“The organisation of labour which Providence has given us”: Scriptural Defences of Slavery and the Role of Christianity in the American Slaveholding South, 1820-1865

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Table of Contents:

I

Chapter 1: Introduction and Contextualisation of the Argument: Abolitionism and The Divine Sanction of Slavery:

This thesis purposes to understand how a deeply committed Christian people viewed their claims to power as they did; and through the American Civil War laid down their lives in terrible numbers to preserve the way of life which they had forged for themselves. The Old South deemed itself to be the societal manifestation of biblical Scripture, a social order bestowed by Providence and 'ordained of God'[1]. This apparent manifestation of God's will produced a patriarchal, hierarchical slave society, legitimised almost entirely through literal readings of Scripture, and the reading of such alongside contemporary political and economic theories. Here, I will examine the forging of an ideology and social order based solidly in the realities of biblical Scripture, which Southerners believed to be just - so much so that the bloodiest war ever fought on U.S soil raged for more than four long years. Thusly, through examining the extent and depth of the effort to situate slavery on Christian ground, and build a class-stratified social order ordained of God, one may obtain some understanding as to the Southern whites' readiness to defend a social system so odiously abhorrent, even by contemporary standards. The research focus of this paper is to present an understanding of the ways in which this deeply committed Christian people viewed their world and their claims to power as they did, and how this view emerged and was influenced by the Christian Scriptures. Elizabeth

1 Rev. Fred. A. Ross, D. D., *Slavery Ordained of God*, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co, 1857)

Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese's journal article 'The Divine Sanction of Social Order: Religious Foundations of the Southern Slaveholders' World View', is a wonderfully informative, albeit somewhat brief examination of the subject with which this thesis is concerned. The article, however, owing to its brevity, offers a somewhat limited examination the scriptural foundations of the Southern world view in question; and as such, it is the aim of this thesis to propose and informed examination of both the scriptural basis of the Southern worldview and the arguments regarding the divine sanction of American slavery which followed these developments.

Following the Revolution of 1776 and the Declaration of Independence, the American North and South faced common issues – disestablishment, the issue of re-Christianization and adapting a non-established Protestantism in lieu of their departure from the Church of England. These issues led to broad debates and tensions around the notions of the individual as a soul and the individual as an actor, and many sub-sects of Protestantism gained popularity through this Second Great Awakening – Evangelists, Baptists and Methodists to name but a few, all of whom proposed slight variations in terms of the role of the individual. The years from 1820-1860 accelerated these debates, crystallising around the central tendencies of either Northern or Southern social relations, reflecting the dualistic relationship between the labour systems of slavery and capitalism respectively, creating rival discourses regarding the place of Christianity, split over geographical lines. Northern Protestantism succumbed to a slow erosion of claims to impose order; in response, Southern Protestantism waged an increasingly defensive ideological battle against such claims of individual conscience, in favour of a religiously legitimated social order and cohesion delivered to them by Providence.[2]

The antislavery movement began in earnest in Great Britain during the latter part of the eighteenth century, and by 1808 had successfully won the abolition of both the British and American slave trades. In the early days, and even during succession, some American Southerners were opposed to slavery.However the South as a whole, in all its nuance and variety, can still at no time during this portentous period of history be said to be anything but

2 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction of Social Order: Religious Foundations of the Southern Slaveholders' World View', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (Summer, 1987), pp.211-233.

proslavery in ideological terms. As abolitionism gained momentum, its adherents maintained the self-evident sinfulness of slavery; the Southern response to this went through several stages referred generally as the transition from apologetic defences of slavery as a necessary evil to the assertion of it as a positive good for all.[3]

The defence of slavery began relatively quietly. Even up to the late 1820's the North Carolina press insisted that supporters of slavery were few and far between, and that they would soon be rid of the institution[4]; beyond this even as late as 1840, it appears that, in a general sense, the state of Arkansas showed little interest in the defence of slavery, instead simply accepting it as a fact of life[5]. Defending slavery as a "positive good" came initially from Southerners, Northerners and British conservatives alike – implying that the transportation and enslavement of Africans was in itself a form of rescue from their barbaric pagan practices[6]. Furthermore, the "positive good" was stressed in terms of the benefits to whites, who, through the leisure and freedom allotted to them as a result of the labour and toil of African slaves, fashioned themselves to be a people dedicated to strength, freedom and republicanism epitomised in the oft-repeated sentiments of Edmund Burke, through his tribute to the Southern slaveholders' love of "manly, moral, regulated liberty"[7]. These distinct notions of slavery as a "positive good" for blacks firstly, and then for whites, complemented one-another, and resultantly merged. The final phase of the proslavery argument with which this thesis is primarily concerned, whereby God-Ordained slavery was proclaimed to be the ultimate and preeminent basis upon which any civilised society could be based, did not, however, emerge in fully-fledged terms until after a couple of decades into the nineteenth century. The views espoused by

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3 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (Cambridge University Press, 2005) p. 76.

4 Rosser H. Taylor, 'Humanizing the Slave Code of North Carolina', *North Carolina Historical Review* (1925), p. 330.

5 Orville W. Taylor, *Negro Slavery in Arkansas* (Durham, NC, 1958), Ch. 3.

6 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class* p. 76

7 Edmund Burke, Reflections *on the Revolution in France* , (1790), Para. 12.

this stage in proslavery arguments reached the pinnacle of their ferocity after the 1840's and remained prominent until the end of the Civil War in the mid 1860's.

The Missouri Compromise of 1820 proved catalytic in the crystallisation of proslavery and abolitionist arguments invoking Scripture.It is for this purpose that the periodisation of this thesis begins proper at this point in American history. Nevertheless, prior to the political struggles regarding the legality of slavery in the proposed state of Missouri, some Scriptural defences of slavery were already beginning to gain shape during the late eighteenth century. However, without the vocal abolitionist sentiments which came to the fore alongside the struggle over Missouri, the vehemence of such arguments was neither as widespread, nor so heavily invested in by such a great proportion of the populace as can be seen in later decades. Regardless of the comparatively gentler calls for abolition during these early years, one can consider examples such as Thomas Bacon, an Anglican Reverend from Maryland who, having carefully reviewed biblical texts in regards to slavery, at a decidedly early point in terms of the slavery debate, proposed in a series of sermons during the mid-eighteenth century his conclusion that slavery fitted within God's order without question – and as such refuted the consideration of slavery as inherently sinful.[8] Furthermore, historians Shmidt and Wilhelm provide evidence of numerous proslavery petitions (with thousands of signatures) between 1784 and 1785 in Virginia. Interestingly, these petitions can be seen only to imply 'Negro inferiority' in a general sense - much unlike contemporary Northern social thought, which dwelt heavily on pseudo-scientific rationalisations of slavery, asserting amongst other things definitive racial inferiority – the Virginian petitions, in fact, can be seen to lean much more heavily on an extensive scriptural defence of slavery in order to provide justification of their espoused views, decades before such notions became very commonplace in the defence of slavery.[9]

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8 Thomas Bacon, *Four Sermons*, *upon the Great and Indispensable Duty of All Christian Masters and Mistresses*, (London, 1750) [in addition, see: Thomas Bacon, *Two Sermons Preached to a Congregation of Black Slaves*, (London 1749)]

9 Frederika Teute Schmidt and Barbara Ripel Wilhelm, 'Early Proslavery Petitions in Virgina', in *the William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 30, (January 1973), p. 133.

The Missouri compromise of 1820 and surrounding controversy caused a great acceleration of theological discourses regarding slavery and American Christianity. In the midst of the controversy, Southern newspapers from a variety of states began publishing and distributing scriptural defences of slavery, with the Richmond *Enquirer* in particular proposing that "whoever believes that the written word of God is *verity itself*, must consequently believe in the absolute rectitude of slave-holding"[10]. During the years between 1820 and 1860 theological discourses crystallised around the central tendencies of Northern or Southern social relations. Northern Protestantism succumbed to a slow erosion of claims to impose order, accepting the importance of individual conscience, and adopting a general stance of antislavery. Southern social thought, however, developed dramatically.It passed from an apologetic defence of slavery as a necessary evil to a militant defence of slavery as a positive good for masters, slaves - and as an important component of social order for a moral, ordered Christian society.

For Southern slaveholders, any social order, and its corresponding social relations, had to be grounded in divine sanction in order to warrant broad acceptance by the populace. The century which saw the western world as a whole renounce its own long-standing acceptance of slavery and un-free labour in general was the very same time that slaveholders did not simply persist in their defence of the peculiar institution, they took great efforts to forge an abstract model of slavery as a necessary and morally responsible (in their Christian sensibilities) social order.[11] Over time, the relevance and importance of divine sanction in justifying slavery, as opposed to opportunism and racism, weighed increasingly heavily. One can find scarce references to enslaved Africans as 'slaves' prior to the eighteenth century: instead they were simply referred to as to as 'negroes', giving no weight to notions of slavery in the Biblical sense as a working, let alone moral, institution - instead calling to a much greater extent upon racial inferiority.[12]

10 Larry R. Morrison 'The Religious Defence of American Slavery Before 1830', in *Journal of Religious Thought* Vol. 37 (1980), p. 16.

11 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction of Social Order), pp.211-233, p. 211.

The slaveholder's vision of divine sanction in slavery no doubt held self-serving implications; it upheld their status as the landed gentry, the master class and protected their investments in slaves and plantations. Be this as it may, the invocation of biblical Scripture and divine sanction won broad acceptance throughout the south, beyond simply the slaveholding classes, among the propertied, but generally non-slaveholding, majority of white Southerners[13]. In terms of understanding this acceptance, one needs only consider the Southern view of the Bible – as Southerners, much more than their Northern contemporaries "emphasised a concrete or literal relation between signs of divine sanction and their social referents"[14] - Southerners turned to a literal take of the Bible – Gods word – to justify their ways.Applying the specifics of Scripture to the societal order of the South, proslavery advocates insisted that they were "justifying the ways of God to man".[15]

In defending slavery as the foundation of social order, Southerners drew heavily on the religious discourses shared by their Northern bourgeoisie opponents - theology and religious studies were completely inseparable from social thought in both the North as in the South. Northern abolitionists between 1820 and 1860 were unparalleled in their invocation of divine sanction to present the sinful nature of slavery for their cause. However, "increasingly [they] retreated into the swampy terrain of individual conscience"[16], which to them was the ultimate custodian of God's purpose. The push of progressive notion regarding the role of the individual in Christian society meant that, for abolitionists, the avenues for the direct application of biblical scripture to real-world social relations proved vastly reduced. Due to this position and the resultant limits to the application of biblical prescriptions, abolitionists rested their case for ending slavery increasingly upon the "spirit" of the Bible, as opposed to what its pages literally prescribe – abstracting their argument further

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid p. 213.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16Ibid. p. 215.

and further from the actuality of scriptural teachings regarding slaveholding.[17] Southerners, on the other hand, took great comfort in the Bible's easily demonstrable sanction and justification of slavery, and upon seeing the applicability of biblical pronouncements to their labour system, attended, with great care, to scriptural guidance on many other societal matters. Increasingly to Southerners, "the word of God applied directly, not abstractly, to their society"[18] through their religiously legitimated social cohesion. Southern proslavery writers and preachers came to rely heavily upon the Bible and Christianity to justify their world-view and, through doing so, "forged an original and distinctly modern view of the proper place of religion in the analysis and defence of the social order"[19]. This "progressive" notion in terms of the proper place of religion in society pushed a new and thoroughly distinct model of social order, based in many aspects so thoroughly in the specific prescriptions of God's word that many Southerners began to view their society as the biblical ideal, aspiring to reflect that of God's chosen people, the Israelites – effectively forging the South into a society ordained of God; a perfected social order handed down to them from God himself by Providence.

With the thorough entwinement of scripture and social order sanctifying both slavery and their societal model as a whole, the Southern way of life was thoroughly invested in divine sanction to order many levels of their society. To Southerners, freedom could be understood as a function of order, and one's individual rights were deemed particular to one's role in society as allotted by God. Individuals were not good in the abstract, but only as representatives of their kind and in their station[20]; to Southerners, the hierarchies of slavery epitomised this view of social order and one's proper station. To assault their slaveholding was to assault the Christian basis upon which Southern society as a whole was founded; the threat of Northern abolitionists put at stake their

17 Ibid. p. 215.

18 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction of Social Order, pp.211-233,. p. 217.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

ordered, household-based, God-fearing communities – the entire basis of their economic labour system – in addition to their sense of patriarchal family order as well as their personal and social order and hierarchical stations in society - all of which were based solidly in Southern Christian values. Prominent Southern theologian James Henley Thornwell proposed a particularly telling statement regarding this perceived wholesale assault on all Southern values, asserting that the conflict was not simply between abolitionists and slaveholders, but "atheists, socialists, communists, red republicans, Jacobins on the one side and the friends of order and regulated freedom on the other"[21]. This view proposed a deeply founded duality, with structured Christian order and regulation in the south, versus the despotism, atheism and resultant immorality of the Northern way of life. The divine sanction of Southern social systems was taken as proof that it was not simply slavery that was ordained of God, but all Southern society, and as a result all of their economic, political and social systems required defence from the pervasive un-Christian influences of the north – be it capitalism, individual conscience as custodian of God's purpose, or 'unchecked democracy' and the despotic anarchy which they perceived to develop alongside such comparative 'disorder'. The South, to Southerners, stood proudly as "God's bastion against all the isms that were threatening Christian civilisation."[22] After the change from an opportunistic reliance upon slavery and the slave trade during the seventeenth century, to a defence of slavery in the abstract as a positive force for good, proslavery writers began to push forth a defence of slaveholding as the ultimate safeguard from "the corrosive and un-Christian impact of industrial capitalism and its cruel and morally irresponsible market in human labour power."[23] Proslavery writers insisted on the legitimacy of slavery and the charitable Christian ethos of their society concurrently with the revolution in thought which gave rise to the victory of capitalism in the North, and across the west as a whole. Interestingly in this respect, proslavery arguments were never reduced to merely a reactionary argument against threats to their way of life citing "the

21 James Henley Thornwell, *The Rights and the Duties of Masters: A Sermon Preached at the Dedication of a Church, Erected in Charleston, S.C., for the Benefit and Instruction of the Coloured Population*, (Press of Walker & James, 1850) p.14.

22 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction of Social Order, pp.211-233, p.218.

23 Ibid p. 212.

ways of our fathers and mothers", and to an even lesser extent a celebration of feudalism – which in itself was an inherent characteristicdue to the hierarchies of Southern society. Southern proslavery arguments instead "strove to fashion an alternative view of social order for modern times."[24] But the slaveholders differed from their bourgeoisie contemporaries in the particular values they chose to promote, shunning notions of individual liberty and freedom to sell one's own labour, and assessment of the social relations that they deemed necessary for sustaining decent and humane values, which to them meant Christian values. Southern social order claimed to implement the necessary order and discipline for the good of man inspired by God; in slavery, Southerners found the social, political and institutional structures within which, and seemingly only within which, frail and morally dubious humans could live in a manner pleasing to God. All men had a station in society granted by God, and all were free to serve God to their utmost through their works in their proper station – through this servitude to the Lord, they could prepare best for their salvation through Christ.[25]

In terms of the ways in which notions of the divine sanction of slavery developed, the "positive good" argument underwent a radical change from raising "the savage and radically inferior Africans to Christianity, civilisation and useful labour" to a "general defence of slavery as the foundation for a safe and proper modern social order."[26] Both biblical scholarship and social criticism drove the Southerners toward a defence of slavery that abstracted from race to the structural principles of social order. In a society which, under the Second Great Awakening, was witnessing a dramatic increase in the number of professing Christians, the Bible thusly provided a natural grounding for a defence of slavery on moral grounds - and despite abolitionists refuting this view of the Bible, "the slaveholding theologians had little trouble in demonstrating that the Bible did sanction slavery and that, specifically, God had sanctioned slaveholding among his chosen people of Israel"[27] The Southern scholarship which argued the Bible

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24 Ibid p. 212.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid. p. 223.

27 Ibid.

evidenced the reality of God-ordained slavery stood proudly during antebellum debates. Abolitionists found themselves driven to argue the notion that slavery contradicted the "spirit" of the Bible, in particular the New Testament, though interestingly in respect to this viewpoint, Jesus and the Apostles, who denounced every possible sin, never once even insinuated the sinful nature of slavery.[28]

Theologians veered further and further away from justifications of slavery through racism, as it became increasingly clear that slavery sanctioned in biblical stories made little issue of race. Scriptural defences of slavery moved much more toward maintaining social order, class stratification, and the subjugation of labour, of which Africans were a special case. Slavery increasingly began to be defended in the abstract as an ordered social system, as opposed to an opportunistic reliance on those deemed racially inferior.[29] As the defence of slavery passed into abstract notions of Southern social order and stratification as a whole, it became an attack upon the free-labour systems and values of the North and of Western Europe, which contradicted all notions proposed by proslavery arguments in terms of proper social order. Slaveholders argued the comparative caring nature of the Southern system, repeating the sentiment that Southern slaves were treated better than free workers under capitalism – emphasizing the secure living conditions of Southern labourers and the fact that all slaves were clothed and fed as evidence. Through this, once more Christianity was brought to the fore of the argument: "did it not follow that a Christian ruling class had a duty to protect labour by assuming personal responsibility for the health and welfare of its labourers?"[30] They imagined themselves as a caring patriarchal society, whereby the powerful ruling white men, who had been granted a high station in society by the grace of God, held a heavy responsibility of care for those over whom they wielded power. The assault upon capitalist social systems climaxed in statements that unless capitalist countries were to protect their labour as they did in the South, lest the world "relapse into barbarism"[31] as a result of the bourgeoisie refusing responsibility for its labourers leaving them to starve and become miserable and disenfranchised to the point of

28 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction of Social Order, pp.211-233, p. 223.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid. p. 224.

class struggles, social upheaval, and worse, “plunge[d] into a despair that would drive them from Christ and their own salvation.”[32] To be driven from one’s own salvation in Christianity, in the mind of Southerners, would be a most terrible inevitability under the horrors of Northern capitlaism.

Effectively, to proslavery writers, slavery was the solution to the “social question” in all countries as to maintaining the status-quo under the self-propelling economic development occurring as a result of capitalist trade strategies. Proposing slavery as the ideal means of controlling labour in societies became a very popular argument among the planter class, and it was the influential ministers and theologians in the South who “embraced the argument *con amore* and endowed it with biblical foundations”.[33] This was not simply a result of the Bible demonstrably sanctioning slavery, but in Southern society where Christianity was the heart of order, values and community, one had to invoke God in order to gain an audience. In the South, no social theory could get a hearing unless it was firmly grounded in Scripture from the outset, and proslavery extremists and advocates alike knew “that they would never get a hearing in the countryside and in the villages – not even in worldly Charleston – if they could not ground their special views in Christian doctrine.”[34] Proslavery theorists almost invariably began their discourses with assurances to their audience that the argument to follow conformed to Christian teaching and they knew the importance of quoting the Bible correctly, for those with whom they were conversing we’re a people who read the Bible thoroughly, even if many of them read little else, and who would judge preachers by their ability to make sermons elaborate their text.[35]

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31 Ibid. p. 226.

32 Ibid. p .224.

33 Ibid. 226.

34 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, ‘The Divine Sanction of Social Order’, pp.211-233, p. 227.

35 Ibid.

In the American Old South, “religion, slavery and social order stood or fell together and required the best efforts of the best men and women.”[36] There was a thorough commitment to their Christian social standard; all knowledge, all order, and the entire social system which they forged had to be tested against the Christian standards found in Scripture. Religion, economic labour systems and social order were one – and the biblical Christian values against which all was measured had pride of place as the intact centre of all. The inseparability of slavery, society and religion meant that a commitment to one, in Southern eyes, meant commitment to all; those who advocated slavery did so with a dedication to Christian society, and conversely those who were professing Christians were to support slavery and the Christian society into which it fitted. John C Calhoun (a leading American politician and political theorist from South Carolina) implied the Israelites to have had the purest government the world has ever seen[37], and in their aspirations toward a model Christian society, Southerners pursued as close a societal model as they could to Israelite society described in Scripture . T. R. R. Cobb (lawyer, author politician and later, confederate officer during the Civil War, who will be considered in greater depth in Chapter III) wrote “*An Inquiry Into The Law of Negro Slavery*”, paying careful attention to the biblical history of slavery and divine sanction, incorporating them into a “law” of American slavery. Vocal advocates of slavery all shared a “subjective commitment to a Christian society that undergirded their public pronouncements on slavery”[38]; the ordered Christian society which they so deeply cherished came always hand in hand with their pronouncements on slavery.

36 Ibid. p. 229.

37 John Wade, *Donald Augustus Baldwin Longstreet and His Critter Company: A Study of the Development of Culture in the South*. (New York: Macmillan. 1924) p. 60.

38 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, ‘The Divine Sanction of Social Order, pp.211-233, p. 226.

II

Chapter 2: Scripture and Slavery, Divine Sanction or Inherently Sinful? What the Bible Prescribes:

Some religious leaders, particularly in the North (see William Ellery Channing, Albert Barnes[39]) insisted that if the Bible showed slavery to be sanctioned, then the Bible must be "discarded as evil". Southerner preachers, who knew that they were preaching to a populous who knew the texts of the Bible very well, responded in quite simple terms stating that "those who called themselves Christians had to accept the Bible as god's revealed truth, and had to understand that God, not man, defined sin and virtue."[40] Indeed, in the Southern view, sin and virtue were defined strictly in terms of a literal reading of the Bible and its specific prescriptions. This chapter will consult Scripture in terms of slavery as sanctioned or sinful. Scriptural defences of slavery in the American South were far from unfounded. The Bible was called to the fore in arguments from both slavery advocates and abolitionists, with the latter eventually losing their footing in the direct prescriptions of Scripture. American society was witnessing a dramatic increase in professing Christians; as a result people turned naturally to the Bible in order to provide a solid foundation upon which the moral defence of slavery could be built. It is true that during the years 1820-1860, "Northern abolitionists took second place to none in their invocation of divine sanction for their hallowed cause, although increasingly [they] retreated to the swampy terrain of individual conscience."[41] To them, individual conscience was the ultimate custodian of God's purpose. With this progressive notion, however, they radically reduced the social relations to which the Bible actually applied. Abolitionists "rested their case on the spirit of the Bible, not on its specific prescriptions,"[42] thusly, abstracting further and further from what is specifically prescribed by the Bible. Although abolitionists refuted this view of the Bible, "the slaveholding theologians had little trouble in demonstrating that the Bible did

39 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction of Social Order, pp.211-233, p. 223.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid. p. 215

42 Ibid.

sanction slavery and that, specifically, God had sanctioned slaveholding among his chosen people of Israel”.[43]

Rabbi M. J. Raphall, one of the most prominent Jewish leaders to engage in the slavery debate, published his pamphlet *The Bible View of Slavery* in 1861 in which he proclaimed "I am no friend to slavery in the abstract, and still less friendly to the practical working of slavery, but I stand here as a teacher in Israel; not to place before you my own feelings and opinions, but to propound to you the word of G-d, the Bible view of slavery.”[44] Raphall's pamphlet offers an extraordinarily thorough consideration of slavery in the Bible. Despite his personal view of slavery, he states that “under a strong sense of duty I did it; not by any reasoning of my own, but by a statement of facts, supported by the authority of Scripture”[45]. For the justification of slavery in the Bible, Rabbi Raphall firstly takes the Ten Commandments into consideration, the tenth in particular, appearing in both the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy: “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s."[46] And, "Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's.”[47]

Raphall’s pamphlet dutifully calls attention to the prominence of slaveholding in the Ten Commandments, stating that the aforementioned excerpts from the tenth commandment places slaves "under the same protection as any other species of lawful property.”[48] Being fully aware of the Ten Commandments being the word of God - the very highest authority -

43 Ibid. p. 223

44 Morris J. Raphall, *The Bible View of Slavery: A Discourse, Delivered at the Jewish Synagogue, B'nai Jeshurun, New York, on the Day of the National Fast, January 4, 1861*. (New York: Rudd and Carleton, 1861). (http://www.jewish-history.com/civilwar/raphall.html) [Accessed: April 2013]

45 Raphall, *The Bible View of Slavery*

46 Exodus. 20:17.

47 Deuteronomy. 5:21.

acknowledged by Jews and Christians alike, Raphall questioned how, in the face of the sanctions and protections granted to slave property by the word of God in the Bible, “dare [anyone] denounce slaveholding as a sin?”[49].

Furthermore, Raphall mentions/refers to the early figures of the Bible, reminding readers that slavery was not simply permitted, but carried out by some of the holiest men in Scripture, “Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job--the men with whom the Almighty conversed, with whose names he emphatically connects his own most holy name, and to whom He vouchsafed to give the character of 'perfect, upright, fearing G-d and eschewing evil' (Job 1:8) . . . all these men were slaveholders.”[50] Thusly, by Raphall’s argument, all and any who denounce slavery as a sin “are guilty of something very little short of blasphemy"[51] through the denial of the solid facts presented in Scripture regarding the Biblical view of slavery.

The fact of Abraham’s slaveholding in Biblical passages was referenced further by Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb, a lawyer, author, and later a colonel in the Confederate army. Cobb states in clear, scripturally accurate terms, “God sought for a man in whose seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed who should be called the friend of God (James 2:23) and the father of all them that believe (Romans 4:11). He found him in Abraham a large slaveholder (Genesis 14:14) And God blessed him. How? By opening his eyes to the sin of slavery? No; but by giving him flocks and herds and silver and gold and menservants and maidservants and camels and asses (Genesis 24:35).”[52] These arguments of Cobb and Raphall in regards to Abraham being a slaveholder in scripture are irrefutable, and the fact, as stated by Cobb, that God did not condemn slave holding by the ‘father of all believers’, but in fact rewarded him with, amongst

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48Raphall, *The Bible View of Slavery*.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

52 Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb, *An Inquiry Into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, (Philadelphia: T. & J. W. Johnson & Company, 1858), p. 54

other riches, more slaves. In respect to this, how could slavery possibly be a sin in the eyes of God – since Abraham's slaveholding was never once condemned, but instead he was blessed by God for his works?

Cobb published *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery* in 1858, in an attempt to define, as he saw it, "the Law of Slavery as it exists in America"[53]. He called upon both God's word and the 'laws of nature' as he perceived them, in particular his view of the nature of Africans. He called upon a passage from Leviticus which states that God not only gave slaves to Abraham as evidence of his blessing but also commanded the Jews to make slaves of the heathens around them: "Of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land, and they shall be your possession; and ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you to inherit them for a possession. They shall be your bondmen forever."[54]

What was important for Cobb, in terms of relating this to American slavery, was that the command was issued shortly after the Israelite's escape from Egypt - a time when it was unlikely any had owned a slave – and it was by this charter that they enslaved the Canaanites. To Cobb this proved that "natural law points that inferiority of race is necessary to make slavery consistent with the Divine will"[55], in that the enslavement of foreign heathens was a promoted and normative activity, despite the sinful nature of enslaving another Jew. Rabbi Raphall's consideration of this passage further articulates the matter, stating that "There were . . . slaves among the Hebrews, whose general condition was analogous to that of their Southern fellow sufferers. [It] was the heathen slave, who was to be bought"[56]; effectively, on the basis of a person being a heathen, in the eyes of the Bible, this person should be taken into slavery and become the property of a believer. The notion of taking heathens as your property is explained in further depth by Raphall (referencing Deuteronomy 22:3) stating

53 Cobb, An Inquiry Into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America. p. Ix.

54 Levicitus 25: 44-46.

55 Cobb, An Inquiry Into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America. p. 55.

56 Raphall, *The Bible View of Slavery.*

that “over these heathen slaves the owner's property was absolute; he could put them to hard labour, to the utmost extent of their physical strength; he could inflict on them any degree of chastisement short of injury to life and limb. If his heathen slave ran away or strayed from home, every Israelite was bound to bring or send him back, as he would have to do with any other portion of his neighbour's property that had been lost or strayed.”[57]In the Bible, as in the American south, slaves represented property in much the same was as anything else one may purchase - and the powers that masters wielded over their property were both defined and limited by biblical sanction alone.

Furthermore in terms of exemplifying pious and holy men in the Bible to have been slaveholders, the events which take place in the Book of Numbers show priests to have been legitimate slaveholders in biblical Scripture. Numbers 31 concerns the aftermath of Moses’s waging war upon the Midianites upon God’s orders, for attempting to convert Israelites to their own faith. Israelite soldiers killed every Midianite man, but spared the lives of women and children. Moses, angered at this act of mercy, ordered that all of the women and children be killed, allowing only 32,000 female virgins to live. All of the ‘booty’ of this war, including the surviving girls and virgin women, was then divided into two equal portions: one for the warriors and the rest for the people of Israel. A percentage of the slaves from both portions were considered to be the Lord's share of booty, and thusly they were to be given to the priests. In this story, the priests ended up with 365 female virgins[58] as their slave property:

"And levy a tribute unto the LORD of the men of war which went out to battle: one soul of five hundred, both of the persons, and of the oxen, and of the asses, and of the sheep: Take it of their half, and give it unto Eleazar the priest, as an offering to the LORD. And of the children of Israel's half, thou shalt take one portion of fifty, of the persons, of the cattle, of the asses, and of the flocks, of all manner of beasts, and give them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD."[59]

57 Raphall, *The Bible View of Slavery.*

58 Numbers 31:32-42.

59 Numbers 31:28-47.

Beyond simply exemplifying slaveholding in biblical passages by holy figures, scholars sought out the specific prescriptions provided by Scripture in terms of the regulation of slavery, and the rules regarding the relations of masters to slaves. Importantly for Thomas Cobb, the rules regulating the relation of masters to slaves were 'laid down in express terms'[60] by the apostles in the New Testament, not simply in the Old Testament. In terms of regulating the obedience of slaves, Cobb cited the Book of Ephesians, where it states:

"Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favouritism with him."[61]

The notion of respecting and serving one's master on earth as one serves one's master in heaven reflected Southern notions of serving one's station in society. Effectively, arguing that God has granted differing talents and skills to each individual, and thusly their place or station in life, is represented as the station that God has placed them in order to serve him best. In the South, this was reflected in the position of some members of society as laboring slaves, and others in powerful positions as Christian masters. As a result, one should be contented with whichever place in society one is granted by their God-given capacity, and should do the will of God via that station "Revelation teaches us that God gave different gifts to different men, to one five talents, to another two, to another, one. To one, the gift of tongues, to another, government. It teaches us to repress every feeling of envy, strife, ambition and whatever may be our situation in life, suited to our capacity therewith to be content."[62] Furthermore, this passage puts forth the notion that charged masters with a heavy responsibility toward those in their custody. It would be the fault of a sinful

60 Cobb, *An Inquiry Into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America* p. 60.

61 Ephesians 6:5-9.

62 Cobb, *An Inquiry Into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America*, p. 64.

people, not of a sinful social system, if those who were ‘chosen’ to rule over others abused their privilege, and thusly failed in their Christian responsibility and duty to treat their slaves with the respect and care instructed in Scripture.

In terms of biblical regulation of slavery, numerous passages exist offering a ‘law’ of slavery, in terms of appropriate action for given situations. The regulations for the emancipation of slaves offered in Scripture show that slaves in ancient Israel were automatically emancipated after 6 years of slavery if they were Jewish. However, if a master "gave” his slave a wife, the master was entitled to the slave’s wife and any children as his property after the slave’s emancipation:

"If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself."[63]

"And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him."[64]

An Israelite who was a slave could be freed by a family member or by himself if he were rich enough. The cost of freeing a slave was calculated on the basis of the number of years to the next Jubilee Year; this could be between once and fifty years: "After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him: Either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be able, he may redeem himself. And he shall reckon with him that bought him from the year that he was sold to him unto the year of jubilee: and the price of his sale

63 Exodus 21:1-4.

64 Deuteronomy 15:12-18.

shall be according unto the number of years, according to the time of an hired servant shall it be with him."[65]

It was, however, a crime punishable by death to forcibly enslave another Israelite. Any who kidnapped a fellow Israelite and sold him into slavery would be stoned to death for his evil-doing: as "he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death."[66] And "If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from among you."[67]

These specific instructions regarding enslaving fellow Israelites served the purpose of regulating slavery among the Israelites. The aforementioned notion of buying and selling heathen slaves as property, as echoed by Raphall and Cobb, brings to the fore the relation between biblical slavery and the American slaveholding South. Scripture instructs that when taking slaves from foreign lands, as was the case with the American slave trade, automatic freedom was not granted after a period of years. Importantly for American slaveholders, one could purchase a slave from a foreign nation or from foreigners living amongst your society and these slaves would remain in slavery forever, as inheritable property, unless their master freed them:

"Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you; from them you may buy slaves. You may also buy some of the temporary residents living among you and members of their clans born in your country, and they will become your property. You can will them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly."[68]

In respect to the re-selling of slaves, as mentioned prior, a slave was considered a piece of property much like cattle, and thus could be resold to

65 Leviticus 25:48-53

66 Exodus 21:16

67 Deuteronomy 24:7

68 Leviticus 25:44-46

anyone at any time for any reason. However, once again, special rules applied for Hebrew slaves. If a female slave was bought from her father and she displeased her new master, he had no rights to sell her again to a foreigner. If the master required her to marry his son, then he was required to treat her like a daughter-in-law. If he married his slave, and later married another woman, he was required to treat his slave as he previously had. If any of these requirements were not met, then she must be emancipated - though without any money or means of self-sufficiency: "If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. And if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out free without money."[69]

Enslavement is exemplified in Scripture to have been a punishment for criminal activity and debt. Someone found guilty of thievery, yet unable to provide full compensation for his or her crime, would be sold into slavery in order to pay restitution for said misdemeanor: "...he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft."[70] A debtor who could not pay back creditors might be sold into slavery or alternatively, have his children sold: "Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen."[71]

Rules and regulations for the physical punishment and killing of slaves were provided in Exodus. Though a master was within his God-given right to beat a male or female slave, serious injury to the eyes or teeth were unacceptable,

69 Exodus 21:8

70 Exodus 22:3:

71 II Kings 4:1

and a slave was to be freed for the sake of this maltreatment: "And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish; he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. And if he smite out his manservant's tooth, or his maidservant's tooth; he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake."[72] Beating a slave to death would incur an, albeit unspecified, punishment. However, if a slave was beaten, even with such severity that they are temporarily disabled, the offending master would escape punishment provided that the slave in question was only disabled for a couple of days: "And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money [property]."[73]

Specific instances and regulations are presented in terms of buying and selling family members in Scripture. If a man were sold into slavery for debt or thievery, as referenced earlier, his brother could purchase him. Specifically, the brother would not be treated as other slaves, but as a hired servant or a guest – although he was not free to leave until the Jubilee Year, occurring every 50 years, during which it was not uncommon to free male Israelite slaves: "And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant: But as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee: And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his father shall he return."[74] . The fate of female slaves purchased by a brother, however, is unspecified.

In addition to this, a brief regulation involving selling one’s own daughter into slavery existed, stating in simple terms that she not be expected to go out and perform the work that male slaves carry out. Effectively, this reflects quite simply that one’s daughter should not be expected to perform, for example, hard field labour if sold into slavery, and should instead be treated perhaps as a maid

72 Exodus 21:26-27

73 Exodus 21:20-21

74 Leviticus 25:39

within the household: "And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as the menservants do."[75]

The enslavement of women as ‘booty’ after a battle or war, and the correct treatment of said captives are described in some depth in Scripture. In foreign wars, an Israelite could take captive any woman he saw as a slave and as a wife, in the same manner as any other property obtained by the looting of a city: "But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself."[76] This ‘booty’ had been delivered from God into the hand of the Israelites, and it was thusly their God-ordained right to take it.

If an Israelite saw a woman he desired, he could take her captive. After taking a slave-wife captive she would be subjected to a specific, and rather barbaric, ritual of having her head shaved and nails cut short and left for a month in the home of her new master to mourn the loss of her parents. After this time, the master would consummate the marriage, however if he later found her ill-suited to be his wife, he may grant her freedom, but may not earn money from selling her:

“When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the LORD thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive, And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife; Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails; And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her [be it rape or consensual sex], and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her.”[77]

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75 Exodus 21:7

76 Deuteronomy 20:14

77 Deuteronomy 21:10-14

Sexual activity with such female slaves is described and regulated somewhat according to Scripture. In the Book of Genesis instances of impregnating female slaves in order to have children are described, with no concern for the consent of such slaves. Examples include Sarai, who was barren and thus unable to bear a child, has her slave become pregnant by her husband in order to have children. The slave in question, Hagar, appears to have no say in the matter: "Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai."[78]

Slaves represented simple property like any other, and so could be required to engage in sexual intercourse and become pregnant regardless of their consent. Further instances of similar occurrences are described, involving slaves who are quite simply 'given' as wives, again without mention of any consent or permission: "And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her."[79] And "When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife. And Zilpah, Leah's maid bare Jacob a son."[80]

In terms of rules and regulation in terms of sexual activity with slaves, there is little presented in Scripture due mostly to the aforementioned fact that slaves were property like any other, and as a result required no consultation and had no freedom to the exercise of their own will. As presented in Leviticus, it appears the only regulation in terms of sexual activity with slaves is that any man who raped or engaged in consensual sex with a female slave betrothed to be married to another man must sacrifice an animal in the temple to obtain God's forgiveness for this sin. The female slave would be whipped for her part. However, if the slave were not engaged, no punishment or ritual killing was required – as in the aforementioned instances in Genesis, masters could do as

78 Genesis 16:1-2

79 Genesis 30:3-4

80 Genesis 30:9-10

they please and impose their will upon such slaves, with impunity and without consent.

"And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman, that is a bondmaid, betrothed to an husband, and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her; she shall be scourged; they shall not be put to death, because she was not free. And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, even a ram for a trespass offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering before the LORD for his sin which he hath done: and the sin which he hath done shall be forgiven him."[81]

In terms of further instances and regulation in terms of biblical slavery which proved less relatable to American slavery specifically, firstly it is stated that all male slaves were to undergo circumcision: "He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant."[82] Also,"And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him."[83] A male slave would be required to undergo circumcision, which was not only a painful procedure for an adult, in the days before modern medicine, but also could prove lethal.

In addition to this there is mention that the Sabbath must be maintained as a day of rest for all, including slaves. "But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates."[84] Whether or not slaves were required to work on Sundays in the Old South typically varied between plantations.

With such thorough consideration, regulation and sanction of slavery provided by the word of God in Scripture, to refer to slavery as sinful or against the will of God proves rather problematic. This being said, the Bible is a

81 Leviticus 19:20-22

82 Genesis 17:13

83 Genesis 17:27

84 Exodus 20:10

notoriously contradictory amalgamation of texts and viewpoints, and a number of passages (albeit much fewer than those condoning slavery), such as the well known “Love thy neighbor as yourself”[85] , were, and still are, seen as emblematic of the sinful nature of slavery [as an interesting aside, “Love thy neighbour” has more recently been highlighted by anthropologist John Hartung as referring only to the context of behaviour between Jews – thusly sill implicating no sin in the Israelite’s taking of people or buying of slaves from foreigners and those of other faiths, just so long as they treated their fellow Jews with care[86]]. Southern scholars, such as Thornton Stringfellow, a Baptist pastor in Virginia, took many such arguments in stride and set about utilising their well founded knowledge of scriptural texts in highlighting further that these arguments provided little footing in evidencing slaveholding to be sinful. Stringfellow’s *A Brief Examination of Scripture Testimony on the Institution of Slavery* includes, importantly, remarks on a letter from Elder Galusha , a Northern abolitionist of “unquestioned piety”[87], and Dr. Richard Fuller, a South Carolinian Baptist advocate of slavery. This letter came about as Fuller sent a copy of an essay invoking scriptural sanction of slavery to Galusha, stating his views would change were he convinced of the sinful nature of the slavery according to the Bible - "if the Bible contained precepts, and settled principles of conduct, in direct opposition to those portions of it upon which I relied, as furnishing the mind of the Almighty upon the subject of slavery, that [Elder Galusha] would furnish me with the knowledge of the fact.”[88] The letters provide an interesting and unusually cordial correspondence regarding American slavery and biblical teachings from well regarded scholars on both sides of the slavery argument; Stringfellow’s examination of Elder Galusha’s response to Fuller proves both thorough and well researched in his consideration of the former’s scriptural claims. Stringfellow dutifully brings each of Galusha’s proposed biblical references into consideration,

85 Levicitus 19:18

86 Hartung, J. ‘Love Thy Neighbor: The Evolution of In-Group Morality’, in *Skeptic* 3(4): 86-98, 1995.

87 Thornton Stringfellow, *A Brief Examination of Scripture Testimony on the Institution of Slavery, in an Essay, First Published in the Religious Herald, and Republished by Request: With Remarks on a Letter of Elder Galusha, of New York, to Dr. R. Fuller, of South Carolina.* (Washington: Printed at the Congressional Globe Office, 1850). p. 17.

88 Ibid.

and through reference to further biblical scripture offers a stern rebuttal to each.

First, Galusha called forth the quote “God hath made of one blood all nations of men”[89], implying the sin in asserting ownership of another, since, under God all men are of the same blood, of the same stock. Stringfellow proposed simply God’s decree: “Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers”[90], that is to be an abject slave in posterity – as mentioned prior, the later enslavement of the Canaanites in itself was slavery specifically decreed by God. Furthermore the aforementioned passages of Deuteronomy 20:10-15 and Levicitus 25:44-46, whereby God decrees that the captives in war should be enslaved, as should slaves bought from nearby heathen nations and foreigners - Stringfellow holds that “all these nations were *made of one blood*. Yet God ordained that some should be “chattel” as slaves to others, and gave his special aid to effect it. In view of this incontrovertible fact, how can I believe this passage disproves the lawfulness of slavery in the sight of God? How can any sane man believe it, who believes the Bible?”[91] Galusha then referenced the value of humans to not be bought and sold as cattle through the reference that God states a man is better than a sheep[92]. Stringfellow’s retort proposed that, of course, he fully endorsed the idea of man being superior to sheep, and despite the lack of specifics in regards to how much money was exchanged in the purchase of either – one must assume a slave would have cost more than a sheep - on the basis that, indeed, a servant man is better than a sheep. Referencing Luke 27:7-9, Stringfellow notes that obviously a man is better than a sheep “for when he is done ploughing, or feeding cattle, and comes in from the field, he will, at his masters bidding, prepare him his meal, and wait upon him till he eats it” such tasks were “no more than his duty.”[93] In Stringfellow’s mind, it was precisely for such duties that the chosen people of God bought slaves, with

89 Acts 17:26.

90 Genesis 9:25.

91 Stringfellow, *A Brief Examination of Scripture*, p. 18.

92 Matthew 12:12.

93 Stringfellow, *A Brief Examination of Scripture*, p. 18.

the permission of their maker, since a sheep could obviously not perform such tasks. Indeed, in this somewhat obvious sense, man is better than a sheep; however, Stringfellow saw nothing in this notion "to blot out from the Bible a relation which God created, in which he made one man to be a slave to another"[94]. In addition, Galusha cited that God commands children to obey parents, and wives to obey husbands[95] as proof of an unlawfulness of slavery in the eyes of God. Stringfellow's analysis stresses that this is the will of Christ for children and wives, be they bond or free; in addition to this, Christ commands all servants to obey their masters and count them worthy of all honour[96]; furthermore God specifically allowed Jewish masters in Exodus to use a rod to enforce such obedience from slaves[97].

Galusha's argument turned then toward what he deemed to be the definitive evidence which "forever puts the question at rest"[98]: citing Deuteronomy, he proposed the quote "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master, the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee--he shall dwell with thee, even in that place which he shall choose, in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best; thou shalt not oppress him."[99] Once more, Stringfellow referenced the aforementioned passages from Levicitus and Deuteronomy whereby God himself instated the laws authorising the Israelites to buy and inherit slaves as one's possessions forever and to take into slavery those captured during war. To Stringfellow, "The passage proves the very reverse of that which it is brought to prove. It proves that the slave is recognized by God himself as a slave, until he fled to the Israelites"[100] –Stringfellow's rationale stated that this notion was

94 Ibid.

95 Colossians 3:18-25.

96 1 Timothy 6:1-2.

97 Exodus 21:20-21.

98 Stringfellow, *A Brief Examination of Scripture*, p. 18.

99 Deuteronomy 23:15-16

100 Stringfellow, *A Brief Examination of Scripture*, p. 19.

based upon the idea that for some unbeknownst reason, God, who had upheld slavery among his chose people for hundreds of years, who had just given them a formal statute to legalise the purchase of slaves from the heathen countries surrounding them, and to enslave any captives taken in war, was nevertheless desirous to abolish the institution; though in such a way as to undermine, rather than overthrow it – somewhat ill-befitting behaviour for the powerful Almighty Lord of the scriptures. The command to "Do to others as ye would they should do to you"[101] or, as Stringfellow preferred, Moses' embodiment of the same moral principle in "Love they neighbour"[102] was cited as further proof of slavery's inherent sin. Thornton Stringfellow saw this passage as a source of utmost confusion in terms of the moral precepts of the Bible – far from a statement inciting the overthrow of "the positive institution of slavery."[103] This passage was, in fact, given precisely for the regulation of the moral duties required in the very relation between masters and slaves. Effectively, to Stringfellow, how could that which regulates the duties of masters and slaves to one-another overthrow the relation itself between masters and slaves? Finally, the Greek word "doulos" as used in biblical translations was called to the fore of the argument: he proposed that it meant 'hired servant' as opposed to slave. Stringfellow, researching the meaning in Greek dictionaries, proposed that its precise meaning was defined thus: "The opposite of free"[104]. Through the definition of 'doulos' as the precise opposite of freedom, Stringfellow saw the divine at work in support of his cause in the argument, stating, "I ask, if this is not wonderful, that the Holy Ghost has used a term, so incapable of deceiving, and yet that that term should be brought forward for the purpose of deception."[105] In the precision of the meaning as he saw it, Stringfellow saw the Lord at work "as if foreseeing and providing for this controversy"[106] in order to highlight the apparent attempts to deceive God's word by abolitionists. Stringfellow did not stop there. He brought into question a

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101 Luke 6:31

102 Levicitus 19:18

103 Stringfellow, *A Brief Examination of Scripture*, p. 20.

104 Ibid. p. 21

105 Ibid. p. 21

passage from Exodus: “Every man’s servant that is bought for money shall eat thereof; but a hired servant shall not ear thereof”[107]; in the apparent precision and particularity of “the Holy Ghost in presiding over the inspired pen”[108], Stringfellow saw a clear division of two classes of servants – one who was allowed to eat the Passover meal, and the other not – if there were no difference between a purchased slave and a hired servant then this passage would not exist. If they were both hired servants, argued Stringfellow, then surely the passage should have read “Every hired servant that is bought for money shall eat thereof; but a hired servant that is bought for money, shall not eat thereof”[109] – in the particularity of defining separate classes of hired servants and purchased servants, or slaves, Scripture had provided the answer to the question of whether it were slaves or servants discussed in the Bible, a foothold of much abolitionist sentiment invoking Scripture.

With the demonstrable justification, sanction, regulation and commands regarding slavery undeniably present in the Bible, to attempt to argue the abolition of the institution from the very same text was, and still is, a problematic exercise. Proslavery advocates won the battle over the Bible, and proved repeatedly that slavery was far from unlawful in the eyes of the Lord God, who according to the texts of the Bible, both instituted it amongst his chosen Israelites with numerous laws of conduct, and also, through Jesus and the Apostles laid down in writing every possible sin, yet curiously never once even implied slavery to be a sin. As a result, the utilisation of Scripture proved widespread in arguing the moral nature and benefits of slavery over capitalism among some of the most prominent Southern theologians of numerous Christian sects, all the way to backwoods rural preachers.

106 Ibid. p. 21

107 Exodus 12:44-45

108 Stringfellow, *A Brief Examination of Scripture*, p. 22.

109 Ibid.

III

Chapter 3: Proslavery Writers and the Invocation of Christianity in the Defence of Slavery

"[Southerners] have progressed as far in civilisation and in many respects, much farther than any people in the whole country. A very large portion of them are confessedly pious, as well as intelligent. Taken as a whole, they are eminently entitled to be regarded a religious people as any other people on the face of the globe."[110] Indeed, the American Old South can not be viewed of as anything other than a strongly Christian society. Their commitment to a Christian social standard was unique, and provided an entirely modern place for Christianity in society; all knowledge, all order, and the entire social system had to be tested against the Christian standards found in Scripture in order to be considered of any merit. In the sanction, regulation and defence of slavery, in particular, this dedication to biblical prescription was unrivalled. Theology became a primary component for reasoning arguments, often being considered alongside political economy, for example, as a means of evidencing the moral superiority of slavery as an economic system; as opposed to the perceived godless despotism and class struggles borne out of capitalism in the free-labour societies which challenged their slaveholding. This chapter will pay focus and attention to the specific arguments in terms of Christianity and justifying slavery as a sanctioned 'positive good', with reference in particular to the writings of the prominent theologian Reverend James Henley Thornwell of South Carolina - "the most learned of the learned" according to contemporary historian and politician, George Bancroft.[111] As evinced in Chapter I, Thornwell was certainly not the progenitor of this argument, however, he was one of the Old South's most formidable and erudite theologians, having served as a member of the Southern Presbyterian ministry and later president of South Carolina College, he championed the 'regulated freedom', as he viewed it, of the Antebellum slaveholding South. As a staunch defender of biblical orthodoxy, Thornwell and his colleagues often considered various contemporary issues, however this was

110 William A. Smith, *Lectures on the Philosophy and Practice of Slavery* (New York, 1969 [1856]), p.189.

111 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class*, p. 178.

always done “with one eye firmly fixed on his theological foundations[112]; in this sense, Thornwell epitomised the aforementioned modern place of Christianity in the defence and analysis of Southern society, in that he sought to harmonise and join the scriptural teachings of the Bible with contemporarily new scientific learning alongside economics, philosophy and politics in his consideration of various nineteenth-century issues.

Thornwell and many of his contemporaries based their arguments around the post-1830’s emergent idea of a Christian-influenced ‘paternalism’ when considering master-slave relations. The notion of paternalism imbued a heavy responsibility and duty to those who had been granted positions of power in society to act paternally toward all those in their care, since in the Southern mind they were placed in such positions by the grace of God himself. Eugene D. Genovese’s outstanding consideration of American slavery, *Roll Jordan Roll* (1974), defines paternalism as an organic relationship involving reciprocal duties and obligations for which both master and slave were mutually responsible[113]. In itself, the paternalistic attitude toward slaveholding was much better for slaves than the prior opportunistic racism and pseudoscience of racial inferiority which preceded it, however, the heavy endowment of this notion with the moral precepts taken directly from Christian scripture proved analogous to the upholding and maintenance of the slave system. The theological consideration of slavery by figures such as Thornwell proved incredibly powerful in guiding the minds of Old South into increasingly viewing themselves as a society chosen by God, who’s moral standpoint was indisputably Christian, and thusly considering their nation’s political and economic struggle in a very biblical sense. Effectively, as a result of the Southern theologians’ efforts which will now be examined, by the eve of Civil War “the theological facet of Southern thought had played a leading role in the battle of minds that preceded the battle of bullets. Not only had the clergy more than held its own among the contributors to the Southern apologia, but Laymen had joined with them in couching the sectional struggle in

112 James Oscar Farmer, *The Metaphysical Confederacy* (Mercer University Press, 1999) p. 154.

113 Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll*, *Jordan*, *Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011)

terms reminiscent of the Old Testament. Indeed, as the final crisis neared, the entire region seemed to take on an aura of tribal religiosity, of chosenness."[114]

The argument of Southern proslavery theologians fitted roughly around three primary notions. Firstly, a focus upon the simple fact that, as evidenced in the chapter prior, the Bible demonstrably sanctions slaveholding, and thusly how could any pious Christian implicate it to be a sin? Secondly, a submission to God's will, whereby men should accept the arrangements of His Providence and the unequal distribution of His favour, and serve God as best they can from the station in society to which He has allotted them. Finally and as an amalgamation of prior theological notions whilst simultaneously based in political economy, the proposal of slavery versus capitalism as an organisation of labour, citing a paternalistic moral grounding in the merciful Christian sense alongside the comparative economic and political benefits and problems raised by each respective system.

In the eyes of James Henley Thornwell, there was no issue of and ill-conscience for slaveholding, for, in his view, Christians needed go no further than Scripture in mandating their moral codes. His oft-repeated and rather self-assured statement from his *National Sins* sermon that "the relationship betwixt the slave and his master is not inconsistent with the word of God, we have long since settled. Our consciences are not troubled, and have no reason to be troubled on this score"[115], locates Thornwell's position in the debate immediately. As a scholar of theology he had studied the Bible in great depth for much of his life; thusly there was no issue in his mind as to whether slavery is sinful, instead quite clearly it was both God-Ordained and morally sound - if one's moral codes are taken directly from Christian Scriptures in the Bible, that is. Thornwell believed that if slavery were genuinely immoral then surely Christians, being innately good and moral people in his opinion, would abolish it immediately. In his view slaveholders did not hold their slaves in bondage "from remorseless considerations of interest"[116], since they were a moral Christian society with people of good character, and "if they were persuaded of the

114 James Oscar Farmer, *The Metaphysical Confederacy*, p. 10

115 James Henley Thornwell, 'National Sins, A Fast-Day Sermon: Preached in the Presbyterian Church, Columbia, S. C., Wednesday, November 21, 1860' in, *The Collected Writings of James Henley Thornwell*, (Applewood Books, 2009) p, 359.

essential immorality of slavery, they would not be backward in adopting measures for the ultimate abatement of the evil."[117]

Thornwell was not alone in presenting the sentiment that American slavery was far from sinful. Governor J. H. Hammond, a fellow South Carolinian and prolific writer, echoed the confidence of Thornwell in biblical sanction of slaveholding, stating "I firmly believe, that American slavery is not only not a sin, but especially commanded by God through Moses, and approved by Christ through his apostles."[118] In the view of such arguments, there was no question as to whether the Bible declared slavery a sin - it was self-evident in the text to have been commanded by God to the Israelite society that Southerners viewed as so pure and perfect. The notion of declaring slavery a sin was refuted adamantly, with Thornwell stating the church has no authority to declare slavery to be sinful, raising the question: "has the Bible, anywhere, either directly or indirectly, condemned the relation of master and servant, as incompatible with the will of God?"[119] How could any Christian or church sect implicate slavery to be a sin with the word of God himself in the Bible providing no evidence to support such a claim? With this view of the Bible, Thornwell found it outlandish that any scholar of the Bible could consider the holy text, without prejudice, and come to any other conclusion. In his *Report on the Subject of Slavery* he questioned as to whether anyone could imply that "he who applies to [the study of the Bible] with an honest and unprejudiced mind, and discusses their teachings on the subject, simply as a question of language and interpretation, [would] rise from the pages with the sentiments or spirits of a modern abolitionist?"[120] – to Thornwell, the position of abolitionists seemed entirely

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116 Thornwell, *National Sins*, p. 359.

117 Ibid.

118 James Henry Hammond, *Selections from the Letters and Speeches of the Hon. James H. Hammond: Of South Carolina*, (J. F. Trow & Company, p1866), p.124

119 James Henley Thornwell, *"Report on the Subject of Slavery, Presented to the Synod of South Carolina, at their Sessions in Winnsborough, November 6, 1851* (Columbia, SC: A. S. Johnson, 1852) p. 5

120 Ibid.

incongruous with what is written in the Bible, and in such a sense, that anyone could seriously consider the Bible and reach such a conclusion astounded him. For the sentiments proposed by abolitionists regarding the cruelty of slavery as sinful, Thornwell found no grounding, stating instead: “certain it is that no direct condemnation of it [slavery] can anywhere be found in the sacred volume . . . The master is nowhere rebuked as a monster of cruelty and tyranny – the slave nowhere exhibited as the object of peculiar compassion and sympathy”[121], slavery was undeniably present in the bible and yet nowhere was it stated that masters were involved in wrongdoings, nor that slaves were owed an excess of sympathy for their God-ordained lot in life.

The text of the Bible itself was of great importance to such proslavery theologians. Thornwell suggested that “Sacred writers convey the impression that they themselves had not the least suspicion that they were dealing with a subject full of abominations and outrages”[122] - those who contributed to the writing of the Bible wrote their prose in a manner not at all suggestive that they themselves, the sacred writers, believed slavery to be any form of wrongdoing, let alone the abomination suggested by opponents to the institution. Furthermore, in terms of the specifics of biblical text, Thornwell followed that “The Prophet or Apostle gives no note of alarm – raises no signal of distress when he comes to the slave and his master”[123], and as a result a reader will see such parallels in the relation between master and slave and father to child that they could be “in serious danger of concluding that according the Bible, it is not much more harm to be a master than a father – a slave than a child.”[124] Thornwell finalised this avenue of his argument with the statement of the facts in Scripture that firstly, “the church was organised in the family of a slaveholder [Abraham]; [slavery] was divinely regulated among the chosen people of God [The Israelites], and the peculiar duties of the parties are inculcated under the Christian economy” – as shown prior, both master and slave, according to scripture, bore a duty and responsibility in their relation to one-another; if one

121 Ibid.

122 Thornwell, *Report on the Subject of Slavery*, p. 6

123 Ibid.

124 Ibid.

simply considers the literal words of the Bible, “these are facts which cannot be denied”.[125] The text of the Bible suggests little wrong with slaveholding, even as Christ and the Apostles laid down in writing each and every sin, instead, it provides numerous examples of its practice among the holiest men of the Scriptures, and the rules and regulation necessary for slaveholding amongst God’s chosen people, the Israelites. To Thornwell, and perhaps to any who consider the specific prescriptions of the Bible, with these ‘undeniable facts’, how could any confessing Christian speak against slavery and support abolitionism when their holy text, from which all Christian moral codes are to be obtained, never condemns slavery in any form even once.

The second basis upon which theological proslavery arguments were founded was the notion of a submission to God’s will and thus accepting your allocated place in society. In the eyes of Thornwell and his colleagues, in particular Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb, God had willed that the world be as it was, and so men should submit to His will and accept the arrangements of His Providence and the unequal distribution of His favour. Effectively, in their minds, God had issued each person a station in society, he had allocated particular favour upon some – and they were resultantly specifically talented and thus in power positions as the master class – others, however, God saw fit that their station in society be that of a labouring slave, and allocated his favour accordingly. The notion was to accept God’s will in where he had placed you within society, and to serve your master in heaven to one’s utmost of your ability from the station which He in His grace had placed you, as this station was suited to your God-given talents. South Carolinian Governor from 1824 to 1844, James Henry Hammond echoed in clear terms this view of God bestowing particular favour on some, when stating "I endorse without reserve the much abused sentiment of Governor McDuffie, that 'slavery is the corner-stone of our republican edifice;' while I repudiate, as ridiculously absurd, that much lauded but nowhere accredited dogma of Mr. Jefferson that 'all men are born equal.'"[126] Indeed, to this end, it was the view of advocates of slavery that equality was an absurd notion, for those with power and success had received these qualities through the favour of their Lord.

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125 Ibid.

126 James Henry Hammond, *Selections from the Letters and Speeches*, p.124

Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb's *Inquiry into the Law of Slavery* states the notion of accepting God's arrangements through Providence in his assertion that "Revelation teaches us that God gave different gifts to different men, to one five talents, to another two, to another one. To one, the gift of tongues, to another, government. It teaches us to repress every feeling of envy, strife , ambition and whatever may be our situation in life, suited to our capacity therewith to be content".[127] What this implies is that God's favour is distributed unevenly, people are not equally able, however Christian teaching commands one to repress feelings of envy and ambition, but instead to contentedly represent one's station, since it is God's will that it is suited precisely to the individual's capacity. Cobb followed this, articulating that "if every man in the community thoroughly appreciated his own gifts and was therewith content, then each would unbidden assume that position in the scale of life to which his talent fitted him. The rulers would be pointed out of God, the subjects would rejoice to obey. The master would recognize a brother in his servant, while the servant would take pleasure in the service of his Lord."[128]. To this end, Cobb saw that men should appreciate and be contented with the 'gifts' bestowed upon them by God through their talents, and thusly should assume the station in society applicable to their capacity; in doing so all should find solace in this divinely ordained order delivered through Providence, and feel satisfaction in the pursuit of best serving their God within this structure. Moreover, Cobb asserts that this appreciation of the work of a divine hand in ordering hierarchies reflects the true freedom and liberty that can be ascertained through Christ - a hierarchy 'pointed out of God', maintains Cobb, perfectly epitomises "the Apostle's idea of the perfect law of liberty in Christ (James 1: 25). To be such is to be Christ's freemen. Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Such a man needs no restraint whatever may be his situation. If called being a servant he cares not."[129] To be sure, Cobb was advocating a 'regulated freedom', whereby all are Christ's freemen finding liberty in the spirit of their Lord, all of whom were 'free', as it were, to serve him best though obeying the hierarchies delivered unto them by divine Providence.

127 Cobb, *Inquiry into the Law of Slavery*, p. 64

128 Ibid.

129 Ibid. p. 64.

Once more, the erudite and thoroughly argued works of Thornwell offer further contextualisation of this viewpoint. For Thornwell, as with his contemporaries, the importance of religion in society was paramount – all notions were to be tested against Biblical Scriptures to determine their value, social order had to be morally grounded in Biblical sanction, and the Southern system itself was deemed a hierarchy ordained of God through his differing 'gifts' of favour to different men. To Thornwell, the Christian religion was the foundation upon which the status quo of the Old South's societal structures could be upheld; it secured order, maintained moral social relations and defined the 'regulated freedom' which Thornwell so valiantly championed in his writing and sermons. In his sermon, *The Rights and Duties of Masters*, Thornwell asserts "religion . . . is the pillar of society, the safeguard of nations, the parent of social order, which alone has power to curb the fury of the passions, and secure to every one his rights; to the laborious, the reward of their industry; to the rich, the enjoyment of their wealth; to nobles the preservation of their honours; and to princes, the stability of their thrones.[130] For him, religion was the intact centre of all; the stability and strength of the nation, society and social order relied upon it – individual rights were maintained, and the works of individuals rewarded, all and only through the Christianity of their nation. In this sense, with a social order bestowed to them by God, Thornwell questioned how any true Christian could "support the destruction of the very foundations of social hierarchy and order that God, in his mercy provided for the weak and sinful humanity after its Fall?"[131] Indeed, living in a self-described God-ordained society whereby hierarchies were deemed pre-defined and delivered by the divine hand of the Lord himself, how could a confessing Christian propose the undoing of their own Lord's work through abolishing the relation between masters and slaves in their station as designated by Him in Scripture, the foundation of their entire societal order and structure. To Thornwell, Christianity was the principal underpinning of society preventing the Old South from falling into a despotic, anarchic, orderless mess (rather his perception of Northern and European free-labour capitalist societies),

130 James Henley Thornwell, *The Rights and the Duties of Masters: A Sermon Preached at the Dedication of a Church, Erected in Charleston, S.C., for the Benefit and Instruction of the Coloured Population*, (Press of Walker & James, 1850) p. 49.

131 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction of Social Order, pp.211-233, p. 219.

for the ‘school of Him’ taught Christians to respect and obey the authority and power granted to some over others through the Lord’s favour. Thornwell asserted that “Insurrection, anarchy and bloodshed - revolt against masters, or treason against States, were never learned in the school of Him, whose Apostles enjoined subjection to the magistrate, and obedience to all lawful authority, as characteristic duties of the faithful.”[132] In Thornwell’s view, the Bible taught not only proper Christian moral values, but instilled obedience and submission to one’s master in heaven as with one’s master on earth, thusly with a faithful and pious populace, one could thusly escape the brutality and barbarism of social upheaval and class struggle, through the obedience and subjection to the ‘lawful’ authority and order delivered by the will of a merciful God to ‘weak and sinful’ humanity.

Thornwell’s stress upon avoiding the toil and tribulation he deemed to be evident in free-labour societies, brings one to the final, and perhaps most unique and important notion in unifying this particular debate with the onset of Civil War; the ideological joining of theology and political economy in order to propose the duality of slavery versus capitalism as respective organisations of labour. Unsurprisingly, Thornwell and his contemporaries saw little good in the systems found in free-labour capitalism – to them the free-labour organisation appeared devoid of Christian morality, it showed little concern for the protection of one’s fellow Christian brethren, and most importantly a perceived plunge of the labouring classes into a despair that could drive them from their faith, and thus, from their salvation in heaven. When proposing the duality between capitalism and slavery, Thornwell proposed his reasoning based in the ideological joining of political economy and theology, combining the two in order to warn against the perceived dangers of liberal capitalism, and the societal downfall and relapse into barbarism which would be, in his eyes, the certain result of such godless systems. To Thornwell, paternalistic slaveholding was undoubtedly the more caring of the two systems, and the post-1830 rise of paternalistic attitudes toward slaves articulates his view of slavery as the most civilised, humane and compassionate means of organising labour; regardless of whether this abstract view of slavery was genuinely reflected in the actuality of practice and treatment of slaves on plantations across the Old South.

132 Thornwell, *The Rights and the Duties of Masters*, p. 49

Moreover, Thornwell called upon his faith in appealing against the worryingly agnostic principles of racial difference as an underpinning to slavery, since slavery was an ideology of responsibility and care to one's brethren as fellow Christians. To him it was "no light matter to deny the common brotherhood of humanity [. . .] if the African is not of the same blood with ourselves, he has no lot, nor part in the gospel."[133] Again, the caring ideology underpinning paternal slavery reared its head, in that "those who defend slavery upon the plea that the African is not of the same stock with ourselves are aiming a fatal blow at the institution, by bringing it into conflict with the dearest doctrines of the gospel."[134] Slavery was ordained of God, and thus since all men are sons of Adam, all had a duty to care for one another. In his eyes, "[God] must be able to call us brethren before He can impart to us His saving grace. No Christian man, therefore, can give any countenance to speculations which trace the negro to any other parent but Adam"[135] – thus, one had to accept Africans as brothers, as sons Adam, and these brothers were much better cared for when clothed and fed as they were under slavery, than idle and starving without work, as they would in Thornwell's perception of the effects of free-labour capitalism.

Thornwell synopsised his notions of the organisation of capital in slavery when stating that "The labourer becomes capital, not because he is a thing, but because he is the exponent of a presumed amount of labour. This is the radical notion of the system, and all legislation upon it should be regulated by this fundamental idea."[136] In this joining of theology and political economy, Thornwell implied that slavery simply proposed a different organisation of capital and labour – capital was not freely exchanged nor paid to a labourer, but instead invested inherently in the labourers themselves, and their wage for such was reflected in the food on their plates, clothes on their backs and roofs to sleep under. In his own words, "slavery is nothing but an organisation of labour, and the organisation by virtue of which labour and capital are made to coincide . . . labour can never be without employment and the wealth of the country is

133 Thornwell, *National Sins*, p. 541.

134 Ibid. p. 542.

135 Ibid.

136 Ibid.

pledged to feed and clothe it."[137] To this end, in the minds of those arguing the benefits of this system, slavery was a caring ideology, and unlike a free-labour society, a labourer could never be without work, and thusly could never be without the necessities to live earned through one's labour. Slavery was a "security for the rights of property and a safeguard against pauperism and idleness"[138], through this organisation of labour one would not see the inherent dangers of free-labour societies, where in his view, multitudes of labourers were left wholly unemployed[139].

The importance to Thornwell of eschewing pauperism and idleness was not ill-founded. He had studied Rousseau's political theories, and was versed in philosophy from Plato and Aristotle to Kant and Hegel.[140] He was well learned in history and political economy and accepted them in their own spheres in respect to Christian theology. As a result, he saw the reality of the diminishing returns on agriculture and the falling rates of profit which were becoming evident in the South with a certain foreboding; he was well aware of the tendencies of populations to outstrip subsistence farming, and to enter into free-labour capitalism when subsistence farming no longer sufficed the nation's needs. The laws of political economy, as he saw them, when left to work themselves out in a free-labour capitalist society, would result invariably in class struggles and revolts against the existing power structures. He implored governments to respond to this danger, asserting that "the government must either make provision to support people in idleness, or it must arrest the law of population and keep them from being born"[141] since population growth shows a tendency to outstrip its employment, thusly governments must assert a more caring ideology, they "must organise labour, human beings cannot be expected to

137 Ibid.p 359.

138 Thornwell, *National Sins*, p. 541.

139 Ibid. p. 540.

140 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction of Social Order, pp.211-233, p. 218.

141 Thornwell, *National Sins*, p. 540.

starve".[142] In this vein of proposing a seemingly more ideologically 'caring' system, Thornwell returned to his assertions of Christian morality being the foundation of such, questioning "how could anyone who called himself a Christian accept these alternatives? Accept the immiseration[sic] of the masses by a cold hearted bourgeoisie that refused responsibility for its labourers and left them to starve, and, even worse, plunge into a despair that would drive them from Christ and their own salvation."[143] He saw that if those who were granted power in society refused their duty and responsibility for the care of those beneath them, then all would plunge into despotism, and through the horrors of unregulated freedom, be driven away from God's grace. In Thornwell's eyes without a pervasive influence of Christianity guiding their system, society would fall from grace. It was his logic that a responsible ruling class should act in the Christian duty as its brother's keeper, and that this must prevail over 'a false and oppressive freedom' defined by a lack of responsibility for one's fellow man. Labour, in his opinion, had to be subordinated into capital in order to be bulwark against this danger, and to this end, labour should be thereby be disciplined to avoid idleness, but more importantly it should be protected and nourished[144]; as opposed to starving in the streets without work or shelter, as he imagined to be the reality of the lives of Northern labourers.

In the duality between the two labour systems Thornwell saw his opponents as self-righteous, uncaring promoters of godless despotism, and held steadfast that those of the Old South had undoubtedly the better social condition. He argued that they did not "envy [non-slaveholding states'] social condition"[145] that his opponents, "with sanctimonious complacency . . . affect to despise us and shun our society"[146] but, as he had argued for numerous years,

142 Ibid.

143 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction of Social Order, pp.211-233, p. 218

144 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction of Social Order, pp.211-233, p.219.

145 Thornwell, *National Sins*, p. 541.

146 Ibid.

slavery was an inherent part of the holiest society every to have graced the earth – the Israelites. He reiterated this statement, warning that although their Northern opponents viewed slavery as a wrongdoing, the Southern social order was demonstrably bestowed of God, and Southerners had no desire to see the perceived horrors of free-labour organisation in their society. Thornwell disputed Northern claims of the inherent sin in slavery, asserting that Northern abolitionists "may say to us *stand by – we are holier than thou;* but the day of reckoning must come [. . .] we desire to see no such state of things among ourselves, and we accept as good and merciful constitution the organisation of labour which Providence has given us in slavery."[147] To him, Southerners were safe in the knowledge that the hand of God had bestowed, in his mercy, this social order upon them – and why would they forsake God-ordained order, only to see the unholy horrors of Northern capitalism ravage their populace?

To the end, in Thornwell's view, slavery was the only option, and resultantly had to prevail over capitalism. On the eve of succession he stated that capitalist countries must institute slavery or disintegrate. The God-ordained slavery of the Old South was the only way to organise a society in a manner both pleasing to God, based in the proper Christian morals of compassion and care; in Thornwell's view, "Slavery [. . .] must everywhere prevail over the cash nexus of the market – a slavery, to be sure, grounded in biblical principles and regulated by Christian doctrine, a slavery at once humane and stern, compassionate and firm, paternalistic and demanding."[148] The slavery of the Old South was put upon a holy pedestal, as it were, by Thornwell and his contemporaries. In their eyes, it fulfilled the requirements and prescriptions of God's word in the Bible to the letter, ensured a responsibility for the care of fellow brethren both black and white, and stood proudly as a superior model of organisation to capitalism, according to their view of contemporary political economic theory. With such an investment in asserting the righteousness of American slavery, and through basing such assertions so heavily in the religion which pervaded so many avenues of Southern society, it is unsurprising that succession and civil war were, by the 1850's, almost an inevitability.

147 Ibid. p. 541

148 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction of Social Order, pp.211-233, p. 219.

Thus far, this chapter has been primarily concerned with the works of contemporarily well-held, and generally Presbyterian , South Carolinian theologians, in particular the astounding works of Reverend James Henley Thornwell. Thornwell would be described by modern historians as of the ‘master class’ – a figure who one would expect to make every effort to maintain and defend the society in which he had been granted both power and success. This viewpoint, however, was not one maintained singularly by a select group of scholars of theology, nor simply the ‘master class’ who found the “peculiar institution” of slavery so beneficial and rewarding. The viewpoint was much more widespread, both geographically and throughout various echelons of society and sects within Christianity - from the dominant, influential slaveholders to the lowly ‘crackers’ amongst whom slaveholding was but a novel rarity.

In terms of differing Christian sects, it is important to consider that there was not one singular dominant form of Christianity, in that, as stated in Chapter I, the issue of re-Christianisation after 1776 a variety of offshoots of Christianity, which generally crystallised around the central tendencies of Northern or Southern social relations, emerged and gained popularity. Presbyterianism gained, respectively, great power in the Old South (the aforementioned James Henley Thornwell, for example, was a prominent South Carolinian in the Old School Presbyterian denomination), however, Southern Presbyterianism was not alone in its support of American Slavery. While Presbyterian divines had a power and influence far beyond their number of constituents in society, particularly in the realm of education (the College of South Carolina for example), within these schools they cooperated a great deal with Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians and others to develop “A non-sectarian Christian social ethos that accepted slavery or, more broadly, the subjugation of labour, as the firmest basis for a modern Christian social order”[149] in such matters “Methodists, Presbyterians and the Baptists differed little if at all on their basic social views.”[150] A case in point in evidence of this is that Methodist, William G. Brownlow and Presbyterian, Frederick A. Ross, were two men who thoroughly disliked one another personally and regularly exchanged denunciations – the former, in fact, publishing a regular

149 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, ‘The Divine Sanction of Social Order, pp.211-233, p. 227.

150 Ibid.

column during 1847 in the newspaper he published and edited, *The Jonesborough Whig and Independent Journal,* labelled simply 'Frederick Ross's Corner', in which he repeatedly assaulted the character of Ross[151]. However, a comparison of the social theories espoused in Slavery Ordained of God (Ross) and Ought American Slavery to Be Perpetuated (Brownlow), both "extolled slavery as God-Ordained and as the proper foundation of a Christian social order."[152]

The works and speeches of Ross sought to propose Southern slavery as 'ordained of God', and encompassing a divine order to a much greater extent than the economic systems of the North. His speeches in New York in 1856 assessed that the moral agitations regarding slavery were in pursuit of "the harmony of the Northern and Southern mind, in the right interpretations of Scripture on this great subject . . . for the ultimate union of the hearts of all sensible people, to fulfil God's intention, - to bless the white man and the black man in America."[153] In itself, as an early statement in his speech, this encompasses the notions of paternalism in the blessing of black and white men alike, alongside the belief in seeking God's intention in the Bible as to what can be deemed moral or sinful. Ross saw that since the 1820's, Southern Christianity had become much more prominent, and recognised the influence of the 'slavery question' when stating that he saw God "more honoured in the South to-day than he was twenty-five years ago; and that that higher regard is due, mainly, to the agitation of the slavery question."[154] In their studious attention to the Bible, Ross found that the 'powerful intellects of the South' had discovered, in the grace of God, "that the relation of the master and slave is not sin; and that, notwithstanding its admitted evils, it is a connection between the highest and the lowest races of man . . . This seen result of slavery was found to be in

151 E. Merton Coulter, *William G. Brownlow: Fighting Parson of the Southern Highlands* (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1999). p.53-83.

152 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction of Social Order, pp.211-233, p. 227.

153 Frederick A. Ross, 'SPEECH, DELIVERED IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY NEW YORK, 1856', in *Slavery Ordained of God* (J.B. Lippincott & Company, 1857). p. 35

154 Ross, *Slavery Ordained of God* , p. 35

absolute harmony with the word of God. These men, then, of highest grade of thought, [turned] in scorn from Northern notions."[155] Following this assertion of slavery being God-Ordained, Ross asserted then the respective foundations of Northern abolitionist sentiment and the godlessness in such viewpoints, stating that Northern anti-slavery men had "left the light of the Bible, and wandered into the darkness until they have reached the blackness of the darkness of infidelity"[156], furthermore he claimed others to be metaphorically "throwing the Bible into the furnace, are melting it into iron, and forging it, and welding it, and twisting it, and grooving it into the shape and significance and goodness and gospel of Sharpe's rifles."[157] To Ross, those of the North were forsaking true Christianity, and melding Scripture into their own model in pursuit of immoral aggression towards the south; in a somewhat light-hearted manner Ross joked that if Northerners were to see slavery not as a sin, then in their propensity "to go to extremes in your zeal and run everything into the ground, [Northerners] may, perhaps, become too pro-slavery; and that [Southerners] may have to take measures against [Northern] coveting, over much, our daughters, if not our wives, our men-servants, our maid-servants, our houses, and our lands."[158] To Ross, slavery was far from sinful and had its foundation in a positive Christian social order – on the other hand, he perceived that the North was veering dangerously far from biblical sanction and order through their zeal in pursuit of profit through capitalism.

Brownlow, despite his personal issues with Frederick Ross, proposes an argument which aligns itself neatly alongside the notions of Ross's work – he too saw no sin in the relation of masters and slaves, and furthermore was damning toward the capitalism of the North and their resultant lack of proper Christian order. In his view, slavery was "an established and inevitable condition to human society"[159], and "God always intended the relation of the master and slave to exist . . . Christ and the early teachers of Christianity found slavery differing in no

155 Ibid. p. 36.

156 Ibid. p. 37.

157 Ibid.

158 Ibid. p. 39.

material aspect from American slavery *incorporated into every department of society.*"[160] In much the same view as Ross, Brownlow's argument presides over the findings in Scripture and how they demonstrably evidence the view of God upon slaveholding, and thusly the slavery of contemporary America, being of no difference to biblical slavery, must be viewed in the same vein as morally sound. Furthermore, Brownlow espouses sentiments attacking the un-Christian character of Northern abolitionism in a duality with the paternalistic outlook of Southern slavery, asserting that "those politicians, and bad men, who are exciting the whole country, and fanning society into a livid consuming flame, particularly at the North, have no sympathies for the *black man,* and care nothing for his comfort. They seek their own – not the negro's good."[161] In much the same way as Ross argued, the abolitionists of the North were perceived to be seeking their own capitalist good in seeking profit and in doing so were eschewing the notions of paternalistic Christian duty and responsibility of care for one's fellow brethren, which had become so popular in the South.

Beyond simply prominent preachers, however, the principal ideas of proslavery theologians such as James Henley Thornwell, Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb or even the works of Ross and Brownlow mentioned above, can be seen to have gained currency outside of their published papers and speeches. The report on observances of the Old South and its people during the 1850's, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, with Remarks on Their Economy,* written by Northerner, Frederick Law Olmstead, proves rather telling in regards to the spread of proslavery theology, even into the church services in the secluded backwoods of Georgia. During his travels Olmsted described a church service for blacks and whites together in the woods of Georgia, in which he remarked upon the service given. He described from the outset, that the service was being held in a small church "in a small clearing of the woods, and there was no habitation within two miles of it"[162], far from the metropolitan class of Charleston's churches, here, fastened to trees nearby "there were many saddled horses and

159 Rev. W. G. Brownlow and Rev. A. Pryne, *Ought American Slavery To Be Perpetuated? A Debate Between Rev. W. G. Brownlow and Rev A. Pryne. Held at Philadelphia*, *September, 1858* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co 1858) p. 34.

160 Rev. W. G. Brownlow and Rev. A. Pryne, *Ought American Slavery To Be Perpetuated?* p. 34.

161 Ibid p. 57

mules, and a few attached to carts or wagons. There were two smouldering camp-fires, around which sat circles of negroes and white boys, roasting potatoes in the ashes."[163]. Olmstead described the majority of the audience to be of the class of 'crackers', poor whites who were unlikely to own slaves, however explains that at least some of them were slaveholders "and were by no means so poor as their appearance indicated"[164]. What is of particular interest in Olmstead's report is the comments on the sermon itself – Olmstead notes the emotive delivery by the speaker, who "nearly all the time cried aloud at the utmost stretch of his voice, as if calling to some one a long distance off"[165], warranting the attention of the audience to the sentiments of his sermon as he calls upon views espoused by the likes of well held theologians like Thornwell. Olmstead noted that there were no points of contention upon which the audience may have a difference of opinion to the speaker, nor any particular connection between each sentence uttered, however "there was a constant, sly, sectarian skirmishing, and a frequently recurring cannonade upon French infidelity and socialism, and several crushing charges upon Fourier, the Pope of Rome, Tom Paine, Voltaire, "Roosu," and Jo Smith"[166]. The constant, sly sectarian 'skirmishing' and 'recurring cannonade' described by Olmstead is particularly telling in respect to the sentiments espoused by established proslavery theologians. The speaker's reference to French infidelity and socialism alongside philosophers such as Rousseau and Voltaire and even political theorists such as Thomas Paine appears reminiscent of Thornwell's basing of his reasoning in the braiding of political economics and theology in order to warn against the dangers of capitalism. Voltaire's philosophy regarding freedom of religion and the separation of church and state were oppositional to the contemporary South's incorporation of Christianity into a multitude of departments of society; Tom

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162 Frederick Law Olmstead, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, with Remarks on Their Economy* (New York: Dix and Edwards 1856) p. 454

163 Ibid.

164 Ibid.

165 Olmstead, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, with Remarks on Their Economy*, p. 455.

166 Ibid.p. 456.

Paine's writing on the rights of man and transnational human rights proved incompatible with the workings of slavery; Rousseau's philosophy on the natural state of man and legitimate social order offended the sentiments of proslavery writers through his calls to abandon claims of natural rights, and instead to enter into social contracts with the general will of the people being of greater importance than the will of God, for example. Berating the political, philosophical and economic systems which upheld values that disagreed with the Southern Christian proslavery philosophy appears to have been prominent even in small Southern religious gatherings, far from the prominent theologians who penned such views in published sermons and papers.

In addition to this, the Olmstead's preacher put great stress on the importance of God's word. He refers to himself as an 'ambassador of Christ', a simple messenger delivering the words of Scripture, to which one must pay great attention and obey – not to the messenger. As Olmstead reported "The audience were frequently reminded that the preacher did not want their attention, for any purpose of his own; but that he demanded a respectful hearing as "the Ambassador of Christ." He had the habit of frequently repeating a phrase, or of bringing forward the same idea in a slightly different form, a great many times"[167]. The speaker proposed himself simply as the messenger, charging the concern of his audience not upon him, but upon what the words of the Bible prescribe. Questioningly he addressed the audience as to whether some would not come to Christ, asking rhetorically "Is it because he was of lowly birth? ah! Is that it? Is it because he was born in a manger? ah! Is it because he was of a humble origin?"[168] Settling finally on his notion of being the messenger he asserted again "perhaps you don't like the messenger--is that the reason? I'm the Ambassador of the great and glorious King; it's his invitation, 'taint mine. You musn't mind me. I ain't no account. Suppose a ragged, insignificant little boy should come running in here and tell you, 'Mister, your house's a-fire!' would you mind the ragged, insignificant little boy, and refuse to listen to him, because he didn't look respectable?"[169] This stress upon his role as a simple messenger places the greater importance upon what he is the messenger of, which in this

167 Ibid.

168 Ibid.

169 Olmstead, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, with Remarks on Their Economy*, p. 457.

case is the word of God, in the Bible – all that he proposes to be iterating is the will of God as is found in the Scriptures.

Furthermore, the concept of Christian paternalism can be seen to permeate the words of the preacher when he states to the black members of the congregation, "I take great interest in the poor blacks; and this evening I am going to hold a meeting especially for you."[170] His apparent care and concern for the slaves among the congregation brings to the fore prior mentioned notions of the paternalistic responsibility and duty of care for those lower in society by those granted a higher station by the will of God. This Christian ideology of serving God and caring for one's fellow brethren can be further seen through his stress on the importance of finding salvation and being saved through Christianity. Olmstead reported that the speaker beseeches all to convert and pray for those who have yet to do so, "crying aloud, with a mournful, distressed, beseeching shriek, as if he was himself suffering torture: 'Oh, any of you fond parents, who know that any of your dear, sweet, little ones may be, oh! at any moment snatched right away from your bosom, and cast into hell fire, oh! there to suffer torment forever and ever, and ever and ever--Oh! come out here and help us pray for them! Oh, any of you wives that has got an unconverted husband, that won't go along with you to eternal glory, but is set upon being separated from you, oh! and taking up his bed in hell--Oh! I call upon you, if you love him, now to come out here and jine[sic] us in praying for him."[171] Such an impassioned call to bring all 'to Christ' suggests not simply paternalism and associated moral responsibility that all of God's children be saved, but a dedication to the importance of Christianity in the lives of Southerners during the tumulus years in the lead-up to Civil War.

From James Henley Thornwell's publications all the way to backwoods Georgian preachers, it is apparent that a shared dedication to a positive model of Christian society evident in the South's distinctive institutions permeated much of the contemporary Southern theological zeitgeist in the years leading up to Civil War. To them, slavery was demonstrably moral in the view of God in the Holy Bible, and the realities of the societies of those who opposed and attacked their way of life were founded in capitalist godlessness; as they saw it, their opponents held an ethos of the uncaring, unchristian pursuit of personal gain to

170 Ibid. p. 458.

171 Ibid.

the detriment of others, in whom one had neither a Christian duty nor a responsibility in the care or provision for, as, ideologically, was the Southern way.

IV
Chapter 4: A God-Ordained Christian Society as Manifest in the South's Distinctive Institutions? Conclusions:

The arguments espoused by religious figures in the prior chapters can be demonstrably justified against the teachings of the Christian Bible, however, in addition to this, the proslavery stance of many Southern theologians and religious figures can be viewed in respect to their place, and the place of Christianity as a whole, within Southern society and its distinctive institutions. A rural Baptist, for example would typically support himself by farming or in a trade, and as was the manner of the south, and for this he would acquire slaves, if he could. Presbyterian ministers more typically would teach in schools for the children of slaveholders and they themselves would likely own house slaves if not a plantation. Alternatively, as was the case with many Methodists, they would perhaps also serve as a lawyer, immersing themselves into the civil and criminal issues of a slaveholding society[172]. Regardless of which sect of Christianity, the societal roles of Southern religious figures were braided so closely with the workings of slavery that to enter into such a role, yet have no affinity with slaveholders or slaveholding, would have proved practically impossible. Indeed, the structure of Southern society held that "the ministry, medicine and the law constituted the principal roads to respectability – and to the ultimate 'profession' of planting – in Southern slave society."[173] The status and role of slaveholders within Southern society reflected that of a master class, these men were deemed the most respectable members of society, and as has been evidenced in the prior chapters, undoubtedly pious Christian men. Ministers and preachers had to accept the slaveholding world that they found around themselves, opting to attempt in melding it to correspond as closely with the Mosaic Law of the Bible and the Christian model of social relations as they were capable of doing. In doing so, the intertwined nature of Christianity and Southern social order and structure deepened, and the stress on Biblical justification for all aspects of society became increasingly apparent. Obviously, in their attempts to make a slave holding society into a positive, respectable model, they failed; however their placing of slavery onto a solidly Christian ground proved hugely successful. Slavery, as always, remained an atrocious injustice to humanity, but

172 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction of Social Order, pp.211-233, p. 228.

173 Ibid.

the works of Southern religious leaders were remarkable in their effort made to bring a paternal Christian conscience and action to the minds of the slaveholding class, and to make slavery a justifiably God-ordained aspect of a truly Christian society.[174]

The foundations of the societal structure of the Old South lay in a biblical Christian social order. The proslavery arguments from theologians discussed in the chapter prior assert that a concern and general commitment to a positive Christian society, as modelled by the distinctive Southern social institutions, was evident in the sentiments of theological scholars and Southern preachers alike. The social order, or perhaps more appropriately worded as the hierarchies, of Southern society (as were stressed above, in the writings of Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb in particular) were deemed to have been delivered by Providence from God to a weak and sinful humanity, in order that man serve him best in his Christian duty. The structures of Southern social relations, as such, were heavily imbued with biblical ideologies. Social order in the South was defined by three primary constituents – that of family, or those socially dependent upon a patriarchal figurehead; the second being that of the household, which whilst thoroughly intertwined with notions of family, was in itself a unit within the economy and community often as a plantation; finally that of polity, which effectively encompassed the local community, the region and the nation as a whole - polity was the platform upon which Christian masters were to carry out their duties and responsibilities having been endowed, supposedly by God, with their societal power.[175] It was taken for granted by slaveholders that the families, households and polity of were those of a strongly Christian society that would "stand or fall in accordance with its adherence to Christian principles. And those principles made God's will manifest in the legitimate authority that some, as members of specific groups, wielded over others."[176] This authority, legitimated by God's will, permeated the ways in which social structure and social relations

174 Ibid.

175 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction of Social Order, pp.211-233, p. 219

176 Ibid.

were carried out in the slaveholding South.

The God-ordained power of men over women as the foundation of God's hierarchy immediately placed white Southern men in an authoritative position within the family, regardless of their position in society. The principle of male authority in the patriarchal structure of Southern relations can be seen through the fact that, according to Genovese, "almost all scriptural defences of slavery . . . rooted the subjection of slaves to masters, and of blacks to whites, in the prior subjugation of women to men."[177] Effectively, the biblical promotion of male patriarchs as heads of families to whom all others were subjugated meant that "distinctions of class and race were similarly God-ordained extensions of the principle of family order and male authority"[178] as taken from Scripture. The contemporary Southern notions of family, however, were unique in the blurred lines between what family and household meant. The step from family to household was both short and blurred, and in Southern society the idea of one's household and one's family naturally articulated one-another. A patriarchal structure in the family passed through into the household, and thusly into other spheres of Southern social relations, as Stephanie McCurry's writing on Southern gender relations suggests, "Southern men, like other republicans, established their independence and status as citizens in the public sphere through the command of dependents in their household."[179] The meaning of dependents in this case, did not simply mean that of one's family, but as was the structure of Southern paternalism, the care of one's fellow and lesser brethren was charged to those who had been granted higher roles in society by God's will. There was a fine line between what was defined as family and what was defined as household, epitomised wonderfully by the popular paternalistic conception of "my family, black and white" which laid bare notions of their Christian community as an "extended family within which labourers were assimilated to an

177 Ibid.

178 Ibid

179 Stephanie McCurry, 'The two faces of republicanism: Gender and proslavery politics in antebellum South Carolina', *Journal of American History*, 78 (1992) pp. 1245-64, p.1245.

organic relation to their masters, whose duties included protection and succour as well as discipline and the imposition of order."[180]

The household, whilst being thoroughly articulated by notions of family order, provided the fundamental embodiment of Southern conceptions of God-ordained property, taken directly from the Bible (as evidenced in Chapter II) to include property in human beings as slaves in the same manner as any other property. In this sense, it was the status and role of white men as heads of households which attributed them their freedom, as opposed to their attributes as a labourer themselves – through being the head of a household which consisted of both the family and the labouring slaves of the master, these white men were endowed with the control of an important economic unit within Southern society. The household provided the necessities for living to its labourers whilst providing an economic output of produce, in a manner not so dissimilar to that of the factories of the North, to the benefit of the local and national economy. In the Old South in the years prior to the American Civil War, conceptions of family and household resisted disentangling. The family was defined in a complex manner as a network of social dependents, a component of the Southern society as an important economic unit, and also serving as an active political unit with all members of the 'family' represented by the white male head of the household. For contemporary Southern society, a household was effectively the same thing; the structure of Southern social relations, economy and political system was made up of a network of households, each containing the patriarch as representative of the family and slaves who lived there, all of whom were encouraged, with the post-1830's rise of paternalism, to view themselves as a family.[181]

The network of households and their master-representatives which made up Southern society were based in Southern Christian ideologies of God-ordained hierarchical power and paternalism. The final aspect of Southern social order to be considered is that of polity, which, dependent upon the context, referred to the locality, the region or the nation as a whole. The polity was the basis upon which Christian masters' status was built and legitimised in this strongly

180 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction of Social Order, pp.211-233, p. 220.

181 Ibid.

Christian society; it was the Christian foundation of Southern society which defined the manner in which heads of households carried out social relations on a larger scale. The head of a household represented all of the social dependents of the household socially, economically and politically; resultantly these head of households "faced each other as Christian masters who represented the interests of the entire household – its wife, children and slaves, each of whom constituted different kinds of dependents in a web of social dependencies."[182] In their representation, however, these Christian masters were bound by the religiosity of the polity, and thusly the manner in which social relations were carried out was grounded in such. The power of these masters was legitimised by their Christianity, and thusly "male head of households exercised their power legitimately only when the exercised it in accordance with the Mosaic Law, the Sermon on the Mount, and the entire body of laws and commandments laid down in the Old and New Testaments."[183] As such, the role of Christianity in shaping southern social relations was both hugely pervasive and influential – the power of masters and subjugation of others in society was grounded in divine sanction, as was the formation of household and families as one structure of dependents under the care of a paternal master; finally, in respect to the role of Christianity in Southern societal functions, the manner in which heads of households managed their social, political and economic business was done in accordance at all times with the Bible, and these men faced each other as, above all, pious Christian men whose role in society was defined and legitimised, as they saw it, by the divine will of God.

In terms of conclusions, the distinctive social relations and institutions of contemporary Southern society placed religion in a unique relation to society, particularly at a time when modernity, in terms of capitalist economics and political equality, was being adopted throughout Western Europe and Northern America, alongside the abolishment of inhumane colonial practices such as slavery. The South's distinctive institutions did indeed represent a biblically modelled Christian society. The place of religion within the social order of the South was both unique and modern – their societal structure and respective social relations were all grounded in biblically legitimised hierarchies; the place

182 Ibid. p. 221.

183 Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction of Social Order, pp.211-233, p. 221.

of religion in the analysis and the defence of slavery and of their society was unrivalled in depth and entirely original in theologians braiding of Christianity and political economy. Through this, Southerners forged themselves a society based solidly in the actuality of biblical prescription, and defended adamantly, to the end, the morality and righteousness of their way of life. Through this examination of the extent and depth of effort to situate slavery upon Christian ground, and build a class-stratified social order ordained of God, one can see the dedication to their social order and slaveholding as so thoroughly intertwined with their faith that the threat of abolitionism appeared, not as a reorganisation of their economic labour systems and racist hegemony, but to be an assault upon the nation's entire social and economic order, structure and belief system.

Freedom in the American slaveholding states was an entirely different notion to the understanding of freedom in the Northern states let alone modern standards. Freedom was a function of social order, and each individual had a proper station in society from which they were "free" to serve best their Lord, they lived in a religiously legitimated social order and cohesion delivered to them by Providence. Through this concept of one's hierarchical position delivered by God, the aforementioned social structures developed whereby a white patriarchal dominance instilled white men as Christian representatives in society, who spoke and acted on behalf of the family and slaves within their household with a strict adherence to the Christian principles of the Mosaic Law and both Old and New Testaments, which legitimated and justified their position in society. To the end Southerners denied that American slavery was sinful at any level and asserted that all institutions lay open to injustice and exploitation, frequently venting attacks upon the cruelty and maltreatment of labourers under Northern capitalism. Slavery as a social relation was demonstrably ordained of God in the Bible; it was with a great duty and responsibility that Southern masters were to treat those in their custody with paternalistic compassion and care, whilst demanding a presumed amount of labour for their worth. The social system was delivered by Providence, and as such, it would be the work of sinful people if those chosen by God to rule over others failed in their duty and responsibility as Christians, neglected those in their care, and abused their God-given rights – thusly forcing God to forsake them, and into withdrawing his divine sanction of their society.

The accordance to Christian Scriptures inherently planted at all levels of the structures governing social order in Southern society meant that effectively to stand against the social order of the South was to stand against their Christianity. In the Southern mind, their order represented God's last bastion of a truly Biblical society; they were justifying the way of God in the Bible to weak and feeble man. In this sense one may obtain an understanding as to the Southern whites' willingness to enter into the Civil War in order to preserve a social system as repulsive and objectionable; evidently the battle for Southern Christian minds had been won by proslavery advocates long before the war, they stood by their Bible and their Bible justified their slaveholding society and social order. Since the stirrings of the Missouri Compromise in 1820, the abolitionist movement was increasingly perceived as such a threat to the entire South's social structure that during the half century leading up to the American Civil War defences of slavery crystallised into vehement arguments providing the ideological joining of Christianity, philosophy and political economy in order to evidence, over all else, the morally Christian superiority of Southern social order. In Southern minds, slavery was in no disagreement with their deeply held Christian values, and as such their whole worldview and society was influenced, legitimised and justified through Scripture; as James Henley Thornwell iterated at the time, on the subject of American slavery, "[Southern] consciences are not troubled, and have no reason to be troubled on this score."[184] The "unofficial" national anthem of the Confederate States, "*God Save The South",* calls to "Let the proud spoiler know God's on our side"[185]; in respect to this thesis, this sentiment is particularly apt. Through their studious attention to the Scriptures, Southern theologians and religious figures planted a uniquely modern and strongly Christian worldview into the mindset of the Southern populace – illustrating that indeed, in the defence of American slavery and the Southern social order through the Scriptures, God was most certainly "on their side".

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