

Dedicated to those who make my life meaningful

Drew University

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Meaning-Makers:
Protestant-American Nationalism during the Civil War

A Thesis in History

By

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Abstract:

Protestant ministers discussed the past, present, and future of the nation through their understanding of Christianity. With differing interpretations of Christianity, prominent ministers used the Civil War as a battleground for the future of the nation. While all Protestant ministers believed in a Christian nation, their different interpretations of Christianity showcased just how decentralized the religion was. This paper delves into the sermons of prominent Protestant ministers from various denominations during the Civil War. It analyzes the ways in which these ministers made meaning of abstract questions that America was struggling with at the time. Questions concerning the origin of the conflict, the institution of slavery and equality in the nation, and the presence of God in the conflict and the nation as a whole were important to the Protestant ministers as well as their congregations across the nation. These ministers used their influence in the nation to combat and delegitimize other interpretations of the Christianity and the nation, as opposed to using faith to foster understanding in such a divisive time in the nation. These ministers implement the same rhetorical tactics with their individual interpretations, denominational and regional allegiances, and experiences to shape how they discuss America. These trends have modern implications as well, where modern Protestant ministers of influence use their differing interpretations of Christianity to claim that their understanding of the nation should be the one that the nation shapes itself around. With the current President maintaining a Christian Advisory Board and Christian ministers speaking at National Conventions for presidential candidates, it is important to analyze the issue of marrying Christianity to the America and its history in the nation.

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Introduction:

At the inauguration of President Donald Trump, Reverend Robert Jeffress of the First Baptist Church in Dallas Texas was chosen to deliver a sermon along with four other pastors and one rabbi. During his sermon Jeffress delivered such lines as, “As the prophet Daniel said, it is God who removes and establishes leaders. Today — one year later — God has raised you and Vice-President-elect Pence up for a great, eternal purpose,” “God instructed Nehemiah to build a wall around Jerusalem to protect its citizens from enemy attack. You see, God is NOT against building walls,” “But the challenges facing our nation are so great that it will take more than natural ability to meet them. We need God’s supernatural power,” and “President-elect Trump, you had a campaign slogan that resonated with tens of millions of Americans because it spoke to their heartfelt desire: ‘Make America Great Again.’ Psalm 33:12 gives us the starting point for making that happen: ‘Blessed — great — is the nation whose God is the Lord.’”¹ Jeffress in each of these examples aligns then President-elect Trump with aspects of the Christian faith and comes to the conclusion that his victory was ordained by God.

Robert Jeffress is a celebrity minister, with over 25 books, a television program, a radio program, and the ability to spread his words across 195 countries in the world.² Jeffress has been outspoken on a number of issues in the United States. When discussing Islam Jeffress titled his sermon, “Islam versus Christianity,” and stated, “Islam is a false religion. If you sincerely follow the tenets of Islam, then you will end up in hell when you die. Islam does not lead people to God.

¹ "Full Text of Pastor Robert Jeffress' Sermon to Donald J. Trump," *BCNN1 - Black Christian News Network / Black Church News*, January 20, 2017 <http://blackchristiannews.com/2017/01/full-text-of-pastor-robert-jeffress-sermon-to-donald-j-trump/>.

² "About Dr. Jeffress," *Pathway to Victory*, Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://ptv.org/who-is-dr-jeffress/>.

It leads people away from the true God.”³ When responding to the Supreme Court ruling in favor of gay marriage, Jeffress had this to say, “Friday’s Supreme Court decision represents a collective shaking of our fists in God’s face saying , ‘We don’t care what You say about life’s most important relationship. We know best.’ While Friday’s decision by the Supreme Court is tragic, it is ultimately irrelevant. Regardless of what the Supreme Court justices declared Friday, the Judge of all of the universe has already issued His decision: marriage should be reserved for one man and one woman. And there is no appealing that verdict.”⁴ When discussing abortion, Jeffress again broadcasts his passionate stance. “I will tell you without hesitating that when it comes to abortion there is only one biblical position. God hates abortion. God hates the murder of children. Now, I would not presume to tell you which candidate you should vote for. But you need to know that when you vote for certain candidates you are voting for the murder of children.”⁵ Jeffress’s quotes demonstrate his interweaving of theology with his vision of the nation. He does not shy away from implicating God’s vision in the affairs of the United States and the policies that are created. Jeffress is broadcasting his vision, and the ideas of his congregation across the nation and the world, in an effort to bring the nation closer to God.

“When our words call Jews and Muslims and Christians and Sikhs and Buddhists and even people not of faith to come together to work the work of love and work the work of liberation—that’s preaching.”⁶ This quote alone from minister and political activist William

³ Robert Jeffress, "Islam Versus Christianity · First Baptist Dallas," *First Baptist Dallas*, October 19, 2017, <http://www.firstdallas.org/icampus-blog/islam-versus-christianity/>.

⁴ "Dr. Jeffress Responds to Supreme Court Ruling on Gay Marriage," *Pathway to Victory*, December 05, 2016, , <https://ptv.org/supreme-court-gay-marriage/>.

⁵ Robert Jeffress, "Choosing to Murder Children · First Baptist Dallas," *First Baptist Dallas*, September 07, 2016, <http://www.firstdallas.org/devotional/choosing-to-murder-children>.

⁶ Jon Queally, "Preaching Is More Than Words': Rev. William J. Barber II Delivers Soaring Sermon in Honor of Martin Luther King Jr.," *Common Dreams*, January 21, 2019, <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2019/01/21/preaching-more-words-rev-william-j-barber-ii-delivers-soaring-sermon-honor-martin>.

Barber II, a Drew University alum and recent recipient of the MacArthur Genius Award demonstrates a different understanding of the connection between faith and differing ideologies. Whereas Jeffress would condemn those that practice different teachings than what he feels is right and just, Barber is advocating for people regardless of differences to come together. Both of these men are Protestant ministers, and both are also political activists in their own right, as Barber is a member of the NAACP and the founder of non-profit organization Repairers of the Breach and Jeffress is a member of President Trump's Evangelical Advisory Board.⁷ These ministers use their interpretations of their faith to shape their understanding of the nation and its future. Both ministers have the power to reach a wide audience as these men have appeared on television interviews, broadcasted their sermons, and spoke with politicians. Jeffress and Barber are two sides of the same coin that is Protestant Christian activism in the nation.

This pattern of religious leaders demonstrating their political advocacy through their theological teachings has been commonplace throughout American history. Even at the conception of the nation, Protestant ministers were of the belief that America was destined to be the true Christian nation. "From the beginning American Protestants entertained a lively hope that some day the civilization of the country would be fully Christian. The ways in which the hope was expressed varied somewhat from generation to generation, but for more than three centuries Protestants drew direction and inspiration from the vision of a Christian America."⁸

⁷"TRUMP CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCES EVANGELICAL EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD," *Donald J Trump for President*, June 21, 2016, <https://web.archive.org/web/20170118140319/https://www.donaldjtrump.com/press-releases/trump-campaign-announces-evangelical-executive-advisory-board>.

⁸ This quote from Robert T. Handy's *A Christian America* identifies one of the driving forces behind Protestant ministers throughout American history. Historians have praised Handy's work for its ability to discuss the continuity of Protestantism in America, which is why it will be used as a reference throughout this work.

Robert T. Handy, *A Christian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971). Pg. ix-x

Protestant ministers led their congregations with this understanding in mind. With the addition of more and more denominations in the Protestant faith, there become more and more visions of what a Christian America is. In the instance of our two ministers presented above, Jeffress's Christian America calls for all its inhabitants to practice the "true" faith of Christianity, while Barber's vision of a Christian America allows for differing beliefs to coexist in one nation. These visions of America are just two examples of the differing paths that Protestant ministers see our nation taking, and in America's history there is a pattern of these various perceptions of the nation.

One of the most significant periods in American history where we can observe the practice of fusing religious and political advocacy and the clash of multiple visions of America is the Civil War. The Civil War was the culmination of conflicting views on the course of the nation that resulted in an open rebellion and the attempt to create two different Americas. Historian Mark Noll outlines the significance of religion in the Civil War in his work, *Civil War as a Theological Crisis*, "As a group, however, it was a different story, for the trumpets blown so forth-rightly were producing cacophony. On no subject was the cacophony more obvious, and more painful, than on the question of the Bible and slavery. On no subject did the cacophony touch such agonizing depths as on the question of God's providential designs for the United States of America."⁹ Protestant ministers, each with their own understanding of their denomination, the Bible, and the nation as a whole, all professed what they felt should be the destiny of their country. With the secession of the Confederacy, ministers were required to make meaning out of the chaos that was ensuing across the nation. Their congregations came to them in need of guidance, as what the nation was accustomed to for nearly 100 years was now

⁹ Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015). Pg. 11

breaking apart. And ministers decided to make meaning in the only way they knew, through their varied understandings of their own faith, their regional/political allegiances, and their differing understandings of the nation.

This thesis serves to analyze this crucial point in American history. American Protestant ministers used their religious interpretations to comfort their congregations and advocate for their own vision of the future of America through their sermons. More and more historians are analyzing the significance of ministers on the discourse of the Civil War, and this thesis is building on that conversation with a closer examination of some of the elite white male Protestant ministers during the American Civil War. Religious leaders were centerpieces in their communities. These men obtained a similar celebrity status as the ministers presented earlier. In a time where not all ministers were able to publish their sermons, those that could signify that they had an audience outside of their own congregation, and had the status to be able to have access to means of mass production. American history has a connection to the Protestant faith, which further builds up the status of these Protestant ministers.

First is the fact that religion was then much more important than any other center of value at work in the country; second is the fact that American religion was still mostly Protestant. On the first point, churches, church attenders, and religious societies were not, proportionately considered, all that much more numerous or widespread than they are now. But almost all other institutions and agencies of culture with which we are now familiar were much smaller than they have become. Richard Carwardine put the matter well in his study of religion and politics before the Civil War when he concluded that during the mid-1850s ‘over 10 million Americans, or about 40 percent of the total population, appear at that time to have been in close sympathy with evangelical Christianity.’ This was the largest, and most formidable, subculture in American society.¹⁰

¹⁰ Ibid. Pg 19.

With many Americans practicing their faith, but some rural areas not having access to churches in their communities, they would have to rely on the sermons published and distributed by newspapers and through the mail. Protestant ministers were held to a high regard in American society, with white male ministers garnering the ability to proliferate their understandings across the nation due to the spread of white supremacy throughout the nation.

Because the church was so connected to the lives of many American citizens throughout the 19th century, reading and interpreting sermons is an effective avenue to gain a sense of the understanding, or lack thereof, of the American people during such a divisive conflict. David Chesebrough's article "The Civil War and the Use of Sermons as Historical Documents" explains the validity of sermons. "As reflectors of culture and current thought, the preachers of sermons throughout American history have become popular by mirroring the opinions, hopes, fears, prejudices, likes and dislikes of a significant number of people."¹¹ This quote reveals much of the importance of sermons and their purpose in American society. Sermons represent the notions of the congregation, reflecting their understanding of the world around them. Sermons are in part the understanding of the minister but they are also written to appeal to their audience and their sentiments. Those who deliver sermons are directly building onto the culture of the era, while also echoing the sentiments of the pre-established culture.

Ministers used their sermons to advocate for what they saw as necessary for the improvement of the human race. This can be in reference to good morals but can also reach into the political climate and national debates. "Many sermons from this era are highly political, deeply

¹¹ David B. Chesebrough, "The Civil War and the Use of Sermons as Historical Documents." *OAH Magazine of History* 8, no. 1 (1993): 26-29. Accessed April 25, 2019. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25162922>.

passionate about various social issues, and examples of powerful and beautiful rhetoric.”¹² Chesebrough’s points on the relevance of Civil War sermons can be amplified by the deeper understanding of the themes surrounding the sermon and its creation. These ministers were attempting to make meaning of the issues of the nation and providing their own remedies for them. However, these answers reveal different understandings of ubiquitous material and events in American history. Chesebrough puts it best when he writes, “Preachers on both sides of the Mason Dixon Line were instrumental in fanning the fires of sectionalism which divided the nation.”¹³ It could be assumed that these religious ministers were working under similar understandings based on their shared faith, however, that was not the case during the Civil War as in the modern day. Protestant ministers were susceptible to, and enveloped themselves in the sectionalism of the nation across religious and political lines. This is because politics and religion were married to one another in American society to these ministers that it would be impossible to separate one from the other. This is what makes the study and analysis of their published sermons that much more valuable. They were speaking from a place of elite white male privilege to more Americans than those who were unable to publish their works, and they were practicing the same divisive tactics in the name of Christian advocacy.

There are issues in studying sermons, however. Because these sermons were performed, there is no way of knowing the emotions behind the words as they were given without independent reporting on its delivery. The same issue can be said for the audience and their reception of the sermon. For some of the sermons selected we are able to know the audience in the congregation, but we have no way of analyzing the impact of these sermons on their audience. There is also the importance of taking the time to analyze the language of the Civil War sermons. Understanding

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

that these sermons were at times two-hour affairs, a sermon can be a difficult mountain to climb. But if one takes the time to sift through the sermons, they are able to see a dense work of passionate rhetoric that is indicative of the beliefs and understandings that we can perceive from the era.

This thesis is constructed to take on the task of navigating Civil War sermons in an effort to interpret Protestant understandings of the war, as well as the ways in which these Protestant explanations represent their varied interpretations of America's past and its future. The sermons selected for this paper are from white, male, Protestant preachers of various denominations in the Union and the Confederate States of America. A majority of Protestant ministers in America were white men, as was a majority of their congregations. While it would be intriguing to work with sermons of various ethnicities and religions, for the purpose of narrowing our scope, we will be working with white male Protestants. These white male Protestants represent the elite ministers who were able to garner the status worthy of publishing their sermons for more Americans to experience. Protestant ministers held significance in their communities, but these white men had the status and the ability to impact the nation.

The difference in denomination however is valuable given the trends of Protestantism in America. For instance, both the Baptist and the Methodist denominations in America split before the Civil War due to the subject of slavery. These and other denominations have specific differences that influence their sermons, while also showcasing the divisions in their understanding of the nation within their own denominations. It is important to recognize these differences and address the impact they have on our sources in order to provide valuable context on the document. Handy notes the desire of Protestants to create a Christian America when he writes, "Protestant leaders from many denominations operated on the assumption that American civilization would remain a Christian one, and that its Christian (which for them always meant Protestant) character

would become even more pronounced.that true religion was the prior and more basic concern, an essential ingredient in a sound civilization.”¹⁴ Their understanding of the nation as deserving of God’s chosen kingdom embeds the Christian faith with the foundation of America. There were a number of Great Awakenings in American history where we see a surge in conversions to Christianity, with the Third Great Awakening occurring in the mid 1800’s. The Third Great Awakening is categorized by an increase in social activism by Christian leaders that led to others gravitate towards the faith. These Protestant ministers aided in founding the nation on Christian morals, and in the midst of a schism in the nation, these ministers had to answer difficult questions about God’s presence in the nation and what was to be done to save His chosen people. This task becomes much more difficult when there are other ministers of a similar status advocating for different versions of the nation.

The goal of this thesis is to uncover and analyze the discourse of these ministers on essential questions of the American Civil War. This paper is designed to address how Protestant ministers provided their guidance and opinions on larger debates in America during this trying time. These ministers were attempting to provide answers to their congregation while furthering their own theological endeavours of creating a Christian America. However, as we will see, one of the effects of the Civil War was the creation of at least two distinct visions of “Christian Americas” split along political interests. The creation of these two Christian Americas mirrored the national conflict, and demonstrate the issues created by connecting religion to a national civil conflict. Due to regional/political allegiances, denominational schisms, white supremacy, and differing interpretations of the Bible, Protestant ministers advocated for conflicting notions of America’s history, its current conflict, and what its future should be.

¹⁴ Handy, Pg 27.

The first chapter will analyze how sermons discussed the cause of the conflict. Our modern understanding is that the decision to secede was made over either the institution of slavery or the impediment of the federal government on the rights of the states. These ideas did not form in a vacuum, and so it is necessary to look into these sermons and note whether they bring up these arguments or if they make claims to other causes not discussed by historians. It is important to note if these sermons do not make any mention of cause of the conflict. This is all to say that the way these ministers approached the topic of the origins of the war has direct impact on how the accepted history of the war was shaped.

The second chapter will discuss the issue of slavery in America and the decision of the preachers to include commentary on slavery and equality, or their decision to fully neglect the topic. We know now that slavery has a place in the narrative of the conflict, so the decision to address the question of slavery in these sermons will be an important decision for these Protestant leaders to make in their sermons. To not speak on a subject is still forming a stance, and with the growing sentiment of abolitionism that spread throughout the country, the discussion on slavery became more divisive, more heated, and more Americans would then look towards their ministers to provide some guidance. However, as we will see, these ministers built upon the divisive nature of the argument and its vitriol. Morality was often brought up when discussing the institution of slavery, and because these ministers would provide guidance on how to be morally righteous in the eyes of God, Americans would rely on the words of their local reverends for how to respond to these arguments. Again, two distinct ideas of Christian morality grew out of the discourse on slavery in America. And with the shift in the aims of the war to abolitionism, a discourse on how to lead a moral Christian life could not avoid slavery.

The third chapter will refer to notions of God and God's presence in the conflict. Where the first chapter will focus on the conflict from a secular perspective, this chapter will focus on how these sermons use theological ideas to advocate for their political and social beliefs. An example of this would be the connection between the Protestant faith and patriotism. This is important to cite when considering America's disagreements on the separation between church and state. Protestant ministers desired to create a Christian America, and they sought out this goal through the means of converting Americans to the faith. It is understandable for these ministers to include God in every aspect of American life because their desire was to have God realized in the everyday lives of Americans. However, there has never been one definitive version of Christianity for the nation to cling to, but many ministers across the nation advocating for their interpretation as the true Christianity. "Clashes over the meaning of the Bible on Slavery were matched during the era of the Civil War by an equally striking division in what the nation's most widely recognized religious thinkers concluded about the workings of divine providence. Confident pronouncements about what God was 'doing' in and through the war arose in profusion from all points on the theological compass."¹⁵ This quote from Noll underscores the importance of studying these ministers and their discussion on slavery. These ministers found great difficulty in discussing slavery as well as how to discuss God's place in the war as a whole. The ways in which these ministers discussed God varied, and this lack of consensus caused their congregations further misunderstandings on ideas like God's presence in the nation.

The sermons analyzed here have been selected from the months of April to August of 1863 from the Harvard Divinity School Andover-Harvard Theological Library and University of North Carolina Chapel Hill's *Documenting the American South* collections. The intention behind these

¹⁵ Noll, Pg. 14

months in that year is that it begins with the two year anniversary of the attack on Fort Sumter and spans until one month after the battle at Gettysburg. These months represent an important time of reflection for the nation, where many of them believed that the conflict would be over much sooner than reality, and with much less bloodshed. The battle of Gettysburg acts as a midpoint to compare the discussion of the aforementioned topics before and after the event. Because of the significance of Gettysburg as the first battle on Union territory, and the Union victory leading to the beginning of the end of the Confederate front, it is interesting to analyze the commentary by the sermons on these events and their effect on the war as well as their larger efforts of creating a Christian America. These ministers are in the midst of deciphering the course of the nation, and their ideas conflict with one another in such a way to reveal how divisive these interpretations of events are, and how divided the Protestant community is.

According to a 2018 poll from Rasmussen Reports, 37% of Democrats and 32% of Republicans are afraid of another Civil War.¹⁶ Additionally, 59% of all voters fear that violence will erupt over the policies of our current president's administration.¹⁷ The American people have questions about their history and their present situation. During times of great divide we must look towards the past to mine information that can help to answer our questions. What will be revealed from analyzing the past is a continuation of similar differing notions of the nation that have been reinforced throughout generations. Modern politically active ministers behave in such a way that is emblematic of the ministers that will be studied here. The desire here is not to discredit belief in a higher power or demean the great work that preachers have done in their shaping of moral guidelines for the nation to follow as well as delivering important information to large amounts of

¹⁶ "31% Think U.S. Civil War Likely Soon," *Rasmussen Reports*, June 27, 2018, , http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/general_politics/june_2018/31_think_u_s_civil_war_likely_soon.

¹⁷ Ibid.

people. However, Handy puts it best when he writes, “The Protestant dream of Christian civilization and the actions which stemmed from it must be taken seriously in an attempt to fully understand the American experience.”¹⁸ Ministers in America operate with the goal of religious and political advocacy, but the internal divides of Christianity then become outward divisions in the nation as a whole in regards to national discourse and understanding our past, present, and future.

¹⁸ Handy, Pg. x-xi

Chapter 1: The Cause of the War and Divine Judgment

“In such dire circumstances, Americans looked to their preachers for instruction from God.”¹⁹

_____ One of the largest areas of disagreement in regard to the Civil War is just how the conflict began in the first place. In other American conflicts it is much easier to note the beginning of U.S involvement; from events like the sinking of the USS Lusitania to the attack on Pearl Harbor that begged the United States to respond with equal force, to addresses like the Monroe and Truman Doctrines that shaped the nation’s diplomatic presence and influenced their decisions in policing the world. However, with an internal conflict, it is a more complicated discussion. With a civil war, there are a multitude of viewpoints and arguments, and in the case of the American Civil War, two fields of thought have grown in popularity as the reasoning behind the conflict. One interpretation of events argues that slavery was the argument that caused the nation to split, while the other prominent interpretation argues that the rift in the nation was due to the federal government’s increasing influence on state autonomy.

It is important understand where these interpretations originated, as well as how they have been disseminated throughout the nation, and by who. Preliminary research on the subject will reveal interesting statistics based on Google Books’ Ngram , which displays the frequency of specified terms over a period of time. When inputting the terms “Slavery,” “State’s Rights,”

¹⁹ Noll, Pg 11.

and, “sermon,” we find striking data. In the decades 1810-2000 there are a total of 8,928 hits for State’s Rights.²⁰ The decades of the highest occurrences of the term were the 2000s with 1,139 hits and 1960 with 1,040 hits.²¹ This is in comparison to the number of hits during the decades of 1840-1870 which have a collective total of 98 hits.²² Comparatively, searching “Slavery” with case sensitivity referring to the proper noun, which refers to the institution as a whole, we observe a striking difference. In the year 1860 alone the term “Slavery” appeared in different literary works 47,754 times.²³ Even in the decades preceding the Civil War we can see a similar trend where the total instances of the term in 1840 and 1850 equaled 40,433.²⁴ What this means is that throughout published works in America there was more of a discussion on slavery than on State’s Rights in the years leading up to the Civil War, as well as during and after. It was not until the 1960s that discussions of State’s Rights became more prevalent in America. This of course lines up with opposition to the Civil Rights movement, where some states argued it was their right to keep schools and public places segregated.

And while this data does not cover what context these terms were discussed, it is clear to see the general discourse on slavery was much more prevalent in the decades leading up to and during the Civil War than any discussion on State’s Rights. And yet, there is another term that appeared even more than both slavery and State’s Rights combined throughout this period; “sermons.” In the decades of 1840 through 1860 sermons appeared 184,399 times.²⁵ this data shows the general attention of the writers in America, wherein many published works are either

²⁰ The study collected is not case sensitive. Mark Davies, Google Books (American English) Corpus (155 billion words, 1810-2009).

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

of sermons or discussing sermons in some capacity throughout the nation. The attention to sermons throughout this time period demonstrates how these elite religious leaders proliferated their sermons throughout the nation. These sermons were often printed in newspapers along with some sermons being printed as pamphlets and given out during service. This also means that these sermons held significance in the lives of Americans during this time. “The assertions of Protestant leaders were generally accepted in the larger society, in theory if not consistently in practice!”²⁶ This quote by Handy reflects the ideas of Francis J. Grund, an Austrian journalist observing American Christianity before the Civil War, which also appear in Handy’s work, “The religious habits of the Americans form not only the basis of their private and public morals, but have become so thoroughly interwoven with their whole course of legislation, that it would be impossible to change them, without affecting the very essence of their government....”²⁷

With this quote in mind, we should begin to formulate questions to clue into the understandings of these ministers. How did Protestant leaders approach the division of the nation? Of course it is impossible to know with certainty their intentions, but from their writings we can understand more of what they felt was the correct answer. Many of these elite Protestant ministers at the time were graduates of theological colleges and were often aware of the trends of the nation through communications with political figures, newspapers, and one another. In fact, Protestant ministers were often persons of influence in their smaller communities with a responsibility to lead their congregation, and so it is of the utmost importance to analyze how they discuss this topic. While it may seem at the time that more people were discussing slavery than State’s Rights, with these sermons we are able to see how prominent religious leaders interpret the events and how they discuss their beliefs to their congregations. This will allow us

²⁶ Handy Pg. 32

²⁷ Ibid. Pg. 32

to gain a better understanding of the different interpretations of the beginning of the Civil War, and how it relates to their various notions of the nation as a whole. It is important to note that these sermons from 1863 are a collection chosen based on the idea that these ministers had, by that date, considerable time to reflect on the beginnings of the conflict, and that their reflection may yield more informed answers unaffected by the proximity to the early conflicts of the war. If we analyzed sermons from the beginning of the conflict, there may be more sensationalized reports of the conflict. Remember that most Americans believed the conflict would be over quickly and that this rebellion was not a war at all. However, the two year anniversary of the attack on Fort Sumter appears to be a valuable time to clue into the minds of these Protestant leaders and analyze their notions for where the nation had come, and where it was to go. As the war continued, Americans began to realize that the conflict was not going to end as soon as they predicted, and going through the constant fighting and bloodshed caused Americans to begin questioning just how long the conflict would last.

This brings us to our first minister and his discussion on the events of the war. Reverend James Freeman Clarke was a Unitarian minister born in 1810 in New Hampshire and was a graduate of Boston Latin School, Harvard, and Harvard Divinity School. After preaching in Kentucky he began to advocate for the abolitionist movement in America. This led him back to Boston where he became a member of the Unitarian Church. Clarke was an advocate for equality for both African Americans and women, and even attempted to start a utopian community, though the land was later donated to Abraham Lincoln and became the site for Fort Andrew.²⁸ It is clear from Clarke's history that he was not one to shy away from the social conflicts of the time, though his decision to return to Massachusetts to preach as opposed to staying in Kentucky,

²⁸ Robert D. Emerson-Richardson, Jr "The Mind on Fire." *Berkeley & Los Angeles, CA: The University of California Press*, 1995 p.175

a prominent slave state, could be representative of his desire to be with those more likely to align with his moral ideology.

His sermon, “Discourse on Aspects of the War,” preached in Indiana Place Chapel in Boston on April 2nd, represents his mindset on both the nation and its civil conflict. His first line sets the stage for the weight of the conflict. “We live in a great historic period.”²⁹ He continues to explain that the conflict is a “crisis of consecrated life,” which places the war into a religious frame in stating that it is a crisis to sacred land of America and that all humans are just small parts of a larger history.³⁰ This places the Civil War in a historical context, both within the history of the nation as well as the history of a Christian world, where schisms have separated bonds of unity and caused dramatic shifts in beliefs and practices. Other examples of these schisms in religious history are the creation of the Eastern Orthodoxy and Martin Luther’s 95 theses. Clarke’s decision to place the conflict in the context of history likewise supports his own words as he is able to recognize this broader picture. This comes into play when he explains, “One of the most striking aspects of the war is that it comes as a Judgement, and is full of God’s judgements.”³¹ Clarke does a number of things here that are beneficial to keep in mind when analyzing the later arguments presented in his sermon. By asserting that the war is a judgment of God, he thus supports the idea that Americans are at fault and war is a form of punishment for disobeying God. Which then begs the question: What exactly is God unleashing his judgment upon? Clarke puts it best himself when he states, “Judgements make the necessary connections between sin and its consequences; long deferred, perhaps, but sure to come at last, and when they

²⁹ James Freeman Clarke "Discourse on the Aspects of the War Delivered in the Indiana-Place Chapel, Boston, on Fast Day, April 2, 1863." *Boston: Walker, Wise, 1863 (Boston: Prentiss & Deland). Hathitrust*. Pg. 3

³⁰ Ibid. Pg.4

³¹ Ibid. Pg.12

come, involving often the innocent with the guilty, visiting the sins of the parents upon the children, to the third and fourth generation.”³² The later part of this quote is a reference to the book of Exodus, Chapter 20 verses 5-6, which refers to God spreading his love for generations so long as they love Him follow His commandments. Again we see Clarke placing the conflict in chronological timeline, and the war represents the final result of years of grappling with a sinful practice. Clarke is also supporting the notion that even those who may be innocent are implicated in the sins of the guilty. This is meant to explain that the sins of those who are unfaithful corrupt not only themselves, but have lasting consequences on their community as well as for future generations. In the case of the Civil War, the effects of the conflict can be seen in the polls studied earlier, as well as in the national memory of the war, which varies depending on factors like location, family, race, etc. Clarke’s notion that sin impacts the core of the nation could alienate those who feel that they are morally superior to others in a congregation, while also giving the congregation a chance to reflect on if they are following the word of God to the fullest, or if they have some guilt in allowing the conflict to unfold.

And while it might seem obvious what sin Clarke may be referring to, he does not state his case until later on. “The mistake our great men made was to think that it would be easier to crush a conviction than abolish an institution. That was a mistake; and I attribute the present war to the men who made that mistake, who thought that they could more easily destroy an idea in the soul of a man, than abolish the institution of slavery.”³³ Based on this quote, God is enacting his judgment on slavery in America. Clark does include in his argument that the war itself would not have started without the efforts of anti-slavery supporters. However, he explains that the war is inevitable, and the efforts of abolitionists were inspired by God to challenge the system that

³² Ibid. Pg.12

³³Ibid. Pg. 18

could not, or should not, exist in America. Clarke also uses this sermon to comfort his congregation in knowing that, “Best of all, whatever else comes, emancipation has come. Whether the slaves are free or not, we ourselves are free. No longer is Slavery legal; no longer are we bound to maintain it. That disgrace has passed away forever.”³⁴ Clarke’s sermon discusses the war in a way that addresses many of the issues of the time through his own perceptions of them, answering larger questions in a way that comforts his congregation and convinces them that they are on the right side of history and morality.

In this first sermon we can observe several trends that will reappear in several other discussions of the war and its origins, one of which is the codification of the war in a historical context and the understanding that the war is the breaking point of growing tensions between the Northern and Southern states. slavery was seen as a sin in the eyes of God, and God is now using the Civil War as a Divine judgment to force those who are at fault to cease their efforts and repent for their sins. Clarke believed that the war was inevitable, because things could not exist as they were, which is a notion other elite Protestant ministers shared. To these religious leaders, the war had both a socio-historical context, and a religious context, and both shaped the way that these ministers approached their own discourse on the war. And while this argument seems to point to slavery, and therefore making the argument one supported by the Union alone, there is a general acceptance of the war as inevitable and the tipping point of a long standing argument about the direction of the nation.

For a southern perspective, we can look towards Alfred Augustin Watson and his “Sermon Before the Diocese of North Carolina.” Watson was born in New York in 1818 to Presbyterian parents. He studied law at New York University and later found himself drawn

³⁴ Ibid. Pg.36

toward ordination in the Episcopalian church and preaching in plantation households in North Carolina. During the beginning of the war Watson was the “chaplain to the Second Regiment of Infantry, North Carolina State Troops, while continuing as rector of Christ Church.”³⁵ Watson later became the assistant rector at St. James Church in 1863. Watson refused to offer prayers for the President of the United States in 1864. This shows Watson was connected to the state of his choosing, more than of his home state or the nation as a whole. Here we have a Northern minister who felt a desire to preach in the South and became acclimated to the sense of life there, which is evident in his decision to be a chaplain for a unit of the army. Similar to Clarke, Watson was not afraid to demonstrate his feelings on the war.

Watson’s sermon addressed to the Diocese of North Carolina allows us to gain some preliminary understanding of him and his understanding of the war.

The national contest in which we are involved, is in great part a religious war; and that, both as to its origin, and as respects the persons who are our principal enemies. We need not deny, that other and great political causes have been at work. The vast extent of our territory, and the conflict of interests, commercial, manufacturing and agricultural, thereby resulting, had doubtless done much to unsettle us. But fanaticism--religious fanaticism--was the lever. Abolitionism was the LEVER used by those who drove us into the conflict. And abolitionism found--certainly at the first--no fulcrum in the Episcopal Church, either North or South.³⁶

For Watson the war was a religious and a political conflict. Not only that, but he explains that the catalyst for this war was the actions of abolitionists. To Watson, the very idea of abolishing slavery and the pursuit of this end is contrary to the fabric of the nation, as slavery has been

³⁵ Lawrence F. Brewster, "Watson, Alfred Augustin," *NCpedia*, Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/watson-alfred-augustin>.

³⁶ Alfred Augustin Watson, "Sermon Delivered Before the Annual Council of the Diocese of North Carolina, Upon the Festival of the Ascension, May 14, 1863:," *Documenting the American South*, Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/watson/watson.html>.

embedded in the Southern economy. He explains that this idea corrupted those who now believe in it, and that they were the ones to drive the wedge through America. However, Watson does something very significant in this excerpt: he claims that Episcopal church leaders were not susceptible to fanaticism of any kind until the abolitionist movement corrupted Northern Episcopal ministers. This can be seen as an attempt to reach across the territory line and connect with their current enemies in the North, but it performs this task and something more sinister. “True, her congregations and her Clergy at the North have yielded to the pressure, and have sided with our enemies, to a degree mortifying to us.”³⁷ By claiming that this idea spread from some other area than the Episcopal church, it leaves a mysterious unknown enemy in its place. In addition, Watson establishes a moral and religious superiority in claiming that the Northern dioceses were corrupted by the ideas of abolition and fanaticism.

One of the significant conclusions from Watson’s sermon is that his claim for the beginning of the war is also rooted in the nation’s relationship with slavery. As opposed to the common conception that Southerners would argue that the war was the result of a State’s Rights issue, here we see a prominent minister in the Episcopal diocese in one of the strongest states of the Confederacy explaining that advocating for the abolition of slavery is at fault for the coming of the war. This is striking when considering the other arguments presented by these religious leaders that seem to fit neither category of slavery nor state’s rights, at least not at a first glance. However, we must also remember that Watson was not a native to the South, and so his feelings on the susceptibility of the Northern dioceses signified his allegiance to his southern congregation. This also suggests that his notions on the war were from a blended perspective, and may not be aligned with the ideas of other Southern Episcopal ministers.

³⁷Ibid.

A Baptist perspective on the war can be found in William Lamson's "God Hiding Himself in Times of Trouble," preached on April 2nd, 1863, in Brookline Massachusetts at the First Baptist Church. There is not much on record about Lamson's life, except for a memorial novel titled *William Lamson: A Memorial Volume*. This volume details his time preaching at four churches throughout the U.S, including his 16 years at Brookline.³⁸ When discussing his sermons the author writes,

His sermons were uniformly good, full of gospel truth, and delivered with an earnestness and directness which carried conviction to the hearer that the preacher fully believed the truths which he commended to others. They were perfectly clear and transparent, no involved sentences, no hidden meaning, but every word good strong English chosen not because it sounded well, but because it expressed just what he wished to say. There was no possibility of mistaking his meaning.³⁹

The author of this work is William's son, also named William, and so the praise for his father's clarity should be approached with that context. Though William Sr.'s work in the Baptist Church was beneficial, as his time preaching lead to over 150 new conversions into the faith throughout his 16 years, at least according to his son.⁴⁰

Now that we have a cursory understanding of William Lamson, we can begin to analyze this work. In the beginning of his sermon he explains the course of thinking for the Union front where he says, "We felt at the beginning of the strife that we manifest rightly. We felt this because it was the cause of government against rebellion -- law against anarchy."⁴¹ This quote signifies the clarity of Lamson in his opinions on the first battle of the war, the attack of Fort

³⁸ William Lamson, Eliza Wonson Giles. Lamson, and Oakman S. Stearns, "William Lamson: A Memorial Volume" *Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1884*. Pg. 267

³⁹ Ibid. Pg. 268

⁴⁰ Ibid. Pg. 268

⁴¹ William Lamson, "God Hiding Himself in Times of Trouble: A Sermon Preached on the Day of the State Fast, April 2, 1863, in the Baptist Church, Brookline, Mass." *Harvard Mirador Viewer*. Accessed April 25, 2019. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:46312841\\$5i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:46312841$5i). Pg. 3

Sumter by the Confederacy. Lamson explains that because of this moment the war to the North was one of self defense and preservation. This introduces another major justification for the war, but fails to define what led the Confederacy to attack in the first place.

To this end, Lamson provides a case found in the election of Abraham Lincoln. “We had gone into an election of a President of the United States, and one was chosen, after a fair and honorable struggle, in sympathy with Northern, rather than Southern sentiment. The election could not be complained of as fraudulent, or unconstitutional.”⁴² By presenting this argument, listeners, as well as readers, are called to answer to consider what these sentiments may refer to. However, Lamson provides that answer immediately after explaining this by including a quote from President Lincoln’s inaugural address. “The election of a man to the high office of President of the United States, whose opinions and purposes are hostile to slavery.”⁴³ This presents his argument in its intended light. The vitriolic response to the election was due to the fact that President Lincoln ran under the notion that he would abolish slavery.

This pattern of discussing issues that are connected to the negative effects of slavery did not stop there. For while the sources discussed so far were written and delivered in April and May of 1863, looking further along will reveal similar strategies utilized by these Protestant leaders in their sermons. In Richard Newton’s “God’s Marvellous Doing for the Nation,” preached on August 6th for the people of Philadelphia, we observe these same strategies, with notable additions. Richard Newton was a minister at the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany where he was the rector from 1862 until 1881. While Newton was the leader of the Church of the Epiphany the congregation grew more than it ever had in its history. Newton delivered his sermons during services as well as during Sunday School and even had his sermons printed in

⁴² Ibid Pg.4

⁴³ Ibid. Pg.4

other languages so that God's message could reach more people. Another interesting aspect of Newton is found in his reaction to the split between the Northern and Southern Episcopalians in America. Along with other Northern ministers, Newton chose not to recognize the split, so that the denomination's reunification could be done more smoothly.⁴⁴ This is significant as it showcases his sympathy and understanding with his Southern denominational brothers. While he may not have agreed with their decision to split, he still respected them enough to mark them absent from convention meetings and kept their space open for them to return.

Newton makes his strongest claim asserting his opinion on the start of the war when he says, "The war now waging by our Government, is not a war for the triumph of party, nor for the success of a particular set of measures. *It is not a war for the abolition of slavery.* The overthrow of this institution may be one of the results that will follow from the final success of the Government."⁴⁵ There is a lot to decipher from this statement, but before that, it is important to discover just what Newton feels the war is for. "It [the war] is intending for the high and holy principle of self-preservation. It is struggling for the maintenance of law, of order, and of constitutional authority."⁴⁶ So here we see one of the main arguments for the war itself from one Northern Episcopalians perspective. The war was not fought to end slavery, though as Newton stated, abolition would become a final result of the war. The reason behind the constant fighting was to preserve the Union and prevent the Confederacy from establishing its own independent

⁴⁴ Francis Wells, "Fifty Years: A Historic Sketch of The Church of the Epiphany 1834-1884".

⁴⁵ Quote includes his own italics. Richard Newton, "God's Marvellous Doing for the Nation : A Sermon Preached on the Day Appointed by the President for National Thanksgiving and Prayer in the Church of the Epiphany, Philadelphia." *The Literature of Demonology and Witchcraft by Edward Peters Cornell University Library Witchcraft Collection*. Accessed April 25, 2019. <http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=mayantislaavery&cc=mayantislaavery&idno=42925511&node=42925511:1&view=image&seq=8&size=100>. Pg. 8

⁴⁶ Ibid. Pg. 9

nation. This is not a new understanding of the conflict, though it can help to explain how misconceptions of the war could form.

Throughout our research to determine how ministers approached the beginning of the war, there appears to be two distinct questions addressed. One is the question, “Why was the Civil War fought?” and the other question being, “Why did the South decide to secede from the Union?” These two questions have the potential to yield different answers, and indeed they should, though the distinction is necessary. The United States Army decided to defend themselves against the Confederacy not because they wanted to abolish slavery, but because they wanted to quell the rebellion and gain control of their states. In this light, the war was not fought over slavery, at least not until Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. However, the formation of the Confederacy has its roots planted in their stance on slavery. So while the Civil War may have been fought to preserve the Union, the decision for the Southern states to secede from the Union was due to the desire to preserve the institution of slavery.

Of course this can be simplified to explain that the Civil War was fought over slavery, because if not for slavery the southern states would have never seceded, and there is legitimacy to the claim. The Union could have let the rebelling states leave the Union and create their own government with their own policies. Policies that, according to Alexander Stephens, one of the strongest proponents for and later the Vice President of the Confederacy, rely on the idea of slavery and white supremacy. “Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its corner- stone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that Slavery subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this

great physical, philosophical, and moral truth.”⁴⁷ This quote from the infamous “Cornerstone Speech” defines the goals of the Confederacy in its decision to separate from the Union. The decision did not stem from a conflict of state’s rights alone, nor did it come about due to an unfair election or abuse by the Northern states. This document proves that the Confederacy was founded with slavery alone in mind, and the Civil War was to preserve the Union and abolish slavery in America. That is not to say that the North never experienced the benefits of slave labor, nor that the nation did not profit off the use of slave labor in the South. The North used their resources to industrialize while the South continued with their agriculture. And when the abolitionist movement caught the attention of Northerners who accepted it, the South refused to give up slavery as it would fracture their economy and way of life. If the argument of state’s rights appears in our modern dialogue of the event, it is to subvert attention from the issue of slavery to the broader issue of what states feel they have the right to do in the face of federal power. However, while State’s Rights argument supporters will cite instances like the Nullification crisis and the resolutions of Kentucky and Virginia, the underlying matter behind all of these issues for much of the 19th century was slavery. This is shown in both the politicians of the time as well as the religious leaders who include discussions of the institution and use it to justify their stance on the conflict, whether that be in support of or opposition to the practice.

The Civil War, much like in any conflict, devolved into diametrically opposed fronts. There were those who supported slavery on one side and those who opposed it on the other. This is disheartening to see, though it has become common in American history to establish conflicts in such a way. And in this way, arguments in this style will shift the fault of the conflict onto the opposing group. We have already seen this in Watson’s sermon to the Diocese of North

⁴⁷ Alexander H. Stephens, "Corner Stone Speech." *Teaching American History*. Accessed April 25, 2019.<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/cornerstone-speech/>.

Carolina, accusing abolitionists for the corruption of the North, as well as by William Lamson in Massachusetts accusing Southerners for thinking they have the right to secede after the results of a fair and constitutional election. These ministers are discussing the problems of the nation in accordance with their personal beliefs and regional allegiances. They all practice the same faith, but attempt to disprove one another's beliefs as fanaticism or corruption. Their own interpretations of the nation stem from their religious and historical understandings, which is why we see these ministers adhering to state loyalties and denominational interpretations. This history of multiple, conflicting views on the nation by elite Protestant ministers is present here as much as it is in the current year, and demonstrates the flaws of Protestant ministers of high status behaving in accordance with the divisive political system in America.

However, there is a unique trend that has been identified through our first sermon that is also found in other sermons of the time. Clarke concedes the point that without the Abolitionist movement the Civil War would have never began. And while this is true, it highlights a nuanced argument to the cause of the conflict and who is to blame. In fact, a number of Protestant ministers have identified the fault of both the Union and the Confederacy in letting the issue of slavery persist as long as it had, and that the only way to reach a consensus was through a Civil War. These ministers do not discuss the conflict along political allegiances, which demonstrates a more neutral approach to religious and political discourse. Whereas other ministers that we have read attack and condemn opposing viewpoints, the understanding of more moderate ministers is more aligned with understanding the reasoning behind other viewpoints and discussing their validity. This method of discussion humanizes the conflict and is more respectful to other Americans and religious leaders. Much like politicians who behave according to political allegiances, ministers have the ability to choose between behaving along political and

denominational allegiances or reflecting on the understanding of other interpretations than their own and discussing them with others.

William Lamson's sermon is an introduction to this mentality where he includes the quote, "[...] it is true that the whole nation is sin-laden, deserves to suffer."⁴⁸ Here he levels the playing field of the North and the South by placing both groups together under God. This is an effective strategy, but it is necessary for Lamson to identify what the sin is that would cause both the North and South to be forced against each other as punishment. Lamson explains that this great sin is that of greed. "Now as in individuals, so in nations, the love of money, the idolatry of gold, is the root of all evil."⁴⁹ He explains that the root of the Civil War is in the sense of greed corrupting both sides to attack and kill each other, destroying their vision of a Christian America. "How may we become rich and powerful, and not how may we become righteous and God-fearing, a nation whose example and influence should bless the nations of the Earth?"⁵⁰ This case, while it is not a secular argument, does reveal the reality of America at the time. Protestant leaders feared that the nation was straying more and more from God. With the growth of industry, science, and capitalism, Protestant leaders attempted to advocate for emphasizing religious morality and infusing it into everyday American life. And so, when a crisis of the nation struck, Protestant leaders took it as a sign that God had enacted his judgment and was showing the nation that they needed to reshape their relationship with each other, and more importantly, with God.

Other sermons approach the argument of dual responsibility in alternative, less religiously centered methods. There are some religious leaders who discussed the war by

⁴⁸ Lamson. Pg. 15

⁴⁹ Ibid. Pg.16

⁵⁰ Ibid. Pg.16

outlining a guilty party across both sides. An example of this comes from Thomas Brainerd's "Patriotism Aiding Piety", given in Philadelphia on the 30th of April in 1863. Brainerd was a Presbyterian minister born in New York, who graduated from the Andover Theological Seminary in 1831.⁵¹ In 1837 he was ordained as the pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, also known as the Old Pine Church. He served this church for over 30 years before his death in 1866.⁵² Brainerd was very active during the Civil War, as he often cared for many of the soldiers that would pass through the area.⁵³ Sources do not say whether he served only Union soldiers, but it is important to see how he aligned his religious duties as a pastor and his patriotism for the nation.

In his sermon Brainerd defines the idea of false patriotism and terrible practices existing in both the North and the South that have driven the two halves of the country apart.

Our boasting pride in our eighty years of prosperity, our contempt of other nations, our bitter and unfraternal spirit in the long past towards the sins of Southern brethren, when a better temperament might have saved them; our cherished hatred and contempt of our colored brethren, manifested in endorsing their bondage at the South, and their persecutions in the North; the cold selfishness of a party spirit, willing to sacrifice nationality and freedom for party triumph; our public men hypocritically professing patriotism, as an avenue to the salaries of office, or to gainful contracts; rank bribery shamelessly practiced in our halls of legislation; our highest Judicial Tribunal, for party ends, taking away the shield of the law from a feeble race among us; men of influence coldly standing by, and from party motives, allowing traitors of the South to plot and begin treasonable operations in the Capitol itself [...]⁵⁴

⁵¹"Guide to the Thomas Brainerd Papers." *Presbyterian Historical Society: The National Archives of the PC*. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://www.history.pcusa.org/collections/research-tools/guides-archival-collections/rg-292>.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Christopher Childs, "Rev Thomas Brainerd." *Find a Grave*. April 6, 2005. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/10731163/thomas-brainerd>.

⁵⁴ Thomas Brainerd. "Patriotism Aiding Piety. A Sermon, Preached in the Third Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, on the 30th of April, 1863, the Day Appointed by the President..." *HathiTrust*. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?num=20&u=1&seq=2&view=image&size=100&id=loc.ark:/13960/t2r49r16d>. Pg. 20

While this is a rather large section of the sermon, and one continuous sentence listing the multitude of errors of America as a whole that led to the present conflict, it is necessary to recognize the legitimacy of his claims within the context of a religious leader concerned with the corruption of a Christian America. Brainerd mentions first and foremost the pride of the nation, of course being one of the seven deadly sins. Pride and hubris are common sins shown in religious texts, so the significance of Brainerd placing it at the top of the lists of sins for the nation should not go without notice. He also discusses the practice of bribery and corruption, which are not uncommon themes in Christian tradition to be worthy of God's punishment and retribution. Indeed many of the practices that he defines are outlined as immoral by his faith. With that in mind, the connection between these sinful practices and the Civil War believed to be ordained by God aligns with the Protestant notion of the consequences of a nation that does not fear and respect God.

That does not mean that the points raised by Brainerd should be discredited as supporting his religious efforts. His discussion of the North's reaction to the practice of slavery is a poignant statement in a time of such divisive thinking. Placing the North and the South both at fault humanizes the argument and allows for a more respectful approach, in comparison to typical rhetoric of attacking either side calling them traitors, heathens, lost, etc. The North is as much at fault for allowing slavery to persist and for condemning their brethren as the South is for employing in the institution as they have been taught to do for generations. Another great point that Brainerd introduces is that the North is at fault for the mistreatment of African Americans as is the South. He takes particular aim at the politicians who have been so immersed in partisan politics that they have lost sight of the larger goal of government, to represent the nation as a whole and improve the wellbeing of the people. Partisan politics is not something that we are

unaware of in our own time, and it is important to recognize the effects of partisan politics on a nation that was on the brink of a national crisis, and what pushed it over the edge. To Brainerd, the corruption of the politicians is responsible for forcing the divide between the North and the South. He even goes as far to say that these corrupting ideas are, “so successfully used by demagogues, south and north, as to produce a temporary separation [...]”⁵⁵ To use the term “demagogues” to describe politicians on both sides of the national conflict is condemning and accusing both sides for their sinful and corrupting behavior. This is not an attack on the American political system, but a judgment about the current state of American politics, that has been allowed to persist for the benefit of those involved and at the expense of the American people.

Brainerd may be one of the strongest proponents for condemning the politicians and their rhetoric for driving the wedge in the Union, but he is not alone in this opinion. In fact, the separation of church and state allows religious leaders to observe the efforts and arguments of these politicians and speak freely, either praising their behavior or condemning their corrupting strategies. This is ironic of course because these Protestant leaders are attempting to persuade Americans regardless of political and social status to align with their vision of a Christian America, but take strong issue with government officials trying to align Americans to agree with their own understandings. Nevertheless, religious leaders criticizing the behavior of politicians signifies that they are aware of the minutiae of American politics and feel it is their duty to address ways in which to improve the moral character of the nation. This aligns with the goals of Protestantism to support their common goal as well as further their goal of a Christian America. In these sermons the ministers are demonstrating their twin-notions of the nation; the nation as a

⁵⁵ Ibid. Pg. 23.

Christian society and their interpretations of the political and social discourse of the nation as it is. And while there may be a division between church and state on a political level, for these ministers, they see it as their responsibility to fuse the political climate with the religious climate of the nation and guide both towards the goal of a Christian nation.

This critique of politicians is also found in Henry Bellows's "The War to End Only When the Rebellion Ceases," which was preached in New York in April. Henry Bellows was a significant minister during the Civil War, known for his work as the President of the United States Sanitary Commission. Through his volunteer work he was able to raise millions of dollars for the war effort and recruited thousands of soldiers for the Union.⁵⁶ He was a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Divinity School and was a pastor in Alabama before returning to New York to preach at the First Congregational Church of New York for almost 40 years. Bellows was similar to the other ministers we have observed, who had worked towards serving the war effort through non-violent means. Whereas the pastors tried to bring in more people to the Christian faith, here we have examples of these ministers bringing in people to support a patriotic cause complimentary with a religious one.

His sermon begins with a broad claim on his view of the American people.

This American people must either be the best or the guiltiest people on God's earth. [...] Its gifts, endowments, historic and physical position, political, economical, educational, and religious circumstances and opportunities are, in character and sum, so vast, peculiar, empathetic, and providential, that they must either prove a mighty pedestal, lifting America to an unparalleled glory, or a stone of wrath, falling upon our heads and grinding us to powder.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ "Henry W. Bellows (1814-1882)." *Mr Lincoln and New York*. Accessed April 25, 2019. <http://www.mrlincolnandnewyork.org/new-yorkers/henry-w-bellows-1814-1882/>.

⁵⁷ Henry Whitney Bellows. "The War to End Only When the Rebellion Ceases." *HathiTrust*. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?num=2&u=1&seq=7&view=image&size=100&id=loc.ark:/13960/t4fn18s4d>. Pg. 2

This is an intriguing way to present the American people as a whole, wherein they are on the path to discovering whether they are the best peoples in history or the worst nation to have ever existed. This is another instance of a diametrically opposed interpretations that we have seen implemented in other sermons. This passage also allows its listeners to reflect on the current state of America and determine how they feel America fits into God's judgment. The implication of the providential quality of America aligns with the Protestant idea that America is to be the chosen Christian nation, as well as the notion of Manifest Destiny which was a common understanding during the 19th century. Bellows is affirming the notion of other ministers that God looks favorably upon the nation, but there is a disconnect between God and his chosen people. He is attempting to establish God's judgment as the reason for the war here, and later explains how America has brought the judgment of God upon itself. He cites corrupt politics as detrimental to the nation and responsible for the conflict. He writes, "The very mind and conscience of a people become gradually defiled and seared by the continued exhibition of shameless morals, and low thoughts, and corrupt men and measures in high places."⁵⁸ The quote here aligns with the sentiment of William Lamson, whose sermon was written and delivered within the same month of Bellows's. Instead of allowing American citizens to hate one another and attack them in cold blood, these ministers shifted the attention to the people that were responsible for the affairs of the nation. It is necessary to hold representatives of government accountable in the face of such a dramatic failure of the government to preserve the Union. Bellows goes as far to say, "I believe that the politics and the politicians of the last quarter of a century have degraded the conception of what constitutes greatness and goodness, and corrupted very perilously the National tone and life."⁵⁹ Here we have a religious leader attacking

⁵⁸ Ibid Pg. 5

⁵⁹ Ibid. Pg. 5

politicians in such a way as to say they have taken the nation off the path of God. This aligns with the Protestant notion that the nation was shifting away from a Christian identity, and Bellows is attempting to provide an answer as to how that could have occurred. During times of extreme pressure and divisions between citizens of the country, it is necessary to look towards those who represent us and analyze how they are carrying themselves and the well being of the nation. As the argument of the sermon would suggest, the Civil War is not a matter of North or South, slavery or State's Rights, but of corrupt politicians pushing their agenda upon the people of the nation and submitting them to legislation that does not represent their interests and forcing them to make difficult decisions. It can be inferred from this dialogue that the fanaticism that has fueled either side of the fight in the Civil War has its roots planted in the politicians that play into partisan politics and focus more on their own gain and well being than for the general betterment of the nation. It is unclear whether the goal of this sermon was to advocate for holding representatives more accountable, or to air grievances on politicians and make their faults public. Bellows's sermon places the conflict on the shoulders of the politicians, and that his congregation should trust that this is true. However, these ministers are also fanning the flames in reinforcing the notions of these politicians and justifying it with religious understanding.

This idea of uniting the nation as opposed to dividing it further is supported by John Walker Jackson's "The Union--the Constitution--Peace," delivered in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Jackson was a Methodist who was born in Pennsylvania and served the church for over 50 years. There is not much written on him, though an article from *The Christian Advocate* details some information about his life. The article praises him for his, "poetic descriptions, his strong statements of doctrine, his irresistible logic, and his manifest contempt for men and devils who

were arrayed against the truth.”⁶⁰ Jackson was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Conference in Philadelphia, though he was from Indiana’s conference.⁶¹ He later transferred to Harrisburg where he served in the Locust Street Methodist Episcopal Church. Jackson was a significant figure in the Union because Harrisburg is not far from Gettysburg, and on the day of the Confederacy’s retreat, the governor announced it in Jackson’s Sunday morning church service.⁶² Jackson was a significant figure in Pennsylvania and his presence in the capital of the state signified his influence in this area of the Union.

Within this sermon he describes three victories of law: maintaining unity, the constitution itself, and peace. He explains that the Civil War is dangerous for American law, but it is necessary to preserve the Union. He states, “We feel the comprehensive idea of American nationality.”⁶³ This is the central idea of his sermon that he then emphasizes when he writes,

There is to the American people no North, no South, but an undivided territory to be transmitted to our children as our fathers transmitted to us, their children; held not for national vanity, not to be cut and split into warring(sp) sections but as a sacred trust for human happiness in Liberty, and having accepted the pledge to guarantee to every State a Republican form of government, we dare not even risk the possibility of the establishment of any other form.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ T. Carlton, and J. Porter. "Personals." *The Christian Advocate*. 1902.

[https://books.google.com/books?id=NrI6AQAAAMAJ&pg=PA1305&lpg=PA1305&dq=john walker jacksonharrisburgpa&source=bl&ots=USZe27IU3Y&sig=ACfU3U30ejTix6xBSScVvUhToefVdUXBXg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjXrq3muYLhAhXkT98KHTQED0oQ6AEwB3oECAEQAAQ#v=onepage&q=john walker jackson harrisburg pa&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=NrI6AQAAAMAJ&pg=PA1305&lpg=PA1305&dq=john%20walker%20jacksonharrisburgpa&source=bl&ots=USZe27IU3Y&sig=ACfU3U30ejTix6xBSScVvUhToefVdUXBXg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjXrq3muYLhAhXkT98KHTQED0oQ6AEwB3oECAEQAAQ#v=onepage&q=john%20walker%20jackson%20harrisburg%20pa&f=false). Pg.25

⁶¹ Ron Clemons "Rev John Walker “J. Walker” Jackson." *Find A Grave*. June 24, 2015.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/148224590/john-walker-jackson>.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ John Walker Jackson. "The Union, the Constitution, Peace : A Thanksgiving Sermon Delivered in the Locust St. M.E. Church, Harrisburg, Pa. / by Jno. Walker Jackson." *HathiTrust*. Accessed April 25, 2019.<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?num=7&u=1&seq=5&view=image&size=100&id=loc.ark:/13960/t48p64r02> Pg. 7

⁶⁴Ibid Pg. 7

This establishes the notion of dismantling factions and divisions and supporting the idea of an entire United States. This ideology is important as one of the results of the Civil War was the installation of a national ideology. This is shown in James McPherson's *The War that Forged a Nation*. In the title alone McPherson supports the idea that the Civil War was essential in uniting the nation under one identity. McPherson writes, "Before 1861 'United States' was a plural noun: The United States *have* a republican form of government. Since 1865 'United States' is a singular noun: The United States *is* a world power."⁶⁵ This was a significant shift in the nation, and one that the Protestant leaders were able to sense, discuss, and even promote in their sermons. It is important to clarify that for Protestant leaders, the national identity that they were referring to was intrinsically linked to their desire for a Christian America. And with denominational differences and political influences, different visions what a Christian America was to be formed.

In these sermons so far we have observed several strategies to determine where the division of the nation began. Of course there are those that play into the political movements and resort to placing the North and South against each other; those that attack the institution of slavery or defend it for the benefit of the nation as crucial to its economic livelihood. And then there are those that are able to look past the political fervor in order to target the real issues behind the Civil War; these religious leaders that can place the war in a historical context and recognize how America was in its foundation in comparison to how it was now at a time of great division. The Protestant ministers who had watched and participated in the betterment of the nation were obligated to warn their listeners of the sins that led to the war so that they may be able to recognize it themselves and prevent it in the future.

⁶⁵ James M. McPherson, *The War That Forged a Nation: Why the Civil War Still Matters*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pg. 6

The interpretation of the Civil War by these religious leaders leads to a fascinating understanding of the American citizens of the time. Referring back to our Google Corpus collection, a search of the term “Civil War” reveals a compelling truth of the era. According to the data, there was a general increase in the use of the term “Civil War” from the decade of 1810 with 3,422 hits, through to 1860 with 32,184 hits.⁶⁶ This trend continues until 1910 where it amassed over 200,000 uses. The next decade where there was a spike in the use of the term Civil War was in the decade of 1960 with over 300,000 uses.⁶⁷ However, we can be even more specific in recognizing this trend. When modifying the search to the phrase “American Civil War” we are met with a similar trend. From the decades 1810 through to 1860 the term increased in use from 3 hits in 1810 to 217 uses in 1860.⁶⁸ What this means is that educated Americans were aware of the severity of the conflict and were already defining the conflict as a Civil War before the conflict had begun. These writers could have been writing about the Civil Wars of other nations in the previous searches, but when searching for American Civil War, there is a clear understanding of the war in the context of the nation’s history. Here too we see similar spikes in the decades of use of the term “American Civil War” as we have seen in “Civil War.” In 1910 the full term was used 6,228 times and in 1960 it reached 8,767 uses based on Google Books’ collection.⁶⁹ It is important to recognize what these statistics represent for the larger mythology of the Civil War, and the impact of multiple interpretations of the war and the nation. As we have seen in the beginning of our discussion, the idea of State’s Rights being the most discussed reason for the Civil War has been disproven. Meanwhile, slavery continued to be a heated discussion from the turn of the 19th century up until and after the Civil War. But what is

⁶⁶“Google Books (American) Corpus

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

important here is that Americans were aware of the magnitude of the conflict as a Civil War as well as the fear of a potential conflict before the breakout of the war.

In this sense, the Protestant ministers were attempting to provide an answer to the sensation that was sweeping across the nation. With each piece of legislation, each trial, each raid and attack, the American people could sense the divisions among them. It was the responsibility of their ministers to try to find an answer for how the nation was brought to its division. And to many of the ministers that we have analyzed, that answer came from the Divine Judgment of God. It could be that divine intervention was the only possible answer that the ministers could present that would be understood by their congregation. This would also allow the ministers to advocate for what they felt would be necessary to make the nation better, as we have seen through the volunteer work and organizations led by our ministers. What is significant about the prevalence of the Divine Judgment answer for the conflict is that even after two years of fighting, that is the answer that these ministers have been proposing. It could be that this notion was presented in the beginning of the conflict and has been supported throughout the two years. It may also be that as support for the war waned, these Protestant ministers took it upon themselves to provide some way to discuss the war and its aspects that had no clear answer to begin with. These ministers felt it was their responsibility as religious leaders to contextualize every aspect of life within a religious framework. And for the Civil War era, this meant that the ministers needed to try to provide justification for the endless bloodshed on their own soil.

And while their discussion of the beginning of the war and the consequences that led up to it are beneficial to the American people, there are also numerous instances where these religious leaders have attempted to insert their own agenda into the minds of their followers. It may be easy for them to target and criticize the political leaders at the time, but these men are not

without faults of their own. Indeed when it comes to discussions on the morality of the country, the Protestant leaders take on a different voice and assume different objectives in their sermons. As we shall soon see, their discussions of slavery and how they perceive God to be present in the conflict are tied to their Protestant beliefs and desire for a Christian America. But what happens when these Protestant leaders interpret God's guidance differently? And does that impact the Americans of the time and in the modern decade?

Chapter 2:Slavery, Equality, and the Decision to Speak

“The question of Scripture and slavery constituted a great problem in 1860 because a biblically inspired people had done so much to construct the country they were now pulling apart.”⁷⁰

As we have seen in our discussion of the causes of the Civil War, it is clear that slavery was an prevalent topic of debate for the nation even before the eruption of the conflict. Determining what was to be done with the institution was a difficult topic for politicians and average Americans alike. The South realized their economic success depended on slave labor to pick cotton on their plantations to be sold to various parts of America and the world at large. Meanwhile, the industrialization of the North allowed them to use the efforts of immigrants coming to the nation for financial success and overall superior quality of life. This new source of labor allowed for abolitionism to take root in the people of the North, where they no longer needed slave labor for financial means, they could now do away with the institution as a whole.

However, an important distinction must be made before we begin a further discussion of the ideas of slavery and equality in America in the 19th century. While many would be optimistic to think that abolishing slavery would mean that those advocates would see African Americans as equal to other races, that is not the case. In fact, many of the supporters of abolition still harbored resentments about black people, but felt that enslavement was a terrible institution. This is ironic in a modern context as we would think that if you were to use the Declaration of Independence as evidence for abolishing slavery, you would also believe that equality should be acknowledged and respected. For many American politicians, supporting

⁷⁰ Noll, Pg.49

abolishing slavery appeared as a convenient way to ensure favorable public opinion or re-election, when in reality, they still had their preconceived notions of African Americans in comparison to their white counterparts.

The same rationale can be applied to Protestant leaders during this period. While the members of the church believed in the words that they are preaching, passages of the Bible can be interpreted in various ways, and be skewed to fit the ideology of those preaching it. Much like the politicians of the time, these leaders were not infallible, and their words must be analyzed with these realities in mind if we are to understand the Civil War and its multitude of interpretations. It would be too simple to accept all of what we are told in our courses and by our politicians. There is a context and an intention behind any public address, and these sermons are no different. As we have introduced, the ultimate goal for these Protestant ministers was a Christian America. This goal impacted the way in which they approached crucial issues in the nation. From Handy, we can learn more about the typical approach to Christianize the nation by Protestant ministers. “The goal of a fully Christian civilization was to be realized by the methods of persuasion only -- so most Protestant leaders sincerely believed.”⁷¹ So while these preachers were respected for providing guidance for Americans, they too followed their intentions for the nation and would incorporate their ideas of slavery or abolitionist sentiment to fit their own narrative of the future of the country. Because these Protestant leaders viewed themselves as both citizens of the nation and children of God, they would often blend the two worlds together, despite their appreciation for the separation between church and state in the world at large.

There is one more clarification that is necessary before we begin our analysis of these Protestant leaders and their sentiment towards slavery and equality in America. The

⁷¹ Handy, Pg. 47

Emancipation Proclamation was delivered in January of 1863, meaning that it was still new to the nation by the time of these sermons. The decision of the federal government to support the abolishing of slavery was of no surprise to the people of the time, but did reignite the arguments for and against the institution. Remember that the Emancipation Proclamation states:

That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.⁷²

What this means is that only slaves in states that were a part of the Confederacy were considered free. This is a significant, albeit political and tactical, moment both in the course of the war and for the nation as a whole. The Emancipation Proclamation marked the moment where the aims of the war shifted from preserving the Union to preserving the Union and abolishing slavery. And so, for Protestant leaders, they then had to navigate the tumultuous political motion by the President, as well as the sentiments of Confederate leaders and members of their church who disagreed or agreed with this decision. This is yet another reason why the sermons of 1863 can provide some of the most valuable information in demonstrating the various interpretations of the nation and the conflict and how these notions are formed.

Now that we have provided context on the intentions of the Protestant preachers and politicians of the world, as well as establishing the preconceived ideological notions of the time as far as slavery is concerned, we can begin to analyze the words of these leaders as a means of

⁷² Abraham Lincoln "Emancipation Proclamation (1863)." *Our Documents - Interstate Commerce Act* Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=34&page=transcript>.

discovering the realities of the era. Fresh off the heels of the Emancipation Proclamation, and in the heat of the conflict, these preachers felt an obligation to share their guidance to Americans who could not navigate the political climate of the time on their own. And while slavery is a serious issue, the larger purpose of this study is to analyze how their discussion of the institution, or lack thereof, showcased competing understandings of the Civil War and the nation.

With this in mind, let us begin with a study of a Confederate sermon from the era in an effort to understand some of the rationale for preserving slavery for the nation. This is shown in “Ezra’s Dilemma,” which was delivered in Savannah Georgia in August of 1863 by Stephen Elliott. Stephen Elliott was a striking figure in the Episcopal denomination in the Confederacy, as he was the only Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America.⁷³ Additionally, Elliott was the first Bishop of Georgia. Elliott was not just a minister from a small denomination, but Bishop for the entire state and the only Bishop for the Episcopal church of the Confederacy, meaning that he was nominated and elected to the position by his peers based on his merits, his dedication, and his passion for the faith and the nation.

The sermon is filled with pro-Confederate rhetoric in which Elliott defends the decisions of the Confederacy and further supports them by justifying their efforts through God. “We believed, when we began this conflict, that the hand of God was with us, because we had the right and the true upon our side under every aspect in which we could view the case between us and our adversaries.”⁷⁴ With this Elliott is providing the Confederacy with a religious justification for all their institutions as being “right and true,” which of course pertains to their

⁷³ Joseph Blount Cheshire "The Church in the Confederate States." *A History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States*. Accessed April 25, 2019.

<http://anglicanhistory.org/usa/jbcheshire/confederate1912/01.html>.

⁷⁴ Stephen Elliott. "Ezra’s Dilemma." *Documenting the American South*. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/elliotezra/elliott.html>.

desire to preserve slavery. When he discusses the institution, he is not afraid to defend his Southern brethren.

These slaves were imposed upon us--imposed upon us, in many cases, against our wills--imposed upon us just so long as it was profitable for those hypocrites to bring them here. And now when they have become interwoven with our whole social life, forming a part of our representation, of our prosperity, of our habits, of our manners, of our affections, all these ties are to be rudely broken asunder, not at our will or in our own time, but at the will and in the appointed time of those who forced this evil upon us.⁷⁵

This is a significant claim by Elliott in regards to the institution of slavery and what was to be done with it. In this quote he states that the South is not responsible for the slaves that they are using, because it had been an established part of the Southern economy and culture for generations before the current conflict. It is not unreasonable for Elliott to argue this claim, as slave labor had been a key part of the American ecosystem through the Columbian Exchange. This leads to the second part of his quote where he claims that now that the South is so dependent on slave labor, it would be impossible for them to allow for abolition. This quote is one of the most significant to come out of this sermon, as it represents his belief on the institution of slavery. He is presenting the idea that it is an economic necessity, and while it may be immoral, it is the fault of the North for forcing the South to rely on it as source of labor. Of course this not true, however, it does bring up an interesting idea in regards to slavery. Did the South depend on slavery? Was it an economic necessity, regardless of whether it was moral or not?

Elliott allows this thought to linger until he refers back to the relationship between the North, the South, and slavery when he says, “[...] we felt no doubt that the party, which had

⁷⁵ Ibid.

formed and was directing this crusade against us, had grown up out of elements unchristian and really atheistic. Pretending to a peculiar philanthropy, it was a philanthropy opposed alike to the word and the will of God.”⁷⁶ Here Elliott employs the tactic of blaming politicians and corrupt clergy for going against God by supporting ideas opposite his own. He goes as far to say that those that believe in the abolitionist effort are atheistic, and therefore against his vision of a Christian America.

They were ready, in their fanatical worship of these terrible delusions--delusions made more terrible than ever because of the immense developments of physical science and material prosperity-- to blot out all the records of Divine inspiration, should they be found in opposition to their human conclusions. It was not Truth which led them on, it was Passion. It was not the path of pure morality which they were treading; it was the track of a lawless licentiousness, which led over the ruins and ashes of the altar and the fireside.⁷⁷

Elliott targets other institutions for allowing for the corruption of the abolitionists. He makes the important distinction between the ideas of truth and passion, which is ironic in the context of a religious leader’s passion coinciding with their truth. Not only that, but again we see a bastardization of the opposing viewpoint. Elliott is attacking core ideas of religious leaders of the North, with the explicit purpose of supporting his own views and the views of the Confederacy, while also convincing his followers that this is all fact. He goes as far to use the phrase “lawless licentiousness,” which has a sexual connotation to it. This phrasing connects with the sensation of passion that he was describing earlier, and could be his way of saying that American institutions have been abused to licentious extent. And while it is disappointing to see a religious leader support an institution as vile as slavery, it is necessary to observe his reasoning behind it. The sermon advocates for slavery as a racist system, but he does not say anything racist in a way

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

to insult African Americans. This is a hopeful realization, as perhaps he may too be aware of the injustices that slavery can bring, however, he does not condemn the South for its dependence on slavery and instead advocates for its preservation.

To counter this perception of slavery, we can look towards Chauncey Giles and his sermon “The Problem of American Nationality, and the Evils which Hinder its Solution,” which was delivered on April 30th. Giles was a unique figure in American religion as he was the leader of the church of New Jerusalem in North America. Though he was not the leader of the Swedenborgian church at the point of this sermon, his variance in religious denominations signifies his desire for new ways of interpreting the Bible and how it fits into America. Giles’s perspective is also significant because before he settled as a clergyman in Cincinnati, Giles traveled across the United States from his home in Massachusetts to as far as Ohio. Giles has experienced a range of Northern states that have shaped his views on the nation as a whole and where the nation should go next. This is reflected in the title of his sermon, as he is discussing American ideology based on his experience of the Union up until now. However, it is important to note that his travels did not lead him towards southern states.

The piece tackles many abstract concepts of the war including American history, politics, what it means to be a nation, and what nationality is defined by. “Both in principle and in all its effects, slavery is directly hostile to the principles of a free government. Fire and water, cold and heat, light and darkness, are not more squarely antagonistic to each other than true republicanism and Slavery[...].”⁷⁸ This is the core of his feelings toward slavery in America. There is great poetry in his ability to compare these polar opposites, without including that these two opposites

⁷⁸ Chauncey Giles. “The Problem of American Nationality, and the Evils Which Hinder Its Solution.” *Harvard Mirador Viewer*. Accessed April 25, 2019. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:46311384\\$18i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:46311384$18i). Pg. 16

depend on each other. There can be no darkness without light, no heat without cold, etc.

However, his meaning is not lost on his listeners, who are capable of understanding that these opposites are at odds with each other. This metaphor can then also be applied to the believers of the binary. Abolitionists could listen to this and view themselves as the light and attack Southern as their polar opposites. The romantic use of these metaphors does showcase his passion for the subject. Any good Protestant leader should demonstrate a passion for their beliefs so to impart their ideology to their listeners.

Giles continues with the topic of slavery when he writes, “The great sin of slavery as it is now and ever will exist until man becomes regenerated is, that it keeps the slave forever a child.”⁷⁹ This is a unique thought in comparison to typical anti-slavery arguments, as this one targets the specific issue of how slaves have developed in America. He continues, “It strikes at the manhood in human nature; it puts muscle above brain; it arrests man in the first step of his progress, and insists upon keeping him there, that he may be made a better tool of service. It does not allow him to go beyond and become a man, for that would interfere with his forced labor.”⁸⁰ This is the most compelling aspect of his argument. In one paragraph he presents such a specific case for the consequences of slavery that had not been heard in any sermon by a Protestant leader during this year. slavery has very palpable consequences in regards to how these men and women develop. This way of thinking aligns with the Protestant goal of educating and Christianizing America. In a time when many religious leaders were also teachers for future generations of America, the sentiment of Giles is a declaration of the issue that has been plaguing the country. To deny slaves proper schooling and experiences other than field work, you are prohibiting them from reaching their true potential as Americans. Aspects of life like

⁷⁹ Ibid. Pg. 18

⁸⁰ Ibid. Pg. 18

proper literacy, rational thought, and civic duty will be forbidden from these people. Giles is right to highlight this issue as it strikes a chord with the political ideology of all men being created equal and given equal opportunity by the nation. He also provides a thought provoking hypothetical when he asks, “If I can control a *man* with a black skin, why can I not control one with a white skin? If I can compel one man or one hundred men to raise cotton and sugar for me, to be my hands and feet and beast of burden, why can I not compel other men to vote for me, to give me civil power, and if I can get power, why may I not become king, and compel a nation to serve me.”⁸¹ Again we see the commentary of the Protestant leaders on the corruption of slavery and its institutionalization by corrupt politicians. This hypothetical challenges the idea of race in saying that if one man can be controlled, then so can any man. This could relate with the followers of the Confederacy and their ability to be controlled by the politicians who are advocating for secession and needless bloodshed. It also means that Northern politicians may be employing the same tactics to persuade their own constituents. According to Giles, these men are no more free than the people they are trying to keep in chains. This mentality also aligns with the goals of the Protestant faith to convert hearts through voluntary means only. They see no place for corruption and enslavement, though they are not afraid to incorporate the same public speaking tactics of politicians that they would condemn.

These ideas of slavery weakening the nation as a whole are likewise shown in “Our American Institutions,” which was written and delivered by William Henry Furness in Philadelphia in August. Furness was a Boston native who graduated from Harvard Divinity School in the 1820s. From there he became the minister of the First Unitarian Church of

⁸¹ Ibid. Pg 20

Philadelphia, where he served for 20 years.⁸² It is important to note that Furness was very passionate about the abolitionist movement, as were most Unitarian leaders. He argued against the Fugitive Slave Act, and even housed Charles Sumner after his unfortunate attack on the Congress floor.⁸³ This is all to say that Furness had a history with slavery in America, and so it should not come as a surprise that he would include anti-slavery rhetoric in his sermons.

In his sermon he describes the American political system as a gift from God, and praises the North for forming one identity. When he begins to discuss slavery he does not shy away from his desire for human equality. “[...] let us thank God to-day, that he has given us institutions which so fully embody and so faithfully apply the principle of human equality that the hearts of the people have grown together and become one.”⁸⁴ This is an intriguing quote to dissect as it implies a much more optimistic version of the North than one would expect. While it would be nice to think that this idea of human equality has spread across the North and that peoples of all races can come together, it isn’t true. History has proven that while the North advocated for freedom, there was still considerable resentment against people of color in America for the next century and onward. So while Furness is advocating for equality, his romanticization of Northern progress should be criticized and recognized as a method of propelling one narrative over what is occurring in the world at the time. For the Southern states it is easy to observe the ways in which racism manifested over time in the form of slavery. For the North, however, racism towards black Americans took the form of privileges and a social hierarchy that may not have been

⁸² Steven Ugifusa. "Reverend William Henry Furness: A Philadelphia Unitarian." *PhillyHistory Blog*. May 14, 2014. <https://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/index.php/2012/04/reverend-william-henry-furness-a-philadelphia-unitarian/>.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ William Henry Furness. "Our American Institutions." *HathiTrust* Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?num=6&u=1&seq=7&view=image&size=100&id=loc.ark:/13960/t3bz6973z>. Pg 6.

stated, but was reinforced daily. Furness is claiming that God has given America the institutions that call for freedom, while there are still racial divides throughout the Union. Ministers in the Union and supporters of the abolitionist movement emphasized the idea that they are morally above the southern states because they are not as racist as their southern counterparts. However, that does not mean that the North was immune to racial injustice and prejudice, and the implication of being morally superior while still harboring implicit biases is a trend that will appear throughout this time and American history.

So far we have seen sermons from both the North and South discussing slavery in different frames. While some have advocated for slavery under the guise that it has existed in America and should be protected because it is crucial to the South, others have argued that slavery will cause the nation to stagnate and impede on America's great progress. These ideas are secular, as they pertain to more of the political and economic arguments for and against slavery. This is significant, as these ministers are not commenting on the sin of enslaving others and the corruption that it can cause to one's soul. They are fusing their moral arguments with the secular arguments that politicians have used in their debates on the issue. This could be because these ministers are attempting to contextualize their answers in a historical and political nature so they could be accepted by the public. If a congregation hears that both the nation and God would favor abolition, then they are twice as likely to adopt that understanding. And while the sermons we have seen have employed these tactics, there are ministers who advocate their stance on slavery using scripture and invoking God in upholding or condemning of slavery. A sermon is not only the beliefs of the minister, but they are also echoing the sentiments of their congregation. Infusing religion into their discussion on slavery aligns with the congregation as well as the desire of the minister to marry Christianity with American life.

This is shown in the “Address of the Baptist General Association of Virginia,” which was delivered on June 4th of 1863. The address discusses the differences between Northern and Southern Christians and states that the Northern Christians are following a false faith in their desire to abolish slavery.

Not designing politicians, but those who claim to be the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus--ministers of the reconciliation--heralds of the gospel of peace, have sown the seeds of the whirlwind which is devastating the land. It is now many years since our Northern brethren, in their fierce hostility to the institution of domestic slavery, deaf alike to the voice of reason and the authority of Scripture, to the pleadings of patriotism and the claims of Christian charity, by their fiery and intolerant fanaticism, furrowed deep and broad the line of separation--thrusting us from their communion as unworthy to labor with them in the fields of Christian benevolence and gospel enterprise.⁸⁵

This section of the sermon aligns with the previous argument of passion corrupting man and separating man from God’s teaching. While Anti-slavery advocates would use scripture to advocate for the abolition of slavery with passages about loving thy neighbor and loving all of God’s creations, Pro-slavery advocates use scripture to oppress a group of people for the advancement of others. However, this address does not quote any passages from the Bible that advocate for slavery. This address advocates for the institution of what they refer to as, “domestic slavery,” which has no real difference to slavery. They also refer to their own voice as “Christian charity” which aligns with the idea that Americans were somehow saving African people by bringing them to America to be enslaved for the rest of their lives. Another interpretation could be that this charity could be referring to the notion of the North expelling the South and falsely justifying it with patriotic and Christian ideology. This is an important

⁸⁵ "Address of the Baptist General Association of Virginia." *Documenting the American South*. Accessed April 25, 2019.<https://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/baptist/baptist.html>.

interpretation as it calls out the North for their false faith further, while also pointing out that they are using political and religious tactics to convince the nation that their way is the correct path for the nation. While the remaining parts of the sermon discuss the role of Christians and patriots in the war effort, this understanding of slavery as ordained by God and beneficial to the enslaved party must be recognized in order to identify an argument for the protection of slavery in America. Where Giles argued that slavery was restrictive to African Americans as well as for the nation, this address is presenting the opinion that slavery benefits both the slaves and the general population of America, all while using a vague allusion to scripture and Christian superiority to defend the claim.

To contrast this argument in favor of slavery, we will now observe John Walker Jackson's "The Union--the Constitution--Peace," once more. In this piece Jackson discusses several concepts of slavery to support his argument for freedom. The first of these viewpoints is found where he explains, "The 'American of African descent,' the negro, is among us here by no choice or act of his own, and our duty to him is clearly marked out by the finger of a Divine Providence pointing to him in this helplessness and degradation, and saying, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages.'"⁸⁶ This quote is significant for a number of reasons, first and foremost is the choice to refer to slaves as African Americans. This was done to place them on an equal status as all other Americans, and deserving of the same treatment. He then continues to say that African Americans had no choice in coming to America due to being sold and shipped across the ocean from their home continent. This is a far cry from the argument of the Baptists in Virginia, who have no regard whether the African people had a choice in coming to America, only that coming to America was what was best for them. However, Jackson

⁸⁶Jackson Pg. 11

refers to African Americans as children in need of nursing, which reinforces the idea of white supremacy.

Jackson continues with this line of thinking by saying, “He is the touchstone of our civilization, humanity, christianity, and we are shameless hypocritical liars if deny to him the offices of kindness, [and] love [...]. He will test the charity of America in the nineteenth century, for of him will Jesus say to the christian churches of America in that day for which all other days are made, ‘Insasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me.’”⁸⁷ This is the most progressive statement that Jackson presents during his sermon. Whereas his previous statement placed African Americans as equal to other Americans, here he is going so far as to say that they are essential to Christian society and the world as a whole. He refers to them as a “touchstone,” which is defined in the Merriam Webster dictionary as, “a fundamental or quintessential part or feature.”⁸⁸ If African Americans are an essential part of society and Christianity, that would justify the call for abolition. And if they are as essential as Jackson claims, that may imply that other Americans can learn from them. Jackson also attacks those Christians that support slavery by referring to them as “hypocritical liars,” which is very similar to the Baptist address referring to Northern Christians as corrupt and betraying their Southern brothers. The final sentence of the quote is a quote from the book of Matthew that is used to present the idea that helping these African Americans is aligned with being a good Christian because helping any of God’s children is the same as helping God himself. While the Southern Baptists would say that they are the true Christians for following scripture that supports enslavement, Jackson is using scripture to support the opposite point. However, it is significant

⁸⁷ Ibid. Pg 11.

⁸⁸ “Touchstone.” *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/touchstone>.

to note the presence of the metaphor of African Americans being childlike. Whereas other ministers have said that enslavement causes African Americans to remain children forever, here we see Jackson reinforcing the idea of the white savior who has an obligation to lift up “less developed races.” To consider a race of people as children is to undermine the race and assume that they are less developed than other groups of people. This is an example of the accepted racism and racist rhetoric that has been infused into American life with the guise that it is progressive because it is less racist than other accepted ideologies.

This leads to an important realization of these ministers and their efforts of persuasion. With the divide of the country, different visions of a Christian America formed. Southern Baptists and other denominations advocated for slavery because they found specific scripture that did not condemn the institution. Examples of this can be found in Colossians 3:22 where it is written, “Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.”⁸⁹ But for every passage in the Bible like the above quote, there is a passage that can be used to counter that. A perfect example of this can be found in Deuteronomy 23:15 where it is written, “If a slave has taken refuge with you, do not hand them over to their master.”⁹⁰ While it is understandable for Christians to use the Bible as a guide for how to be a better person in the world at large to earn God’s favor, there are many passages that can be removed from context in order to fit an individual’s image of what it means to be a good Christian. Another example of the use of the Bible to support national policy and practices can be seen in the debate over the legalization of homosexual marriage. Those opposed to the legalization would quote Leviticus and its anti-

⁸⁹ This reveals the controversy in the validity of using the Bible as a document to defend moral practices. BibleStudyTools Staff. “30 Powerful Bible Verses About Slavery - What Does Scripture Say?” *Bible Study Tools*. July 18, 2018. <https://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/bible-verses-about-slavery/>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

homosexual rhetoric, while those in favor would quote books like Romans that express God's desire for man to love one another as thy neighbor and thyself. Here again we see specific passages that are contradictory being used as fuel to advocate for legislative change in the nation. Noll summarizes this issue with his quote, "The political standoff that led to war was matched by an interpretive standoff. No common meaning could be discovered in the Bible, which almost everyone in the United States professed to honor and which was, without a rival, the most widely read text of any kind in the whole country."⁹¹ In a nation where reading the Bible was a sign of literacy, religious experts and Americans everywhere failed to reach a consensus or even agreement on its teachings.

A third major understanding can be identified throughout the course of the Civil War in regards to the debate over slavery and equality in America. So far we have been able to recognize those who are in favor of abolition, as well as those who oppose it, but there are also those who choose to disregard it. Whether they support slavery but do not feel it is important to the conflict, or perhaps they choose to ignore it due to the fervor of the arguments, there are a sample of sermons that discuss the Civil War and its impact on the country without any mention towards the institution of slavery. This is important to recognize as their lack of input towards the issue is still a stance on the issue. Especially in a relationship like the one between the ministers and their congregation where the congregation is searching for guidance and understanding in an ever complex world; not discussing a current issue in the nation will allow the congregation to not seek information about it and keep themselves in the dark on an important turning point in the nation.

⁹¹ Noll, Pg. 14

An example of this failure to discuss slavery comes from Isaac Ferris's "The Duties of the Times," which was preached on August 6th in New York. It is important to know that Isaac Ferris was serving as the President of New York University during this time from 1853-1870.⁹² It is important to have this understanding of Ferris as the President of an institution, as it may be the reason behind his commentary on the Civil War. There may have been students at the institution who supported slavery, or those that did not want to hear a blatant argument for or against slavery. New York was also just recovering from its draft riots that occurred during July of this year, which signifies a clear anti-war sentiment in part for the people of New York. The Irish community in New York did not want to fight in the war as they felt they had no reason to risk their lives over a debate they had no part of. The draft riots represented a political issue, a class issue, and a religious issue as many of these Irish rioters were Catholic. The riots were centered in Manhattan and instances of violence and police barricades were all occurring around NYU's campus which was centered off Washington Square Park, which could play a part into Ferris's sermon topics. However, the understanding that these rioters would most likely not attend a Protestant sermon in a university should also be taken into account. A closer look at NYU's history with the Civil War resembles a similar vacancy of information. While there are extensive histories on the university from historians like Joan Dim and Theodore Jones, there is not information regarding an explicit stance from the university on slavery. According to one student's final project on the Civil War and NYU's relationship with the Civil War, "I discovered very little information on the subject."⁹³ This is quite interesting, as it begs the question if this was an intentional lack of information or if documents were lost to time.

⁹² Private User. "Reverend Isaac Ferris." *Geni_family_tree*. June 09, 2018. <https://www.geni.com/people/Reverend-Isaac-Ferris/6000000002955925556>.

⁹³ Srinivasa Ramanujan. "NYU and the Civil War." Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://cs.nyu.edu/courses/fall07/V22.0380-001/erw234/frameset.html>.

However, the context of Reverend Ferris as the President of NYU is substantial for the following sermon on the Civil War.

While Ferris at no point discusses slavery outright, he does make several claims demonstrating his support for the Union. This is understandable as he is residing in New York, but it does lead to some confusion about his stance on the origins of the conflict. He explains that according to God the rebellion of the South is unjust. “You will observe that, had Christ taught a different course, he would have taught rebellion; but the rule he lays down conveys the truth that no man has a right to rebel. A justifiable rebellion, so to speak, could only occur as a last exigency, and that would constitute revolution.”⁹⁴ This quote is preceded by a discussion on how civil government is a gift from God and that all men have a primary duty to be obedient to God. It is clear that Ferris does not condone the rebellion of the Confederacy, which is emphasized where he writes, “God let the serpent sting, that he might save us by bringing in unison all true hearts.”⁹⁵ While Ferris makes blatant attacks on the integrity of the Confederacy and their open rebellion against the Union, at no point does he make a direct claim discussing the reasoning behind the rebellion. He does cast judgment on the Confederacy as traitors, but explains that it was God’s will for the war to occur. This is evident in the previous quote. This quote also allows Ferris to advocate against the riots, serving a dual purpose while not citing either conflict.

Instead, Ferris discusses the war in terms of the Union and those who seek to destroy it. He is highlighting the unity of the nation and stressing his personal desire for America to come together once again. This is a common theme, and a significant discussion to have. Ferris begins a discussion on what parties to pray for during this conflict. “First comes our *enemies* - such by

⁹⁴ Isaac Ferris. "The Duties of the Times." *Harvard Mirador Viewer*. Accessed April 25, 2019. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:47581098\\$10i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:47581098$10i). Pg. 8

⁹⁵ Ibid. Pg 13.

their own course; our friends - our countrymen - sons of the same patriotic fathers- but alienated by the schemes of wicked ambition and mercenary and unprincipled demagogues. Never has there been, except among savages of the lowest grade, such bitter enmity, such unrelenting barbarity, such horrible multiplications of enormities of revenge, such systematic butchery of the unoffending and helpless as has characterized the progress of the rebellion.”⁹⁶ This quote is significant in that he is addressing the desire to pray for those that the Union has sworn to fight against. Ferris is reminding his listeners that even though the conflict has been ongoing for more than two years, it is important to remember that these “enemies” are from the same nation with the same history as the Union. He does not state that these atrocities are the fault of the Confederacy alone, but that the nation as a whole should remember who they are fighting. Ferris also is not afraid to say that the American South has been corrupted by demagogues, but he does not clarify what intentions these corrupt demagogues have that they would resort to rebelling against the Union.

Avoiding a discussion on critical topics is unfortunate for the greater understanding of the Civil War because it refuses to acknowledge what led the nation to open rebellion. Whereas previous ministers discussed their feelings on the conflict and its sources in an effort to educate and to proliferate their understandings to their congregation, refusing to discuss larger issues in American politics reveals an interpretation of the nation that is not based on historical events. These ministers are not ignorant to the debates, the protests, and the rebellions that are occurring across the nation in regards to slavery. So the decision to not include them in discussions of what they feel is the planned course of the Civil War is worthy of recognition. Without addressing any and all potential reasonings for rebellion, they are consenting to a lack of information that can in

⁹⁶ Ibid. Pg 19.

turn allow more Americans to be convinced of an alternative reality that is reinforced by politicians and other radicals in the conflict. In discounting the causes of the war, we allow misinformation and speculation to spread, and these ministers who are responsible for guiding their congregation may have led them astray.

Another example of a sermon that does little to further the debate on slavery in America is found in Reverend Leonard Jarvis Livermore's "What We Have to be Thankful For," which was preached in Lexington Massachusetts on the same day as Ferris's sermon. Livermore was a Unitarian who graduated from the Cambridge Divinity School and began preaching in 1847.⁹⁷ Our understanding of his place in the larger Protestant society is important as Unitarians are descended from Protestantism, although some would not recognize Unitarians as Christian due to their rejection of the Trinity. Regardless, Livermore's sermon from a Unitarian stance is not the tradition for the area. This is significant as his faith can have an impact on the content of his sermon and how it is delivered to his congregation.

Livermore employs many of the same strategies that we recognized in the sermon delivered by Ferris. Livermore does not waste time in addressing the "traitorous factions" of America.

Certainly we can use the words of the text, feeling that the victories for which we rejoice are more than mere military successes; that we have been saved from the indescribable misfortunes and sufferings which a malignant and bitter enemy hoped, and confidently asserted the power, to inflict on us; feeling, too, that in this deliverance we have a right to find evidence of the favorable regard of the Divine Providence, which indeed leaves us to bear, in heavy form and measure, the sorrows which our faults and sins have incurred, but will not suffer, nevertheless, that an arrogant, treacherous and oppressive faction should be finally triumphant over our much abused country.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ "Intelligence." *The Christian Examiner*, 1847. Pg 465

⁹⁸ Leonard Jarvis Livermore. "What We Have to Be Thankful for." *Harvard Mirador Viewer*. Accessed April 25, 2019. [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:46312845\\$5i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:46312845$5i). Pg 3.

This is the first major statement from Livermore, and it covers his complete thoughts on the war. The text that he is referring to is Psalm 44.7, which reads, “Thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.”⁹⁹ It is clear from the Bible verse in addition to the previous quote that Livermore does not harbor any hesitation towards condemning the southern states for deciding to rebel against the Union. This is similar to the discussion of the war from Ferris, wherein they are both quick to condemn the opposing side as traitors and explain that their cause is unjust, but refuse to acknowledge why it is that they are unjust. Livermore explains that God is protecting the North, but does not qualify the judgment other than that God believes in their cause. What this means is that Livermore is analyzing the conflict in terms of preserving the Union and nothing more.

However, Livermore does include certain allusions to the institution of slavery and his viewpoints on it without placing the term in his sermon. A perfect example of this can be found where Livermore writes, “Our nationality we assert and defend, not merely as ours, but as one based on the recognition of human rights, against a spurious government openly building itself on the denial of every human right.”¹⁰⁰ This quote contains significant thoughts on slavery without ever naming it. This is an interesting strategy, as it would be assumed that many Americans in Massachusetts would be able to understand what Livermore means by this. By referring to human rights, Livermore is discussing equal treatment of all Americans, and in saying that the rebels are building their nation with the opposite intention, then it would mean that they are not treating all peoples equally. It is interesting to interpret why Livermore would include this section supporting the North in their stance on equality without including slavery

⁹⁹ Ibid. Pg. 3

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. Pg. 12

anywhere in the sermon. He has enough awareness of the severity of the issue to want to discuss it with his congregation, but chose not to discuss it as openly as other ministers. We have seen Unitarian ministers advocating for abolition, while Livermore chooses to speak indirectly on the issues of the times. Whether it was to protect himself from any person that disagreed with him or because he felt the war was not revolving around slavery, Livermore's conscious decision to exclude slavery from his dialogue while also condemning the South for their mistreatment of the rights of humans is an intriguing study in the methods of discussing the larger issues of the conflict.

Livermore also employs Ferris's recognition of the sheer cost of the war. This is done to humble the congregation and place the war in the context of Americans slaughtering each other for the sake of their own righteous beliefs. "In our joy and congratulations, we will not forget how great the price which thousands of our fellow-countrymen have paid for our triumphs, in the loss of life or limb, in impaired health or forsaken business; nor the equal sorrows of the bereaved, fathers and mothers mourning for fair sons, the hope of their declining years; wives for husbands, children for fathers."¹⁰¹ There is a striking difference between this quote discussing the cost of the war and the discussion of loss by Ferris. Whereas Ferris was asking for his congregation to pray for their enemies and recognized that they too have experienced great loss, even referring to them as brothers, Livermore is referring only to the loss of lives on the Union side. He explains that the lives were lost for the triumphs that the Union is cheering for. Unless Livermore is referring to the soldiers that the Union had to kill in order to be victorious in battle, which is an fallible argument, he is remaining pro-Union even when discussing the deaths of Americans.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. Pg. 15

This is all to say that while slavery was a central issue in American society from before the outbreak of the Civil War, the way in which it was discussed by ministers and their positions on it are intriguing in relation to the history of inequality in America. There are those who choose to acknowledge it and exclaim their opinion on the matter in order to persuade listeners onto their side. There are also those who choose to disregard the issue in exchange for focusing on the issue of disunity in America. However, as we have seen, it is difficult to discuss the rebellion in America without discussing the catalysts for the rebellion. The ministers who follow this form of discussion are making valid claims about what is plaguing the nation, of that there can be no doubt. However, all people in America have an opinion on the treatment of African Americans in the nation, and whether they approve of slavery or not, it is not something that can be ignored or discussed in a vacuum. These ministers that have placed the Civil War in a historical and religious frame must do the same with the elements that have caused great animosity as well.

On November 19th of this very same year, President Lincoln delivered perhaps the most famous of his speeches, the Gettysburg address. In its first line we see the greatest understanding of the conflict and what it means for America as a nation. “Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”¹⁰² Lincoln is honoring America’s past dreams, its present conflict, and his future aspirations for the nation. It has always been founded on the principle of equality and freedom. Freedom from tyrannical rule, from imposing religious mandates, and from the cruel confines of a socioeconomic system that is not equal. In the midst of such a bloody conflict, Lincoln is defining for the nation what the war is about and the

¹⁰² Abraham Lincoln. "The Gettysburg Address." *Cornell University Library*. Accessed April 25, 2019.http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/gettysburg/good_cause/transcript.htm.

necessity to address what has been plaguing the nation. Combined with his Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln set the standard for all Americans to follow, in that he is unafraid to state his opinions, not fearing what those may judge or act in response. slavery was a vitriolic debate in America, and the mistreatment of African Americans as well as other races in America still yields vitriolic responses, but that does not mean that we should avoid the discussion altogether. These ministers are doing their job of educating the nation on the issues of the nation in an effort for them to begin a dialogue on the future of their nation. The impact of these sermons on their congregation is that they are able to learn more about what is happening to their country. This is why it is up to the ministers to express the conflicts of the nation and their feelings on it, that way it can be up to the congregation to determine for themselves what is right in the eyes of God. Though it may be difficult, and there will be those that radically advocate for either side, what is important is the discussion and the display of whatever evidence these ministers choose to showcase. It is up to the American people, however, to interpret the evidence and choose which word to follow. We may never know how these sermons changed the thoughts of their congregation, but with the Second Great Awakening and the increase in religious advocacy in American affairs, it is clear that the American people listened to their ministers and desired their guidance. While it is difficult to pinpoint the specific impact, we can understand that the congregations of these ministers were eager to embrace their religious leaders and the guidance that they provided.

Chapter 3: Divinity and Nationality

“Americans thought they could see clearly what the world was like, what God was like, what factors drove the world, who was responsible for events, and how the moral balance sheet should be read. They were children of the Enlightenment as well as children of God.”¹⁰³

_____ In the previous chapters we have attempted to navigate the writings of these ministers and their decisions to address larger aspects of the Civil War. What we have seen is that their interpretation of the events and controversies of America were rooted in their faith and how they used religious rhetoric to condemn or condone either the Union or the Confederacy. This is unsurprising as the ministers are all well versed in scripture as well as the technique of homiletics. These ministers do not appear in a vacuum, but they are educated professionals both in the complexities of the faith as well as informed members of American society. Not only are they interconnected with political officials and high status citizens, but they are also rooted in communities across the nation both North and South. Prior to the Civil War many religious denominations had one central governing body, but during the war there became Confederate churches that were to be distinct from the Northern churches in that they supported the Southern ideology of the nation. This is to say that many of the religious leaders, as well as the whole of American society, was connected to religion or the clergy in one way or another.

Their proximity to each other likewise means that they were taught similar practices in regards to their ministry and how they were to interact with their congregation. As we have explained in previous chapters, the desire for a Christian America had been established as a goal

¹⁰³ Noll, Pg 70.

for Protestant leaders since America's inception. The Civil War did not change that goal, however, it did have an impact on what ministers believed was the true conceptualization of a Christian America. Because of the issue of slavery, there became two distinct Christian Americas, diametrically opposed based on this institution. This raises an important question in our understanding of how these ministers respond to dissenting opinions, especially at a time where these once synchronized ideologies are now pitted against one another. These ministers are competing with each other for the keys to Christian America, and it is important to recognize how they go about convincing their congregation. Robert Handy reveals an intriguing understanding of how these ministers go about addressing dissenting opinions. "When the leaders of the Protestant crusade confronted those who resisted what seem to them obviously to be the true and right way, they were ready to use social pressure and moral coercion."¹⁰⁴ We have already seen numerous examples of this when discussing their interpretations of the source of the conflict as well as in their perspectives on slavery in America. Protestants in America had their vision of what was right for the nation, and when that was objected in some way, it was met with the notions that the opposing thought was inferior.

And while we recognize the method of coercing Americans to become a Christian nation, Protestant ministers also believed in religious freedom, so long as the religion was Protestantism. "Believing that by the separation of church and state they had separated religious from secular concerns, they seem to have been largely unaware of how much specifically Protestant content that had in fact invested in their understanding of state and society."¹⁰⁵ This is significant to understanding Protestant ideology of America during this time period. While Protestants advocated for religious freedom, their vision of a Christian America was aligned with the

¹⁰⁴ Handy, Pg 50.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. Pg 51.

political climate of the time. While they advocated for religious freedom, they struggled to understand what parts of America were not aligned with Protestant values but were still appropriate for their vision Christian America. Because Protestant leaders had worked so long towards the betterment of the nation that at this point it was impossible for them to distinguish between what was political and what was religious advisement.

The understanding of the interconnectivity between Protestant advocacy of religious freedom and Protestant ideals in American policy is important in discussing this analysis of Protestant ministers in America. What we have explored so far is their interpretations of secular debates in the nation, of which they have responded with religious rhetoric according to their instruction. And while this is common to the nation it leaves a question lingering among these ministers about the presence of God in the nation. We have been able to analyze how these ministers relate God to slavery and the destiny of America, but how do they discuss American identity and nationality? How do they discuss what is to come after the Civil War, and God's place in the nation after being severed almost entirely? These questions also relate to the larger idea of how God fits into the everyday understanding of the conflict and the nation as a whole. It is clear that the relationship between religious ideologies and political policies are an ongoing reality in the nation with religious organizations forming PACs and American voters interested in the religious beliefs of political candidates. Even the debate over the phrase "under God" in schools is an ongoing reverberation of the Protestant ideals bleeding into American politics. If we are ever to understand the modern political-religious climate in America, we must first analyze how these religious leaders presented their notions of Christian America, as well as how conflicting ideas are addressed and what larger significance they may have on the discourse of the war, and America, as a whole.

Perhaps the most prominent example of this exploration can be found in the sermon “Patriotism Aiding Piety,” which was preached in Philadelphia on April 30th by Thomas Brainerd. We previously discussed Brainerd when analyzing his discussion on the responsibility of the conflict. We know that Brainerd was a Presbyterian from New York who was preaching in Philadelphia. We also know that Brainerd sponsored the care of soldiers during the Civil War and actively visited the camps of soldiers in the city. Even in his life we can see the effects of his religious mindset blending into his civic duty by aiding the soldiers of the war. This signifies that Brainerd was working towards his idea of a Christian America in his efforts to support the nation, which relates to the title of his sermon.

Brainerd begins his sermon with a passage from the book of Esther Chapter 4 verse 14, “For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”¹⁰⁶ He then continues to explain that the relationship Esther has with her nation is the representation of patriotism and piety. “To save the life of her nation, she at once determined to go over *the letter of a law*, over the custom of her sex, and to hazard her own life that her nation might not die. Her bearing indicated deep piety as well as patriotism.”¹⁰⁷ Brainerd has now established a comparison for which his congregation should compare themselves to, as well as presenting his credibility to address politics as a minister. This allows the congregation to compare themselves to Esther and to consider what they are willing to do to save their country, and how that would please God. This is Brainerd’s way of coercing people to be more active in regards to supporting

¹⁰⁶Brainerd, Pg. 5

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. Pg. 7

the conflict, and the remainder of the sermon is dedicated to expressing different ways for Americans to express their patriotism through their religious zeal.

Brainerd lists practices similar with the church that are also beneficial in aiding the nation. The first of which is fasting. He refers to Esther's fasting for three days to be closer to God, and then applies this to modern America.

If our children to-day see us intermit our noon-tide meal; if they mark the fulness of our confessions, and the fervor of our prayers, that God would forgive our sins and the sins of our people; if our children behold this, they will have the evidence that our religion is a reality; that we believe God governs the world; that it is a fearful thing to sin against him, and that all national blessings are dependent on his will.¹⁰⁸

Brainerd here introduces an important understanding of Protestant ministers at this time that can be reflected in the sermons we have observed; the notion that God "governs" all things. In his choice of word, Brainerd is placing religion in a political sphere. As we have seen, these ministers have contextualized the war as preordained by God, which showcases his ability to influence the political sphere of America. If God is a part of all things, then he is vested in politics, and practicing aspects of the faith would then allow the lord to look favorably upon the nation.

A similar understanding can be found where he writes, "It would be an atheistic impeachment of God's justice, to assume that he will by miracles oppose us; and unless he does thus interfere against us, his ordinary blessings, for which we hope, will be our salvation."¹⁰⁹

This quote reveals more of the understanding that Brainerd maintains concerning God's presence in the war and how to perceive him in the events of the conflict. He explains that though there may be hard times, and even losses, God will always be on their side. This will reappear

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. Pg 13.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. Pg 24.

throughout the sermons of this chapter. Those who are pious and place their faith in God would often believe that they are on the right side of history, and at a time of great schism in American religion, this perception can become distorted. Brainerd continues with this mentality in the next paragraph. “It would also be an impeachment, not only of God’s justice, but of the manhood, the patriotism, the virtue of this nation, to assume that we can fail in this contest.”¹¹⁰ Brainerd is now making the claim that God is on the side of the Union and that to assume otherwise is to deny both God and country. This mentality is an example of the general trend of the Protestant faith in America. Because they had been part of the first settlements in the nation, they felt an entitlement to determining the future of America. Their vision of a Christian America, they felt, was a destiny for the nation. And so, to deny that vision would be going against the faith, but also against the betterment of the nation.

There is another sermon that focuses on the presence of God in regards to the events of the war. The sermon is titled, “God in the War,” and was delivered on behalf of the U.S Christian Commission on August 6th by Henry Smith. The U.S Christian Commission was comprised of religious leaders that would visit soldiers in the Union and care for them while also proliferating religious literature. Similar to Brainerd, there is a trend of Protestant ministers wanting to come together to support the nation in whatever way they could. However, it is clear that their vision of aiding the nation also relied on the notion of spreading the Protestant faith. In fact, their original objective was faith based. The following was taken from a study on the Commission. “The Christian Commission distributed thousands of Christian tracts, Bibles, and pamphlets to the soldiers, and provided them with additional reading material by operating portable libraries. Its volunteers also distributed medical supplies to field hospitals, assisted surgeons on the

¹¹⁰ Ibid. Pg 24.

battlefields, wrote letters home for the sick and wounded, and taught and witnessed about Christ.”¹¹¹ This is an example of the work that Handy has described and that we have seen in the sermons analyzed thus far. There is a spiritual obligation to serve those who are fighting for the nation, for the good of the nation. It is not surprising to see these religious leaders employing practices to aid the nation while also to fulfill their vision of the nation. For Protestant leaders, performing one task will support the other. The work of supporting the nation stemmed from the idea that God would look favorably upon him for it. In the same vein as Brainerd has written, Stuart’s piety has provided for his patriotism, and his patriotism has aided his piety.

Henry Smith, after having spent his academic life traveling across Europe studying history and religion, writes this sermon with the intention of furthering the goal of the U.S Christian Commission. He begins with a passage from Deuteronomy, chapter 28 verse 7, “The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.”¹¹² This is an encouraging passage from Smith, especially given the context that this sermon was most likely performed for soldiers on behalf of the U.S Christian Commission. Any further thought would be revealing the fact that the enemies in question were once brothers in arms, but for the purpose of the Union and the U.S Christian Commission, increasing morale comes at the expense of further polarizing the nation. While his intention may be to comfort his audience, those that he is not speaking to may not experience the same comfort that he is attempting to foster. In fact, many of these sermons demonstrate that the ministers are speaking to their congregations at the expense of not

¹¹¹Dan Graves, "Civil War Christian Commission Was Formed," Christianity.com, , accessed April 25, 2019 <https://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/1801-1900/civil-war-christian-commission-was-formed-11630528.html>.

¹¹² Henry Smith. "God in the War." *Hathitrust*. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=miun.abj5665.0001.001;page=root;view=image;size=100;seq=3>. Pg 3

considering others, though that was not their intention. These “others,” can mean members of other denominations, citizens in other states, other parts of the world even, however the sentiment is the same that there will always be those that a sermon is intended for, and other groups will be unable to align with its direction. However, the quote does provide inspiring words that God is on their side and will help defeat their enemies on the battlefield.

Smith then transitions into a discussion on the presence of God on the battlefield and His intention to keep the Union safe. He speaks on the context of the war in history and how important it is for his Christian audience to understand him. He then provides his understanding of God, in which he writes, “God is God. He is such a God as is recognized in this proclamation: a God of infinite justice, a God of infinite mercy, but a God of infinite wisdom as well. And he is a God, who, whilst forever interposing in the affairs of men, interposes in favor of, and in harmony with, the principles of divine and eternal Justice, Mercy and Wisdom.”¹¹³ This quote is representative of the larger trend of placing God in terms that are indistinguishable from the ideas of the American government. Justice, Mercy, and Wisdom are all aspects of a good leader, a strong governing body, and any person worthy of God’s favor. Smith here is attempting to intertwine the image of God with that of the Union, so that the soldiers may gain an understanding of the righteousness of their cause. In defining God as something that is without definition while also relating him to many of the understandings of the American government, Smith is pointing towards the theme of moral and religious superiority as a means of justifying the conflict and encouraging the soldiers to continue their fight. This sermon comes in the wake of the draft riots in New York, so it is to be certain that parts of the Union are feeling some dissenting opinion on the conflict as the conflict surpasses two years of fighting. Smith is

¹¹³ Ibid. Pg 8.

attempting to raise the morale of the Union soldiers so they do not leave the battlefield unattended, though the consequences of staying to fight are just as deadly.

After defining God in the terms he holds as convictions, Smith continues to discuss God's presence in the war. He uses God as a means of justifying all of the decisions as well as the shortcomings of the Union. "God makes no mistakes. The folly of men is the wisdom of God."¹¹⁴ This quote appears after a listing of the Union's missteps, including military defeats and the Emancipation Proclamation. Smith is not being critical of these inadequacies, rather he is attempting to justify them through the guise that God is orchestrating the events. This point is emphasized further when Smith states, "His hand was in its inception; his hand has been in its entire evolution; and his hand alone can conduct us through the fearful perils which still environ us to the successful issue which we so earnestly anticipate."¹¹⁵ This notion of explaining the events of the war in relation to some preordained plan by God is not uncommon for the Union, nor is it a foreign idea for the Confederacy. In the previous chapters we have seen the use of God to answer questions that have difficult answers to find, shown in the discussions on the inception of the war. Smith is allowing faith to quell any uncertainties that may appear in the units of the army, as in the American people in general. While it may appear that this is mere fanaticism and a romanticism of the conflict and allowing the Union to believe that they can do no wrong, it is a comforting thought to be able to know that some divine being is on their side and that every death and sacrifice is worth it in the end if it will lead to a Union victory. This could all be done with the understanding that Smith is speaking to soldiers and not to an average American in a city or small town. We have explored the understanding of intended audience, and here we have another example where the intended audience has a direct impact on their discourse. It could be

¹¹⁴ Ibid. Pg 17.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. Pg. 17.

that soldiers would benefit more from this comforting notion than the rest of America. Because these soldiers were risking their lives, hearing that everything is preordained would provide some ease in an already devastating conflict.

Smith makes his most intriguing claim as he discusses his second core idea of the sermon: the notion that the Union must be aligned with the Justice of God. In this section he begins with, “Men talk about Policy. My friends, God is a governor, and God is just. In the science of government, Justice is policy. It is the only policy which God will tolerate.”¹¹⁶ At a first glance, one would assume that governor had the implication of God representing the interests of the states much like an American governor, however more analysis of the statement will reveal alternative interpretations. Using the word governor can be understood as “one who governs,” which is much more aligned with the ideas Smith previously presented. God is governing the people in that he is leading them and represents their best interests. This is significant as it supports the idea that God is on the side of the Union and can do no wrong, and therefore neither could the people that are fighting on the Union side. Because Smith has estimated that God comes from Justice, while also placing the Union in God’s favor, he is reinforcing this notion that the North must continue fighting at whatever cost because God is governing them to do so. This can be interpreted as a comforting thought that these men have a re-inspired faith to fight, but can also be saddening to know that these men were coerced into fighting in a conflict that they may not have full faith in, many of them often being poor Americans and immigrants new to the nation, but were encouraged by their religious and political leaders.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. Pg 17.

On the subject of political leaders, Smith does not avoid an opportunity to criticize American politicians for causing the conflict. “We have been under the guidance of that human folly which dignifies itself with the name of statesmanship, long enough. It has plunged the nation into a civil war whose vast proportions will be the great landmark of the nineteenth century, down to the close of human history. What the government needs is the wisdom which cometh from God.”¹¹⁷ Here we are able to recognize a continuation of the line of thinking that Smith is attempting to reinforce in the minds of these soldiers. However, it is a conflicting thought to claim that God has preordained the war, and yet the war was caused by the folly of politicians. Perhaps Smith is attempting to support the claim that the war is a divine judgment, but it is not entirely clear that these understandings are intended to be separated. These conflicting thoughts are challenged where he writes, “The Wisdom of God has been over the government, vouchsafed in answer to the penitent prayers of his people.”¹¹⁸ Based on Smith’s text, we can understand that God has always watched over the nation and that his wisdom has been present thanks to the prayers of those who practice the faith. This means that the reason for the conflicts in America is due to a lack of religious faith. Here is Smith’s claim for piety aiding patriotism and vice versa, as he is praising the Christians in the audience while also allowing for the realization that their faith was not enough to prevent the conflict from happening. However, Smith can, and indeed does, refute that understanding with a new claim that having faith in God will save them and help end the conflict.

While Smith is attempting to navigate the complex political climate of praising the Union, at the same time he condemns the members of the nation who have allowed the conflict to occur.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. Pg 23.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. Pg 24.

Doubtless the government has made mistakes. Doubtless it will continue to make them. But I firmly believe its aim to be loyal, and its main policy to have been guided by the wisdom of God. Let him who doubts it divide the war into two great periods: the period antedating the emancipation proclamation and the period succeeding it. Let him count the disasters and the victories; let him measure their magnitude and importance, in each period, and rest satisfied that God is with us and that his hand has guided us.¹¹⁹

This section of the sermon solidifies the understanding that Smith has on the presence of God in the conflict and the nation as a whole. According to Smith, God has always been in favor of the Union, and God will continue to guide the nation to victory. He admits that the government is not perfect, but emphasizes his claim that to deny the Union's righteousness and to deny God's wisdom is to go against the divine, the definitive course of history. This is most likely done to appeal to the soldiers and to ensure that they believe that they are right to fight in this war. While it may appear to be conflicting thoughts, the fact that they appear at various points of the sermon separate from each other, so it could be that these soldiers did not attempt to connect the points and realize the conflicting visions of Smith. Regardless, it is clear from this sermon that the ways in which ministers attempted to inspire hope in the soldiers and general population involve placing God as the ultimate governing body in the conflict and justifying all prior events in the war as predestined by God and necessary for their victory.

The sermons so far have showcased an interesting relationship between the soldiers of the war and the religious leaders who are attempting to support them however they can. The soldiers in the war are an important party in the Civil War. They are the ones who have to walk out onto the battlefield and risk their lives to attack men who were once brothers. The Civil War created a rift in the nation but it also severed local communities, friends, and family. The image of literal

¹¹⁹ Ibid. Pg. 29.

brothers fighting each other on the battlefield is not unrealistic in the Civil War, though it has been romanticized to support that image. As the war raged on for much longer than expected and the tactics of fighting became more and more fierce, the encouragement for the war was waning. The draft by the Union represents both the sad truth of the cost of the war and the reaction to the draft showcases some less than popular public opinion on the conflict.

Religious officials were aware of these moments in the course of the war, as well as the ever increasing cost of lives that the war has caused. It is therefore interesting to observe how these ministers approach discussions about soldiers and serve as chaplains for regiments of the armies. We have already seen examples from Smith as to how they discuss the war to soldiers, but how do these religious leaders place God in relation to the soldiers on the field? Similarly, when there are political controversies like the draft in the Union, how were the ministers able to coerce the American people to encourage the enlistment and observe it as a positive for the nation? What we will find is that these ministers place a continued emphasis on the theme of patriotism and piety, and emphasize the glory of the soldiers as heralds of Christian America aligned with the work of the ministers. Noll states it best when he writes, “Since the dawn of time, warring combatants have regularly reached for whatever religious support they could find to nerve their own side for battle.”¹²⁰ Religious justification for national actions is a common trend throughout history, and here we are witnessing the both sides of the Civil War employing the same tactic. Placing God in the war has produced discussions of judgment, predestined events, and the need for an unwavering will, perhaps a more focused discussion on the soldiers will create similar themes.

¹²⁰ Noll, Pg.12

We can begin with a sermon that addresses the draft in the Union. “A Response to the Draft,” is a sermon delivered in Salem, Massachusetts, and was preached in the Barton Square Church on August 30th by Augustus Mellen Haskell. Augustus was from Maine but studied in Harvard where he graduated in 1856 and then graduating from the Divinity School of Harvard in 1861.¹²¹ He became the minister of the Independent Congregational Church in Barton Square in 1862.¹²² A significant fact about Haskell is that he himself was drafted in 1863, however he was elected to serve as the chaplain of the 40th regiment of Massachusetts instead of being a private soldier. He later resigned from the position in 1864.¹²³ We know that the Enrollment Act was effective in March of 1863, but we are unsure when Haskell became the chaplain of the regiment. It could be that this sermon was written in response to his conscription, or it could be before he was drafted to fight. Because it was preached in the Barton Square Church, we know it must have been delivered before his time in the army, but it is difficult to get any more specific. In either context, however, it is significant that he was drafted, but was appointed to be a chaplain, allowing him to fulfill his religious and civil obligation to the nation in a way that avoided direct fighting. If perhaps this was written before his conscription, it would be interesting to identify a change in attitude after having been called to arms. The sermon should shed some light on the feelings of the draft from a religious leader in the wake of the draft riots in New York but from a different state and also almost two months after the event itself.

¹²¹ "Memorial of the Harvard College Class of 1856." *Google Books*. October 20, 2006.
[https://books.google.com/books?id=peATAAAIAAJ&pg=PA137&lpg=PA137&dq=augustus mellen haskellmassachusetts&source=bl&ots=OEUnWxPJW5&sig=ACfU3U0R6sXTqmlJzYZz4iexCAIzzjFw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjT0sjK5J7gAhUQc98KHb_tC_YQ6AEwBXoECAEQAAQ#v=onepage&q=augustus mellen haskell massachusetts&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=peATAAAIAAJ&pg=PA137&lpg=PA137&dq=augustus+mellen+haskell+massachusetts&source=bl&ots=OEUnWxPJW5&sig=ACfU3U0R6sXTqmlJzYZz4iexCAIzzjFw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjT0sjK5J7gAhUQc98KHb_tC_YQ6AEwBXoECAEQAAQ#v=onepage&q=augustus+mellen+haskell+massachusetts&f=false). Pg 137.

¹²² Ibid. Pg 137.

¹²³ Ibid. Pg 137.

Haskell begins his sermon with a passage from Samuel. “And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.”¹²⁴ This passage expresses a positive appreciation for the draft, as the quote is advising that these soldiers must have strong wills and have faith in their lord against their enemies. The passage is reflected in Haskell’s first words. “If we truly believe the cause of our country in the present struggle is righteous and just, this is the word of encouragement we should give her and send to the wasted ranks of our armies [...]”¹²⁵ Haskell is unafraid to place his support in the Union, and he defines their success with the same terms that have been expressed by other religious leaders. The descriptors “righteous” and “just” have been used numerous times to justify the conflict on either side, which are biblical terms that demonstrate the connection between religious and political justice. This is to instill faith in the congregation and to ensure that they are trusting the government.

Haskell then addresses the question raised over when the sermon was written in terms of his conscription. “Most of you are doubtless aware, that in the late call of the Government for men to serve in the army, the lot fell upon me. I propose to accept the alternative to go.”¹²⁶ Here we are able to see that not only has Haskell received his call to arms, but he is choosing to go, albeit in a different, less dangerous position in the army. Nevertheless, Haskell is announcing his decision to answer the call, and the fact that he is placing it in his sermon means that he is going to use his experience to proliferate his feelings on the draft in his congregation. He explains that the draft is a call from “a higher authority.”¹²⁷ The higher authority he is referring to can be

¹²⁴Augustus Mellen Haskell. "A Response to the Draft." *Hathitrust*. Accessed April 25, 2019.<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t9p279m4j;page=root;view=image;size=100;seq=5>. Pg. 3

¹²⁵ Ibid. Pg 3.

¹²⁶ Ibid. Pg. 4.

¹²⁷ Ibid. Pg. 4.

assumed to be that of the federal government and the authority they have to call for citizens to join the army, or more likely the call of God and his authority to change the lives of his followers and lead them to their destiny. Perhaps Haskell's desire in not defining this higher authority is to allow his congregation to place the draft in a religious context. This would paint the draft in a more justified light, while also allowing his congregation to recognize the patriotism that pours forth from answering a call to arms. Haskell is establishing the relationship between patriotism and piety in a less direct way than his other ministers, however his ambiguity of a higher authority can be seen as an appeal to both the religious and the secular-focused audiences that may be in attendance.

Haskell continues in his sermon to describe the war in these terms, and emphasizes the idea that men should be honored to fight in the war as they are doing service to God. "The cause I have felt to be just and holy; that men were doing God service who engaged in it."¹²⁸ This is significant as it is a direct connection between God and the war effort. Whereas we have seen ministers in the Union and the Confederacy using religion to justify their reasons to fight, this is a push towards establishing the idea that these soldiers are fighting for God himself. Remember that the decision to secede and attack stemmed from tensions over slavery and the war itself was based on a decision to fight to preserve the Union. However here we are identifying an idea that these soldiers are doing God's work in fighting for the Union. This is not far off from the themes we have seen in previous sermons, rather it is an extension of these ideas as it places God's will closer to the heart of the conflict. This point is also shown when Haskell writes, "Self-sacrifice I have represented as true life. Not feeling that we are making it in self-forgetfulness, serving others in any and every way, I have called divine."¹²⁹ Here Haskell is further expressing the

¹²⁸ Ibid. Pg.7

¹²⁹ Ibid. Pg. 8

religious superiority of the Union by claiming that the soldiers' ability to sacrifice themselves is comparable to Christ sacrificing himself. This is significant because it aligns with the desire for a Christian America through the veil of fighting for the Union. Christian ideology advocates for sacrifice in a number of ways, and so sacrificing oneself for the advancement of one's community is the ultimate demonstration of faith. Haskell is demonstrating the desire of Protestant ministers to guide the nation towards a Christian America by infusing Christian ideology into aspects of American life. In the case of the Civil War, this meant using Christianity as a means to demonstrate patriotism and moral righteousness.

Evidence for this can be found where Haskell continues to discuss God's presence in the war. He states, "Its success will be the triumph of these and the deliverances of the whole world; but the success of the rebellion would be the death of civilization and Christianity, whatever its influence extended."¹³⁰ This places the war in the context of a crusade of some sorts in which the fate of Christian America hangs in the balance. This is interesting when considering that the major religion of the Union and the Confederacy are sects of Christianity. However, when the Union was severed, so too was Christianity in the nation, which demonstrates the differing interpretations of both the nation and Christianity. Explaining that the fate of Christian America relies on the victory of the Union establishes a direct link between the federal government and the Christian faith, interlocking them in a way that would go against their goal of religious freedom. Perhaps this is best shown in his later quote, "When Christianity shall have full sway in the hearts of men, evidently not only will war but all conflict cease, the antagonism between good and evil disappear, and the salvation of the world be fully come."¹³¹ Or more simply put by

¹³⁰ Ibid. Pg 10.

¹³¹ Ibid. Pg 10

Haskell, “It is God’s war of light against darkness.”¹³² In the same way that the American people have placed the war into a dichotomy of right and wrong, good and evil, Haskell is elevating this claim to a much larger degree. While it may boost morale to define the war in these terms, it also brings unforeseen consequences of romanticism and blind passion.

To provide an example of the Confederate discussion of the soldiers in the conflict, we can look towards James Beverlin Ramsey’s “True Eminence Founded on Holiness,” which was delivered in Lynchburg, Virginia, on May 24th. The sermon is also connected with a discussion on the death of a Lieutenant General for the Confederacy, which will allude to praising the soldiers for their service. Haskell explained that soldiers sacrificing themselves for the cause is the most important sacrifice that one could make for the nation, is there a similar feeling in the Confederacy? James Ramsey was a graduate of the Princeton Seminary and served the congregations of New Monmouth and Lynchburg, Virginia.¹³³ Ramsey was a Maryland native, and considering his congregations were both in Virginia, it is understandable that he would have an affinity for the Confederacy. The T.J Jackson in question is none other than Stonewall Jackson, who passed away on May 10th as a result of an instance of friendly fire on May 2nd. Jackson was a significant figure for the Confederacy, and so his death brought a great blow to the Confederacy both in regards to leadership and morality. It is not surprising that his death would be discussed long after his funeral. The sermon discusses the importance of soldiers, but it may be more romantic towards its discussion of one of the great military leaders of the Confederacy. This sermon is significant in identifying how these Confederate ministers explained in religious terms the need for fighting in the battle no matter the cost.

¹³² Ibid. Pg 10

¹³³ "James Beverlin Ramsey Author Biography." *Banner of Truth USA*. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://banneroftruth.org/us/about/banner-authors/james-beverlin-ramsey/>.

The title alone alludes to his feelings on the relationship between patriotism and piety, true eminence *founded* on holiness. This title can be understood to mean the eminence of Jackson, and the Confederacy as a whole, is rooted in their relationship to God. The passage that Ramsey chooses to recite is from the book of Psalms Chapter 91 verse 14, “I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.”¹³⁴ This passage reflects the sentiment of the title of the piece and will allude to Ramsey’s own beliefs on the subject of God and fighting in the war. The passage can be inferred to mean that those who know God and follow his word are sure to be saved and find a place in heaven. This is referring to Stonewall Jackson, but the same principle can be applied to all soldiers in the Confederacy. This ideology also aligns well with notion of Haskell in regards to the Union soldiers.

Ramsey emphasizes the idea of God in the war when explaining Jackson’s call to fight. “When he entered the army at the beginning of the war, he did it in obedience to the call of his God, as well as of his country.”¹³⁵ Ramsey defines the call of the nation and the call of God to be two different sources, though they are advocating for the same thing. This means that although God and the nation may be different things, their interests are aligned, which is similar to the Union’s claim that God is supporting the Union war effort. Further in the sermon Ramsey explains the relationship between the passage and the service of Stonewall Jackson. “God set him on high, because he honored God. This whole Psalm beautifully and strikingly applies to him. It describes the Divine protection and honor of the man that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, that says of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress : my God, in him will I

¹³⁴James Beverlin Ramsey. "True Eminence Founded on Holiness." *Documenting the American South*. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/ramsey1/ramsey.html>.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

trust.”¹³⁶ Ramsey is stating that Stonewall Jackson was great because of his faith in God, and he will be honored for his glory because of his dedication to Christ. For the Confederacy as well as the Union the connection of pride in the nation and belief in God are intertwined, and working in the name of God will bring the individual and the nation glory.

Ramsey also describes religion as a tool to create strong soldiers and citizens. “True religion has a necessary tendency to produce those qualities that alone can fit men for the highest stations and the noblest deeds.”¹³⁷ This is in reference to Jackson, but can also be applied to any soldiers in the Confederacy. The ability for Christianity to create people capable of great deeds is not an uncommon theme in the faith nor is it unfamiliar to either side of the country. We have seen how these religious leaders interpret religion’s relationship with these soldiers, however this statement is more connected to Americans as a whole. The incentive for a Christian America is the idea that the citizens of the nation would be capable of amazing feats thanks to their faith in God. This also related to the notion that believing in God would mean victory for either side of the conflict, because God is somehow supporting both sides while condemning the opposing sides. The final words of the sermon represent Ramsey’s understanding of God in the war, and the importance of faith. “Fear not, falter not, flinch not, trust in God and victory is ours; victory over our country's foes, over all of the foes of the Church of Christ, over sin and hell and death. God will set us on high, if we revere his name.”¹³⁸ The soldiers of the war rely on God as a way to answer the question of the fate of the nation. In a time of great uncertainty, perhaps the only solace that Americans can find is in the belief in a higher power that will protect them from the situation they see themselves in. However, we have also seen that while these ministers are

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

providing answers to abstract questions, their answers are vested in their own religious and political alignment. And this alignment is a symptom of the relationship between nationality and religion in America, as it is the continuation of this practice since before the founding of the country.

The idea of God being a part of the war, as we have seen, is done to preserve the hope of either side in the conflict. With an ever-growing cost of life and no clear end in sight as the war has gone on for two years, it is understandable that the citizens of the nation would be feeling a lack of guidance and understanding. This is a perfect time for the Protestant ministers to reintroduce the nation to God and to use faith as a way to ease the worries of either side and set them back on track. The connection between patriotism and piety is that having faith in God should restore faith in the nation. At a time of great struggle, Protestant leaders are instilling the ideas of a Christian America through comforting those who are risking their lives and those who may feel the most lost in regards to the fate of the nation. This was the ultimate goal of the US Christian Commission after all, to aid those with the proliferation of God's word.

However, the cost of instilling such passion into the hearts and minds of these soldiers is at the expense of fostering a better understanding across the battlefield. As opposed to enabling the zeal of war, these ministers can just as well express an ideology of understanding and remembering that all Americans are children of God. While the nation is severed based on party lines and affiliations based on factions, political interests, race, etc., these ministers are operating under the impression that their vision of unity is the definitive answer to America's issues. After the Civil War, the struggle for Reconstruction demonstrated how flawed attempting to unify the nation and reaching a consensus would be. Ministers, politicians, and everyday Americans all had some opinion on what was to be done with the nation. Instead of working collaboratively

and deciding a future unanimously, Reconstruction failed due to a lack of consensus stemming from a dependency on following the policies of political parties. As we have seen, the bonds of nationalism and piety are much tighter than we would expect, and even the religious leaders have their interests aligned with those of politicians. In previous chapters we have experienced the divisions of ministers on slavery and the reasoning for the conflict, divisions that are likewise seen in the politicians of the time and with the American people as a whole. If we are to hold our politicians accountable for their attempts to influence the American people, attempts that the ministers have defined as corrupt, we must also hold accountable these religious leaders for attempting to do the same thing. Patriotism and piety are interwoven into the fabric of the Civil War, which makes it so difficult to discuss. When diametrically opposed sides of a conflict believe that their cause is just, and use similar text and ideology to support their claims, it must take thoughtful consideration to navigate what an honest portrayal of the events is and what is mere romanticism to support a larger narrative.

Conclusion: A Vision Blurred

*So it came about that the Civil War precipitated intellectual-religious, as well as domestic, fratricide.*¹³⁹

On April 18th an article from the Washington Post outlined the persistence of multiple interpretations of Christianity and the ways in which they embed themselves in the nation. The article discussed Taylor University, an evangelical school based in Indiana, and their decision to have Vice President Mike Pence speak their 2019 commencement. The President of the University, Paul Lowell Haines, said that the Vice President is, “a Christian brother whose life and values have exemplified what we strive to instill in our graduates.”¹⁴⁰ Mike Pence was a former governor and congressman of Indiana, and is a devout evangelical, so it would make sense to invite the Vice President to speak to the graduating class. The article includes the mission statement of the university, “challenging each generation of students to integrate faith with learning and follow Christ’s calling.”¹⁴¹ Analyzing the Taylor University website reveals their way of achieving their mission through trying to be, “Biblically Anchored and Liberal Arts Grounded, Christ-Centered, Faith and Learning Integrated, and Servant Leader Motivated.”¹⁴²

The article then goes on to reveal that alumni and students in the university are protesting the decision to have Pence speak at the Christian University. There is a Change.org petition

¹³⁹ Noll, Pg 27.

¹⁴⁰ Isaac Stanley-Becker, "'Not My Jesus': Christian Students Protest Pence, Alarming Conservatives," *The Washington Post*, April 18, 2019, , https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/04/18/who-has-bewitched-you-conservatives-alarmed-christian-students-protest-pence-speech/?utm_term=.8610f8eb6299.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² "About Taylor University." *Distinctions | Taylor University*. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://www.taylor.edu/distinctions>.

authored by 2007 graduate Alex Hoekstra, who wrote in the petition, “Inviting Vice President Pence to Taylor University and giving him a coveted platform for his political views makes our alumni, faculty, staff and current students complicit in the Trump-Pence Administration’s policies, which we believe are not consistent with the Christian ethic of love we hold dear.”¹⁴³ The debate has caught the attention of major news outlets as well as prominent evangelical Franklin Graham. When discussing the debate Graham is quoted as saying, “This reminds me of Paul’s words, ‘You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?’”¹⁴⁴ He explains that Donald Trump and Mike Pence defend the faith and are the best examples for the graduating students to follow. Meanwhile, graduating senior Benjamin Krapohl is included in the article saying he, “claimed the invitation was a sign of disrespect to ‘all the non-white, non-straight students who are already pushed to the fringes of Taylor’s community.’”¹⁴⁵ A quote from alumnus Graham Hauser outlines more reasoning for the protest against Pence. “‘Republican’ isn’t ‘Christian’ anymore and this administration has made it easier than ever to see that.”¹⁴⁶

This is not the first instance of the conflict between the understanding of Christianity and its connection to the past, present, and future of the nation. Some students, faculty, and alumni of Taylor University oppose Pence’s speech because his interpretation of Christianity does not align with their own, or as the petition states, “Not my Jesus.”¹⁴⁷ Americans have different understandings of the Christian faith, which is connected to their understanding of the proper course of the nation. Mike Pence’s advocacy against same-sex marriage is reflective of the current Presidential administration’s policies that are against transgender peoples and other

¹⁴³ Stanley-Becker,

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

marginalized groups. Remember that Donald Trump has a Christian Advisory Board that is designed to aid the President in his policies that reflect a Christian understanding of America. But as we have proven, there are multiple Christian understandings of the nation, and they are often in direct opposition to one another.

From our exploration with these sermons, we can understand that this is a pattern in American history, wherein Protestant ministers in America weave their understanding of the nation with their Christian ideology until they are indistinguishable from one another. The Civil War represents a moment in American history where these competing interpretations were brought to the forefront of American society, as the moral conflict of slavery caused the nation and sects of Christianity to separate. During the second year of the conflict these ministers were struggling to make meaning of the war and to present their interpretations to their congregations. Though these ministers advocated for fighting, they did so with the foundation that it was the morally righteous thing to do. What these sermons represent as a whole is the use of scripture and the interpretations of scripture to reinforce aspects of the war that align with their political and Christian worldview. Noll puts it best when he writes,

Although the war showed what could be accomplished through massive industrial mobilization, it did not offer clear moral guidance as to how that mobilization could be put to use for the good of all citizens. The evangelical Protestant traditions that had done so much to shape society before the war did possess theological resources to address both America's deeply ingrained racism and its burgeoning industrial revolution. But the Civil War took the steam out of Protestants' moral energy.¹⁴⁸

Noll's final line is the most significant of the passage above, as it provides the context for Christianity in America post-Civil War. The moral energy of the Protestants was taken away

¹⁴⁸ Handy. Pg. 136

through their efforts to support their individual claims as opposed to reaching a religious understanding across even their own denominations. These Protestant ministers were making their own meaning of the war based on their interpretations of the Bible and events in American history. However, with the divisions of Christianity across denominational and political lines, Protestantism as a whole suffered as there was no central goal for the religion to achieve. The original goal of a Christian America was impossible to reach as there became too many differing interpretations of Christianity and its place in the nation.

This is not the end of the discussion on the influence of these ministers, or lack thereof. The ministers selected represent only a small portion of the multitude of Protestant leaders spread throughout the nation, each with their own thoughts on the war and potentially alternative ways of expressing these thoughts to their congregation. For this reason, it is difficult to identify any ubiquitous trends for the whole of the Protestant faith and even the denominations. Further research on each denomination would most likely yield more concrete findings on the specific rhetoric and beliefs of these denominations in relation to the war. The reason these ministers were selected was because these men were of members of the elite male Protestant ministers who had the power and influence to publish their sermons and launch efforts to advocate for the war effort through organizations. This is a pattern that has continued through to the present day where high status Protestant ministers use their influence to form non-profit organizations to further advocate for their own beliefs.

While more sermons from more faiths and denominations would always be beneficial for this analysis, that does not disregard what has been shown to us through our interpretations of the sermons presented here. Our exploration of these religious leaders in the middle of the conflict has provided us with the context to understand more of how these divisions between Christianity

and America were one in the same. These ministers have discussed abstract questions surrounding the war, and the ways in which their answers align to each other and to the larger themes of Protestantism in America. These ministers reinforced the idea that the war was a form of divine retribution. We have observed these ministers demonstrating their regional pride through the lens of moral superiority and condemning the opposing side as treasonous and antithetical to the American cause. The implementation of this understanding is present regardless of denomination or regional differences throughout the sermons selected, which is indicative of the ways in which Protestant ministers were part of the problem of misinformation and furthering the divide in America. Due to their advocacy of their own interpretations and their dismissal of any other interpretation, the different visions of Christianity blended with differing visions of America; there could be no Christian America because there was no consensus of what Christianity was or what being an American meant. This is then impressed upon the American people who are in the midst of a national crisis which is dividing more and more due to the interpretations of Protestant ministers.

We have also examined their discourse on slavery and the ways in which they addressed, or refused to address, America's relationship with the institution and what they felt was to be done. From Southern ministers we have seen the justification of slavery through scripture as well as its connection to the history of America. These ministers highlighted the institutionalization of slavery in America and based their defense of its continuation on that foundation. Meanwhile Northern ministers advocated for the abolition of slavery with scripture as well as with an understanding of fundamental human rights and American historical documents like the Declaration of Independence. The Northern ministers also showcased their institutionalized racism in the form of identifying Africans as a childlike race that is need of a white Christian

America to develop them further. Here we have a split among our Protestant leaders on the content of the debate, however their justification for their opinion is rooted with the same evidence coming from two distinct interpretation of , scripture and American history.

We also gained some of the most valuable insight into the understanding and implication of God's hand in the conflict itself, which is representative of the ultimate goal of these Protestant ministers. Through placing God at the forefront of every discussion on the war, through identifying his judgment in every battle and piece of legislation of the time, these ministers are interpreting American life and society with their specific Christian lens. At a time where there was great divide over the political and social course of America through events like the election of Abraham Lincoln and the rise of industrialization in the North, these ministers took on the responsibility of advocating for a Christian America that would be devoid of all conflict. The war was an opportunity for them to highlight the moral matters that they felt were plaguing America, as well as what they felt was the best way to correct them. It is not surprising that these methods of salvation and moral righteousness were linked to Protestant traditions. We have seen ministers create a direct connection between civic duty and religious devotion, especially in the face of draft riots and the growing dissent for the war as it dragged on. This pattern is also present throughout American history, where Catholics were forced to convert to Protestantism if they were to receive care from Protestant hospitals. Or the fact that many schools in American history used the Protestant King James Bible as a textbook, essential for becoming literate in the US but an affront to American Catholics Protestant traditions have been linked to American life for generations, and what we have seen in these sermons demonstrates that these ministers all had varying ideas of what the Christian tradition was to be for America. Protestant ministers agreed that America was a Christian nation, but could not agree on which

interpretation of Christianity they should use as the foundation for the nation. This is a conflict that is still present in Protestantism in America in the modern day, where ministers are advocating for opposing values and ideologies with the same Christian faith.

This is all to address the core of this paper, which is to identify and analyze the ways in which these Protestant ministers demonstrate different interpretations of Christianity and how their understanding of Christianity bled into their views on America. And what we are able to interpret is that these rhetorical tactics represent the efforts of these ministers to connect the war with religion, creating, as Noll puts it, a theological crisis. These ministers were attempting to provide answers to abstract questions that affected many Americans. The Protestant ministers selected here have demonstrated that their way to discuss these questions was to infuse the present with scriptural meaning as a means of proving that God is still present in the nation. This is a theme that is present throughout American history and the present day. It is now easier than ever for Protestant ministers to publish their sermons, broadcast them across the nation and the world, and use their influence to attempt to change American life. This also means that it has become easier to point out the discrepancies between interpretations of Christianity. This is why the debate over Vice President Pence's commencement speech is just one instance of many arguments over differing interpretations of Christianity, and how they impact the course of the nation.

According to a 2018 Rasmussen report, 31% of all voters believe that a second civil war is likely.¹⁴⁹ This study represents the modern tensions that Americans are feeling about the strength of their nation. Americans are becoming more and more divided across lines of race, class, gender, sexuality, and religion. These divisions are being emphasized by high status

¹⁴⁹ Rasmussen Reports

political and religious leaders emphasizing their own opinions while condemning and delegitimizing any other understanding. As we have seen, this is a direct parallel to the strategies of the Protestant ministers and their advocacy for their own interpretations and dismissal of other interpretations as fanaticism and corruption. If this fear is present in America, then referring back to the Civil War for an understanding of their political and religious discourse is beneficial in noting the trends between the two time periods. In 2019 there are political and religious interpretations of the nation and the ability for influential figures to spread their notions is easier than ever, however the intention behind the message has always been the same. Protestant ministers and political leaders that practice Christianity are embedding Christian ideology into American life and attempting to lead the nation towards their vision of Christian America. More and more Americans, however, are recognizing the issues advocating for government policy with a religion that has severe divisions amongst themselves.

America's relationship with Christianity will likely be an issue for many years to come, so long as there is a platform for Protestant leaders to share their ideas and advocate for change that aligns with their vision of the nation. It is important for us to recognize that the discourse occurring in the nation now is an extension of the same rhetorical strategies implemented as far back as the Civil War and even the founding of the nation. There are some Protestant ministers like Robert Jeffress who focus on what makes Christians and Americans different, and advocating for an assimilation of peoples to one faith. We also have ministers like William Barber II who advocates for coexistence regardless of what may make us different. In a sense, these are the ultimate visions of a Christian America in the modern day; there are those who advocate for conversion along whatever line of Christianity they follow and those that advocate for coexistence. And while this will be a point of debate throughout Protestant communities for

years to come, what this study has provided is the understanding that this is the continuation of a long standing debate that further divides the nation. It is my hope that through this examination into the discourse of elite Protestant ministers we recognize the importance of understanding context, intention, and differing interpretations of ideology. As political and religious leaders emphasize division and separation, we must instead work towards understanding and respectful discussion. There is no definitive Christian America, just as there is no definitive vision of America, however, through civil discourse, respect, and compromise we can work towards a nation that is suitable for all.

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