godly nation.¹¹

Their confidence that God had sanctioned the Confederate cause led other evangelical clergymen to bolder pronouncements on the unification of the sacred and secular. In the debate over the separation of the Southern Church from that of the North in 1862, South Carolina bishop Thomas Davis asserted that the Church had to be grouped together with all other human institutions so that it could be placed under the rule of Divine Providence. Davis identified the war as "a dispensation extraordinary, and a revelation from God," concluding that God was speaking directly to men and using the

¹¹ Stephen Elliot, Address of the Rt. Rev. Stephen Elliot, D.D., to the Thirty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia [4140] (Savannah, 1861), 3, 4; Otto Sievers Barten, A sermon preached in St. James' Church, Warrenton, Va., on the fast-day, June 13, 1861. By the rector. [4126] (Richmond, 1861), 7, 8 (quote); Stephen Elliot, "New Wine not to be put into Old Bottles." A sermon preached in Christ Church, Savannah, on Friday, February 28th, 1862, being the day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer, appointed by the President of the Confederate States. By the rector [4149] (Savannah, 1862), 8 (quote).

war to reorder the “the forms of society both civil and religious.” Evangelical Episcopalians sought to make their church’s organization subject to the effect of temporal political events in order to justify the Southern Church’s separation from that of the North, yet in doing so they thrust it into the political sphere, a sphere that, they contended, God was directly overseeing. Thus it is not surprising that in 1861 Reverend C.C. Pinckney had proclaimed to South Carolinians that “the supreme power of Jehovah should be recognized as the basis of our national existence.”¹²

Evangelical Episcopalian clergy merged sacred and secular in an effort to gain control over the spiritual health of the Confederacy as a body politic and to prepare it for its millennial role. To justify a war for secession and secure the Confederacy’s position as God’s uniquely chosen redeemer, evangelical Episcopalian clergy encoded Confederate nationalism with a religious, conservative jeremiad leveled at an apostate North. God had originally set forth His plan for a republican system in the United States based on order, virtue, and privilege, but Northerners had given in to the forces of mob rule and to the atheistic notion that men could govern themselves without subordination to God. To evangelical Episcopalian divines, the South remained the last refuge for these righteous values, a refuge threatened by the Republican party. Evangelical Episcopalians often described the antebellum South as an oasis of virtue in a sea of fanaticism, democracy, and atheism. Southern evangelical Episcopalians thus established the South’s special moral position by reference to the morally fallen North, making secession a necessary condition to the fulfillment of the South’s covenant with God. Extending their analogy of the South as a corporate person, evangelical clergy argued that creation of a separate Confederate

¹² Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Carolina, Journal of the proceedings of the Seventy-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, held in Grace Church, Charleston, on the 12th, 13th, and 14th February, 1862 [4541] (Charleston, 1862), 23 (quote); C.C. Pinckney, “Nebuchadnezzar’s Fault and Fall.” A sermon, preached at Grace Church, Charleston, S.C. on the 17th of February, 1861 [4182] (Charleston, 1861), 12 (quote).

nation was an act of purification. Like the rebirth of a sinner, a wayward United States was reborn in a righteous Confederacy. Thus the war became an apocalyptic struggle pitting a righteous redeemer Confederacy against the forces of darkness in the North.¹³

Stephen Elliot invoked this jeremiad against the United States in 1862.

Southerners, he argued, bore for its sins the shame of a now divided nation but could do penitence "by putting our new wine into new bottles." Elliot sought to pour the new wine of Confederate virtue into the new bottles of an independent Confederate nation, characterizing the war as a struggle to prevent the South from being turned away from American republicanism and toward the infidel principles of "French democracy." In 1863, he urged Southerners not to consider rejoining the Union on any terms, arguing that what was once a noble republic had degenerated into "oriental despotism."¹⁴

Elliot articulated the view of Southern clergy that held the sin of the North to be a contagion, suggesting that the corruption had been checked before the war by the conservative influence of the divine institution of slavery. To Elliot, Northern opposition to slavery was an "atheistic" pretension "to a peculiar philanthropy" opposed "to the word and the will of God." He linked an attack on abolitionism with an attack on Northern democracy:

Instead of bowing before the word of God which said "the poor shall never cease out of the land;" instead of submitting to the Divine decree imposed upon Adam and his posterity, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;" instead of acquiescing in the triple curse upon the

¹³Elliot, "Gideon's water-lappers," 21; Michael Snay, Gospel of Disunion: Religion and Separatism in the Antebellum South (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1993), 172; Faust, Creation of Confederate Nationalism, 30, 31, 33.

¹⁴Elliot, "New Wine not to be put into Old Bottles," 8 (quote); Stephen Elliot, "God's Presence with the Confederate States." A Sermon preached in Christ Church, Savannah, on Thursday, the 13th June, being the day appointed at the request of Congress by the President of the Confederate States as a day of solemn humiliation, fasting, and prayer. By the rector [4146] (Savannah, 1861), 21; Stephen Elliot, "Samson's Riddle." A sermon preached in Christ Church, Savannah, on Friday, March 27th, 1863, being the day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer, appointed by the President of the Confederate States [4151] (Macon, 1863), 8, 9 (quote).

descendants of Ham, . . . they turned their rage against the word of God, and covered it all over with ridicule and abuse. Catching the echo of the French revolution, they set up liberty, equality, fraternity, as their idols, and virtually dethroned the God of the Bible.¹⁵

These words were delivered in 1863. A year earlier Elliot had gone so far as to transform a jeremiad against Northern decline from republican virtue into an attack on the principles embodied in founding documents of the American Revolution. He argued that the collapse of godly government had been inevitable under a system that assumed all men were created equal and that men were capable of self government—meaning a system of egalitarian democracy lacking the hierarchy that God's principles demanded. Edward Reed was among those who joined with Stephen Elliot in condemning the founding of the United States as Godless, linking the U.S. Constitution's failure to recognize God to the "principles imbibed in France."¹⁶

Elliot's remedy was not to abandon the republican system of government that had failed to protect the United States from democracy and despotism, but to remove its corrupting principle: failure to base government on subordination to God through adherence to the principles of the Bible. With this accomplished, a change in the system of government would not be necessary. Yet Elliot's argument also clearly implied that any form of human government was acceptable, and indeed superior to that of the North, provided that it was subordinated to the rule of religion.¹⁷

Elliot joined the many other evangelical clergymen who acknowledged antebellum, Southern sins but did not view them as the real causes of the war. Delegates at the annual convention of the Diocese of South Carolina in June 1861 concluded that, although Southerners had sinned, the war had been forced on the South. Their resolutions went on

¹⁵Elliot, "New Wine not to be put into Old Bottles," 12; Elliot, "Ezra's Dilemma," 14 (quote).

¹⁶Elliot, "New Wine not to be put into Old Bottles," 10-11; Reed, "A People Saved by the Lord," 9; Barten, A sermon preached in St. James' Church, Warrenton, Va., on the fast-day, June 13, 1861, 1.

¹⁷Elliot, "New Wine not to be put into Old Bottles," 14.

to revile the clergy of the Northern Protestant Episcopal Church for their failure to raise "their voice against the measures now in progress for our subjugation." Having justified their own war effort through a merging of sacred and secular, evangelical Episcopalians apparently saw no reason why the Northern Church should not abandon its own independence from secular politics to defend the Confederacy as God's cause.¹⁸

Although some of the early war writings of evangelical Episcopalians acknowledged Southern sin, albeit not as a cause of war, others were even more uncompromising in their denunciation of the North. O.S. Barten proclaimed that the South had been separated "from those who forgot the word of God and would not serve Him," concluding that "God is punishing them by utterly wasting them, and is teaching us a lesson by just saving us from a common ruin." South Carolina rector J. H. Elliot raged against those "who have broken faith--removed the old landmarks--transgressed the brotherly covenant--violated their constitutional engagements" and who now "thirst for our blood." In an 1864 sermon, Alabama bishop Richard Wilmer argued that the North had both sinned against the South and broken God's law.¹⁹

Not all evangelicals laid blame for the war entirely in the hands of the North. Yet, most often, even those who held that both North and South were responsible for the war articulated the theme of rebirth from the corrupt foundations of the North. In 1861, struggling to make sense of the outbreak of fighting, C. C. Pinckney wrote that the pride of both the antebellum North and South over American prosperity had encouraged God's wrath. Rather than urging a complete new birth, Pinckney spoke of reconstructing the old

¹⁸Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Carolina, Journal of the proceedings of the Seventy-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, held in Trinity Church, Abbeville, on the 19th and 20th of June, 1861 [4540R] (Charleston, 1861), 24.

¹⁹Barten, A sermon preached in St. Michael's Church, Charleston, S.C., on occasion of the taking of Fort Sumter, 9 (quote); J.H. Elliot, The Bloodless Victory, a sermon preached in St. James' Church, Warrenton, [4139] (Charleston, 1861), 11 (quote); Richard H. Wilmer, "Future Good--The Explanation of Present Reverses: A Sermon preached at Mobile and Sundry other points in the State of Alabama During the Spring of 1864" [4206] (Charlotte, 1864), 10.

system in the South on what he hoped would be sounder, more Godly principles. He suggested that the American form of government had already collapsed and that the Confederacy sought to "reconstruct" a portion of it, trusting to God that "we may be preserved from past errors." Reflecting the characteristic evangelical emphasis on morally uplifting the corporate body one individual at a time, Pinckney urged that each citizen of the new confederacy work to improve his own character to ensure the spiritual health of the new nation:

A government in our land is only the reflections of the public sentiment, and an embodiment of the national character. Hence every man's opinion and every man's character enters into the national structure, and helps to mould its form, and to influence its destiny. Every citizen contributes his mite towards the character of the rising edifice.

Once the South had been purged of the sins of the North, it could assume its millennial role, but Pinckney warned against national pride lest the new nation be assembled with "rotten mortar."²⁰

In 1861, Alabama rector Henry Niles Pierce expressed a similarly uncertain, perhaps not completely consistent viewpoint. He asserted that the South was the last refuge of constitutional liberty, suggesting that secession was necessary to protect the South from despotic principles that had developed rapidly in the North; and he expressed confidence that the righteousness of the Confederate cause would ensure victory.

However, at the same time, he saw the war as God's judgment on the South:

That God is judging us for our national sins and transgressions, I firmly believe. Else would he have put it into the hearts of the Northern people to peaceably acquiesce in our withdrawal. It may be that they are made mad that they may be destroyed. But we cannot but suffer also in the conflict. And this day, humbly implore our Heavenly Father to turn away His wrath from us. It is He alone who can give us peace. It is He alone who can send us prosperity. . . . Let us therefore

²⁰Pinckney, "Nebuchadnezzar's Fault and Fall," 10, 11 (quote).

in deep contrition confess our sins and the sins of our people as did the prophet Daniel.

Despite their concession that the South too had sinned, Pinckney and Pierce clearly felt that the moral progress of the South was more promising than that of the North, joining with Stephen Elliot and most other evangelical divines to view the creation of the Confederacy as a process of moral reconstruction if not complete rebirth.²¹

However, one evangelical Episcopalian was a genuine dissenter, convinced that God had used disunion as a judgment as much against the South as against the North. In May 1861, Virginia bishop William Meade lamented what he felt was the godlessness of the entire American nation during the fifty years before the war, calling Americans "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." Like Stephen Elliot, he identified a corrupting influence in the American and French Revolutions that had infected the spiritual body of the country. Yet unlike Elliot, Meade made no distinction between regions of the antebellum United States when explaining the effect of this contagion:

Our own Revolution and that of France following soon after, each throwing off allegiance to power unduly exercised, did not stop where they should have done, but, under the guidance of infidelity, proceeded to the overthrow of all authority—even to that of parents, teachers of youth, and civil rulers—asserting dangerous rights for all, of every age and condition. Nor have we to this day recovered from its effects. There is a spirit of independence and insubordination in the domestic and social circle, and, among all ranks, which is one of the most fearful signs of our times, and which, if not arrested, must bring down the heaviest calamities on our land; perhaps some tyrant king or kings whom God may give us, in wrath, to punish and subdue this unruly evil.

Meade's consternation at the moral state of both North and South was so great that, at least initially, he rejected the evangelical postmillennialist mission that his fellow clergymen in the church ascribed to the Confederacy.

²¹H.N. Pierce, Sermons preached in St. John's Church, Mobile, on the 13th of June, 1861, the national fast appointed by His Excellency Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America. By the rector [4181] (Mobile, 1861), 7 (quote), 12.

God, in mercy, hides from us the sight of garments rolled in blood, of fields strewn with mangled bodies, of proud cities crumbled into heaps of ruin, of fertile valleys become desolations, republics and kingdoms rising and failing and being no more forever. Such has been the history of nations once prosperous like our own. Such may be the end of our own, unless the Prince of Peace shall speedily come down and establish that kingdom which is to be for ever and ever. *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

Though it does not identify Christ as destroyer, Meade's request for a rapid return of Christ appears to reflect the assumption, shared with him by premillennialists, that human efforts to reform the world and thereby initiate the millennium would be unavailing.²²

Although in another sermon the next month Meade acknowledged the dissolution of the Union and criticized Northerners for making exaggerating charges of Southern cruelty to slaves, he also continued to assert that "human corruption" had been exhibited by "both sides" before the war. He even went so far as to upbraid Southerners for failure to tolerate some Northern "misrepresentation" of slavery. Moreover, he acknowledged the existence of a "sincere" albeit misguided anti-slavery motive for the Northern war effort, and suggested that the war might in part be God's punishment on the South for neglecting its slaves. Taken together, Meade's views make him seem perhaps ambivalent toward the Confederate cause itself. Yet they were consistent with those he had expressed for years before the war in attempting to improve the treatment of slaves and colonize freed blacks in Africa. Apparently alone among prominent evangelicals, Meade considered the fate of slaves as a problem of Christian duty, independent of Southern nationalism.²³

²²Since Meade does not identify Christ as apocalyptic destroyer, one may question whether Meade can be called a millennialist of any sort. However, Meade's expectation that God's purpose could not be realized gradually throughout time seems to put him at odds with the high churchmen discussed in Chapter 2. The difficulty in classifying Meade's thought reflects the inevitable weakness of concepts such as "millennialism" in describing the complex interaction between the ideas of individual clergymen and trunk currents in church thought. William Meade, Sermon preached at the opening of the Convention of the P.E. Church in Virginia, in the City of Richmond, in the fifty-first year of his ministry, and the thirty-second of his Episcopate [4168] (Richmond, 1861),

12 (quote), 17 (quote, italics added), 19 (quote, italics added).

²³William Meade, "Address on the day of Fasting and Prayer," appointed by the President of the Confederate States June 13, 1861. Delivered at Christ Church, Millwood, Va [4167] (Richmond, 1861), 7(quote), 8 (quote), 10 (quote); Diana Hochstedt Butler, Standing Against the Whirlwind, 148.

Thus, although the dominant evangelical Episcopalian construction of the war's meaning merged sacred and secular to produce a brief for Confederate nationalism based on millennialism and a jeremiad against the North, participating clergy were far from unanimous on the question of the sources of the corruption that produced the war. With the exception of William Meade, they laid most of the blame at the Yankees' door, but some also hedged their bets by attributing sin to the South. Because such qualms appeared often, especially early in the war, one may conclude that the dramatic breakup of a once strong republic seemed a fearful portent whose meaning was not so self evident as Stephen Elliot apparently would like to have believed. Always nervous about being on the right side of God, fearful of His wrath, and sensible of the obvious fact that war could bring great suffering to both sides, evangelicals were not completely comfortable with the record of Southern conduct before God, and this was reflected in their sermons, despite their adherence to the millennialist formula. William Meade must be considered an exceptional case, an evangelical whose antebellum experience led him to give such doubts priority over the Confederate nationalism his colleagues were then in the process of developing. Although the anxiety expressed by evangelical Episcopalian clergy over the South's prewar sins had a different source from that expressed later in response to the fortunes of the Confederate military, an undercurrent of doubt about the initial purpose of the Confederate war effort continued throughout the war. The clergy's interpretation of the Confederacy's defeats in battle may have reflected, in part, doubt about the validity of the millennialist formula and even about the righteousness of the Confederate cause itself.

However, notwithstanding such qualms and the views of William Meade, evangelical clergy in the Confederacy defended slavery as an essential part of the Confederate millennialist formula. To defend that formula was necessarily to defend slavery and the peculiar role that God had supposedly created for slaves. For the

Confederacy to undertake its millennial role, white Southerners had both to elevate their own spiritual conduct and to spread the gospel to all who needed it. The South could serve as a beacon of righteousness and base for evangelism to the world, but the slave population represented both a built-in mission and a thorny obstacle to the validation of the millennialist formula. For the Confederacy to be righteous, its economic system could not be based on sin. Yet, if Northerners were correct, slavery at best encouraged violation of the will of God by blocking Christian marriages and by denying large numbers of people access to the gospel. At worst, slavery did both these things and was also a system of abuse, neglect, cruelty, and exploitation. In short, it was hardly the sort of institution to form the social and economic basis of a righteous, purified nation prepared for a unique role in realizing God's kingdom of grace on earth. Yet the institution was an integral feature of the new nation's society. Evangelical millennialists who sought to shape the formation of Confederate nationalism therefore had to vindicate slavery as a Godly institution so that it could be integrated into the millennialist formula.

Yet like the merging of sacred and secular in the political realm, making slavery into a more Godly institution required the Church to become more directly involved in a heretofore largely secular institution. In the late antebellum period, Southern clergy had begun to respond to abolitionist attacks on slavery with biblical pro-slavery arguments. Yet these early efforts were limited in scope and did not deny the need for some reform of slavery. However, the reform theme itself was a recognition by white Southerners that they had not done what was required by God to minister to the spiritual needs of their slaves. Confederate clergy therefore had to act. As historian Clarence Mohr has argued: "If slavery had God's blessing, evangelizing blacks became a sacred duty."²⁴

²⁴Donald G. Mathews, Religion in the Old South (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 158, 180, 181; Clarence L. Mohr, On the Threshold of Freedom: Masters and Slaves in Civil War Georgia (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1986), 243 (quote).

Of the sermons that survive, those of Stephen Elliot provide the best statement of wartime evangelical views on slavery within the Protestant Episcopal Church. Elliot, even as the senior bishop of the Church, did not alone determine the position of the evangelical Episcopalians, but resolutions from the Confederate Church's national conventions and scattered references to efforts at evangelizing slaves in state diocesan convention reports suggest that his views are representative of those of other evangelical Episcopalians.

From the outset of the war, Stephen Elliot defended slavery as part of the unique trust that God had given to his chosen nation in order for it to fulfill its millennial role. In an 1862 sermon he argued that God had produced a united Confederacy expressly to protect the institution from destruction at the hands of the Republican party. Using an Old Testament analogy, Elliot criticized Northerners who proclaimed slavery to be unbiblical as those who "forget that he kept his own chosen people . . . in bondage to Egypt for four hundred years, until they were disciplined to go forth and become a nation among the nations."²⁵

As a postmillennialist, Elliot contended that slavery was a training ground for slaves, protected by God so that slaves could be prepared to fulfill a role for which they alone were suited: serving as evangelical missionaries to Africa.

Africa alone is uninfluenced by Christianity, and whence is that influence to proceed? . . . How, then, is that dark spot upon the world's surface to be enlightened? Who is to pierce those pestilential region and preach the everlasting Gospel, even though it be only for a witness? . . . The enterprising missionaries of the American Churches have tried it, . . . they too have failed, because the Caucasian blood has not been able to bear the enervating heats and destructive fevers of the torrid zone. Whence, then, is their regeneration to come, for come it must, if the Bible be the word of God, ere the present economy of things shall terminate? We are driven to look for it from some agency which shall be able, through national affinities, through a like physiological structure, through a oneness of blood and of race, to bear the burden of this work, and ultimately, in God's own time, to plant the gospel in their Father-land, after they themselves

²⁵Elliot, "Our Cause in Harmony with the Purposes of God in Christ Jesus," 10 (quote), 18.

shall have been prepared through a proper discipline, for the performance of this duty. And I find this agency in the African slaves now dwelling upon this Continent and educating among ourselves.

Elliot's plan for slavery contained all the elements of the evangelical millennialist vision. Slaves could serve both as an evangelical mission field and as missionaries in the making. God had fitted them alone for a special purpose in the fulfillment of his economy of grace on earth, without which the millennial reign of Christ could not begin. Finally, this scenario confirmed the Confederacy in the status of unique redeemer nation, since to Elliot and other evangelicals the Confederacy had been specially chosen to protect slavery for God's larger purpose.²⁶

According to Elliot, Southerners were already well on the way to fulfilling this trust. He concluded that after the constitutional ban on further importation of slaves had taken effect in 1808, white Southerners paid "greater attention to the comforts and morals of their slaves," encouraged slaves to marry, and as a result helped the slave population in the South more than quadruple in size by the eve of the Civil War. Although by 1862 Elliot acknowledged that, in areas where the presence of the Union army promised freedom, slaves had fled their masters "just as children would rush after any new thing or boys would be tempted by a holiday," he suggested that the absence of attacks by slaves against their masters proved that slavery was not a source of weakness to the Confederacy but a "comfort and a help."²⁷

As records of the diocesan and national conventions of the Confederate Church make clear, Elliot's views echoed those of others in the Church. A pastoral letter from the bishops of the Confederate Church in 1862 urged the faithful to elevate the moral status of slaves in Confederate society, arguing that "religious instruction of the negroes has been thrust upon us in such a wonderful manner that we must be blind not to perceive that not

²⁶Ibid., 8-9.

²⁷Ibid., 12 (quote), 20 (quote).

only our spiritual life is wrapped up in their welfare." The bishops also asserted that "the time has come when the Church should press more urgently than she has hitherto done upon her laity, the solemn fact, that the slaves of the South are not merely so much property, but are a sacred trust committed to us, as a people, to be prepared for the work which God may have for them to do, in the future." The bishops further urged masters as Christians not to violate the "sacred" marital relations of slaves.²⁸

In meetings of the Confederate Church's House of Deputies of the General Council held in 1862, deputies urged Confederate Episcopalians to attend to the "spiritual welfare of our colored population." The delegates resolved "that this church desires specially to recognize its obligation to provide for the spiritual wants of that class of our brethren, who in the Providence of God have been committed to our sympathy and care by the national institution of slavery." In its 1863 report on the state of the Church, a Virginia diocesan committee reiterated the theme, concluding that religious instruction of slaves was "the peculiar trust committed to the Southern Church" and that Christian whites were "the commissioned heralds of the gospel to their immortal souls."²⁹

In a February 1863 address to his diocese, South Carolina bishop Thomas Davis blamed the Union army for disrupting the administration of sacraments to slaves of the state's coastal regions, then pressed the case for increased effort to bring religious instruction to slaves:

²⁸Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Pastoral letter from the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church to the clergy and laity of the Church in the Confederate States of America. Delivered before the General Council, in St. Paul's Church, Augusta, Saturday, Nov. 22d, 1862 [4519] (Augusta, 1862), 10 (quote), 11 (quote).

²⁹Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States, Journal of the Proceedings of the General Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America, Held in St. Paul's Church, Augusta, GA. From Nov. 12th to Nov. 22nd, Inclusive, in the Year of Our Lord 1862, With an Appendix Containing the Constitution, A Digest of the Canons, A List of the Clergy, and of the Officers of the General Council, Etc. (Augusta, GA.: Steam Press of Chronicle and Sentinel, 1863), 101 (quote), 102 (quote); Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, Journal of the Sixty-Eighth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, Held in St. Paul's Church, Richmond, on the 20th, 21st and 22nd May, 1863 [4556] (Richmond, 1863), 38.

But this seems clear; that the Southern people must alone be looked to for the religious instruction of the negro population, and to this let me call your attention. In South Carolina these people furnish the especial Missionary subjects of the Episcopal Church; I would endeavor to impress this very earnestly, and urge the necessity for increased exertion in this sphere of duty. It needs fixed principles and settled determination and conduct. We must be governed by our sense of duty, and the magnitude of the trust committed to us. . . . Let us uphold the hands and cheer the hearts of those who give up their lives to constant, faithful labors in this department of Christ's kingdom; and thus in faith let us await the blessing of God.

Davis portrayed slaves not so much as chattel property, but as fellow Christians-human beings with consciences, assigned by God (rather than by master alone) with a peculiar role in the fulfillment of His plan. However, as will be considered later, Davis's view of slave consciences ran against a strong current of resistance by masters.³⁰

Stephen Elliot strove to portray Southern stewardship over slaves in the most favorable terms, but also he demonstrated concern about deficiencies in the religious training of slaves and in the legal recognition of slave marriages. In a March 1863 sermon, he concluded that the slaves' continuing loyalty to their masters vindicated Confederates "from the charges of cruelty and barbarity which have been so industriously circulated against us," and furthermore that this loyalty demonstrated that Confederates could "hereafter, with entire safety, and with most excellent results to ourselves, introduce them gradually to a higher moral and religious life." Elliot attempted to reassure possibly doubtful countrymen that they could and should prepare slaves for the evangelical work assigned by God to the Confederacy. In another sermon later in the year, he again urged masters to assume the role of religious teacher, saying that "we have not only been masters to these people but so far as circumstances have permitted us, . . . we have been friends and instructors."³¹

³⁰Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Carolina, Journal of the proceedings of the Seventy-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, held in St. Philip's Church Charleston, on the 11th and 12th of February, 1863 [4542] (Charleston, 1863), 28-29.

³¹Elliot, "Samson's Riddle," 21 (quote); Elliot, "Ezra's Dilemma," 13 (quote).

Evidence of how Confederate clergy responded to the calls of Elliot, Davis, and others to increase efforts to minister to the spiritual needs of slaves is mixed and difficult to interpret. Reports from diocesan conventions throughout the Confederacy contain numerous pastoral letters and parish reports detailing the administration of sacraments to "colored" communicants. While the records do not provide information on prewar practices, it seems probable that preaching and administering the sacraments to a small number of black communicants was not unusual in parishes throughout the antebellum South.³²

Interspersed with these are occasional references to what appear to be special efforts to bring preaching to groups of slaves assembled specifically for that purpose. Evidence of increased efforts to bring Christianity to larger numbers of slaves during the war also exists. For example, in South Carolina in 1863 and 1864, Episcopalian parish reports called for increases in religious instruction for slaves, urged more church construction to support new slave communicants, and lamented that a need to make room for white refugees had forced new black communicants out of church services. Similar

³²Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, Journal of the Sixty-Eighth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, Held in St. Paul's Church, Richmond, on the 20th, 21st and 22nd May, 1863 [4556] (Richmond, 1863), 69 (quote); Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia, Journal of the Second Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Georgia, held in Trinity Church, Columbus, Ga., Commencing May 5th, 1864 [4532] (Savannah, 1864), 52, 53; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana, Journal of the Twenty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana, held in Grace Church, St. Francisville, on the First and Second Days of May, 1861 [4534] (New Orleans, 1861), 60-61; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia, Journal of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Georgia, held in Christ Church, Macon, commencing May 9th, 1861 [4529] (Savannah, 1861), 46; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Carolina, Journal of the proceedings of the Seventy-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, held in Grace Church, Charleston, on the 12th, 13th, and 14th February, 1862 [4541] (Charleston, 1862), 59; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of North Carolina, Journal of the Forty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of North Carolina, held in the Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill on Wednesday May 14, Thursday May 15, Friday May 16, and Saturday May 17, 1862 [4537] (Fayetteville, 1862), 16; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, Journal of the proceedings of the Thirty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, held in Christ Church, Mobile, on the 1st and 2nd of May, 1862 [4524] (Montgomery, 1863), 99.

reports were made in other Confederate states, including Alabama and Georgia. Where there were problems in reaching slaves for religious instruction, parish rectors often blamed the Union army. The increased emphasis on preaching to slaves hinted at in these writings seems consistent with the millennial vision articulated by Stephen Elliot, even to the point of featuring the apocalyptic element of an adversary (the Yankees) directly attempting to block God's millennial plan for evangelizing slaves. However, some parishes also reported that some masters refused to allow religious instruction of their slaves.³³

Although it is not known how often Episcopal preachers encountered opposition on the part of masters to efforts to preach to slaves, the fact that such opposition existed

³³Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Carolina, Journal of the proceedings of the Seventy-Fifth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, held in the Church of the Advent, Spartanburg, on the 11th and 12th of May, 1864 [4543] (Columbia, 1864), 47, 63, 66; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Carolina, Journal of the proceedings of the Seventy-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, held in St. Philip's Church, Charleston, on the 11th and 12th of February, 1863 [4542] (Charleston, 1863), 28, 64, 66, 68; Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, Journal of the Sixty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, Held in St. Paul's Church, Richmond, on the 16th and 17th May, 1861 [4554] (Richmond, 1861), 73; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Carolina, Journal of the proceedings of the Seventy-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, held in Trinity Church, Abbeville, on the 19th and 20th of June, 1861 [4540R] (Charleston, 1861), 45; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia, Journal of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Georgia, held in Christ Church, Macon, commencing May 9th, 1861 [4529] (Savannah, 1861), 51; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas, Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas, held in Christ Church, Houston, June 5th, 6th, and 7th, 1862 [4548] (Houston, 1862), 18-19; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of North Carolina, Journal of the First Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of North Carolina, held in St. John's Church, Fayetteville, on Thursday May 14, Friday May 15, Saturday May 16, and Monday May 18, 1863 [4538] (Fayetteville, 1863), 34; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, Journal of the proceedings of the Thirty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, held in Christ Church, Mobile, on the 1st and 2nd of May, 1862 [4524] (Montgomery, 1863), 82, 93, 95; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia, Journal of the First Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Georgia, held in the Church of Atonement, Augusta, Ga., Commencing May 7th, 1863 [4531] (Savannah, 1863), 16, 17, 19; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, Journal of the proceedings of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, held in St. John's Church, Montgomery, on the 5th, 6th, 7th of May, A.D. 1864 [4525] (Mobile, 1864), 34; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of North Carolina, Journal of the Forty-Fifth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of North Carolina, held in Grace Church, Morganton, on Wednesday July 10, Thursday July 11, and Friday 12, 1861 [4536] (Fayetteville, 1861), 47.

may reflect a problem with the evangelical millennialist vision that limited its ability to win adherence from Southern slaveholders. Historian Michael Snay has suggested that the evangelical effort to sanctify slavery by limiting abuse of slaves and saving slaves' souls subtly recognized the humanity of slaves, for it assumed them to be beings with a conscience before God. Taken to its logical conclusion, this recognition made slavery difficult to justify, especially for an evangelical Christian, since it ascribed to slaves equality with whites in what evangelicals believed was the most important measure of being. If some masters rejected efforts to assemble their slaves for religious instruction or balked at the idea of Church-inspired constraints on masters' power over the slaves, it may have been due in part to an unspoken fear that the institution of slavery might be compromised by recognition of the slaves' status as human beings.³⁴

However, despite such concerns on the part of some masters, the surviving sermons and writings of evangelical Episcopalian clergy in the South reveal little effort to improve slaves' status other than making occasional exhortations to the slave owners not to neglect their slaves. Snay argues that when the Confederacy began to lose on the battlefield, clergy searching for the cause of God's displeasure found it readily in the Confederacy's national sin of failure to provide the proper treatment for its slaves. Yet even during the years of Confederate military setbacks in 1863 and 1864, the sermons and writings of evangelical Episcopalians make almost no mention of failure to care for slaves as a sin that God punished with battlefield reverses. The closest they got to a real reproof might have been Stephen Elliot's observation in an August 1863 sermon that "many, very many, I know, have been insensible to their duty and have neglected the great trust committed to their charge, and for this, punishment has fallen upon us, but many have acquitted their consciences before God." Elliot went on to conclude that the growth of the

³⁴Snay, Gospel of Disunion, 98.

slave population before the war, the acquisition of culture by slaves, their fidelity to their masters during the war, and the large numbers who attended the missionary meetings proved that in general Confederates had dutifully upheld this trust from God. Elliot certainly hoped that more masters would meet what the Church saw as their biblical obligations in the treatment of their slave charges, but he was ready to accept a limited response to the Church's vague exhortations to reform and preferred to focus on what Episcopalians had accomplished rather than on their lapses. Although he delivered this sermon after the great Confederate defeat in the battle of Gettysburg, Elliot was not specific about the punishment Confederates had suffered for their failures to meet their responsibilities to their slaves, again suggesting that punishment for lapses was not his main point of emphasis. During the war, no other evangelical Episcopalian clergy whose words survive rose to present any view on the matter different from that of Elliot.³⁵

A problem related to the issue of improved treatment for slaves was the legal recognition of slave marriages. Despite efforts by Southern political leaders, legal reforms designed to recognize slave marriages were never enacted in any Confederate state. The Confederate Episcopal Church called for such recognition, as did other Confederate churches. The failure of this effort revealed the practical limits of the evangelicals' millennialist vision.³⁶

Despite the millennial purpose that Stephen Elliot attributed to slavery, the evangelical Episcopalians' wartime efforts to make the institution more Godly seem to have been confined to supporting increased missionary work among slaves and to offering vague, almost self congratulatory exhortations to, in effect, "keep up the good work" of improving the care of slaves and making minor changes where necessary to correct

³⁵Ibid.; Elliot, "Ezra's Dilemma," 12 (quote), 13-14.

³⁶Since some Southern legislative bodies had shown interest in the issue during the war, Drew Faust concludes that such legal recognition would have been likely had the war lasted longer, but this is of course highly speculative. Faust, Creation of Confederate Nationalism, 78.

abuses. Undoubtedly, Confederate nationalism and the millennialist formula prevented Southern Episcopalians from sharply criticizing Southerners for failures to care for their slaves, since such action would have knocked the South off its moral pedestal as protector of slaves, calling its role as millennial redeemer into question. Yet if Stephen Elliot's rhetoric had, as this study argues, little connection with reality in suggesting that slaves were being admitted as equal members of the Church, then his effort to make the millennialist formula in this respect applicable to the Confederacy can be taken seriously only as an effort to rationalize attitudes and actions essentially in conflict with that formula.

Donald Mathews makes an important observation about the antebellum American evangelical worldview that suggests an inherent logical weakness in evangelicalism. That weakness may have made the millennialist formula unworkable in evangelical hands. Mathews argues that, although evangelicals saw themselves as responsible for the moral condition of themselves and of others, they confined their moral action largely to the individual and to such influence as each individual could exert by personal example. Essentially, before Confederate clergy such as Stephen Elliot sought to merge church and state during the Civil War, evangelicals in the South avoided taking moral action against corporate bodies such as the government or the Southern people considered as a whole. Thus, it may be that the wartime success of the millennialist formula depended on corporate thinking that went against the individualist inclinations of evangelicals, suggesting another reason for their failure to realize the more difficult tenets of God's plan for the Confederacy as evangelical redeemer nation.³⁷

Nevertheless, into the years of Confederate defeat Stephen Elliot remained insistent in his belief that the Confederacy had been chosen to prepare slaves for God's

³⁷Mathews, Religion in the Old South, 65.

purpose. In an April 1864 sermon, Elliot concluded that "we have been entrusted with the moral and religious education of an inferior race, made more sacred to us by the events of this war, because we have been made to see what will be their miserable fate should they pass out of our nurturing hands." A month later in another sermon, he again cast white Southerners in the role of the slaves' special protectors, suggesting that blacks emancipated by victorious Yankees would quickly perish in competition with whites. Although Elliot refused to believe that the Confederates might be defeated, battlefield reverses appear to have diminished the importance he ascribed to slaves as fellow Christians placed in the South to be prepared for evangelical work in initiating the millennium. In September 1864, he concluded that a Confederate defeat would mean for whites "a condition of serfdom, in which we and our children shall be made 'hewers of wood and drawers of water,' to the paupers of Europe" and "the negroes of Africa." Such rhetoric implicitly characterized slaves as inferior beings fit for no higher role than that which Elliot feared a Confederate defeat would force on white Southerners. In the end, Elliot and his evangelical colleagues were unable to reconcile contradictions inherent in their attempt to "elevate" slaves' Christian character through religious instruction, as a means to prepare them for a millennial role.³⁸

Evangelical Episcopalian clergy may not have succeeded in integrating slavery into the millennialist formula of Confederate nationalism, but that formula nonetheless became their basis for interpreting the events of the war. In the early years of the conflict, evangelical Episcopalian divines confidently asserted that God's special favor for His chosen covenant nation was realized by His direct intervention on behalf of Confederate

³⁸Stephen Elliot, "Gideon's water-lappers." A sermon preached in Christ Church, Savannah, on Friday, the 8th day of April, 1864. The day set apart by the Congress of the Confederate States, as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer [4143] (Macon, 1864), 20 (quote); Stephen Elliot, "Vain is the help of man." A sermon preached in Christ Church, Savannah, on Thursday, September 15, 1864, being the day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, appointed by the Governor of the State of Georgia [4153] (Macon, 1864), 9, 13 (quote).

forces in battle. With few exceptions, they urged the Confederates not to accept credit for their armies' victories, but instead to attribute all agency to God.

Following the successful Confederate attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861, South Carolina rector J.H. Elliot asserted that God had directly intervened on behalf of the Confederates to give them victory, employing power beyond the strength of men. In June, shortly before the First Battle of Manassas, Stephen Elliot saw the hand of God everywhere strengthening Confederate forces beyond any power they could have had through men's effort alone. Virginia rector A.M. Randolph agreed with Elliot and, in a sermon delivered the same day as that of the Georgia bishop, gave thanks to God for Confederate success. Soon afterward, the Confederate victory at First Manassas produced further claims from evangelicals that God had directly intervened to secure Confederate victory. Stephen Elliot concluded confidently that the Confederate cause was God's cause and that God had given the Confederates victory on the battlefield because they were fighting a "sacred war, involving in its issues not human rights only, but sound religion, and the maintenance of truth in philosophy, in morals, and in government."³⁹

However, though he agreed with his colleagues that the Confederate cause was God's cause, Rector William C. Butler of Virginia had a different interpretation of the roles of Providence and human agency in the Confederate victory. Articulating a theme that would appear with increasing frequency in the rhetoric of evangelical Episcopalian divines as the war progressed, Butler rejected the idea that God had directly intervened on the behalf of the Confederacy at First Manassas. Instead, he concluded that "we are not

³⁹J.H. Elliot, Bloodless Victory, 7; Stephen Elliot, "God's Presence with the Confederate States." A Sermon preached in Christ Church, Savannah, on Thursday, the 13th June, being the day appointed at the request of Congress by the President of the Confederate States as a day of solemn humiliation, fasting, and prayer. By the rector [4146] (Savannah, 1861), 17, 19; A.M. Randolph, Address on the day of fasting and prayer appointed by the President of the Confederate States, June 13, 1861, delivered in St. George's Church, Fredericksburg, VA [4183] (Fredericksburg, 1861), 6; Stephen, Elliot, A sermon preached in Christ Church, Savannah, on Sunday, July 28th, 1861, 5, 8 (quote); Edward Reed, "A People Saved by the Lord," 6.

authorized to say that a miracle was wrought on the plains of Manassas last Sunday, any more than we are authorized to say that a miracle was wrought at the loss and retreat at Rich Mountain." Butler argued that God had given Confederates the means for victory but that it was up to the Southern people to demonstrate their faith by using those means effectively. He attempted to rein in exultant cries that the victory at First Manassas by itself proved God's favor by pointing out that such expressions could not account for Confederate defeats. However, at this early point in the war, the heady atmosphere of victory increased confidence in the validity of the millennialist formula, convincing most evangelicals that God had produced a miracle because he had chosen the Confederacy to fulfill his plan on earth.⁴⁰

Yet evangelical Episcopalians also demonstrated that they were prepared for a longer war that could bring privation and reverses to the Southern people. The millennialist formula placed the Confederacy in a special role but also forced Confederates to justify that role by demonstrating the purity of character necessary to serve as God's instruments in redeeming the world. As the war unfolded, evangelical Episcopalian divines construed the conflict as a kind of crucible used by God to purify the character of the Southern people, to ensure that Confederate virtue was indeed spiritually new and pure. To evangelical divines, the length and nature of the conflict would be determined in part by the measure of virtue in Confederate hearts. Here the evangelical approach--salvation of the body of Christ one individual at a time--focused the rhetoric of evangelical divines on urging Confederates to avoid sin and to trust God in the face of trials and defeats.

Stephen Elliot had already, before First Bull Run, warned the Southern people against pride, idolatry, Sabbath breaking, profanity, and reliance on self instead of on God. Even as he asserted that God intervened directly in the Confederacy's behalf to vindicate a

⁴⁰ William C. Butler, Sermon: preached in St. John's Church, Richmond, Virginia, on the Sunday after the battle of Manassas, July 21, 1861, 12 (quote), 13, 17-18.

most righteous cause, Elliot warned Confederates that they would be in danger of defeat if they attributed military victories to human strength instead of to God. Later in 1861, Elliot continued to warn against private sins, including intemperance, extortion, and lack of devotion to God. In effect, he made the Confederate war effort into a process of spiritual revival, with the proper attitude toward war being dependent on constant faith in God and on the understanding that God used every event in the conflict to further His purposes.⁴¹

By the end of 1861, the conflict had begun to bring suffering home to the Southern people, forcing evangelical divines to explain the purpose of that suffering. It was interpreted as God's means of purifying the Confederacy for its redeemer purpose. After fire struck Charleston, South Carolina, in December 1861, Rector W. B. W. Howe advised his congregation that they were being tried by God in order to test their faith, not to be punished. Others concluded that chastening and testing were one and the same. Stephen Elliot echoed this theme in February 1862 when he told his congregation that "War is a fearful scourge, as God's word plainly tells us; but it may sanctify us as well as chasten, it may purge out our old dross, even though it be through the fires of affliction." In February 1862, South Carolina bishop Thomas F. Davis concluded that God "is chastening us for our sins, and proving our faith, that it may be found in His sight 'laudable, glorious and honorable.'"⁴²

⁴¹Elliot, "God's Presence with the Confederate States," 20; Elliot, Sermon preached in Christ Church, Savannah, on Sunday, July 28th, 1861, 19-20; Stephen Elliot, "How to Renew our National Strength," A sermon preached in Christ Church, Savannah, on Friday, November 15th, 1861, being the day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer, appointed by the President of the Confederate States [4147] (Richmond, 1862), 10-11.

⁴²W.B.W. Howe, "Cast Down but not Forsaken," A sermon delivered in St. Philip's Church, Charleston, December 15th, 1861, being the Sunday after the great fire. By the assistant minister [4160] (Charleston, 1861), 13; Elliot, "New Wine not to be put into Old Bottles," 17 (quote); Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Carolina, Journal of the proceedings of the Seventy-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, held in Grace Church, Charleston, on the 12th, 13th, and 14th February, 1862 [4541] (Charleston, 1862), 26 (Davis quote).

Besides building faith in God, evangelical clergy argued, the war purified and prepared the South for its millennial role in other ways. In February 1862, Stephen Elliot saw the war as a good dispensation from God, because it would extinguish sources of corruption within the Confederacy, such as political partisanship, that supposedly had pushed the North away from the republican ideal of a politics of disinterested civic virtue. A year later, Texas rector W.T.D. Dalzell agreed, thanking God for the "unanimity of sentiment which has characterized men of all shades of opinion previous to this struggle" and for "the total obliteration of party feeling." By eliminating factions and ushering in more virtuous government, the Confederate redeemer nation subordinated itself more fully to God's commandments, placing aside the supposedly corrupt, human concerns of partisan self-interest.⁴³

Yet as God purified the South for its sins, Stephen Elliot argued, he continued to order events to support the Confederacy as His chosen nation. Elliot delivered a sermon in September 1862, following Confederate victories at Second Manassas and Richmond, Kentucky. In it, he again saw the hand of God everywhere protecting and guiding his chosen people. He asserted that God had deliberately kept the Confederates from invading border-states until such time as border state residents could see the manifestations of corrupt, despotic government in the North and hence see the need for secession. Yet the scale that the war had now reached gave Elliot pause in predicting an end to the fighting. He concluded that it would not end before moral results had been achieved sufficient to justify the deaths of men bound to God by Christian covenant.⁴⁴

⁴³Elliot, "New Wine not to be put into Old Bottles," 17; W.T.D. Dalzell, "Thanksgiving to God." A sermon preached in St. Mark's Church, San Antonio, on Wednesday, 4th Feb. 1863 [4133-2] (San Antonio, 1863), 9 (quote); For an in depth discussion of the Confederate rejection of political faction see George C. Rable, The Confederate Republic: A Revolution Against Politics (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

⁴⁴Elliot, "Our Cause in Harmony with the Purposes of God in Christ Jesus," 18, 19, 21.

In 1863, evangelical Episcopalian divines' rhetoric began to shift toward placing more agency in the hands of men. Evangelicals grappled with the mystery of the role of Providence in the Confederacy's continuing sufferings and defeats. In the latter years of the war, as Confederate defeats piled up, evangelical Episcopalian divines struggled to explain what was happening. They denied any military or political significance to the defeats, asserted that God was using the defeats to prepare the Southern people for their millennial role, and scolded the people for their lack of faith--especially in Confederate victory--and their character lapses.

Although W.T.D. Dalzell asserted in February 1863 that God continued to demonstrate His special favor for the Confederacy by directly intervening in support of Confederate arms, the next month Stephen Elliot emphasized that the sins of the Confederate people were prolonging the war. Elliot accused the people of covetousness and greed, saying that, although he still did not doubt that God would bring victory to the Confederacy, Southerners' sins required a period of divine cleansing whose duration Elliot could not determine. He argued that Confederates were not morally prepared for victory and that uninterrupted peace increased moral corruption, and that therefore continued war was actually a blessing, a loving discipline that God used to prepare Confederates for His purpose. Abandoning his earlier faith in the direct intervention of special Providence, Elliot asserted that, while God had the power to immediately end the war, "He always acts through natural means; always works out His purposes by a sequence of events which are entirely within the scope of unbelief to consider as customary." Nevertheless, in an August 1863 sermon, he continued to identify the Confederacy with the biblical Israel, reminding Confederates of their victories earlier in the war and suggesting that these victories remained signs of God's favor.⁴⁵

⁴⁵W.T.D. Dalzell, "Thanksgiving to God," 2, 9; Elliot, "Samson's Riddle," 13, 14, 15 (quote), 17; Elliot, "Ezra's Dilemma," 16.

However, as he delivered this sermon following the disastrous Confederate defeats at Vicksburg and Gettysburg in July 1863, Elliot struggled to justify God's Providence and maintain the people's determination to achieve victory. He charged that the Southern people had "forgotten the resolution with which we had entered upon this journey towards the promised land of our national independence." He rebuked Southerners for shirking duty in the army. He warned that Confederate defeat would expose Southern women and children to "menial service," insults, and dishonor at the hands of "hordes of insolent slaves and rapacious soldiers."⁴⁶

Yet despite such dire warnings, with their implicit message that the Confederacy could lose, Elliot continued to insist that God had ordained the Confederate cause. He concluded, that the inaction of the Confederate army was "a visitation from God, to teach us our own weakness" and therefore a loving dispensation that would force the Southern people to trust more in God. Elliot adamantly denied that God could support the Union cause, claiming that He would never "be with those who have forsaken him, and trampled upon his word." God was merely "biding his time" while he chastened the Southern people for their sins and tested their faith, meanwhile preparing vengeance against the North. God's chastening might be prolonged, severe, and difficult to explain, but Elliot, at least in his rhetoric, remained undaunted in his conviction that God had to vindicate the Confederate cause on the battlefield because He had chosen the Confederacy to be instrumental in His plan.⁴⁷

In a sermon delivered in early 1864, Richard Hooker Wilmer, Bishop of Alabama, offered similar views yet, surprisingly for this stage of the war, Wilmer (unlike Elliot) reflected little sense of ambivalence or confusion about the reasons for Confederate

⁴⁶Elliot, "Ezra's Dilemma," 18 (quote), 26 (quote).

⁴⁷Ibid., 7 (quote), 15 (quote).

setbacks. He argued that battlefield defeats were both God's means to discipline the Southern people and an essential way to build a common Confederate identity:

The truth is, beloved, that no strange thing has happened to us in that we are called upon to endure reverses in the maintenance of right and in the discharge of duty. This is part of our discipline and as events will prove, a part of our heritage. We are only illustrating, upon a grand scale, in this great national affliction, what is perpetually witnessed in the instances of individuals.

Consistent with the evangelical millennialist construction of Confederate nationalism, Wilmer saw the Confederacy as a corporate person in its dealings with God.⁴⁸

Like an individual Christian in evangelical covenant theology, the Confederacy as corporate person had to accept trials and tests from God in order to attain the righteousness necessary to fulfill its part of the covenant and thereby allow God to fulfill His part. Wilmer's characterization of the Confederacy makes this point clear:

A whole nation is taken up and put under trial and discipline. The grand panoramic figures pass by in review before the world. All nations are spectators of a people enduring grief, while suffering wrongfully at the hands of their enemies; and they, who could gather no significance from the examples of individual men, enduring heroically their appointed sufferings--persecuted, but not forsaken--cast down, but not destroyed--are now taught to ponder well the same lesson, written in characters of flame upon the firmament. What a day will that be which shall vindicate the righteous judgment of God--which, after we shall have expiated our portion of the national guilt, shall make manifest to the dullest vision that "the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

Wilmer saw the Confederacy as a priest saw a Christian communicant. Thus he concluded that Confederate defeats trained the Southern people to wait upon the Lord, demonstrating, as they did, that God was not at the beck call of humans. Wilmer concluded that God had inflicted suffering on the Confederate people to punish but also to

⁴⁸Richard H. Wilmer, "Future Good--The Explanation of Present Reverses: A Sermon preached at Mobile and Sundry other points in the State of Alabama During the Spring of 1864," [4206] (Charlotte, 1864), 5 (quote).

correct, thus training Southerners in a renewed reverence that Wilmer believed was already apparent in early 1864.⁴⁹

Reaffirming the jeremiad against the North, which evangelical millennialists had used to justify a special place for the Confederacy in God's economy of grace, Wilmer asserted that the war was cleansing the South of the Northern contagion. He concluded that "the levelling[sic] doctrines of human equality, which tend downward to the gulf of atheism are disappearing before the stern reality that some men are 'born to honor.'" At the same time, Wilmer revived the earlier concern that the South had entered the war unclean, and thus he provided further explanation for the length of the trial God had imposed on the South. However, he argued that the problems of worldliness, love of money, and a Southern youth untrained in obedience were being corrected by war.⁵⁰

Despite the long odds against a Confederate battlefield victory at that point, Wilmer remained confident that the Confederates' "time of trial and suffering is now--that of our enemies is to come." He concluded that God would "recompense, if not in our way, and at our time, and with our measure and by our instrumentality--yet, in His own way, at His own time, and by such instrumentality as to His infinite wisdom may seem best and most expedient."⁵¹

In 1864, evangelical Episcopalian divines continued to assert that Confederate defeats resulted from a combination of God's chastening for (vaguely specified) sins and as preparation for His greater purpose. However, their ambivalence over the meaning of Confederate defeats led them increasingly to avoid judgments on the means God would use to accomplish His purpose. Thus the means, if not the purpose, of Providence became more of a mystery as the war neared its conclusion. In two sermons delivered in April and

⁴⁹Ibid., 6 (quote), 7, 17.

⁵⁰Ibid., 16, 17 (quote), 19.

⁵¹Ibid., 12 (quote), 13 (quote).

September 1864, Stephen Elliot offered familiar explanations for Southern battlefield defeats but also, in a profound departure from his 1861 rhetoric, denied the importance of the temporal results of the war. Although he did not thereby abandon the idea of an earthly vindication for the Confederate cause, in dismissing the importance of disastrous Confederate defeats his rhetoric pointed in that direction, for he was attempting to make worldly concerns irrelevant to the realization of God's plan. Elliot called the war "a dispensation of death," God's punishment meted out equally to both sides without any clear benefit to either. He denied the significance of the loss of territory to the Union army. After Georgia was invaded by the enemy, he argued that this was necessary to give the people of Georgia a history, a sense of identity born in the tribulation attendant to the building of character and the purging of sin.⁵²

Elliot concluded that the Confederacy by mid-1864 was still afflicted with sin and corruption but that God would eventually give it victory, as soon as the character of the Southern people had been fully purified by adversity. Yet Elliot defined as vaguely as ever the deficiencies in the Southern character that necessitated God's continued chastening, thus making it possible to accommodate an unexpectedly long period of Confederate chastisement within the belief in a nation chosen by God to be a beacon of righteousness to the world:

We have been selected to be a bulwark against the worst developments of human nature, fanaticism, democracy, license, atheism. For such purposes God is disciplining and refining us in the fires of affliction, and when he shall perceive that we have been ennobled by our struggle, purified by our sacrifices, exalted by our self-denial--that we have learned to put at their true value wealth, and luxury, and show--to distinguish between false pretension and genuine merit--to understand the infinite, absolute, immutable character of virtue--to worship the honest and the true, and the good and the beautiful--to keep in our eye the religion of Jesus, as we find it revealed in the Scriptures and exemplified in his pure and holy and self sacrificing life--He will give us our deliverance and establish us in this land flowing

⁵²Elliot, "Gideon's water-lappers," 6, 7; Elliot, "Vain is the help of man," 5, 9, 10 (quote).

with milk and honey, as a nation consecrated for His own mysterious yet all-wise purposes.

Unfit for earthly vindication though the Confederates might still be, Elliot implied that the righteousness of the Confederate cause alone guaranteed the earthly power to prevent a Confederate defeat. However, only a short journey remained to move the evangelical divines from confidence in an earthly victory based on irrational faith in spiritual power to faith in a purely spiritual victory.⁵³

To Stephen Elliot, the war had become almost solely a supreme test of blind faith in God. Where such faith was lacking, Elliot sought to shore it up. On the least pretext, he argued that God had renewed the people's faith and rekindled their courage. He claimed that, despite the defeats, God had always before answered the Southern people's calls for help, even if not in the way they had hoped. Elliot simultaneously argued that "the help of man is vain" and called "upon our people to awake and buckle on the armor of heroic citizenship." He denied that his position was inconsistent, saying that "God works by means" and not through miracles, and he concluded that God's help would come in the form of strengthening the people's resolve, stifling the "weak minded and timid," and "confounding the devices of our enemies." In short, victory would be achieved by complete submission to God, incomprehensible though His methods might be. Throughout 1864, other evangelical clergy returned to Elliot's and Wilmer's themes in a tireless effort to maintain the Confederacy's will to keep fighting. They claimed that God's trials were a blessing and that God was protecting the Confederacy for His larger purpose.⁵⁴

⁵³Elliot, "Gideon's water-lappers," 13, 21 (quote).

⁵⁴Ibid., 15; Elliot, "Vain is the help of man," 4, 5, 8 (quote); Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, Journal of the Sixty-Ninth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, Held in St. Paul's Church, Richmond, on the 18th and 19th May, 1864 [4557] (Richmond, 1864), 12, 24; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas, Journal of the Second Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas, held in Christ Church, Houston, June 9th, 10th, and 11th, 1864 [4550] (Houston, 1864), 18.

In early 1865, with the military defeat of the Confederacy imminent, evangelical rector Charles Minnigerode delivered a sermon in which he placed little emphasis on the temporal results of the war, focusing instead on the moral problem that Confederate setbacks had revealed. The people, he said, lacked the faith to receive God's blessing and to develop the character required to fulfill their part of the millennial covenant given to the Confederacy. Minnigerode echoed Elliot in concluding that God worked through means and not miracles, but that God's agency rather than any human effort determined the course of events. Like Elliot and Wilmer before him, he also denied the importance of Confederate battlefield defeats, asserting that the power of the Union army was not God's power except insofar as it chastened Southerners. Minnigerode still hoped for a temporal victory but readily conceded that defeat was possible. If the Confederacy had to fall, Minnigerode said, the Southern people should go down to defeat with their "faces upward," their "hearts turned to God," their "hands in the work," and saying "blessings--not curses," secure in the knowledge that they had retained honor, always done their duty, and died "as the servants of God, . . . in the hope of glory." Minnigerode concluded not by anticipating an earthly victory but simply by calling for complete submission and service to God so that He might "smile upon us and give us his blessing, and crown the year with his mercy and goodness, and beautify us with his salvation."⁵⁵

Minnigerode thus completed a subtle shift in the late-war sermons and writings of evangelical Episcopalians away from expectation of a temporal vindication of the Confederate cause and toward expectation of a more purely moral and spiritual vindication. Confident of an earthly victory for the Confederacy, Richard Wilmer explained the reason for Confederate battlefield defeats by reference to continued Confederate weaknesses that had to be identified and corrected through a spiritual process

⁵⁵Chas. Minnigerode, "He that believeth shall not make haste." A sermon preached on the first of January, 1865, St. Paul's Church, Richmond [4171] (Richmond, 1865), 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 15 (quote); 16 (quote).

of cleansing. Yet such defeats made no sense as a sign of God's favor to an earthly kingdom. Stephen Elliot's unwavering faith in the righteousness of the Confederate cause resulted from his conviction that the Confederacy could not lose the spiritual battle. From that point, it must have been easy to conclude that if its armies lost struggles on earthly battlefields, then God must not have intended the Confederate victory to be found on earth.⁵⁶

While a spiritual victory had always been a necessary component of the realization of the Confederacy's millennial purpose, the steady shift away from the battlefield contests as markers of progress toward the spiritual vindication of the Confederate cause gradually uncoupled the earthly from the spiritual in the rhetoric of the evangelical Episcopalian clergy. At the end of the war, these clergymen still looked for earthly signs of progress toward Godliness, but more in the hearts of individuals than in the political progress of individuals working as the Confederate corporate body. This outlook resembled that of antebellum evangelicals throughout the United States and made it possible for the righteousness of the Confederacy to be justified independently of the temporal results of the war. The Confederacy would achieve an eschatological vindication as God's cause to be fulfilled by God in the course of His judgment.

Thus, the Confederate cause had become righteous not, as before, because it was chosen by God to initiate the millennial reign of Christ on earth, but because it focused the hearts of individuals on developing the Christian virtues of unquestioned faith in God, discipline, righteousness, obedience, and self-denial. By implication, the Confederate cause had exemplified these virtues at the civic level. However, the Southern people had not developed these virtues within themselves sufficiently to make Godly government work.

⁵⁶Eugene Genovese offers a broader discussion of late war explanations for Confederate reverses used by Southern churchmen from different denominations. Eugene D. Genovese, A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1998), 37-71.

Thus God had allowed the Confederacy to be defeated. Yet the cause remained righteous even if the post-millennialist vision had collapsed. Minnigerode's words implied that former Confederates would draw lessons from the failure of the Confederacy to better prepare themselves for God's final judgment. The result may have been pre-millennialism, since it anticipated the arrival of God's judgment without the righteousness of the ideals of Confederate nationalism first being vindicated by earthly, human means.

Pointing to Minnigerode's words, Ronald Lee has made a similar argument. However, in conceding that as early as 1861 A. M. Randolph identified a separate spiritual victory as both possible and more important than any earthly victory the Confederacy could achieve, Lee raises a possible problem with the notion that evangelical Episcopalians sought to merge church and state in a formula that coupled millennialism with Confederate nationalism. Randolph indeed did "thank God . . . that he" had "turned the hearts of this people to himself in fasting and prayer," and had brought "us to feel our weakness and to lean upon his strength." He concluded that if "these manifestations be real and not a sanctimonious pageant--if the result of this national trial has been to turn us devoutly and earnestly to the living god, then we have already gained a greater victory than any which the history of this struggle can record." Moreover, in concluding that the Confederacy could not be conquered because its principles were by "their very nature unconquerable," Randolph foreshadowed the sentiments of Stephen Elliot in 1864, when Elliot argued that Confederate soldiers were "irresistable, not because of their numbers, but from the holiness of their cause and the enthusiasm of their temper." At two very different points in the war, evangelical Episcopalians seemed both to conflate the spiritual and the temporal spheres and also to separate them.⁵⁷

⁵⁷Ronald Glenn Lee, "Exploded Graces: Providence and the Confederate Israel in Evangelical Southern Sermons, 1861-1865" (M.A. thesis, Rice University, 1990), 205-13; A.M. Randolph, Address on the day of fasting and prayer appointed by the President of the Confederate States, June 13, 1861.

If Randolph's and Elliot's views are wholly representative of the attitudes of evangelical clergy in the Church at the times each wrote, one may ask if the war really had any effect at all on Southern evangelical millennialism as regards the merging of church and state. Nevertheless, despite the paucity of surviving sermons and the inconsistencies in those that have survived, it is possible to acknowledge the congruence between Randolph's and Elliot's views while still affirming that the war helped to create and then extinguish an evangelical postmillennialism based on a merging of church and state. The words of C.C. Pinckney and O.S. Barten, considered earlier, show that the merging of church and state was never complete in the thinking of evangelical Episcopalians, as is suggested by Stephen Elliot's 1861 admission that church involvement in temporal politics was an exceptional event, perhaps justified only by war.⁵⁸

Within the Episcopal Church, some evangelicals (and, as will be argued in the next chapter, most if not all high churchmen) never linked church and state together. Among those evangelicals who did, undoubtedly the linkage was not adhered to with the rigidity characteristic of a fully articulated ideology. Both Randolph and Elliot probably fit in this latter category. During the Civil War period, millennialism as articulated by evangelical Episcopalian clergy to support Confederate nationalism remained imprecise and ill-defined. The process of abandoning the postmillennialist vision of the Confederacy as God's earthly redeemer was facilitated by the loose ideological connections between church and state, making the retreat from the earthly Confederate redeemer as easy as simply returning to the antebellum conception that church and state belonged to separate spheres.

delivered in St. George's Church, Fredericksburg, VA [4183] (Fredericksburg, 1861), 7 (quote), 8 (quote); Elliot, "Gideon's Water-Lappers," 13 (quote).

⁵⁸Elliot, Address of the Rt. Rev. Stephen Elliot, D.D., to the Thirty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia, 3; Barten, A sermon preached in St. James' Church, Warrenton, Va., on the fast-day, June 13, 1861. By the rector, 8; C.C. Pinckney, "Nebuchadnezzar's Fault and Fall," 12.

It has been noted that the millennialism of the evangelical Episcopalian clergy who worked to define Confederate nationalism contained an apocalyptic theme. Wartime, postmillennialist evangelical Episcopalians anticipated an apocalyptic battle with an infidel United States in order for the Confederacy to be able to embark on a mission of world evangelism, a mission necessary for it to fulfill its instrumental role in initiating Christ's reign on earth. A Confederate victory would supposedly have allowed the Confederacy to evangelize the world both by the example of its corporate righteousness and by the evangelical work of individuals, such as Stephen Elliot's proposed slave missionaries. Even premillennialist evangelical Episcopalians still assumed that the Confederate cause was chosen by God as most righteous and therefore that Christ would provide moral vindication for its struggle with an apostate North when He returned to establish His millennial reign.

Though they were mostly conservative, the evangelical Episcopalian clergy attempted to identify God's truth as revealed in the popular experiences of the war rather than solely in the religious traditions of their church. Stephen Elliot, Richard Wilmer, and others assumed that God taught lessons through the events of the war and through the response of the Southern people. These lessons were easily placed alongside the stories from scripture as examples of God's truth.

In casting the Confederacy in the role of God's special redeemer, the evangelical Episcopalian divines aligned themselves with the tradition of American exceptionalism by which the antebellum United States had defined itself. Americans had cast themselves as God's chosen people with the founding of Puritan Massachusetts and had continued to do so since the American Revolution, based on their adherence to the republican ideal of virtue. Using the religious jeremiad, the evangelical Episcopalian divines appropriated this mantle of virtue from the North at the outset of the Civil War, recast it to the

Confederacy's unique form of evangelical nationalism, and used it to justify a merging of church and state from which the religious construction of Confederate nationalism followed. The earthly Confederate nation collapsed but the righteous Confederate cause remains as an aspect of American exceptionalism that continues to shape the twentieth-century American outlook.

Chapter 2: High Church Ideas.

“Our danger is to merge the Holy Ghost into the means of grace, and overlook the important fact that He is a personal agent, acting indeed through those means, but not necessarily tied to them.” Pastoral letter from the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States, November 22, 1862.¹

Strong as the evangelical party may have been within the Southern Church, in warning of the danger Southern Episcopalians faced in merging the inward signs of grace with the external sacraments, the bishops revealed the pervasive influence of orthodox or high church doctrine within the Church. Emphasis on the sacraments as the primary means of receiving divine grace was characteristic of the high church ideas on which the American Church was based. When the Confederate Church was formed at an October 1861 convention, delegates included high church bishops James H. Otey, William Green, and Thomas Atkinson. Although outvoted by the other seven bishops attending the convention, in attempting to name the new Southern church a “Reformed Catholic” church these three men provided some idea of the relative strength of high church sentiment in the Confederate Church.²

Although never more than a minority view in the Confederate Church, the ideas articulated by these men drew on a tradition of high church doctrine shared alike by

¹Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Pastoral letter from the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church to the clergy and laity of the Church in the Confederate States of America. Delivered before the General Council, in St. Paul's Church, Augusta, Saturday, Nov. 22d, 1862 [4519] (Augusta, 1862), 14.

²Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America, Journal of Proceedings of an Adjourned Convention of Bishops, Clergymen, and Laymen of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America, Held in Christ Church, Columbia, South Carolina, from Oct. 16th to Oct. 24th, Inclusive, in the Year of Our Lord 1861 in Journals of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America, ed. William A. Clebsch. Centenary Edition in facsimile (Austin, TX: The Church Historical Society, 1962), 16, 17.

evangelicals, self-described high churchmen, and others who are hard to classify. High church doctrine formed the foundation of Episcopal theology. However, though they claimed the same foundation and used some of the same terms as the high churchmen, Southern evangelicals departed from the true substance of high church ideas.

When evangelicals attempted to play a role in the creation of Confederate national identity through a merging of the sacred and secular, high church ideas proved to be incompatible with their vision. The insistence of high church doctrine on the ideological and (most importantly) on the functional separation of the sacred and secular was irreconcilable with the evangelical millennialist formula of the Confederate redeemer nation. Ultimately high church ideas and doctrine called the evangelical millennialist formula of Confederate nationalism into question as much as did the battlefield events of the war.

Despite assumptions and terms shared by evangelicals and high churchmen, true high church thought differed at many points from that of the wartime evangelicals. Church historian Diana Hochstedt Butler suggests some of the differences in her discussion of the antebellum Northern church.

For the high churchmen, salvation was found in the Episcopal Church alone, holy living was formed by participation in its rites, and the church was a sort of "ark" in the midst of American society. Evangelicals, on the other hand, believed that men and women in other denominations could be saved, that holiness was the outworking of the transformed heart of the converted person, and that individual holiness would result in a purified social order. To them, voluntary societies were organizations of redeemed individuals seeking to live out a holy life in the world. By example, by preaching, and by exhortation holiness would spread throughout the world until the kingdom of God would be revealed in its fullness.

Evangelicals within the Church formed links with evangelicals in other denominations and participated in civic-minded voluntary societies that combined elements of church and state in order to save the world one Christian at a time. For evangelical millennialists in the

Confederate Church, the Confederacy itself assumed the role that voluntary societies had played for antebellum Northern evangelicals. By contrast, Southern high churchmen, both before and during the war, looked to the church as a body apart from the world, seeking to bring people to its door alone for salvation.³

Although voluntarism requires less political commitment than nationalism, Evangelical Episcopalian participation with evangelicals from other denominations in the creation of a Confederate redeemer nation was analogous to antebellum Northern evangelical cooperation with other denominations in the formation of voluntary societies, because each group had the same goal. Both sought to move the Church into civic space and considered the Church as but a framework for a wider body of Christians determined to redeem the world by evangelizing and by the outward expression of righteousness developed within. Yet Confederate evangelicals faced the same problem as their antebellum Northern counterparts: high church voices and doctrinal foundations that rejected expanded participation in the secular sphere.

High churchmen looked away from society and to the Church's hierarchy and tradition, while evangelicals attempted to make society more Godly through the fervor of revival. Evangelicals accepted innovations in doctrine to facilitate rapid growth of the Church through the accommodation of new religious constituencies and cooperation with other denominations. High churchmen such as North Carolina rector Alfred A. Watson, on the other hand, suggested that other denominations, since they rejected the subordinating authority of the Episcopacy or Church hierarchy, in a sense rejected the word of God.⁴

Evangelical revivalists welcomed emotional enthusiasm as the outward sign of a human heart changed by God's grace, while high churchmen insisted upon a careful,

³Butler, *Standing Against the Whirlwind*, 44.

⁴*Ibid.*, 45; Alfred A. Watson, *Sermon delivered before the Annual Council of the Diocese of North Carolina upon the Festival of the Ascension, May 14, 1863. By the Assistant Minister of St. James Parish, Wilmington* [4204] (Raleigh, 1863), 15-16.

dispassionate understanding of the gospel based upon apostolic tradition. As Watson concluded in 1863, "the great principle of the traditional system, such as our Church maintains, is that of holding nothing as revealed truth, or as the sound interpretation of revealed truth, which we have not received, from the Apostles, and which was not received by the first Christians from the Apostles." A Fort Worth, Texas, parish lay reader put it this way in 1861: "It affords me indescribable pleasure to assert, that the services of our holy universal church are mostly highly appreciated by a few of the most intelligent of the resident citizens, who are haters of that wild enthusiasm which leads astray from reason and from the true import of God's Holy Word. A few of the truly sapient, are beginning to clearly discern the essential difference between that nominal religion, which is greatly dependent for its soothing and enlivening, but deceptive influence, upon a chimera of the mind, . . . and . . . genuine piety."⁵

While evangelicals merged the political and religious spheres to create a nation chosen by God to initiate the millennial reign of Christ, high churchmen such as Alfred Watson focused on the Church alone as God's agent of redemption. In contrast to their evangelical colleagues, the high churchmen usually rejected millennialism. They emphasized ordered, rational precepts, externally administered sacraments, hierarchical authority, discipline, and denominational exclusivity, rejecting the fervent, apocalyptic visions of worldwide evangelicalism, interdenominational cooperation, and redemption characteristic of the postmillennialists.⁶

While evangelical Episcopalians such as Charles Minnigerode may have been forced by the results of the war to concede that God's promised kingdom was not of this

⁵Ibid., 14 (quote); Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas, Journal of the Twelfth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas, held in St. David's Church, Austin, April 11th, 12th, and 13th, 1861 [4547] (San Antonio, 1861), 45 (quote); Butler, Standing Against the Whirlwind, 44-45.

⁶Watson, Sermon delivered before the Annual Council of the Diocese of North Carolina upon the Festival of the Ascension, 15; Mullin, Episcopal Vision, American Reality, 86.

world, high churchmen in the Southern Church never departed from that view, because it lay at the core of high church doctrine. Church historian Robert Mullin has concluded that antebellum evangelicals identified the United States as the new Israel, placing Episcopal clergy in the role of “priests and prophets of ancient Israel” charged by God “to rehearse the need for national holiness and national righteousness.” By contrast, early high church leaders such as New York bishop John Henry Hobart adopted the early church rather than ancient Israel as their model--a decision “with far reaching implications,” Mullin says, since in the primitive church “God did not work either through a nation or even through a collection of Christians but through His self appointed vessel, the Church.” While evangelical Episcopalians during the Civil War would embrace the concept of a Confederate redeemer nation, Mullin shows how Hobart laid the foundation for a very different view:

One is hard pressed to find in Hobart any sympathy for a concept of the body of Christ above that of the visible church and its bishops. There was no sense of Hobart that in inter-Christian cooperation God was actually creating something new in sacred history. The gospel had to lead to the church or it had not been properly understood.⁷

So it was with the high church outlook in the Confederacy years after Hobart laid this foundation in the early nineteenth-century. Evangelical millennialism assigned Christians a role in reordering society, but the apostolic tradition of the high church party “led in the direction of disassociating the concerns of the church with those of the state.” This tradition of high church thinking found proponents in the Confederate Church from the war’s outset. A report of the Diocese of Virginia’s Committee on the State of the Church in 1861 concluded that “whatever may be our duties as citizens of an earthly commonwealth, it is still true, . . . that our most sacred and paramount duties have regard to that commonwealth or kingdom, which ‘is not of this world.’ ” While most evangelicals

⁷Mullin, Episcopal Vision, American Reality, 55 (quote).

ended the war and a few began it making that same assumption about the role of the Church, during most of the conflict they devoted themselves to creating a righteous kingdom that was very much of this world. The high churchmen, on the other hand, adhered more consistently to the original formulation.⁸

When, in the wake of the South's secession from the Union, the Southern Church sought to separate from the parent Northern church, Missionary Bishop of the Southwest Henry Lay reluctantly agreed to the separation but emphasized the importance of the Church's status as separate from the state: "We love to think of the Church as a kingdom not of this world, and so unshaken amid its storms." He claimed that during the sectional crisis "our countrymen have seen that there was one ark which could float tranquilly upon the troubled sea" and suggested that marshaling as "Churchmen in hostile ranks, yet unwilling to sever any link whatever of Christian fellowship," would be in many ways more sublime than separating from the Northern Church. Lay also expressed reservations about Southern secession as a means to reform the Church's organization, concluding that "we have been accustomed to think of Church authority as traditional; coming down from the Fathers, not upwards from the children," and contrasting "the gravity and deliberation observed by our mother Church, in perfecting her Reformation, with the precipitate and revolutionary methods adopted on the Continent."⁹

North Carolina bishop Thomas Atkinson went even further than Lay, rejecting the idea that Church unity should be affected by secular politics. He argued that the unity between his diocese and the Northern Church should not be altered by the secession of North Carolina, concluding that church and state had to remain separate under "the

⁸Ibid., 89 (quote); Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, Journal of the Sixty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, Held in St. Paul's Church, Richmond, on the 16th and 17th May, 1861 [4554] (Richmond, 1861), 62 (quote).

⁹Henry C. Lay, Pastoral letter to the clergy and members of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Arkansas. By the Missionary Bishop of the Southwest [4526] (Memphis, 1861), 18 (quote), 19 (quote).

American, . . . Scriptural and Primitive principle, which equally forbids the Church to control the state." For Atkinson, too, the Church remained a kingdom "not of this world." In his 1863 sermon, Alfred Watson had also congratulated Southerners because the war had not been provoked "by harangues from the pulpit," preventing the state from interfering in the affairs of the church. Watson too asserted that the weapons of the church's "power are not carnal, but spiritual." He worried that the separation of the Southern Church from its parent Northern Church would threaten the independence of the Church from the state. Watson urged the North Carolina Church not to abandon "her own independence" and allow "her own action to be too hastily determined by that of the State," asserting that the Church "should not forget her own royalty--that she is a nation and a kingdom of herself."¹⁰

However, not all supporters of high church doctrine were entirely consistent in opposing church involvement in secular politics. Alexander Gregg, Bishop of Texas, identified by one church historian as "the John Henry Hobart of Texas," allowed himself to be pulled in both directions. Responding to the evangelical jeremiad against the North, Gregg delivered a sermon in 1861 calling for the church to have a voice in politics:

The pulpit, sacred from the intrusion of the topics involved in the ordinary course of political affairs--a time with us that is past--the pulpit,--consecrated to the cause of our "holy religion," can no longer be silent. With the liberties of our country, now that infidelity and fanaticism have begun to wage their "irrepressible conflict"--the cause of religion itself is inseparably bound up.

Unlike his colleague Stephen Elliot, Gregg attempted to avoid moralizing on secular issues, insisting that the church should not "trace out the history of political grievance"

¹⁰Thomas Atkinson, Extract from the Annual Address of the Rt. Rev. Thomas Atkinson, D.D., to the Convention of the Diocese of North Carolina, holden at Morganton, July 10th, 1861 [4125-1] (Office of the Church Intelligencer, 1861), 5, 6 (quote); Thomas Atkinson, "On the causes of our national troubles." A sermon delivered in St. James' Church, Wilmington, N.C. . . . [4125] (Wilmington, N.C., 1861), 6 (quote); Watson, Sermon delivered before the Annual Council of the Diocese of North Carolina upon the Festival of the Ascension, May 14, 1863. By the Assistant Minister of St. James Parish, Wilmington, 7 (quote), 17 (quote), 18 (quote).

and "inflame the passions of men." However, by calling for a larger role for the pulpit in politics, his argument resembled a key part of the evangelical millennialist outlook.¹¹

Perhaps Gregg later felt he had gone too far with such remarks. In 1863 he delivered a sermon insisting that the Church alone should bring men into covenant relationship with God. He argued that the "primary end" of "human government" was "a purely temporal one" and that "the weapons of her [the Church's] warfare are not carnal." "[T]he chief aims of the State terminate in the present life," he wrote "its loftiest aspirations rise not above the shades of the earth, and its most far-reaching vision is bounded by the horizon of time."¹²

However, despite his rejection of the millennialist formula, as a prominent church leader Gregg clearly faced pressure to participate in the religious justification of the Confederate cause. At a time when Southern patriots demanded unqualified support for the Confederacy, clergymen who appeared less than committed faced sharp criticism, or worse. However, most high churchmen, including Gregg, supported the Confederate cause even though they rejected the evangelical millennialist formula of Confederate nationalism. To justify maintaining the separation of church and state while deflecting potential charges of disloyalty to the Confederacy, Episcopal high churchmen needed to offer a patriotic alternative to the religious-political synthesis of the millennial redeemer nation as God's means to save souls. A doctrine shared by all Episcopal clergy before the war provided such an alternative: the Church Catholic.

¹¹Lawrence L. Brown, "The John Henry Hobart of Texas: Alexander Gregg, 1819-1893, First Bishop of Texas, 1859-1893," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church (1959): 306-23; Alexander Gregg, "The duties growing out of it, and the benefits to be expected, from the present war." A sermon, preached in St. David's Church, Austin, on Sunday, July 7th, 1861. By the Bishop of the Diocese of Texas [4156] (Austin, 1861), 6 (quote).

¹²Alexander Gregg, Primary charge, to the clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Texas, delivered in Christ Church, Houston, on Saturday, May 9, 1863. By the Bishop of the Diocese [4157] (Austin, 1863), 17, 18 (quote), 22 (quote), 36 (quote).

The term Church Catholic was used to identify all parts of the true church regardless of political boundaries. Henry Lay alluded to it in explaining that before giving in to the evangelical demand to separate from the Northern Church he had hoped "that we might agree to construe certain words and phrases in our code as setting forth the geographical, not political boundaries within which the Church claims jurisdiction." Lay had hoped to place the Church and its organization beyond the reach of political disputes. His failure to do so did not result from a lack of doctrinal justification.¹³

The doctrine of the Church Catholic made the Church inclusive, rather than exclusive, across political boundaries. Although antebellum Episcopalians differed on whether the Church Catholic included all true Christians, as evangelicals argued, or merely all Episcopalians and members of the Church of England, as the high churchmen argued, the doctrine made it difficult to justify demonizing the North as an apostate nation, since the North included brother clergy and communicants of the Episcopal Church. Furthermore, the doctrine made it even more difficult to claim an exclusivity in God's favor for the Southern Church or for the Confederate government, since all members of the true Church wherever situated were assumed to be equally favored by God. Aware of these obstacles, evangelicals treaded warily in working to separate from the Northern Church and cooperate with evangelicals from other denominations to transform the Confederacy into God's specially chosen redeemer nation. Instead of rejecting the doctrine of the Church Catholic outright, they attempted to make it compatible with the separation from the Northern Church called for by the millennialist formula.¹⁴

Stephen Elliot led the evangelical effort to separate from the Northern Church with a circular in March 1861. He acknowledged that the Southern dioceses had "long been the

¹³Lay, Pastoral letter to the clergy and members of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Arkansas. By the Missionary Bishop of the Southwest, 19 (quote).

¹⁴Butler, Standing Against the Whirlwind, 45-47.

equal and happy members” of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States and took pains to explain that the need to separate from the parent church did “not arise out of any dissension which has occurred within the Church itself, nor out of any dissatisfaction with either the doctrine or discipline of the Church.” He emphasized that “we are to-day, as Churchmen, as truly brethren as we have ever been,” concluding that necessary responses to political events did not alter the unity of the Church North and South as “one faith.” Elliot claimed that the Southern Church “desired no change in the Faith or order of the Church, no relaxation of its discipline, no alteration in its Liturgy.”¹⁵

When the General Council of the Southern Church met in 1862, the president of its House of Deputies, Rev. Christian Hanckle, argued that the Southern Church was not about “to detach” itself “from the Church Catholic, but to put forth a new bud from the parent stock.” He concluded that the Southern Church intended to make “no change in the faith and polity of the Church Catholic; nor even in the worship and discipline of our beloved Church, except where our peculiar condition may require.” A committee report from House of Deputies contained another evangelical argument that the Church Catholic could be maintained despite the separation:

In the course of events we have been separated from brethren, with whom we have been associated in the same ecclesiastical communion, since the Protestant Episcopal Church was fully organized and set in operation on this continent. Though now found within different political boundaries, the church remains essentially one. In this respect we are no more separated from them, than from the members of any Protestant Episcopal Church throughout the world. In matters of this kind, neither geographical bounds, nor civil relations, nor any temporal cause

¹⁵In all but the quote passage in the last sentence Elliot spoke with Louisiana Bishop Leonidas Polk in a circular to the bishops of the Southern Church. In the passage in the last sentence, he spoke as President of the Confederate Church assembled in convention. Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States, Proceedings of a Meeting of Bishops, Clergymen, and Laymen of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States at Montgomery, Alabama, On the 3d, 4th, 5th, and 6th of July, 1861 (Montgomery, 1861) in Journals of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America, ed. William A. Clebsch. Centenary Edition in facsimile (Austin, TX: The Church Historical Society, 1962), 3 (quote), 21 (quote).

whatsoever, can have effect, so long as in doctrine, discipline and worship we are substantially the same. And as ecclesiastically our unity is to this extent thus preserved, so we would endeavor, in spite of every temptation to the contrary, to cultivate to the utmost toward our former associates, the "unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."¹⁶

Evangelicals also pressed the argument in state diocesan conventions. In May 1861, Louisiana bishop (and soon to be Confederate general) Leonidas Polk argued that "a change in Church Union, . . . does not necessarily involve a breach in Christian unity." A report from the Louisiana Diocese's Committee on the State of the Church backed the bishop, concluding that "the Diocese of Louisiana, like every other Diocese, is an integral portion of the One Catholic and Apostolic Church, in the Unity of which she cannot cease to be embraced, but by lapsing into heresy and schism," but adding that unions of churches "are voluntary combinations for purposes of practical expediency, and therefore may be changed whenever sound expediency requires that they should be dissolved." The Louisiana divines thus sought to place church organization in a secular sphere separate from the Church Catholic.¹⁷

Like Henry Lay, most high churchmen appear to have acquiesced, though with misgivings, in the separation from the Northern Church. Mississippi bishop William Green was even enthusiastic about separation, at least in the war's early phase. While accepting the idea that political separation might make a separate Confederate Church necessary, Green assumed that such separation would be "a division without dissension, a separation without injury to the respective parts, a parting of brothers amid tears of affection, and

¹⁶Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America, Journal of the Proceedings of the General Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America, Held in St. Paul's Church, Augusta, Ga. From Nov. 12th to Nov. 22nd, Inclusive, in the Year of Our Lord 1862, With an Appendix Containing the Constitution, A Digest of the Canons, A List of the Clergy, and of the Officers of the General Council, Etc. (Augusta, GA., 1863) in Clebsch, Journals of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America, 13 (quote), 101 (quote).

¹⁷Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana, Journal of the Twenty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana, held in Grace Church, St. Francisville, on the First and Second Days of May, 1861 [4534] (New Orleans, 1861), 35 (Polk quote), 40-41 (committee report quote).

with a mutually commending of each other to God.” Green concluded that such a parting would “exhibit the Catholic Spirit of the Church” in a “beautiful light.” He thanked God for such “peace and quietness and unbroken love in our Zion [the Church].”¹⁸

However, in at least one case the adamant rejection of separation by a prominent bishop triggered a protracted debate over the status of a Southern diocese. In his address to the annual Diocese of North Carolina council meeting in May 1862, Bishop Thomas Atkinson explained that he had refused to participate in the consecration of Richard Wilmer as bishop in the Confederate Church and had participated in the consecration of a Pennsylvania bishop, because, he argued, in taking an alternative course he would have “ceased to be a Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church *in the United States*.” Atkinson then explicitly denied that the North Carolina Church had separated from the Northern Church, notwithstanding the actions of other Southern dioceses and the ongoing war.¹⁹

Atkinson proceeded to blast the position of Stephen Elliot and other evangelicals, which held that political events had forced the church to separate:

But could the State by any political act destroy the organization of the Church and annul the Constitution and Canons which were its bonds of union with the Church in the United States? If it be the Church of Jesus Christ, or a part of the Church of Jesus Christ, (and which of its members will declare it not to be?) then the State can neither make nor unmake it, alter or amend it, directly or indirectly; for Jesus Christ said, “my Kingdom is not of this world.” His Church, so far from being a creature of the State, or the subject of the State, . . . was planted in spite of the State . . . He, then, that proclaims that the Protestant Episcopal Church is changed in its organization and laws by the mere act of the State, does . . . in effect declare

¹⁸Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi, Journal of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi, held in Christ Church, Holly Springs, April 25th, 26th, and 27th, 1861 [4535] (Jackson, 1861), 35 (quote), 36 (quote); Watson, Sermon delivered before the Annual Council of the Diocese of North Carolina upon the Festival of the Ascension, May 14, 1863, 15.

¹⁹Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of North Carolina, Journal of the Forty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of North Carolina, held in the Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill on Wednesday May 14, Thursday May 15, Friday May 16, and Saturday May 17, 1862 [4537] (Fayetteville, 1862), 19 (quote), (italics added).

that it may be a very respectable religious denomination, wealthy, refined and orderly, but that it is no part of the Church of Christ.

He may have been directly responding to an address Stephen Elliot had delivered at the Georgia diocesan convention a week earlier. In that address, Elliot affirmed the validity of separation from the Northern Church and the legitimacy of Richard Wilmer's bishopric, asserting that to do so conceded nothing "to the civil power over the ecclesiastical." He argued that the state "has had influence upon the ecclesiastical in our recent action, simply because of the connection which the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States chose to form, through its Constitution and Canons, between herself and the civil state."²⁰

Elliot responded to high church complaints that separating from the Northern Church because of political changes external to the Church broke faith with the practice of the primitive church. He argued that it was "idle to bring the usages of the Christian Church of the first three centuries to bear upon our conduct," for the antebellum state diocesan system deprived American bishops of the ability to follow the primitive church principle that the status of bishoprics was beyond the reach of political changes. Elliot was pointing out that under the law of the antebellum American Church a bishop who resigned or otherwise lost his see lost his power as a bishop of the Church (though without losing *his status* as a bishop). This innovation in church doctrine, Elliot contended, in effect tied bishoprics to political boundaries, thus contradicting the high church doctrine of separation of church and state long before the Civil War started.²¹

Elliot had first made this argument in 1861, during his address to the Georgia Diocese's Thirty-Ninth Annual Convention. Elliot's remarks at this convention show that the evangelical position on the legitimacy of separation from the Northern church was based on the manner in which the Episcopal Church had been originally created as a

²⁰Ibid., 20; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia, Journal of the Fortieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Georgia, held in St. Philip's Church, Atlanta, commencing May 8th, 1862 [4530] (Savannah, 1862), 19 (Elliot quote).

²¹Ibid.

church separate from its parent Anglican Church immediately after the American Revolution:

Had the Episcopalians who convened to organize a Church in the United States and to obtain for this country the succession of Bishops, been satisfied to receive that succession from the Church of England, and to establish its Episcopate without any absolutely restricted jurisdiction, governing the Church through councils of Bishops and Presbyters, the Church should have been unaffected in its relations by any changes in the civil state. But the jealousy of Episcopal and even priestly authority, which existed in this country after the Revolution, made this independence seemingly hopeless. It was deemed necessary to organize the Church upon the model of the Constitution of the United States, to create a General Convention in which Laymen should have an equal representation with Clergymen and by which all Ecclesiastical law should be established and modified, and to define sharply the jurisdiction of Bishops. This was done by making their Dioceses co-terminous with the States in which they were established, . . . Each Bishop was tied down to his jurisdiction by a marriage which admitted of no divorce. His privileges as a Bishop of the Church Catholic of Christ no human organization could affect, but all his privileges as a Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, arose out of his connection with his particular jurisdiction, and expired with that jurisdiction. . . . When the jurisdiction therefore of a Bishop declares itself, in the exercise of its rightful sovereignty to be thenceforth and forever separated from the other jurisdictions which make up the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, it forces him into a like separation. . . . These States [the Confederate States] are no longer, in any sense, a part of the United States, and consequently the Bishops of these States or Dioceses, for in this connection those words are synonymous, are no longer Bishops of the United States. They are now Bishops of the Confederate States.²²

Elliot claimed that, in arguing that secession of the Southern states had produced the separation of the Church, a clergyman conceded nothing to the State not already established long before the Civil War. He based this argument on circumstances of the Church's formation. The early American Episcopal Church's efforts to satisfy the objections of the English bishops to consecrating American bishops discussed in the introduction to this study could, Elliot seems to have concluded, be argued to have

²²Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia, Journal of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Georgia, held in Christ Church, Macon, commencing May 9th, 1861 [4529] 16-18.

resulted in ceding authority over bishoprics to the laity and civil government. Yet others within the Southern Church did not share Elliot's views. Whatever the merits of Elliot's position, high church bishops such as Thomas Atkinson adhered to different conceptions of church independence from civil government, conceptions that were not without historical justification of their own. These conceptions were more consistent with the process by which Samuel Seabury had been consecrated (without the involvement of the state) than with the process by which the remainder of the episcopate had first been created and placed the church in a sphere more separate from state action. Other clergy apparently did not share Elliot's view of the doctrinal significance of the church history he cited. In the surviving writings of the Confederate Church, the relationship of the American Church's early history to the question of the Confederate Church's effort to separate from the Northern Church was addressed explicitly by Elliot alone. His high church adversaries appealed to much older precedents in arguing their position: those of the early Roman Church. Thus, although the early history of the American Episcopal Church played a role in creating a basis for the evangelical position, high churchmen and even some others in the Southern Church seem not to have considered it in the same light.

Furthermore, despite his apparent concern for precedent and church history, Elliot concluded his 1862 convention address, by actually rejecting the primacy of doctrine: "Theory is a beautiful and oftimes is the true harmony of things, but in a disarranged and convulsed world, practicable action must take the place of theory." He then sought to further devalue the significance of the Church Catholic in the debate. He argued that while "it would be the best" if the Church could be arranged "as an entirely separate kingdom, within the kingdoms of the world," such a notion was impractical since "in these latter days Christians have not succeeded in any such efforts." In other words, the Church could not be a purely spiritual body entirely unaffected by changing political boundaries. Yet in

1861 Atkinson had offered a different view. He had concluded that dioceses in the Confederacy could simply remain part of the Church of the United States since other churches, including the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England, claimed communicants outside the political boundaries of their states of origin.²³

However, Elliot was determined to argue the case for the evangelical position. Attempting simultaneously to advance the millennialist purpose of Christianizing slaves and to stand the high church objections on their head, he proclaimed the Confederate Church organized as a result of the November 1862 General Council meeting of the Southern Church.

The organization which was completed by this council of the Church, in the Confederate States, frees us in the hereafter, from any possible interference, whether by influence or legislation, with our distinct institution. The whole duty now devolves upon us to take heed that by our earnestness and vigilance in elevating the moral and spiritual condition of the negroes, we may approve ourselves faithful stewards of the mighty trust committed to our care.

While Atkinson asserted that separation from the Northern Church was itself evidence of unacceptable interference in the sphere of the Church by the state, Elliot concluded that it actually freed the Church from state interference in its efforts to teach religion to slaves.²⁴

Yet Atkinson's stubborn insistence that separation from the Northern Church made the Church Catholic into a creature of the state reveals unresolved problems with high church acceptance of the evangelical argument that separation was consistent with

²³Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia, Journal of the Fortieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Georgia, held in St. Philip's Church, Atlanta, commencing May 8th, 1862 [4530] 20 (Elliot quote); Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of North Carolina, Journal of the Forty-Fifth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of North Carolina, held in Grace Church, Morganton, on Wednesday July 10, Thursday July 11, and Friday 12, 1861 [4536] (Fayetteville, 1861), 11; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of North Carolina, Journal of the Forty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of North Carolina, held in the Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill on Wednesday May 14, Thursday May 15, Friday May 16, and Saturday May 17, 1862 [4537] (Fayetteville, 1862), 21-22.

²⁴Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia, Journal of the First Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Georgia, held in the Church of Atonement, Augusta, Ga., Commencing May 7th, 1863 [4531] (Savannah, 1863), 16.

the doctrine of the Church Catholic. High churchmen might acquiesce to separation in order to support the Confederacy, but they assumed that the doctrine of the Church Catholic really referred to a spiritual realm led by clergy alone. As Atkinson argued, there really was no way to avoid the conclusion that proclaiming the Church separated based solely on action initiated by the state compromised Church independence, thereby compromising the Church Catholic itself. High churchmen struggled with this problem in an effort to compromise with the evangelicals but ultimately could not resolve it.

Alexander Gregg accepted the evangelical argument for separation, arguing that the antebellum connection between the Northern and Southern Episcopal churches "was that of mere ecclesiastical union--a human arrangement simply for the common good of all, and the advancement of their common work." He concluded that "the questions now at issue between ourselves and those from whom we are separate, are not questions affecting the church and its Catholicity, the Diocese in its integrity, the member of Christ in his spiritual relations." To further justify separation from the Northern Church, Gregg, perhaps alone among high churchmen whose writings survive, even attacked its clergy:

The views of churchmen at the North are diametrically opposed to our own, because they regard us as still citizens and subjects. . . .

How far, as a whole, they have sympathized in this unholy and monstrous war of invasion is not known. There is, however, reason to believe that such feeling has been general.

By itself, this argument was compatible with the evangelical jeremiad against the North, but, in light of Gregg's later statements, neither this position nor Gregg's endorsement of Stephen Elliot's position on the doctrine of the Church Catholic can be taken as acceptance of the evangelical millennialist formula of the Confederacy as a specially chosen redeemer nation.²⁵

²⁵Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas, Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas, held in Christ Church, Houston, June 5th, 6th, and 7th, 1862 [4548] (Houston, 1862), 27 (quote).

In his final surviving statement on the issue, Gregg presented a convoluted, inconsistent argument that again shifted his position away from a merging of church and state. He thereby rejected the core of the evangelical postmillennialist formula and attempted to maintain adherence to the doctrine of the Church Catholic:

Should revolutions occur, and another order of things be established--a new government taking the place of the old--though, the Church, as a spiritual body, the kingdom of Christ, can perform no part therein, however, her members, as subjects of the State, may have been actively engaged--yet, the duty of subjection to the powers that be becomes manifest. The Church must, of necessity, decide for herself, when a change of rulers has been brought about; and, though yet in the midst of a revolution, whe[n] her legitimate and regularly constituted government has been put in operation. . . . But, in order to [make] such a decision, no political interference or legislation, on the part of the Church is demanded--or, if seemingly so, would be beyond her legitimate province. It becomes simply a question of fact, which can always be readily determined . . . For, according to Catholic usage, founded upon fitness and expediency, ecclesiastical organizations have been regulated, territorially, according to civil boundaries--the Churches, for example, in the several states or provinces . . . Such an union is the result of conventional arrangement among men . . . It is the work of man, simply, and must, of necessity, be so regarded. Whereas the unity of the Church, to which, in its breach, the heinous sin of schism pertains--is that divine principle and bond of union which is essential to its existence, . . . When civil changes take place, involving a change of nationality, a severance of the bonds of ecclesiastical union follows, not strictly in the order of cause and effect, as by virtue of any intrinsic or necessary connection, so that it may be said, the one, per se, produces the other--but, simply on the ground of its being fit and expedient as the Church hath ever adjudged.

Gregg appealed to precedent to justify his claim that secession could be accepted by the Southern Churches as a division of the church instigated by the state. In this sense, his position fit that of Stephen Elliot. However, unlike Elliot, Gregg was a high churchman and therefore justified his argument on the precedent of the early church, "as the Church hath ever adjudged," rather than on circumstances of the American Church's founding.²⁶

²⁶Gregg, Primary charge, to the clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Texas, delivered in Christ Church, Houston, on Saturday, May 9, 1863. By the Bishop of the Diocese, 27-29 (quote); Mullin, Episcopal Vision, American Reality, 85-89.

Gregg did everything he could to justify separating the Church based on a political dispute without thrusting the Church itself into the political realm, but his struggle reflects the incompatibility between the Hobartian doctrine of keeping the Church in a sphere separate from that of the state and the effort Stephen Elliot led to separate from the Northern Church. In his 1861 address to the Georgia Diocesan Convention Elliot had suggested that the Civil War era Church had no role at all to play in determining whether it had been separated by action of the state, because its predecessor determined its relationship to the state. Gregg appealed to precedent but rather vaguely. His words provide little help in determining what sort of relationship between church and state he envisioned, sounding as if he wanted the Church to both remain above the action of the state and to make a decision, supposedly without political significance, as to when it had been separated by the state. As Bishop Atkinson might have argued, in practical terms, Gregg's distinction between the Church somehow acting on its own, solely "to accept a fact," and the Church-rubber stamping secular political decisions was undoubtedly meaningless. Gregg's words suggest that he was aware of the contradictions in his position and was far from comfortable with the compromise he had adopted.

Alfred Watson revealed his own uneasiness when he rejected the claim that separation from the Northern Church could be accomplished without fissures in the Church Catholic. In his May 1863 sermon, Watson accepted political disunion as by then undeniable but expressed concern that the political disunion had produced "individual ecclesiastical alienation" affecting the unity of the Church Catholic. He concluded that the Northern and Southern Churches should work toward reunion:

But I speak of the reunion of the Church. Nor even of that, in the way in which it has heretofore existed; but only, so as it may exist between us and the mother Church in England. . . . It will be difficult, if not impossible, ever to feel as we felt before, towards those who have so wantonly, so cruelly, assailed us. Yet should the Church at such a time be specially careful, how she forgets the great doctrine

of her own Unity. Nor must her children forget that she is Christ's kingdom, and, therefore, far above all human interference. Human governments, as individuals, are subject to Christ; and were all the kings on earth . . . were even the *Church herself* in Council to repeal God's law of the Church's Unity, their action would be void.

Coming as it did in the middle of a bitter fratricidal war that took the lives of thousands of North Carolinians, Watson's comments seem remarkable, but they reflected his high church outlook and unwillingness to abandon the doctrine of the Church Catholic in its original form. Though most high churchmen seem to have been in nominal agreement with the evangelical argument for separation, they really did not resolve the conflict between support for separation and the damage it did to the high church conception of the doctrine of the Church Catholic.²⁷

Consistent with their emphasis on the church as God's ark in a worldly sea of discord, high churchmen (despite Alexander Gregg's comments) generally refused to demonize the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States. Thomas Atkinson, Henry Lay, William Green, and Alfred Watson in different ways emphasized the unity of the Church Catholic in both the North and the South. Indeed, in refusing to recognize the separation of the Northern and Southern wings of the Church, Atkinson attempted to remain all but oblivious to the war's effect on the Church.²⁸

However, as they rejected most attempts to demonize the members of their own church and the evangelicals' blanket attack on the North, high churchmen also implicitly formulated their own jeremiad against the North in general. Even as he argued against separating the Church and sought to keep it out of secular politics, Thomas Atkinson concluded that the Confederate cause was "the righteous cause in this present most lamentable controversy" and expressed the hope that "God will bless [it] with temporal

²⁷Watson, Sermon delivered before the Annual Council of the Diocese of North Carolina upon the Festival of the Ascension, May 14, 1863. By the Assistant Minister of St. James Parish, Wilmington, 20-21.

²⁸Atkinson, "On the causes of our national troubles." A sermon delivered in St. James' Church, Wilmington, N.C. . . ., 6.

success." Alfred Watson suggested that the war was indeed, as evangelicals had argued, "a religious war" between righteous Southerners and Northerners corrupted by the ungodly principles of abolitionism and "fanaticism." However, he concluded that the Northern dioceses of the Church had not arrayed themselves against the Confederacy under such influences "but because of the disposition of the Church to uphold the powers that be--the civil government in which she dwells." Watson pointed out that the Church had followed the same approach during the American Revolution, concluding that "while constituting, perhaps a guaranty for her stability and conservatism," it was "for that very reason, no evidence--but to the contrary--of any liability to the influence of fanaticism." Unsympathetic to possible millennialist implications of the jeremiad as justification for an apocalyptic final battle, high churchmen such as Gregg, Atkinson, and Watson nonetheless attempted to combine the Church's traditional role as arbiter of public morality with the patriotic sentiment demanded of all Southern leaders during the war.²⁹

Although Alexander Gregg apparently did not share Watson's enthusiasm for a postwar reunion between the Northern and Southern Episcopal Churches, in creating a high church jeremiad against the North he ultimately moved away from the position of the evangelical millennialists. He concluded that the North had been guilty of fanaticism and moral corruption in its unjust war against slavery. He argued that the struggle against the North was "but the counterpart of the fearful struggle within--of a lost and ruined nature, battling against Satan and his malignant host for immortality," a position that strongly resembled part of the evangelical jeremiad, at least insofar as it held that political separation was necessary to protect a Godly society from Northern corruption. Yet Gregg

²⁹Thomas Atkinson, "Christian duty in the present time of trouble." A sermon preached at St. James' Church, Wilmington, N.C., on the fifth Sunday after Easter, 1861, by the Right Rev. Thomas Atkinson, D.D., Bishop of North Carolina [4124] (Wilmington, N.C., 1861), 7 (quote); Watson, Sermon delivered before the Annual Council of the Diocese of North Carolina upon the Festival of the Ascension, May 14, 1863, 10 (quote).

attempted to resolve the question of how the high churchmen could invoke the jeremiad against the North without converting the war into a religious crusade in which the Church would lead the state:

For, though God's people of old were often called to destroy the idolatrous nations around them, the example was one not written for our imitation. Interpreting the facts of the old dispensation by a better and clearer light, then, we may conclude, that wars waged for glory, conquest, revenge, or any other object than self-preservation, or the protection of life, liberty, and independence are clearly against the will of God and the doctrine of the Gospel of Christ. . . . The *injustice* and *wickedness* of a war of invasion and desolating fury, she can but recognize, and in her sympathies and teachings *condemn and deplore*. For it is not now, as when, the empire became Christian and the connection was established, the voice of the Church was swallowed up in that of the State.

Gregg concluded that by defining the Confederate war effort as a purely defensive war the Church could support the Southern cause as the more righteous cause without thrusting itself into the political sphere. He argued that assuming such a position of moral leadership did not conflict with the principle that the Church should not use "any mere earthly agency" to "bring the conflicts of man to a close."³⁰

As Gregg saw it, the Church could avoid thrusting itself into the secular sphere merely by keeping its clergy out of military and political offices. However, even if one accepts the concept of the defensive war, the Church would hardly be leaving carnal weapons on the ground merely by avoiding formal legal and administrative cooperation with the Confederate government. The Church's evangelicals merged church and state in order to support their millennial vision for the Confederacy without formally joining the

³⁰ Alexander Gregg, "The duties growing out of it, and the benefits to be expected, from the present war." A sermon, preached in St. David's Church, Austin, on Sunday, July 7th, 1861. By the Bishop of the Diocese of Texas [4156] (Austin, 1861), 18; Alexander Gregg, A sermon; preached in St. David's Church Austin on Sunday, July 10th, 1862 [4158] (Texas Almanac Office, 1862), 12; Alexander Gregg, A sermon; preached in St. David's Church Austin on Sunday, March 15th, 1863 [4157-1] (Texas Almanac Office, 1863), 11 (quote); Gregg, Primary charge, to the clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Texas, delivered in Christ Church, Houston, on Saturday, May 9, 1863. By the Bishop of the Diocese, 36 (quote), 37.

two institutions in law or--with one bizarre exception--making their bishops into Confederate generals.³¹

Their example shows that, in the peculiar cultural climate and circumstances of the South on the eve of the Civil War, creating an ideological union between church and state was all that was necessary to create a functional linkage between the sacred and secular spheres during the war. Evangelical millennialists made the Church part of the apparatus of the state merely by actively working to provide the Confederate cause with a sense of religious mission, creating a partisan position that made the South uniquely righteous in the minds of the Southern people. Although the high church position did not impart the same sense of religious mission, it could support armed resistance against Union forces based on the defensive war concept. Furthermore, though they attempted to define the Church as a sphere separate from that of the state, Episcopal high churchmen lived in a period in which church and state were never so separate as they would become in the twentieth century. Thus even the high churchmen did not expect the Church to be completely oblivious to the concerns of the state.

However, only a religious ideology that merged the purposes of church and state could by itself effect a functional unity between the institutions of the secular and sacred spheres. The defensive war concept was a far cry from a religious justification of the Confederacy based on the exceptionalist notion of the Confederacy as God's unique redeemer. However doubtful it may have been as a description of the actual political posture of the Confederacy during the war, the defensive war concept formed the only pro-war religious ideology articulated by the high churchmen. The concept did not identify the conditions of the Civil War as unique in the history of the Church. Thus, it did not

³¹West Point-trained bishop Leonidas Polk became a lieutenant general in the Confederate army and was killed in battle at Pine Mountain, Georgia, June 14, 1864.

warrant the extraordinary steps that evangelical millennialist clergy, such as Stephen Elliot, took to ensure Godly government by merging church and state.

Although Elliot might have endorsed the defensive war concept and might even have accepted the jeremiad against the North, the exceptionalist doctrine of the Confederate redeemer converted any fight for Confederate independence into a cultural offensive, whether defensive in the narrow military sense or not. The ideological union of church and state effected by the evangelicals created a functional unity of purpose between the two. Calls from evangelical churchmen to the Southern people exhorting them to conduct a cultural offensive against a Northern enemy began as exhortations to fulfill religious duties but simultaneously and unavoidably became military-political imperatives. Alexander Gregg defined the war as a moral struggle but his model was closer to a moral quarantine of the South than to a crusade. The evangelical millennialists intended for the Confederacy to conduct an offensive to seize the national identity as God's chosen redeemer people from the United States, a nation which, by supposedly departing from God's purpose, no longer deserved that identity.

This required church and state to share functions, a union unnecessary merely to justify a defensive war for a righteous cause. Such a merging of church and state Gregg could not accept. High churchmen such as Gregg were, to a carefully limited extent, willing to support Confederate political ideology with religious justification but they were not willing to erase the boundaries between religious and political ideology to the extent that church and state shared the functions required to conduct a cultural offensive against the North led in part by the Church. Though the high churchmen might invoke a jeremiad that sounded much like that of the evangelical millennialists, even Alexander Gregg

understood that God's sanction for a defensive war did not include an endorsement for attacks on "idolatrous nations" such as the United States.³²

The evangelical postmillennialist formula assumed that God's plan was in some measure intelligible to human beings before Christ's return, at least enough for people to understand the roles they were to play in fulfilling it. As we have seen, the methods of Providence in its work on earth became steadily more mysterious to the evangelical millennialists as the war went on and the Confederacy suffered reverses. Ultimately, the ways of Providence became totally incomprehensible and the expected earthly kingdom gave way in evangelical rhetoric to "a kingdom not of this world." However, at the outset of the war millennialism had provided most evangelicals with a reassuring explanation of the work of Providence on earth. The high church view, on the other hand, uninfluenced by millennialism, expressed the work of Providence on earth as a mystery from the outset of the war. A report from the Committee on the State of the Church at the 1861 Mississippi diocesan convention explained the high church position on the mysteries of Providence:

Our Lord said: "All power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth," including equally the kingdom of Providence with that of Grace. In the former we must wait for his footsteps as he is pleased to manifest them from time to time. But the latter is already clearly revealed with every line of duty marked and fixed out. We speak of the Church, the pillar and ground of truth, God's house on earth, wherein, and whereby the invisible Christ, and the human soul may meet and be made one. What the true Christ proclaims as the way of salvation must be regarded as the voice and authority of her Ascended Head. Thus her visible progress is, in all reality, the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world.

For the high churchmen, Providence remained largely unintelligible; but God's immediate plan for the world did not need to be known because the Church alone, rather than church

³²Gregg, Primary charge, to the clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Texas, delivered in Christ Church, Houston, on Saturday, May 9, 1863. By the Bishop of the Diocese, 36 (quote).

and state merged, operated as God's redeemer through which his human ministers were to work for his kingdom.³³

Those who saw Providence as an entire mystery during the first two years of the war were probably influenced by high church doctrine, whether they were high churchmen or evangelicals. Numbers can only be guessed, but this group was not insignificant. Bishops' addresses and parish reports from various dioceses throughout the Confederacy stressed the mystery of Providence. They did so especially when describing how the war had hurt parishes. Though Providence might seem cruel, diocesan reports called for Confederates to trust it nonetheless. Indeed the war's very incomprehensibility became a sign that it had been sent by God. Despite the contradiction inherent in such a position, evangelicals who identified Providence as a mystery may even have included nominal adherents to the postmillennialist formula distressed over events in their parishes.³⁴

Though the high churchmen did not accept the evangelical millennialist formula, their views on slavery were in some ways similar to those of the evangelicals. Southern high churchmen, like their evangelical counterparts, argued that white Southerners gave their slaves religious instruction and protection from rapacious Yankees. Like the

³³Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi, Journal of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi, held in Christ Church, Holly Springs, April 25th, 26th, and 27th, 1861 [4535] (Jackson, 1861), 20.

³⁴Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, Journal of the Sixty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, Held in St. Paul's Church, Richmond, on the 16th and 17th May, 1861 [4554] (Richmond, 1861), 94, 104; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of North Carolina, Journal of the Forty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of North Carolina, held in the Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill on Wednesday May 14, Thursday May 15, Friday May 16, and Saturday May 17, 1862 [4537] (Fayetteville, 1862), 11-12; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia, Journal of the Fortieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Georgia, held in St. Philip's Church, Atlanta, commencing May 8th, 1862 [4530] (Savannah, 1862), 8; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Carolina, Journal of the proceedings of the Seventy-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, held in Grace Church, Charleston, on the 12th, 13th, and 14th February, 1862 [4541] (Charleston, 1862), 23; Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, Journal of the Sixty-Seventh Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, Held in St. Paul's Church, Richmond, on the 21st and 22nd May, 1862 [4555] (Richmond, 1862), 20.

evangelicals, they considered slavery a trust from God to be protected. To the high churchmen, slaves were not part of a millennial plan, yet they expressed at least as much concern as the evangelicals about abuses in the institution. In place of a millennial purpose for slavery, the high churchmen offered the institution as a bulwark of traditional authority against social and ecclesiastical disorder.³⁵

Though evangelical Confederate Episcopalians were undoubtedly much more conservative than their Northern counterparts, the millennialist mission they articulated contained the progressive notion of transforming society through moral activism. Evangelicals considered slavery to be a bulwark against liberalism and anarchy, but their rhetoric actually suggested innovations in the master-slave relationship. However unrealistic it may have been, Stephen Elliot's proposal that slaves be trained to become missionaries to Africa certainly suggested a radical innovation in Southern society. High church doctrine, on the other hand, valued slavery as exclusively an institution of conservatism. While Elliot and other evangelicals considered slavery to be a means to combat moral corruption on the societal level, they were forced to concede that the institution itself had to change in order to be such a bulwark. Evangelicals thus were forced to endorse one form of societal change, change to the institution of slavery, in order prevent another, moral decay of the whole of Southern society. To the high churchmen, slavery itself had to remain in its traditional form in order to block societal change. They made the assumption that retaining the South's traditional labor system would act as a powerful anchor to the Southern economy and thereby to its social system.³⁶

Alfred Watson affirmed the role of slavery as an institution of conservatism when he argued that high church tradition had protected the church from abolitionism. To

³⁵Gregg, *A sermon: preached in St. David's Church Austin on Sunday, July 10th, 1862*, 11.

³⁶Diana Hochstedt Butler, *Standing Against the Whirlwind*, 148.

Watson, since slavery had not been condemned when the Gospels were written, it could not be wrong in mid-nineteenth-century America: "If slavery were wrong now, and to be condemned, she [the Church] believes it would have been wrong then, and would have been condemned then." The Church accepted "no new Gospel, according to Garrison, or Phillips, or Beecher [prominent Northern anti-slavery activists] or anybody else." Watson considered Church authority as established in traditional high church doctrine to be the South's best protection against home-grown "agrarianism, abolitionism, or any other heresy, which, like them, may uproot the social compact, or our religious faith."³⁷

Although their doctrine made slavery into a conservative institution, Southern high churchmen supported the correction of abuses and the religious instruction of slaves, despite concerns that in doing so they would encourage undesirable or dangerous innovations in the master-slave relationship. In 1861 Henry Lay concluded that although scripture justified slavery it also required masters to treat slaves properly. In an 1863 pastoral letter, Alexander Gregg elaborated this theme into a high church justification for holding masters accountable for the proper treatment and religious education of their slaves:

Next to those of his own children, the Christian master is bound by every motive of duty to provide for the spiritual interests of his slaves--to secure for them the blessing of the Church in baptism, and spiritual virtue . . . In the Primitive Church an example in this and most other respects which we would do well to imitate--the rules and regulations touching the relation of master and slave were carefully guarded and faithfully enforced. . . . In the earliest and purest ages of the Church, after the time of the Apostles, much was expected and required of the master, and a due subjection exacted of the slave. For the baptism of their children the most anxious care was evinced. Marriage among them was encouraged and solemnized by religious rites.

They were allowed no undue liberties nor suffered to occupy positions in the Church which would be insubordinate in their tendencies, and lead as had been the

³⁷Watson, Sermon delivered before the Annual Council of the Diocese of North Carolina upon the Festival of the Ascension, 13 (quote), 14 (quote), 15.

case to an alarming extent within the sphere of our own observation perhaps to unhappy results.

Such suggestions might be perceived as innovations in the master-slave relationship, but Gregg was able to appeal to the precedent of the primitive church to argue the contrary.³⁸

To the high churchmen, the primitive example demonstrated that christianizing slaves and legally recognizing slave marriages were essential to slavery, at least as God had ordained the institution. Evangelicals might agree based on considerations of expediency, but they were on shakier doctrinal ground when they did so. According to Gregg, high church tradition offered a base of authority to keep slaves subordinated even as they were admitted into the Church as Christians, and Christian principles regulated the master-slave relationship without the need for innovation in doctrine. "Properly understood," Gregg argued, the master-slave relationship corrected "the abuses to which it is incident." Because evangelical doctrine emphasized the equality of Christians within the body of Christ as opposed to the high church emphasis on church hierarchy, and because it defined slaves essentially as human beings with Christian consciences, it could not offer such protection to the master-slave relationship. The bishops of the Confederate Church perhaps alluded to this problem when they simultaneously urged that slave marriages be recognized in law and that the religious instruction of slaves in the Confederacy proceed without subjecting the slaves "to the teachings of bald spiritualism," lest the slaves "find food for their senses and their child-like fantasies in superstitious observances of their own, leading too often to crime and licentiousness."³⁹

³⁸Lay, Pastoral letter to the clergy and members of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Arkansas. By the Missionary Bishop of the Southwest, 13, 14; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas, Journal of the First Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas, held in Christ Church, Houston, June 7th, 8th, and 9th, 1863 [4549] (Houston, 1863), 14 (quote).

³⁹Gregg, "The duties growing out of it, and the benefits to be expected, from the present war." A sermon, preached in St. David's Church, Austin, on Sunday, July 7th, 1861. By the Bishop of the Diocese of Texas, 19 (quote); Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Pastoral letter from the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church to the clergy and laity of the Church in the Confederate States of America. Delivered before the General Council, in St. Paul's Church, Augusta, Saturday, Nov. 22d, 1862 [4519] (Augusta, 1862), 11 (quote).

Although evangelicals and high churchmen tried to agree in supporting the Confederacy, most points of agreements were more apparent than real. While the Confederate army was successful on the battlefield, evangelical Episcopalians sought to merge church and state behind a religious construction of Confederate nationalism that joined millennialism to the republican ideals of civic virtue. This construction may have been fragile and support for it far from unanimous among evangelicals, but it placed the Church in an entirely new relationship with the state. It assigned to the Confederacy the role of specially chosen, righteous redeemer and included a jeremiad against both the Northern governmental system and the people of the United States. As for the high churchmen, at points their rhetoric thrust the Church into the political sphere by adopting elements of the jeremiad against the people of the North and, with the exception of Thomas Atkinson, by initially accepting the separation of the Episcopal Church as a result of action initiated in the secular sphere. Yet these efforts to make high church doctrine compatible with the evangelical position reached a boundary that high churchmen could not cross: the point at which evangelicals joined the functions of church and state behind a cultural offensive.

High churchmen differed from evangelicals by attempting to sharply define the ideological boundaries of the sacred and secular spheres so as to prevent a merging of church and state functions. Unlike the evangelicals, who endorsed the Confederacy as millennial redeemer, the high churchmen adhered to the antebellum high church doctrine of the Church Catholic, which called for the spiritual sphere to be kept strictly separate from the temporal political sphere. The doctrine thus provided an ideological framework for separation of church and state which when adhered to by the high churchmen ensured a functional separation of the two spheres as well. While evangelicals such as Stephen Elliot tried to adapt the doctrine to support the millennialist program, high churchmen

such as Gregg defended the traditional belief in the Church Catholic as God's sole agent in the world. Among the writings that survive, only Gregg's joined evangelicals in strongly criticizing the Northern clergy of the Church. Yet even he demonstrated a determination to keep church and state separate, a determination lacking in the writings of the evangelical millennialists in his Church. By the mid-point of the war, high church rhetoric reflected uneasiness over the effect of separation from the Northern Church on the Church Catholic. Thus, consensus eluded the Southern Church, despite the efforts of its clergy to agree with each other, because the millennialist intention to merge church and state into the Confederate redeemer republic was inconsistent with the high church intention to keep the two spheres separate and focus on the Church alone as God's agent on earth.

To the differences over slavery and the church-state relationship can be added deeper differences between high church and evangelical beliefs. In place of the evangelical belief that divine truth could be revealed by the actions of humans, the high churchmen articulated a belief that truth is found only within the traditional bases of authority, in this case the apostolic precedents of the primitive church. In place of the millennialism of the evangelicals, the high churchmen offered the belief that God gradually realizes His purposes throughout all history. This high church conception postulated no apocalyptic battle for the realization of God's kingdom on earth such as the millennialists foresaw. It emphasized no sharp demarcation lines in the history of God's grace realized on earth. In contrast to the exceptionalism of the evangelicals, the high churchmen saw nothing exceptional about the Confederacy, although they considered its cause Godly, for it adhered to supposed universal truths such as constitutional liberty and defense against unprovoked attack.

The elements of the high church outlook reinforced each other. Evangelical exceptionalism was predicated on the postmillennialist formula, because what made the

Confederacy exceptional was its supposedly unique millennial role in initiating worldwide righteousness and hence Christ's reign on earth. If the Confederacy did not have a unique role to play, if the Confederates were no more than another people struggling against corruption both internal and external, then clergymen who ministered to the Southern people need not claim that Southerners were specially favored by God as his most righteous people. The Union might be more morally corrupt than the Confederacy. The Confederate cause might be just. But Southerners could also be less righteous than peoples of other nations. Without the apocalyptic element of evangelical postmillennialist rhetoric, which converted the Civil War into an Armageddon between a uniquely righteous Confederacy and an apostate North, high church ideas assumed no sudden end to history, or at least not one predictable by people.

Chapter 3: The Strange Case of James Warley Miles.

Two parties, evangelicals and high churchmen, dominated debate over the direction of the wartime Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States, but the Church was a more diverse body than that fact suggests. In the antebellum period, the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States encompassed liberal evangelicals, conservative high churchmen, supporters of the so-called Oxford movement (which some believed threatened to subordinate the Church to the Pope) and adherents of what would become, after the war, a liberal Broad Church Movement that bore little resemblance to anything that preceded it.¹

Thus, it is not surprising that the wartime South Carolina Episcopal rector James Warley Miles defies categorization as either a proponent of high church ideas or an evangelical. He adapted his theology to justify the Confederate cause as the leading agent of the purposes of Providence yet he was no millennialist. His sermon, God in History, makes him a unique voice within the Southern Church.

Miles delivered his sermon to the graduating class of the College of Charleston on March 29, 1863. In it, he offered a formula for history that closely resembles that of the evangelical millennialists:

But if we be true to ourselves, if we are not blind to the indications of Providence we have the glorious but awfully responsible mission of exhibiting to the world that supremest effort of humanity--the foundation of a political organization, in which the freedom of every member is the result of law, is preserved by justice, . . . and is sanctified by the divine spirit of Christianity.

To Miles, Providence offered the Confederacy the opportunity to play the lead role in history, in order to fulfill His purpose. Yet at the same time, Miles did not consider the

¹Butler, Standing Against the Whirlwind, 139, 179; Mullin, Episcopal Vision, American Reality, 190-191.

Confederacy, or for that matter even the human race, necessarily unique in its ability to fulfill that purpose: "To presume to say that, if we also fail, the hope of human liberty, of constitutional freedom, is but a despairing dream would be blasphemy against Providence, as though in its infinite armory it possessed no other instruments for realizing what it has implied in the idea of man."²

To Miles, Providence would inevitably work out its plan, with or without Confederate participation. He argued that free will made people into responsible beings capable of accepting or rejecting the role offered to them by Providence: "A great destiny is offered to our Confederacy; we may accept it, and become a glory among nations, or we may refuse it, and be made a warning to the ages to come." Although Miles's formulation contains elements of the millennialist notion that God selected people to play an instrumental role in history, it lacks the apocalyptic twist of millennialism. Becoming "a glory among nations" on earth was not equivalent to ushering in the end of history itself through the establishment of Christ's millennial reign. One could say that, while evangelical millennialists in the Southern Church felt that they had been selected by God and that they expected to conduct a dialogue of sorts with God to fulfill His will, Miles felt that the South had an opportunity to select itself by taking on a role that God had created for any people willing and able to accept it. Although evangelicals interpreted Confederate defeats as God's chastening, Miles's Providence seems not to have been so personally involved in the efforts humans made to fulfill its purpose.³

Although he articulated a jeremiad against the North, Miles's formulation in that regard also differed from that of the evangelicals. He concluded that the United States represented a failed attempt to establish "civil and religious liberty." However, his reading

²James Warley Miles, "God in history." A discourse delivered before the graduating class of the College of Charleston [4170] (Charleston, SC), 24.

³*Ibid.*, 26 (quote).

of the meaning of the French Revolution was more complex than that of the evangelicals in the Church. He concluded that "the dreadful portent of the old French Revolution was not a mere godless outbreak, the result of a false philosophy in religion, moral, and politics, however much this may have had to do in shaping its course; it was the cry and struggle, though dark and blind, yet the cry and struggle of the truest instincts of humanity, for light and relief, against the unnatural and intolerable oppression of a faithlessness, falsehood, corruption, and abuse, which contemned and mocked all that is sacred in human nature." Essentially, Miles found the germ of supreme truth within the worst form of moral corruption. As Miles argued it, the French Revolution kept the fire of truth alive so that it could be expressed more fruitfully later in the unfolding of history. Thus, his jeremiad offered a warning less adversarial than that of the evangelical millennialists, and less useful in making one people the exclusive beneficiaries of God's highest favor.⁴

On the other hand, this same reasoning did not make Miles into a high churchman. Miles said nothing about the Church as a worldwide brotherhood most favored by God. Indeed unlike either evangelicals or high churchmen, his focus was not on those favored by God but rather on Providence itself as the purpose that transcended all human interests and concerns.

Miles's explanation of the role Providence intended for the institution of slavery comes closer to the high church view than to that of the evangelicals, but may not fit completely with the ideas of either party. Although he concluded that the Confederacy's glorious mission included demonstrating to the world "the true relations of labor and capital," he apparently felt that Providence intended no other purpose for slaves. According to Miles, the Confederacy had "a great lesson to teach the world with respect

⁴Ibid., 22 (quote), 23 (quote).

to the relation of the races: that certain races are permanently inferior in their capacities to others, and that the African who is intrusted to our care can only reach the amount of civilization and development of which he is capable--can only contribute to the benefit of humanity in the position in which God has placed him among us." Miles's attitude fit with high church doctrine in the sense that he rejected urgings to offer religious instruction to slaves as a means to prepare them to develop into higher, more Christian beings capable of fulfilling a role in initiating Christ's millennial reign. But, unlike the writings of some high churchmen considered here, Miles's sermon reflects no concern about the spiritual condition of slaves or for a need to redouble efforts to preach to slaves during the war. Miles may have paid less attention to the spiritual condition of slaves than either the evangelicals or high churchmen, because he felt bound neither by apostolic precedent nor by what evangelicals represented as God's purpose revealed in the actions of humans. To Miles, Providence had a logic that was always entirely its own.⁵

Miles's ideas did not fit well with either the thought of evangelicals or with high church doctrine. He justified the Confederate cause as God's agency to bring about His larger purpose, but he did not do so in a way familiar to evangelicals. His Providence was not the personal, partisan God of the evangelicals; yet he believed God's purpose could be read in the present, outside the confines of primitive church precedent to which high church ideas restricted truth. Miles did not anticipate a millennial reign so much as a continuum, a steady unfolding of the purpose of Providence in history. Miles saw history as a series of stages, inexorable in their progress, rather than as a story ending with an apocalyptic battle fought by people against evil. Miles was unclear as to the nature of the end of history, but, in a sense, he concluded that the plan of Providence was being worked out every day. Although Miles's sermon is unique among those surviving in the

⁵Ibid., 26 (quote).

Confederate Imprints series, its presence underscores the diversity within the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States that also produced a complex interaction between evangelical and high church ideas during the Civil War.

Like the high churchmen, Miles articulated the belief that God gradually realized His purposes through history. Miles saw truth unfolding within a tradition. However he differed from the high churchmen in that his tradition was universal, encompassing all human experience and not limited to the apostolic precedent of one church. Miles envisioned an instrumental role for the Confederacy in realizing God's plan but not a role that was unique in the sense that it departed from patterns Miles saw in the past and anticipated in the future. The role the Confederacy was to play was potentially instrumental in fulfilling God's plan as it gradually unfolded, but it would not necessarily be the final act ushering in the end of history.

Conclusion

The end of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States came in 1865. Convinced that the defeat of the Confederacy by itself ended the separation between the Northern and Southern churches, the Dioceses of Arkansas, Texas, and North Carolina sent representatives to the Episcopal Church's General Convention in Philadelphia. Bishops Thomas Atkinson and Henry Lay attended, took their seats, and responded to the roll call of the House of Bishops almost as if nothing had happened. At the General Council meeting of the Confederate Church held in Augusta, Georgia on November 8, council members conceded that the results of the war had eliminated the original justification for separating from the Northern Church and resolved that Southern dioceses could withdraw from the Confederate Church and rejoin the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States if they desired. Although council leaders Stephen Elliot and C.W. Andrews introduced resolutions allowing for those who wished to remain in the Confederate Church to do so by renaming it the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Associated Dioceses in the United States, within a year all former Confederate dioceses returned to the parent Church.¹

Thus, although doctrinal differences would continue between parties within its ranks, the Protestant Episcopal Church reunified its organization quickly after the war. This was in contrast to other denominations that broke apart before the war and reunified much more slowly if at all after the conflict. One may ask the reason for the difference. What was it that led the Protestant Episcopal Church to reunify so quickly? The answer

¹Raymond W. Albright, A History of the Protestant Episcopal Church (New York and London: The Macmillan Company and Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1964), 254; James Thayer Addison, The Episcopal Church in the United States, 1789-1931 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951; reprint, Archon Books, 1969), 199; Protestant Episcopal Church in the Late Confederate States of America, Journal of the Proceedings of the Proceedings of the General Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Late Confederate States of America, Held in St. Paul's Church, Augusta, Ga., The 8th, 9th, and 10th of Nov., In the Year of our Lord, 1865 in Clebsch, Journals of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America, 12.

may be that with a well established episcopate holding strong ties to the parent Northern Church, the Confederate Church could not survive the end of the separate Southern government without a justification for independence acceptable to both evangelicals and high churchmen. Such a justification had not been developed during the war and apparently could not be developed afterward.

Although the wartime evangelical effort to claim from the North the role of virtuous, chosen people might have been used by Southern Episcopal clergy to justify an independent Southern Church after the Southern states had returned to the union, such a course would have forced the evangelicals who led the effort to separate, to stand their wartime position on its head. Instead of arguing that separation had been initiated by action of the state later justified by the church, evangelicals would have had to have argued that the Church was acting alone, basing its determination to remain separate from the Northern Church solely on moral imperatives. The Southern states were no longer separated from the North and therefore, under the evangelical reasoning, the Southern Dioceses were no longer outside the American Church. To have suddenly abandoned their original justification for separation and to have created a new one that would have persuaded high churchmen inclined to simply rejoin the parent church apparently was more than the evangelicals could accomplish. Perhaps if high churchmen had joined the evangelical exceptionalist crusade against the North during the war, moral exceptionalism could have received enough support after the war to replace political separation as a justification for a separate church. However, such support did not materialize. In this sense, high churchmen may have prevented the formation of a viable postwar Southern Church during the conflict.

Finally, perhaps separation did not last because it was begun before the political struggle had been resolved. When the American Church was first founded a true vacuum

of authority existed, because political separation had already been finalized, leaving the American churches with no bishops. The Confederate Church on the other hand, attempted to separate from the Northern Church before the end of the Civil War, with an established episcopate that was far from united in accepting the doctrinal implications of church separation initiated by actions of the state. High church dissension against acceptance of the wartime evangelical rationale for separation was not overcome perhaps in part because it was allowed to develop before the political issues on which the evangelical position depended were really settled. In this sense too, the failure of the high churchmen to accept the evangelical justification for separation may have doomed the effort during the war.

It was no coincidence that dioceses with high church bishops such as North Carolina, Texas, and Arkansas led the process of reunification by returning to the Northern Church before other Southern dioceses could even assemble in convention to approve their actions. High church conservatism expressed itself most clearly in a concern for the preservation of existing institutional frameworks. Without a clear justification for continued separation, the high churchmen could not resist reunion. Moreover, to the high church bishops the institutional unity between the Northern and Southern Dioceses of the Church had not really been destroyed. Bishop Atkinson and his colleagues must have thought that it was relatively easy to salvage that unity. However, high churchmen alone could not have reunified the American Church but for the weakness of the evangelical position. Thus the evangelical dioceses followed their high church brethren back into the parent church very soon after Thomas Atkinson took his seat in that church's House of Bishops. Given their wartime justification for separation from the Northern Church, the evangelicals simply could not resist the high church desire for church reunion in the wake of Confederate defeat.

The Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States both participated in the construction of Confederate nationalism around the concept of a millennial redeemer republic and remained stubbornly resistant to the very same effort. It demonstrated both impressive unity behind an idea and considerable diversity. Its evangelical members helped give the postwar South a lasting sense of identity based on their particular brand of American exceptionalism. Yet evangelicals and others within the Church differed on the meaning of the war. The high churchmen and James Warley Miles produced rhetoric that often strongly resembled that of the evangelicals. At points their expressions even seemed compatible with the millennialist formula. Yet apparent similarities concealed profound doctrinal and ideological differences that had developed long before the war began. These differences showed up as inconsistencies in the arguments of high churchmen such as Alexander Gregg and Alfred Watson who attempted to support the Confederacy as both a moral cause and a cause in which the Church could play only a limited role. Although the evangelicals were probably a strong majority within the Southern Church, the non-evangelicals cannot simply be dismissed. Careful study of the wartime writings of the clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederacy yields a picture that is more complex than that painted by Ronald Lee, who characterizes the clergy of the Church simply as evangelical millennialists.²

Evangelical millennialists in the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States assumed a prominent role in the creation of Confederate nationalism. Yet, despite the loyalty of high churchmen and others in the Church to the Confederacy, the evangelicals were unable to unify their Church. Despite strong support within the Church for the evangelical millennialist formula and the determined efforts of high churchmen such as Thomas Atkinson and Alexander Gregg to keep their ideas within the bounds of

²Ronald Glenn Lee, "Exploded Graces: Providence and the Confederate Israel in Evangelical Southern Sermons, 1861-1865" (M.A. thesis, Rice University, 1990).

doctrinal orthodoxy, evangelicals and high churchmen (especially the latter) demonstrated much uncertainty in attempting to find a consensus on the Southern Church's response to the war. Evangelical millennialists quickly abandoned antebellum constraints on the role of the pulpit in order to participate in the construction of Confederate nationalism, yet the war unleashed many unexpected and ultimately incomprehensible pressures forcing them finally to abandon the postmillennialist scenario. High churchmen rejected that scenario from the beginning, but had to grapple with their own uncertainty over how to support the Confederacy without merging church and state or demonizing the clergy of the Northern Church. The high churchmen looked for compromises on these issues, but the doctrinal issues involved were not really resolved and neither group appears to have been really satisfied with the result. Add to this a wartime doctrinal autonomy afforded to clergymen of the Southern Church, which provided enough leeway for the appearance of unique views such as those of James Warley Miles, and it is not surprising that the Confederate Church was unable to form a doctrinal consensus on the war. In these ways, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States was an uncertain shepherd, caught between old doctrinal precepts and new forces that its clergy could not reconcile.

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