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CHRIST AND CLASS: THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE SOUTH:  
1760-1865

A Dissertation  
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the Department of History  
The University of Mississippi

by  
RYAN LEE FLETCHER  
MAY 2013

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the emergence, practices, religious culture, expansion, and social role of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the American South from 1760 to 1865. The dissertation employs three major research methodologies by: (1) centralizing the role of social class in the Episcopal Church's history, (2) seriously considering the Episcopal Church's distinctive theology, and (3) quantifying the connections that linked the Episcopal Church to the South's economic structures prior to the Civil War. Archival research, periodicals, and published records related to the Protestant Episcopal Church provided the primary evidence used in the formulation of the dissertation's interpretations and conclusions. Many historians of the early American South depict evangelical Protestants as the preeminent religious movement in the region following the American Revolution as the Protestant Episcopal Church stagnated and supposedly became relegated to the region's cultural periphery. "Christ and Class" aspires to complicate such analyses by elucidating how the Protestant Episcopal Church's potency in the South during the pre-Civil War period should not be measured by its inferior membership numbers in comparison to the region's other denominations, but rather the institution's vitality hinged upon the social power and devotion of its planter-class communicants.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the loving memory of my best friend,

who will always be remembered—

Prince Nicholas XVII.

## ABBREVIATIONS USED IN NOTES

VHS: Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia

LV: Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia

SCL: South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina

MDAH: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi

AEC: The Archives of the Episcopal Church, Austin, Texas

SSCUVA: Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections, University of Virginia,  
Charlottesville, Virginia

JDLS: Jessie Ball duPont Library, Sewanee, Tennessee

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Producing a dissertation is a collective endeavor. Countless archivists and librarians in Virginia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas offered their amazing professional talents without which this dissertation would never have materialized. I also express my appreciation to the University of Mississippi's Graduate School for generously affording me invaluable research fellowships. I am most thankful for both Dr. Jeffrey Watt and Dr. Joseph Ward for meeting with me on various occasions to address my questions related to the religious dimensions of early modern Europe. Dr. Charles R. Wilson, Dr. Sheila Skemp, Dr. Ted Ownby and Dr. Kathryn McKee demonstrated both prodigious patience and unwavering support throughout the entirety of their service on my dissertation committee. I could not have selected a better committee. All members of my committee enriched and improved the following dissertation from its original form. I am solely responsible for all of my dissertation's insufficiencies, but to the extent that "Christ and Class" has intellectual virtue it is due in large measure to my committee's insightful and sagacious advice. Professor Wilson deserves special recognition as my advisor and mentor. I am unable to contemplate any professional honor that could be more impressive than the remarkable opportunity of the last six years to be one of Dr. Charles R. Wilson's students. Adequate words escape me so I will just add to Dr. Wilson that my gratitude for your many years of counsel and guidance will be "without end." Finally, Mom, Dad, and Jennifer thank you for the persistent reminders of why I entered graduate school, especially at the moments "when sorrows like sea billows" rolled. I am indebted to a family that provided me with a lifetime of preparation, because a dissertation sometimes requires the dogged work-ethic of a farm kid.

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## A COLLECT FOR THE PLANTER CLASS: AN INTRODUCTION

The Collect for the Third Sunday After Epiphany: Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth thy right hand to help and defend us through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*  
—*The Book of Common Prayer* (1789)

A quarter of a century has elapsed since John B. Boles heralded the "discovery" of southern religious history. In the intervening decades, the historiography related to southern religion has experienced what might be called an evangelical turn. Historians of southern religious history, with few exceptions, have connected evangelicalism to every aspect of the pre-Civil War South. The evangelical turn in the scholarship has produced "thick" and rich descriptions of every religious facet of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Gender, slavery, and politics have been the three major themes that have received extensive attention from scholars of evangelicalism in the South.<sup>1</sup> For understandable reasons, a historiography with such

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<sup>1</sup> John B. Boles, "The Discovery of Southern Religious History," in *Interpreting Southern History: Historiographical Essays in Honor of Sanford W. Higginbotham* ed. John B. Boles and Evelyn Thomas Nolen (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 510-548. On gender and Protestant evangelicalism see for example: Christine Leigh Heyrman *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* Cynthia Lynn Lylerly *Methodism and the Southern Mind, 1770-1810* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); and Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). On slavery and Protestant evangelicalism, see for example: Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Albert J. Raboteau *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978). Mechal Sobel, *The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth Century Virginia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); *Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740-1870* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988). On politics and Protestant evangelicalism, see for example: Mitchell Snay, *The Gospel of Disunion: Religion and Separatism in the Antebellum South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); C. C. Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schism and the Coming of the American Civil War* (Macon: Macon University Press, 1985); Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina press, 1999). For more on "thick description," see Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3-30.

fecundity has expended less time on non-evangelical religious traditions that existed in the very pluralistic South. In part, historians have been captivated by the remarkable numerical growth of the Baptists, Presbyterians, along with the Methodists following the Great Awakening and continuing through the Great Revival. Historians attracted to success and dynamism have extended religious traditions which claimed fewer members far less attention. In particular, the Protestant Episcopal Church vanishes in many historical renditions behind the evangelical tents of camp meeting revivals after disestablishment. Table I.1 demonstrates the rapid ascendancy of Protestant evangelicalism in the United States following the American Revolution.

<b>Table I.1: Estimated Church Adherents in the United States, 1776-1850</b>		
<b>Denominations</b>	<b>1776</b>	<b>1850</b>
<b>Episcopalians</b>	53,089	95,110
<b>Methodists</b>	6,971	1,632,613
<b>Southern Baptists</b>	28,636	580,834
<b>Presbyterians</b>	63,063	478,456

**Source: William M. Newman and Peter L. Halvorson, *Atlas of American Religion: The Denominational Era, 1776-1990* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2000), 73, 77, 80, 83.**

The great Donald G. Mathews deserves special mention. Mathews captured the problem with the evangelical turn when he offered an essay designed to answer the following question:

"Where does the Episcopal Church fit into the southern evangelical narrative?" Mathews rightly

added the caveat that historians had to abandon the common practice of depicting the Episcopal Church as a "foil, bad example, or vestigial appendix" in the region's historiography. In *Religion in the Old South*, Mathews cautioned that the Protestant Episcopal Church did not grow "only as part of the broadening Evangelical movement." Mathews notes the presence of "high church" Episcopalians in the pre-Civil War South, especially in the Diocese of North Carolina. Despite the acknowledgement of a high church presence, Mathews nonetheless maintains the "Evangelical ideal was so great" in the South that it even shaped the more liturgical Protestant Episcopal Church. A dearth of historical research coupled with a penchant to force Episcopalians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to live inside the prevailing "evangelical narrative" have both been deleterious to any serious effort to understand the centrality of religion to southern society prior to the Civil War. This dissertation does not profess to remedy twenty-five years of deficiencies in the historiography. Rather, the chapters presented on the subsequent pages only seek to begin a historiographical conversation regarding the Protestant Episcopal Church in the South during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on its own terms, as opposed to studying it through the prism of evangelicalism.<sup>1</sup>

The Protestant Episcopal Church that existed in the South prior to the Civil War provides historians with a unique perspective on the nexus between social class and religious faith. Mathews's *Religion in the Old South* also offers an additional and critical contribution to the historiography by describing the Episcopal Church as the "church of the aristocracy" in the antebellum South. Protestant evangelicalism in the early South has provided historians with opportunities to investigate religion "from below" since the movement welcomed many of the

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<sup>1</sup> Donald G. Mathews, "Sacrament and Segregation: Episcopalians in the Evangelical South," in *Religion in the Contemporary South: Changes, Continuities, and Contexts*, ed. Corrie E. Norman and Don S. Armentrout (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2005), 306-307; Donald G. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 129-131.

region's marginalized, including women, poor whites, and slaves. Such examinations are invaluable and have enriched the field's understanding of the early South. Allurement to numerical supremacy and the marginalized, however, must not obscure social reality. Despite the emergence of an evangelical majority, the Protestant Episcopal Church retained an underappreciated "social power" in the South prior to the Civil War because the planter class comprised the core of its membership.<sup>2</sup>

The term "social power" and its connection to the Episcopal Church necessitates some explication. Social power has been used by a variety of historians of the American South studying various social classes. For example, Brenda E. Stevenson contends that enslaved women in the antebellum South had "situationally bound" social power. Stevenson defines social power for enslaved women as having liberating connotations since it granted them a "social presence and influence that was recognized beyond traditional boundaries." Stevenson's research is a keen reminder that social power has different meanings for various social classes. Finding a definition for the Episcopal Church's social power in the early South, therefore, requires deemphasizing any emancipating subtexts, and instead zeroing in on the domineering nature of a ruling class. Some social theorists have aspired to move beyond a simple class analysis of power. For example, Max Weber warned against equating "economically-conditioned" power to all forms of power. For Weber, social "status" and "party" complicate historical analyses of class-based power. In addition, Weber maintained that social power as a form of "social action" or "class action" had to be "linked to general cultural conditions, especially those of the intellectual sort." Karl Marx's understanding of the attributes of social power is more persuasive for this dissertation than Weber's argument for cultural prerequisites.

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<sup>2</sup> Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*, 129-131. Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1980), 35;

Marx implied that social power emanated from a social consciousness arising from a societal "superstructure." According to Marx, the "relations of production constitute the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which rises a legal and political superstructure." Marx alluded to the intellectual and cultural connection to the superstructure by asserting that the "mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general." For Marx, cultural expressions flowed from their relationship to class-based power. The Episcopal Church in the South during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries possessed social power in excess of its total membership because likely a majority of the region's ruling class—to borrow a Marxian-verb—"conditioned" the sacred institution to provide its theological resources to the various causes of the planters including the American Revolution, slave missions, and secession—just to list a few. Planters did not deviously invent the Episcopal Church to serve their ruling-class interests. Rather, since Anglicanism both predated and outlived the South's planter class, the following pages examine how the planters "conditioned" the Episcopal Church in their region at a particular historical moment in time for the exercising of social power in a superstructure dedicated to a slave-society mode of production.<sup>3</sup>

Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians from the South, of course, also offered sanctification for the planter class's political and economic agendas rooted in slavery. The South's evangelical-Protestant denominations, however, exerted less social power because of differing denominational cultures and a more diversified social-class dynamic. Along with diluting the planter class's power with more non-planter members, most Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians in the period following the American Revolution became increasingly

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<sup>3</sup> Brenda E. Stevenson, "Marsa Never Sot Aunt Rebecca down': Enslaved Women, Religion, and Social Power in the Antebellum South," *The Journal of African American History* 90: (Autumn 2005), 345-347; Max Weber quoted in *Social Class and Stratification: Classical Statements and Theoretical Debates* ed. Rhonda Levine, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 49-63; Karl Marx quoted in *The Marx-Engels Reader* ed. Robert C. Tucker, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1972), 4-5, 117-119. I added the emphasis to the word "conditions."

captivated by what Samuel Hill persuasively calls the "central theme" of southern religious history as they fixated upon: "the conversion of individuals from condemned status before the Almighty to an everlasting reward in heaven, though the merits of Christ's death...the gospel in a nutshell." Hill confesses (before proceeding to include Episcopalians) that the Episcopal Church "might appear...out of place" in his analysis of the region's "popular churches." Even though Hill deems the Episcopal Church's out-of-place appearance to be deceiving, the following chapters very respectfully disagree. The Episcopal Church in the South possessed unique ecclesiological, theological, and class-based characteristics that irrevocably isolated it from what Hill calls the "popular churches." From its inception, Anglicanism connected its members with their communities and the larger nation in practicing religious faith. The Church of England retained a sacramental theology in which individuals could find salvation in its life-long communal rituals infused with grace. Anglican churches offered individuals redemption in *The Book of Common Prayer's* collective liturgy and apostolic sacraments shared by the entire parish community. Notwithstanding a few low-church evangelicals, Episcopalians in the South remained loyal to their Church of England ancestry. Moreover, the Anglican tradition because of its historical roots in England's sixteenth and seventeenth centuries balanced Christianizing both individuals and the national *society*. The Church of England's longstanding connection to monarchs and parliaments implanted a cultural politics in the denomination from the moment of its origin. Episcopalians in the pre-Civil War South preserved that political-social ethos, but interpreted and filtered it through the planter class's agenda. The concentration of the South's politically-minded ruling class in the Episcopal Church's pews coupled with Protestant evangelicalism's increasing devotion to the "central theme" ensured that even after the end of *de jure* disestablishment, the Episcopalians in the region remained a *de facto* establishment

retaining remarkable social power in their region despite being surpassed by other religious denominations in total membership.<sup>4</sup>

For historians desirous of understanding the planter class and its hegemony in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, researching the Protestant Episcopal Church is essential. In *The Great Revival*, John B. Boles observed that a "social stratification" continued to exist in southern religion after the American Revolution in which the "wealthiest planters and merchants" often gravitated toward the Episcopal Church. Numbers regarding religious affiliation are always perilous and should be considered projections. Until the religious affiliation of a sizable region-wide sample of planters can be documented, using existing numbers from narrower studies provide the basis for an educated, though not concrete, projection. In *Masters of Small Worlds*, Stephanie McCurry's research suggests that in the South Carolina low country 66.7% of planters who owned one hundred or more slaves identified with the Episcopal Church. Jane Turner Censer's examination of North Carolina's piedmont planters with seventy or more slaves demonstrated that 57.5% were Episcopalians. In addition, William Kaufman Scarborough's *Masters of the Big House* argues that 58.8% of planters owning 250 or more slaves throughout the entire South preferred the Episcopal Church. More research will have to demonstrate that the McCurry-Censer-Scarborough percentages would apply to other regions within the South and to planters owning as a few as twenty slaves, but all existing evidence confirms that region-wide a strong plurality (if not an outright majority) of planters claiming a religious affiliation belonged to the Episcopal Church. Although some planters did experience an evangelical conversion to the other denominations listed in Table I.1, many

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<sup>4</sup> Samuel S. Hill, *Southern Churches in Crisis Revisited* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 73-85. Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics and Society Under the Tudors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 285-295; Michael C. Questier, *Conversion, Politics, and Religion in England, 1580-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 2-11.



persisted in their faithfulness to the traditions of their colonial ancestors. The Episcopal Church in the South may not have been the exclusive religious tradition of the planter class after the American Revolution, but its contemporaries rightly characterized it as a church of planters.<sup>5</sup>

Debates over religion within classic sociology reflect the theoretical framework of this dissertation by providing it with a rich theoretical lexicon to understand the connections between religion and social class. Since social class plays such a dominant role on the following pages, Karl Marx's writing on the subject in *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* seems to be a logical starting point. Marx viewed religious traditions as products of the state and society designed to "produce...a reverse world-consciousness, because they are a reversed world." For Marx, religion provided "moral sanction" and "justification" to the existing structures in the real world. Such interpretations led Marx to offer his now famous utterance that religion served as "opium" for the people. Eugene Genovese's Marxist analysis eloquently captured the fusion of religion and hegemony in the South. Using Antonio Gramsci, Genovese defined hegemony as the ability of a ruling class to "contain...antagonism." Religion, and for this dissertation the Episcopal Church in particular, obviously supplied planters with the spiritual resources necessary to remain atop the South's social structure. Class and hegemony are core components to this dissertation, but they are not the extent of it. Along with class hegemony, the Episcopal Church performed another religious function in the pre-Civil War South. For that other role, a brief consideration of Emile Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religion* will prove insightful. Durkheim defined religion as "something essentially social." Indeed,

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<sup>5</sup> John B. Boles, *The Great Revival, 1785-1805: The Origins of the Southern Evangelical Mind* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1972), 170; Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, & Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 165-166. Jane Turner Censer, *North Carolina Planters and Their Children, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), xix, 5; William Kaufman Scarborough, *Masters of the Big House: Elite Slaveholders in the Mid-Nineteenth Century South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), 2-3, 53-54; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 463-472.

Durkheim asserted that “there can be no society which does not feel the need of upholding and reaffirming at regular intervals the collective sentiments and the collective ideas which make its unity and its personality.” For Durkheim and this dissertation religion served as a mechanism for the perpetuation of the “collective ideas” that enabled the social unification of the planter class and clergy inside the Episcopal Church. Episcopalians utilized their church and faith as a means to express what Durkheim called the “ideal view” of southern society at any given moment. Durkheim furnished balance to the more absolutist views of Marx, since he cautioned against understanding religion as a “simple restatement of historical materialism.” For Durkheim, material realities, as part of the larger matrix of cultural circumstances, may indeed shape a religious idea, but once constructed a religious inspiration soon achieves an “independence” that separates it from its original material reality. According to Durkheim, "beliefs, myths, dogmas and legends are either representations or systems of virtues and powers" attributable to the "sacred" and its connection to the "profane." Class hegemony and a desire for a relationship with the "sacred" are not mutually exclusive uses of religion. Southern Episcopalians in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries used their religion both to serve the planter class's social agenda and to satisfy a less materialistic human need to commune with the holy mysteries of faith.<sup>6</sup>

The ensuing dissertation commences in the 1760s and 1770s just at the moment that Rhys Isaac's *Transformation of Virginia* moves the established church into the background of the colonial landscape in the South. Evangelical and political rebellion did not obliterate the Church

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<sup>6</sup> Karl Marx quoted in Malcolm B. Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 83-89. Karl Marx quoted in *The Marx-Engels Reader* ed. Robert C. Tucker, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1972), 11-17; Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), 25-27, 147-148., 164-165; Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. trans. Joseph Ward Swain (BN Publishing, 2008), 37-38, 423-428. For a very engaging call for scholars to incorporate social class into interdisciplinary analyses of religion consult: Sean McCloud, *Divine Hierarchies: Class in American Religion and Religious Studies* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

of England in Virginia or South Carolina.<sup>7</sup> Chapter one demonstrates that many members of the established church embraced the republicanism of the American Revolution. Planter-dominated parishes of the established church became crucibles of a political revolt against the modernizing threats of the British Empire. Before the American Revolution subsided, members of the established church in the South crafted a slaveholding republicanism that would endure beyond the imperial crises of the 1760s and 1770s. Disestablishment and the destruction triggered by the American Revolution caused a temporary, but not fatal, declension in the southern parishes of the emergent Protestant Episcopal Church. William Warren Sweet, one of the pioneers in American religious historiography, joins other scholars in characterizing the post-Revolution Episcopal Church as existing in a state "of suspended animation" prior to the War of 1812. As chapter two explains, a cotton-induced realignment in the South's economic structure yoked with new episcopal leadership resulted in a remarkable renaissance for the Episcopal Church after 1820. A sizable portion of the South's planter class reaffirmed their allegiance to the Episcopal Church in the decades following the War of 1812. The social coalition between planters and rectors that had thrived in the colonial South became rejuvenated with cotton wealth in addition to effective bishops after the American Revolution. The social construction of gender roles in the South, however, threatened the Episcopal Church's renaissance. Chapter three analyzes how the construction of gender within the Episcopal Church's parishes elicited concern among bishops and rectors over their failure to bring more southern men to the communion table. Absent sufficient male membership, bishops and rectors had to rely upon the untiring labors of southern women to ensure the regeneration of their church after 1820. Episcopal planter-class families expected their church to lend its considerable intellectual resources to reinforcing their social hegemony. Slave missions, as chapter four surmises, demonstrated the expectations many

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<sup>7</sup> Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, 260-317.

planters had for their church. Bishop and rectors in the South dedicated themselves to preaching a gospel of paternalism designed to effect greater control over slaves on countless plantations. Chapter four utilizes the definition of paternalism offered by Eugene Genovese in *Roll, Jordan, Roll* as an ideology of the South's "ruling class" that used a social code of "mutual obligations" that linked "the oppressed with the oppressors," which as a result compelled planters to recognize on some level the humanity of their slaves. For Genovese, and this dissertation, a religious paternalism served the planter class as "a way of mediating irreconcilable class and racial conflicts."<sup>8</sup> Slave missions revealed the dual-function of religion for the planter class. Planters turned to the Episcopal Church for their own spiritual needs, but in slave missions they evidenced their willingness to deploy church resources to reinforce their social hegemony by creating a Marxian reverse-world consciousness. Chapter five returns to the beginning, as Episcopalians in the South advanced a revolutionary politics in the nineteenth century. After the 1820s, Episcopal politicians and church leaders in the South became increasingly rigid in their views on both theology and sectionalism. The planter class's demands for a political orthodoxy that protected their slave-based economic power culminated in the Episcopal Church's secessionist movement, which commenced in 1861. Interspersed between each chapter are biographical codas designed to proffer an in-depth look at the preceding chapter's central themes. The dissertation concludes on an optimistic historiographical meditation engineered by Will Campbell as it considers the Episcopal Church's reversal of the "reverse world" as it embraced a countercultural activism in the South after the Civil War.

The ensuing chapters examine the Protestant Episcopal Church in the South and as a result invoke both the noun "South" and adjective "southern" throughout. In chapter one, which

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<sup>8</sup> William Warren Sweet, *The Story of Religion in America* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1930), 322-323; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 5-7.

examines the late colonial period, usage of descriptors like "southern" should not be viewed as an argument for the existence of a distinctive cultural or political identity, but rather simply a reference to a geographical region of Britain's North American colonies. Following the American Revolution, the nation clearly diverged into distinctive regions, thus making appropriate the terms "South" and "Southern." To borrow from Ira Berlin's terminology: subsequent to the American Revolution "the North" through gradual emancipation laws became "a society with slaves," while "the South" remained an unqualified "slave society." In addition, outside of slavery Episcopalians in the South shared many practices and theological doctrines with their northern brethren. Episcopalians in the pre-Civil War North need more rigorous study, but they are beyond the scope of the present study, therefore the following pages makes very limited statements regarding Northern Episcopalians. Statements to the effect that "Episcopalians in the South" embraced some concept or engaged in some activity not related to slavery should not be taken to suggest dissimilarity from "Episcopalians in the North," but rather are reflections of this dissertation's limited research focus, nothing more. Delineation of the monikers "Southern Episcopalians," "southern bishops," "southern vestries, and "southern rectors" should not be taken as a definitive implication that those individuals professed themselves to be "southern" in identity unless that is clearly stated to be the case. Again, the adjective is being used because for dwellers in the post-Revolution "South," immersion in a slave society quite distinctive from the "North" shaped religious institutions, people, and ideas in a unique manner, even if the region's inhabitants lacked consciousness of or refused to acknowledge their reality. Finally, although the dissertation utilizes published primary sources from every corner of the South, archival research primarily concentrated upon Virginia, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Mississippi.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: The

A final warning must be offered before proceeding. Domination, labor exploitation, and political machinations did not mysteriously obliterate the humanity of Episcopalians in the South. Wealth gleaned from cotton, tobacco, rice, along with sugar empowered planters and their Episcopal clergymen to purchase many things, but it could not afford them god-like status. For example, Bishop James H. Otey of Tennessee revealed the humanity and deep need for religion that defined the Episcopalians in the South. Bishop Otey reflected upon the death of his daughter Fanny in 1848:

[Feb. 6.] A day of deep bereavement and sorrow this has been. My precious and darling child Fanny...struggled all day with scarlet-fever; and last night her spirit was released from its clay tenement, and borne, I trust, on angels' wings, to the Paradise of God.

Feb. 7. My loving, sprightly, generous-souled Fanny lies shrouded, a pale corpse. We have prayed for resignation to Heaven's will.

Feb. 8. I have to-day felt all the bitterness of grief in realizing that my precious little Fanny is gone. O God, let it please Thee to calm our troubled souls.

Employed myself as diligently as my depressed mind would permit, in the composition of a sermon in reading God's Word, and in prayer.

Feb. 11. The world is sad, and I am low in the mire of despondency. But God sees my heart...

The social agenda of religion to sanctify the planter class is absent in Bishop Otey's meditation on Fanny's death. Instead, Bishop Otey turned to religion out of a personal need to resurrect his joy in a moment of utter despair. The great social leveler of death remained uncontrollable for the South's planters. Episcopal planters and clergymen lost children, spouses, siblings, parents, and friends. In such moments of forlornness and unease, planters summoned the spiritual resources of their faith. Like the many planters who worshiped in the churches of his diocese, Bishop Otey demonstrated that the religious traditions offered by the Protestant Episcopal Church, in addition to propping up the region's class hierarchy, provided its adherents with profound personal hope and spiritual meaning. The Episcopal Church equipped parishioners in

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Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 7-13.

the South with both the religious assets to encounter Christ and sanctification for their social class.<sup>10</sup> Since planters were responsible for horrific suffering and death, they have rightly been castigated and condemned for their egregious brutality toward slaves along with leading the South to engage in politics predicated upon racism. Sometimes, however, scholarly conversations concerning planters and their religious allies have descended into intellectually vapid demonization. Describing the planter-controlled South as a region characterized by untold "evils," "cold materialism," and "reckless exploitation" is entirely accurate, but an impediment to substantive historical analysis. After all, the same value-laden adjectives could be applied to almost any human society. Too often the South's "crude" planters are depicted in writing and conversation as disembodied demigods, who possessed so much power, did such incalculable damage, and caused so much bloodshed they could not have been humans.<sup>11</sup> In minimizing the humanity of planters, historians of the South do a disservice, because there is an unintentional implication that people with authentic human feelings, genuine compassion, or even devout religious faith could never commit "evils" or engage in "reckless exploitation," which is a demonstrably absurd contention that has been consistently disproven throughout human history. The temptation to berate planters in historical analysis is understandable and justified given the unforgivable horrors of slavery, but succumbing to that yearning has produced an incomplete record. To comprehend the entire history of slavery requires scholars to also analyze rather than dismiss or oversimplify the complexities of the enslavers. The subsequent dissertation does not aspire to sympathize with or apologize for the planters, but it does contend they, like many

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<sup>10</sup> Bishop William Mercer Green, *Memoir of Rt. Rev. James H. Otey, D.D., LL.D.: The First Bishop of Tennessee* (New York: James Pott and Company, 1885), 33, 163-163.

<sup>11</sup> For example: Richard Follett, *The Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana's Cane World, 1820-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2007), 67-68, 88-89; Samuel C. Hyde Jr. "Backcountry Justice in the Piney-Woods South," in *Plain Folk of the South Revisited*, ed. Samuel C. Hyde (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 231; S. Max Edelson, "Clearing Swamps, Harvesting Forests: Trees and the Making of a Plantation Landscape in the Colonial South," in *Environmental History and the American South: A Reader*, ed. Paul S. Sutter and Christopher J. Manganiello (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 118.

yeoman farmers, poor whites, and slaves had a personal need for religion. Plantation families and their Episcopal clergymen lived lives just as complex as the South's other social classes, they just possessed greater control over the region's means of production and attendant political power. Attending services on Sundays to hear readings from *The Book of Common Prayer* or to meditate upon their rector's homily demonstrated that Episcopalians in the South of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries confronted the same existential questions, eternal uncertainties, not to mention spiritual anxieties, that non-planters encountered. The Episcopalians in the South discussed on the following pages confessed in every prayer for forgiveness, with every sprinkle of the baptismal waters, and in each taste of sacramental bread that they remained, like other Americans, mere mortals wrestling with their many imperfections.



## CHAPTER 1: VINEYARDS OF THE VESTRY

Naboth said to Ahab, the Lord forbid it me that I should give the Inheritance of my Fathers unto thee-  
-I Kings 21:3

Virginia's House of Burgesses confronted an arduous schedule in early November 1759. As a result, the colony's legislators conducted business Monday through Saturday to fulfill their obligations. Few members of the House of Burgesses could travel to their distant home parishes on their one day of rest- Sunday. Instead, Virginia's political elite either availed themselves of vicinal religious opportunities or organized sermons for the colony's government on Sundays. On November 11, Revered William Giberne delivered a sermon to the Council and House of Burgesses at Williamsburg. Giberne, the Rector of Hanover Parish in King George County, entitled his sermon *The Duty of living peaceably with all MEN*. Romans 12:18 provided the scriptural basis for Giberne's exposition on the imperative that all of the colony's residents needed to live in "Union" and "peace."

Giberne's sermon captured the syncretism between the Church of England's establishment and the social hierarchy of the southern colonies. In a homiletic voice, Giberne reminded the colony's political leadership that societal harmony should not simply be seen as a moral precept for "private Christians," because all Christians belonged to a public "Civil or Ecclesiastical Society." The Rector's words betrayed a growing unease regarding discord in the

tobacco colony. Over the preceding twenty years, Virginia dissenters had assaulted the deferential cohesion of the colony. “Religious Contentions,” Giberne cautioned, must not obscure the reality that all Christians comprised the “same mystical Body of Christ.” Members of the House of Burgesses appreciated that their colony’s religious awakening involved questions of social class. Giberne addressed the social structure as he emphasized the sinfulness of a class based politics. Hanover Parish’s Parson proclaimed that the “several Ranks and Stations” should avoid “any thing that looks like Faction.” *The Duty of living peaceably with all MEN* sought to assuage the anxieties of the gentry in warning that any colonist who injured “the Estate or good Name of another” must be labeled a “Destroyer of the Commonwealth.”<sup>1</sup>

As an inoculation against the hedonistic social impropriety that threatened the tranquility of Virginia, Giberne called for the promotion of the “best religion.” Giberne assured the House of Burgesses that for centuries Christianity had provided human society with the “the greatest improvement of Morality.” The Bible promulgated God’s societal “Ordinance” of “*Peace, Love, and Charity.*” To uphold God’s design and minimize strife, Giberne demanded that colonists in Virginia must “*be subject to the higher Powers* whether Temporal or Spiritual.” For the Rector of Hanover Parish, only proper deference to the colony’s political and religious establishment would result in “the Tranquility of this Dominion, and the Peace of our Jerusalem.”<sup>2</sup> *The Duty of living peaceably with all MEN* reified the concept of social deference and elevated it to the biblically sanctioned will of God.

Giberne’s homily inspired the planter-led House of Burgesses. On Monday November 12 as one of the assembly’s first official actions, the House of Burgesses voted to send an expression of gratitude to Giberne for an “excellent sermon” and requested that the good

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<sup>1</sup> Reverend William Giberne, *The Duty of Living Peaceably with all MEN* (Williamsburg; William Hunter, 1759), 7-8.

<sup>2</sup> Giberne, *The Duty of Living Peaceably*, 10-11, 15-16.

reverend print the document so it might circulate to remind the people of their godly duties. The House of Burgesses ordered Landon Carter to deliver both its thankful sentiments and printing request to the Rector of Hanover Parish. Carter's mission on behalf of the House of Burgesses marked the beginning of an enduring relationship with William Giberne. In addition to managing his Sabine Hall plantation and serving in the House of Burgesses, Carter occupied a seat on his parish's vestry during the mid-eighteenth century. Carter's Lunenburg Parish Vestry hired Reverend William Giberne as their new rector in 1762. Planter-vestryman Landon Carter valued a clergyman so dedicated to cultivating "peace" toward the gentry by using the theology and discipline of the Church of England.<sup>3</sup>

Carter and Giberne should be seen as exponents of a social coalition that connected the innumerable planter-vestrymen and rectors who inhabited the eighteenth century southern colonies. Church of England clergymen and planter-vestrymen advanced a shared theocratic vision of social deference. In the thirty years that followed Giberne's prelection, southern colonists did not live "peaceably," but rather existed in a blasphemous world defined by chaos, dissent, and warfare. Planter-vestrymen and rectors responded to colonial disarray by crafting a hybrid ideology of Episcopal republicanism, which offered both religious and political salvation to its adherents. Episcopal republicanism blamed society's ills on the corrupt and sinister trappings of early modernity: imperial monarchy, the bureaucratic state, mercantilism's proto-capitalist values, and a non-apostolic Church of England in the colonies. In the South, gentry and clergy motivated by Episcopal republicanism joined together to create both a new church and state. Episcopal republicanism elicited for Virginians and South Carolinians passionate longings

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<sup>3</sup> *The Journal of the House of Burgesses*, November 12, 1759. Rhys Isaac, *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom: Revolution and Rebellion on a Virginia Plantation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 249-250; John Nelson, *A Blessed Company: Parishes, Parsons, and Parishioners in Anglican Virginia, 1690-1776* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 173-178; Bruce A. Ragsdale, *A Planters' Republic: The Search for Economic Independence in Revolutionary Virginia* (Madison: Madison House, 1996), 8.

for a more virtuous “premodern” society centered upon three pillars: Greco-Roman political traditions, a slave based agrarian economy, and an apostolic church.<sup>4</sup> This chapter will commence with an examination of the early modern nature of the Church of England and its antithesis of parish localism. Dissatisfaction with the early modern British Empire made parish localism all the more alluring for many planter-vestrymen. In the 1770s, the unbridgeable chasm between a mercantile empire and plantation parishes generated a distinctive Episcopal republicanism in the southern colonies. As subsequent chapters will demonstrate, in the decades after the American Revolution a regionalized Episcopal republicanism galvanized Southerners to construct a vision for the Protestant Episcopal Church far different from their coreligionists in the North.

### **An Early Modern Establishment**

The Church of England in the southern colonies exemplified many of the characteristics of an early modern institution. Europeanists have employed a variety of definitions and chronologies when discussing the early modern period. Phil Withington’s *Society in Early Modern England* chronicles the historicity of “modernity” and its use by professional historians as a method of categorization. Withington credits Richard Smith’s *English Society, 1580-1680* (1982) with “the most powerful post-war statement of early modernity.” Smith defines early modern Europe as an age of:

intensified interaction between the locality and the larger society...both drew together provincial communities into a more closely integrated national society and at the same time introduced a new depth and complexity to their local patterns of social stratification.

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<sup>4</sup> Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 3, 28-31.

For Europeanists, the intensified interactions of early modernity usually include “the Renaissance, the Reformation, the rise of capitalism, the voyages of discovery, the rise of the nation-state, the scientific revolution, [and] the Enlightenment.” Early modern interactions shaped the institutions and individuals that comprised Europe’s eighteenth century Atlantic empires. In addition to interactions, Eugene F. Rice complicates any concrete explanation as he reminds scholars that an array of “continuities” and “discontinuities” characterized early modern Europe. Europeanists also use varying chronologies to identify the end of the period. Although some historians might end the early modern period prior to 1750, Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks makes a convincing argument that the start of the French Revolution remains the “conventional breaking point.” As Wiesner-Hanks surmises the “years around 1789 therefore saw changes in economic structures, the process of colonization, political theory, and international relations.” According to Wiesner-Hanks, a convergence of economic, social and political revolutions defined the 1780s and 1790s. Alongside the French Revolution, late eighteenth century Europeans embraced the stirrings of modernity in a variety of events ranging from the opening of Edmund Cartwright’s weaving factory in the 1780s to the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft’s *The Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792. The Church of England in the southern colonies, therefore, attempted to preserve ancient traditions and yet adapt to rapid changes, thus positioning the institution in that abstract fluidity which characterized early modern European society prior to 1789.<sup>5</sup>

The Church of England in the southern colonies exhibited the religious, political, and economic attributes of an early modern institution. First, the Church of England supported an

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<sup>5</sup> Phil Withington, *Society in Early Modern England: The Vernacular Origins of Some Powerful Ideas* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 68-69. Smith quoted by Withington. Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe, 1450-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 5-7; Eugene F. Rice Jr., *The Foundations of Early Modern Europe, 1450-1559* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1970), x.

early modern religious community entrenched in Reformation theology and an imperial structure. Britain's imperial establishment demanded vestrymen serve as religious bureaucrats for disparate geographic regions with at times divergent requirements. Despite the often thankless work of caring for vast rural parishes, vestrymen performed their duties with considerable aplomb. Even after the Great Awakening, established churches remained committed to the experience of their sacred truths in the southern colonies. As evangelicalism advanced, established parishes in Virginia and South Carolina did not simply maintain existing churches, but ensured that the common prayers filled new buildings and by extension souls. Vestrymen refused to cede ground to a rabble of evangelicals or surrender to apathetic parish members. For instance, St. Mark's Parish in Virginia confronted a daunting challenge in 1773 when fire destroyed its old church. In response, the vestry ordered the erection of a new church sixty feet long and forty feet wide to replace their former sanctuary. Fire could not annihilate the parish's worship schedule, so the vestry decided that the "tobacco house" belonging to James Pendleton needed to be repaired "in order to hold Divine worship until the church be finished." St. Mark's Parish transformed Pendleton's tobacco house into a temporary church, and as a result revealed how in the southern colonies the Church of England forged vivacious plantation-centered faith communities. Sometimes the existing religious infrastructure could not accommodate an ever increasing demand for the Church of England's worship services. For example, the Shelburne Parish Vestry commissioned the construction of an additional church on the land of John Taylor. Vestry members created an architectural schematic that proposed a church thirty feet long with a forty foot wide frame built with white oak. In addition, the vestry decreed that the new church would be covered with "chestnut or yellow Poplar painted shingles." The Shelburne Parish Vestry pronounced that upon the church's completion the "Minister

perform Divine Service once in every three weeks” at the building to supply the increased spiritual demand for the Church of England’s gospel message.<sup>6</sup>

Absent new buildings, vestries mandated the celebration of divine service in convenient locations for peripheral parishioners who requested easier access to worship opportunities. In 1775, “sundry inhabitants at the upper End” of Southam Parish petitioned the vestry to remedy the “great Distance” between their homes and the proclamation of God’s word in the parish’s church. Commitment to the promotion of discipleship in the Church of England motivated the Southam Parish Vestry to demand that their rector:

...preach one Sunday in three weeks at such place as shall be made convenient for him between Jesse Carters & Mrs. Ann Harris’s on Buckingham Road.<sup>7</sup>

Southam Parish’s decision to increase the number of preaching venues substantiated the religious vitality of the established church in the southern colonies. Rather than permit members of their flock to go hungry, vestries instructed ministers to feed their distant, yet faithful sheep. Southern vestries persisted in spreading their relevant gospel message to the ends of the southern colonies throughout the eighteenth century.

The Church of England in the southern colonies did not passively wait for the ungodly to grace their church buildings, but instead deployed missionaries. Unlike evangelicals, Church of England missionaries not only preached the gospel, but also promoted the liturgy outlined in *The Book of Common Prayer*. For example, Reverend Charles Woodmason commenced his mission work in the South Carolina backcountry in 1766. Missionaries, like Woodmason, defined their preaching based upon the liturgical calendar of the Church of England. In the mission field,

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<sup>6</sup> St. Mark’s Parish (Va.). Vestry Book, October 1773. Accession 33314. Church records collection, LV. Shelburne Parish (Loudoun County, Va.). Vestry Book, June 15, 1772 (1771-1805). Accession 19746. Church records collection, LV. The proposed church sparked an intense debate within the Shelburne Parish Vestry. See Dell Upton, *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1986), 13. Reformation-era theologies included both Catholic and Protestant variants.

<sup>7</sup> St. James-Southam Parish (Powhatan County, Va.). Vestry Book, August 19, 1775. Accession 37796, Church records collection, LV.

Woodmason marked Lent and Holy Week with special sermons on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday in 1768. Dissenters lambasted Woodmason's liturgical services as vestiges of "Popery." Lent, Holy Week, and Easter represented some of the most solemn, yet taxing weeks for missionaries of the established church. An exhausted Woodmason could find no rest from his spiritual labors in the days after an Easter spent battling dissenters. Woodmason got lost among South Carolina's various "cattle tracts and winding paths." Unable to employ guides to remedy his travel difficulties, Woodmason sought refuge at a backcountry tavern kept by a "rich man." Upon arrival, the tavern keeper declined to sell Woodmason any goods or allow him to "kindle up a Fire." For Woodmason, the tavern keeper's refusal to sell "a Glass of Liquor" amounted to the most egregious offense since the tavern "had 2 Barrels of Rum in House." According to Woodmason the tavern keeper "looked on me as a Wolf stayed into Christs [sic] fold to devour the Lambs of Grace...[so] did this rigid Presbyterian treat me." A dissenter tavern keeper had violated Woodmason's conviction that "Presbyterians and Episcopalians [sic] very charitably agree (Viz.) That of getting drunk." Woodmason expected that, whatever their theological divergences, dissenters and members of the established church could formulate camaraderie through alcohol consumption in the post-Easter season. Woodmason's liturgical evangelization and subsequent discrimination at the tavern epitomized the frustrations that confronted the Church of England's missionaries who toiled on the southern frontier in the 1760s. The Church of England appeared to be a scorned minority in many backcountry communities, rather than the established religion.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Charles Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant*. ed. Richard J. Hooker (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 33-34, 53. Woodmason described a shared drinking culture among Presbyterians and Episcopalians during "Season of Festivity and Drunkenness- The Stills will be soon be at Work for to make Whisky and Peach Brandy."



Missionaries needed more gadgets of grace to supplement liturgical preaching and alcohol frivolity. Backcountry parsons depended upon the Church of England's sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion. For example, Reverend Alex Garden in St. Thomas's Parish quantified the success of his ministry to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) with his numbers of baptisms and communicants. From 1764 to 1766, Garden reported the baptism of thirty-five South Carolina children. In addition, Garden estimated that on "Sacrament Sundays" some 20-30 people attended worship. Garden described a likely common experience for the Church of England when he reported to the SPG that attendance increased by as much as 50% for the sacramental services of Christmas and Easter. SPG missionaries in South Carolina did not view reporting statistics as mere bureaucratic paperwork. Numbers propelled missionaries "to do more for the Hon. & Glory of the great Jehovah" in a holy work that always seemed unfinished. On occasion, SPG missionaries expanded upon their numerical data and provided anecdotal evidence regarding the utility of sacraments in the mission field. Stationed at St. John's Parish in South Carolina, Reverend Levi Durand stressed the paramountcy of Holy Communion to his rural exertions. Durand recounted the experience of an elderly woman who consumed the bread and wine for the first time along with thirteen other communicants in September 1761. The unidentified woman conferred with Durand to discuss the "nature & design of the Lord's Sacrament" prior to her attendance. Convinced of the Church of England's sacramental theology, the elderly woman decided to not "defer any longer approaching the Lord's Table." Missionaries for the Church of England utilized their distinctive theology related to the sacraments of baptism and communion, alongside liturgical sermons as they tussled with "word" driven dissenters on the southern frontier.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Rev. Alex Garden to SPG, 17 September 1764, Records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Rev. Alex Garden to SPG, 6 May 1765, Records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign

Itinerant frontier missionaries lacked many of the extensive legal privileges granted to established parishes in the southern colonies. Southern vestries availed themselves of colonial legal protections on Sundays to enforce the social order and piety they so fervently valued. Prior to the 1760s, Virginia and South Carolina enacted laws to honor the Christian Sabbath and discourage disruptions to divine service. South Carolina passed “An Act for the Better Observation of the Lord’s Day, Commonly Called Sunday” in 1712. Under section seven of the legislation, South Carolina’s Assembly granted Charleston churchwardens sweeping powers to defend the integrity of the Christian Sabbath. South Carolina demanded churchwardens “in the time of divine service walk through the said town (Charleston) to observe, suppress, and apprehend all offenses.” Legislators in South Carolina empowered churchwardens to “enter into any publick house or suspected houses to search for any such offenders.” Under the legislation, the Assembly avoided enacting an overly-rigid theocracy since the law granted families, inns, and public houses the right to dress meats all day Sunday and the privilege of selling milk before nine in the morning or after four in the afternoon. Virginia enacted similar regulations to protect the ministry of the Church of England on Sundays.<sup>10</sup>

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Parts . Rev. Alex Garden to SPG, 15 April 1766, Records of the Society for the Prorogation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Rev. Alex Garden to SPG, 21 March 1767, Records of the Society for the Prorogation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Rev. Levi Durand to SPG, 2 October 1761, Records of the Society for the Prorogation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Missionary and parish rectors in Virginia and South Carolina proved to be quite competent in their occupation. Scholars estimate that despite vocal anti-clergy sentiment, only 10% of Virginia rectors ever had legitimate charges filed against them from 1723 to 1776. See Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 45.

<sup>10</sup> *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina* vol. II. ed. Thomas Cooper (Columbia: A.S. Johnston, 1837), 396-399. Virginia adopted “An act prohibiting unlawfull disturbances of divine service” in 1680. Under the law, offenders could be restrained by the sheriff, fined 200 lbs of tobacco for their first offence and 500 lbs of tobacco for each subsequent violation. See *The Statutes at Large Being A Collection of all the Laws of Virginia, From the First Session of the Legislature in the year 1619*, ed. William Waller Hening (Richmond: J & G Cochran Printers, 1821), 2: 483-484. South Carolina’s legislation regarding divine service worked in Charleston. By 1724, sixty-one percent of eligible churchgoers attended services at St. Philip’s Parish. See Patricia U. Bonomi and Peter R. Eisenstadt, “Church Adherence in the Eighteenth-Century British American Colonies,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 39: 2 (1982), 245-286.

Churchwardens appealed to establishment laws at midcentury to demand that colonists honor the solemn worship of the Church of England on Sundays. In 1770, churchwardens Edmund Head and Robert Stott reported to the vestry of St. Michael's Church in Charleston, South Carolina that "several young men" gathered under the piazza of the church's west door and "distrub'd the Congregation very much at that end of the Church with walking backwards & forwards, trading sticks on the Flaggs & talking loud during Divine Services." Head and Stott advised the vestry that they had told the young men to "either go into the Church or go home." The rebellious young men, of course, ignored the orders and then proceeded to subject the churchwardens to "contempt." St. Michael's Church Vestry ordered that the young men be summoned "before a Magistrate...for such misdemeanours."<sup>11</sup> Established churches in Virginia and South Carolina invoked their legal privileges to advance religion and social order in the eighteenth century.

Vestrymen and their established church constituencies in the southern colonies entreated their colonial governments to pass supplemental laws when barriers to worship needed to be removed. In 1766, St. James's Parish petitioned the House of Burgesses regarding the ferry fees required to cross the Roanoke River in order to attend court days, divine services, and "other days of public worship." Virginia's legislators responded by ordering that ferry-keepers exempt the minister and parishioners of St. James's Parish as they traveled to the "several churches" on Sundays and other days of public worship. To offset the fee waivers, the House of Burgesses required that ferry-keepers on each side of the river be granted an annual allowance. In a cunning scheme, Virginia's government empowered St. James's Parish Vestry to increase the

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<sup>11</sup> St. Michael's Episcopal Church (Charleston, S.C.). Vestry Minutes, May 28, 1770. St. Michael's Church records, 1751-1983. (320.00) SCHS.

parish levy and then use the surplus generated to contribute to the ferry-keeper allowances.<sup>12</sup> St. James's Parish, by petitioning the House of Burgesses, evidenced a steadfast piety within the Church of England. Southern vestryman presided over a complex early modern religious milieu characterized by sacred buildings, divine services, missionaries, sacraments, and legal entanglements.

Second, as appendages to the early modern British Empire established churches operated as political institutions. The Church of England acted as one of many imperial bureaucracies in the eighteenth century British Empire as it aided colonies in elections. In South Carolina, churchwardens in addition to protecting the religious infrastructure of their churches assumed the role of eighteenth century elections supervisor. For instance, the elections of 1771 demonstrated the nexus between church and state in St. Michael's Parish. Pursuant to the colony's Church Act, parishioners assembled on Easter Monday April 1 and elected the vestry and churchwardens. Elections to church offices had a religious component in the southern colonies as parishioners often offered prayers and participated in the singing of Psalms prior to casting their votes. Easter Monday elections did not terminate the parish's season of voting. On March 20, South Carolina's Lieutenant Governor William Bull had issued a writ of election for the parish. Under the order, Churchwarden Robert Stott summoned "all the FREE HOLDERS & other...Inhabitants...qualify'd for Electing Members of Assembly" to report to the parish church on April 16 and 17. For St. Michael's Parish, April functioned as election month. At the direction of their churchwardens, parishioners "Assembled at the Church" to cast ballots for the South Carolina Assembly only fifteen days after they had conducted their parish's Easter Monday elections. Eligible voters chose Thomas Loughton Smith to represent St. Michael's

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<sup>12</sup>*The Statutes at Large Being A Collection of all the Laws of Virginia, From the First Session of the Legislature in the year 1619*, ed. William Waller Hening (Richmond: J & G Cochran Printers, 1821), 8: 257-258. The St. James's Parish Ferriage Exemption Act also exempted parishioners traveling to the courthouse or for "general musters."

Parish in the Assembly by a vote of 91-1.<sup>13</sup> Smith's election dramatized the early modern nature of the Church of England in the southern colonies as parishes became stages for the integrated performance of religion, politics, and social power.

Prior to the American Revolution, Virginia also entrusted the Church of England with election responsibilities. In 1769, the colony passed "An Act for Regulating the Election of Burgesses..." in an effort to reform a "defective" electoral process. Pursuant to the law, once the governor signed a writ of election it would be transmitted to the sheriff of every county. Each sheriff would then have three days to "cause a copy thereof to be delivered to the minister and reader of every parish in his county." Upon receipt of the writ, parish ministers and readers would be obligated under the new election law to:

...publish the same in his church or chapel, where they or either of them officiate, immediately after divine service, every Sunday between the receipt of such copy and the day of election, and shall return the same copy to the sheriff together with a certificate of the due publication thereof.

Virginia had decided to use ministers as election bureaucrats for the colony. Established parishes in both southern colonies assumed critical election responsibilities within the British Empire's political system.<sup>14</sup>

Backcountry unrest in the late 1760s awakened South Carolina's Assembly to the dangers of a parish dependent political system. Charleston's political machinations over church issues combined with evangelicalism's successes not only gave Charles Woodmason an irascible disposition, but turned the minister into an agitator in the colony's Regulator movement. Rachel Klein's *Unification of a Slave State* provides a persuasive interpretation of the Regulator

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<sup>13</sup> St. Michael's Episcopal Church (Charleston, S.C.). Vestry Minutes, November 19, 1770, March 20, April 1, April 8, April 16, April 17, 1771. St. Michael's Church records, 1751-1983. (320.00) SCHS. Frederick Dalcho, *An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina From the First Settlement of the Province to the War of the Revolution...To Which Are Added; The Laws Relating to Religious Worship...* (Charleston: E. Thayer, 1820), 437-454.

<sup>14</sup> *The Statutes at Large Being A Collection of all the Laws of Virginia*, 8: 308-309.

movement within South Carolina's larger historical narrative. Utilizing the research of Richard Maxwell Brown, Klein portrays the South Carolina Regulators as a political movement led by an "emerging planter class." According to Klein, Regulators aspired "to establish a particular type of order that was consistent with the needs of planters." Klein suggests the threat of frontier lawlessness to property motivated the backcountry uprising. South Carolina's Regulators incorporated religion into their campaign too. In *Unification of a Slave State*, Klein contends that when compared to the North Carolina Regulators, participants in the South Carolina movement appeared to have few New Light or Baptist members. South Carolina Regulators preferred the Church of England over dissenting denominations. Regulators in South Carolina, therefore, afforded property and parish concerns an equiponderance in their agitation.<sup>15</sup>

South Carolina's Regulators threaded the political nature of the Church of England throughout the *Remonstrance* they presented the colony's Assembly in 1767. Regulators considered the failure to extend the parish system into the backcountry a "sensible Grievance" since it perpetuated "non-Representation" in government. For the Regulators the failure of the Assembly to extend the parish system had resulted in a rupture in the

...Body Politic- For, can We vote for *Members of Assembly*, Or chuse [sic] *Vestry Men*, or elect *Parish Officers* when We have no Churches to repair too, [sic] or they are scituated [sic] One, two hundred Miles from us?...Nor either a Church built, or Parish laid out in any of the Upper Parts of the Province...Thus We live and have liv'd for Years past as if without God in the World, destitute of the Means of Knowledge, without *Law* or *Gospel*, Esteem or Credit...

The *Remonstrance* claimed that the colony's political discordance had created religious chaos.

An unconcerned regime in Charleston permitted a dilapidated religious infrastructure and clergy

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<sup>15</sup> Rachel N. Klein, *Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1760-1808* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 48-49, 51, 66-67, 77.

shortage to cripple the establishment in the backcountry. A weakened Church of England had served as a catalyst for the emergence of “New Sects... especially those call’d *New Lights*.”<sup>16</sup>

The *Remonstrance* of the South Carolina Regulators did not simply promulgate grievances, but it also proposed an extensive legislative program to remedy the backcountry’s complaints. Regulators clearly believed that the established church could utilize biblical laws to remedy frontier lawlessness. South Carolina’s established church protected sacred property in the dissemination of God’s commandments among the lower classes, especially admonitions against the sins of stealing and coveting. Proper fear of divine punishment could be just as effective as courts or magistrates in enforcing the colony’s social order. Proponents of the established church understood that religion created a moral economy rooted in Christian teaching. South Carolina’s Regulators requested that the Assembly provide a supply of Bibles, Church of England prayer books, and devotional tracts “to be distributed by the Ministers among the Poor.” The backcountry’s moral economy had broken down because political leaders in Charleston had pursued policies that resulted in the languishment of the established church. In response, the *Remonstrance* demanded the Assembly devise a system to supply “*New* as well as *Vacant Old Parishes*” with ordained ministers.<sup>17</sup> Regulators offered a perspicuous opinion that a functional Church of England in the backcountry could ameliorate much of the colony’s social unrest.

In a letter to planter-politician Henry Laurens, South Carolina Regulators emphasized the conjugation of politics and religion in their insurgency. Regulators suggested that the Assembly’s inaction had denied the sacrament of Holy Communion to backcountry settlers. The

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<sup>16</sup> Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry*, 222-226.

<sup>17</sup> Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry*, 231-232. Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 48.

letter appealed to the rampant Catholic prejudice that pervaded eighteenth century British society, as it asked Laurens:

Are we in a Popish or Protestand [sic] Land, that We must be thus kept in Ignorance, not only of the Laws of the Land...but also of the Gospel of Christ- Excluded from hearing the Word of God read or preach'd- debarr'd the Holy Sacraments...May we not say that we are on the same Level with the Subjects of Spain or Portugal?

Regulators contended that as British subjects they should have access to the same temporal and spiritual privileges as the governing cabal in Charleston. Laurens could not have overlooked the biblical imagery used by the Regulators in their argumentation. Rachel Klein's *The Unification of a Slave State* elucidates how Regulators discussed their plight using terminology related to slavery. Given that Charleston and the backcountry shared a common scriptural language, Regulators logically wielded the most famous biblical example of slavery in their letter to Laurens. Regulators decried how the backcountry had been placed "in chains" and resided in an "Egyptian Darkness." South Carolina's political establishment, the Regulators continued, would have made "excellent Officers...under Pharaoh, [who compelled] the Israelites to make Brick without straw." Biblical motifs of slavery and deliverance supplied Regulators with a rich lexicon of verbal ammunition for their assault upon the profane regime in Charleston.

Regulators brandished the Bible as a sword in their prophetic epistle to Henry Laurens as they referenced Jonah 4:10. Regulators demanded Laurens "not suffer Thirty thousand in *Ninevah* [sic], who know not their Right Hand from their Left." According to the Bible, upon hearing Jonah's prophecy the residents of Nineveh turned from their evil ways, submitted to their king's dictates, and thus averted certain destruction at the hands of God. By making the backcountry analogous to biblical Nineveh, Regulators deemed religious ignorance the central cause of South Carolina's frontier anarchy. A backcountry enlightened by scripture could be



expected to emulate Nineveh and submit to the colony's political authorities. Regulators pleaded with Charleston's politicians to send rectors and missionaries- prophetic Jonahs- into the wilderness. Parish elections and South Carolina's Regulators demarcated an eighteenth century Church of England coterminous with early modern governance in the southern colonies.<sup>18</sup>

Third, the Church of England responded to the economic suffering unleashed by the British Empire's early modern economic system of mercantilism.<sup>19</sup> During the 1760s and early 1770s, poor relief represented a consistent function of the established churches in Virginia and South Carolina. Parish poor relief in the southern colonies traced its origins to Tudor England. Over the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, England enacted a number of so-called poor laws to remedy concerns over vagrancy and the country's increasing poverty resulting from structural economic change. English laws codified in 1552, 1598, and 1601 stipulated that the parish would become the primary administrative unit for poor relief, resulting in a substantial role for parish churchwardens. Following the Restoration, England provided parishes with some protections with the adoption of the Settlement Act of 1662. Under the Settlement Act, parishes now had the power to remove impoverished "newcomers" within forty days for residing outside of their place of settlement. Finally, Britain passed the Workhouse Test Act in 1723 which allowed parishes to confine the poor to labor-intensive institutions. Many in eighteenth century English society viewed workhouses as a "deterrent" to dissuade the poor from applying for relief. As a result, parishes contracted out the poor to farms, private individuals, or workhouses.

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<sup>18</sup> Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry*, 247-249. Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 62-63. For the relevant discussion of Nineveh in the Bible, see Jonah 3:1-4:10. Conversations with Joseph Ward, Jeffery Watt, and Sheila Skemp aided this chapter's understanding of the relationship between politics and religion in early modern Europe.

<sup>19</sup> John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 33-50.

Parishes denied relief to destitute men and women who refused an assignment to a workhouse institution.<sup>20</sup>

Seasons of vacant pulpits and degraded buildings did not impede parish poor relief for southern vestries. Questions about the precise motivations behind poor relief in the southern colonies have created a dividing line in the historiography. Rhys Isaac describes poor relief as a means of vestry power rather than an expression of piety. In Isaac's estimation:

...vestries also exercised patronage over lesser men since the relief of the poor was entrusted to them. They could choose to ease- or not to ease- a person's declining years. It lay with them to decide whether to lighten the burden assumed by poor but self sufficient householders who had to undertake the care of an aged or infirm relative.

Isaac's depiction of parish poor relief as a hegemonic ritual is not endorsed by all historians.

John. K. Nelson argues that the efforts of local parishes to assist the poor testified to the established church's fidelity to scriptural dictates. According to Nelson, "Virginians also understood charity to be a cardinal virtue...expressed...primarily through taxed-based parish care." Perhaps the interpretations of Nelson and Isaac are not entirely irreconcilable. Property served as the basis for parish poor relief, thus the entire system operated upon the basis of social class. For an eighteenth century South Carolinian or Virginian, an omnipotent God erected a divine social hierarchy that empowered the gentry with reciprocal obligations. Planters in exchange for their plantation fiefdoms supported the established church and obeyed scriptural commands to care for "the least of these."<sup>21</sup>

Vestries in South Carolina and Virginia levied a yearly poor tax to relieve the tribulations of individuals who could not compete in plantation societies transfigured by the increasing

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<sup>20</sup> Paul Slack, *The English Poor Law, 1531-1782* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 28, 32-33, 51-56.

<sup>21</sup> Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 65. Nelson, *A Blessed Company*, 83.

demands of transatlantic mercantilism. Widows, orphans, and the disabled most often received poor relief from vestries. Benevolence required funding, and southern vestries considered both land and slaves to be the most taxable properties in their slave society. For example, St. Helena's Parish in Beaufort, South Carolina typically taxed slaves per head and land per 100 acres at the same rate. Rates vacillated depending upon exigencies, the composition of the vestry, and the condition of the parish's economy. St. Helena's Parish Vestry required planters to pay eighteen pence per slave and per 100 acres in 1764, but then reduced the levy to one shilling per slave and per 100 acres the following year.<sup>22</sup>

Planter-politicians used poor relief to demand all property holders maintain a basic level of subsistence. Virginia planters deemed individuals and communities who failed to succeed at subsistence agriculture to be unworthy property holders that burdened the colony's poor relief system. For example, the House of Burgesses merged planter class economic ideology and parish poor relief to justify the seizure of Indian lands in 1767. Virginia empowered Hungar Parish in Northampton County to seize 200 acres of an Indian tract of land totaling 600 acres. Members of the House of Burgesses justified their actions because: "Indians neglect to cultivate; and by pursuing their ancient custom of hunting, fishing, and fowling leave their aged, sick, and disabled, to languish in distress and to become a charge and burthen to the said parish." Virginia's Hungar Parish poor law required the vestry and churchwardens to lease the 200 acres of land and use the proceeds from rents to provide poor relief to Indians in their parish. The House of Burgesses, in the guise of parish poor relief, offered agrarian plantation values as a solution to the poverty within Britain's mercantile empire.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Minutes of the Vestry of St. Helena's Parish, South Carolina, 1726-1812* ed. A.S. Salley, Jr. (Columbia: The State Company, 1919), 127-129. St. Helena's Episcopal Church, Beaufort. Records [SCHS microform] 54-8. Vestry minutes, April 16, 1770. 79210276, SCL.

<sup>23</sup> *The Statutes at Large Being A Collection of all the Laws of Virginia*, 8: 414-415.

Some vestries attempted to exploit the labor of the poor by making them earn their relief on local farms or in workhouses. St. Paul's Parish in Hanover County, Virginia grappled with the erection of a workhouse. In 1763, St. Paul's Parish Vestry ordered that John Winston and Harry Tompkins work with their counterparts on the St. Martin's Parish Vestry to purchase and accommodate a workhouse. Coordination between two vestries proved difficult as both had to agree upon identical policies regarding the workhouse. To assist with the construction and administration of the workhouse, St. Paul's vestry decreed in 1768 that both parishes "agree with an Overseer and hire Negroes for the use of the said poor House as they shall think fit." In the case of St. Paul's Parish workhouse, not even slaves could expedite construction. Upon the death of Daniel Boaze in 1769, the vestry reluctantly enjoined the churchwardens to provide for his children " 'til the House now Building at the poor House is finished, it appearing to the Vestry that [Boaze's children] are in distress." In 1770, St. Paul's Parish Vestry requested an agreement with St. Martin's Parish "to sell the Negro Fellow name Phill at the Poor House and to buy another in his stead..." St. Paul's Parish would make a similar request just over four years later in regards to a slave called Bob. Christian precepts of charity and slavery merged in the planter dominated southern parishes. Vestries continued in poor relief the longstanding planter class strategy of using slavery to reduce class conflict within their colony. In the end, assessment of the financial obligations between both parishes proved too complicated, and as a result St. Martin's Parish asked to be discharged from support of the poor house. In proffering their request, St. Martin's Parish Vestry petitioned that "the Slaves and Stock" held together be sold. Virginia's struggles in building a workhouse reflected a growing realization by southern established churches concerning the incongruence of plantations and workhouses. An abiding concern pertaining to the workhouse's slaves by both vestries embodied an implicit assumption

by southern colonists that bonded labor could only be lucrative to their society through plantation slavery. For planters, eighteenth century parish workhouses seemed designed to empower Britain's emerging capitalist ethos.<sup>24</sup>

Children could not navigate the complexities of British mercantilism or produce an agrarian subsistence. Orphans, victims of incompetent parents, and unwanted children were entrusted to—the charitable care of southern parishes. The Church of England in the southern colonies expended immense resources toward the poor relief of children. Often poor relief for children sparked debates regarding morality, gender, and human sexuality. In November 1769, Virginia's House of Burgesses passed “An Act for the relief of parishes from such charges as may arise from bastard children...” Established parishes had petitioned the colony's government for assistance with the “great charges” resulting from the care of children born to unmarried parents. The law established a process for securing financial contributions from a child's father. Delinquent fathers unable to pay had to be declared an “insolvent debtor” in order to provide parishes with legal access to their estates. Section three of the legislation required unwed mothers pay twenty shillings to parish churchwardens as a “fine” for “having a bastard.” The House of Burgesses expected churchwardens to apply the collected criminal fines toward relief of their parish's poor. Virginia's legislators had constructed gendered distinction in reforming poor relief. Colonists only penalized fathers for failing to support their offspring, but criminalized non-marital sexual intercourse for women. Members of the House of Burgesses turned the bodies and sexuality of Virginia women into a revenue stream for parish poor relief.<sup>25</sup>

Rectors in the southern colonies viewed poor relief as an opportunity for the dissemination of their gospel message to children. Reverend Charles Woodmason attempted to

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<sup>24</sup> *The Vestry Book of St. Paul's Parish Hanover County, Virginia 1706-1786* ed. C. G. Chamberlayne (Richmond: The Library Board, 1940), 435, 442, 449, 452, 473, 499, 518-519.

<sup>25</sup> *The Statutes at Large Being A Collection of all the Laws of Virginia*, 8: 374-377.

implement missionary poor relief in the South Carolina backcountry. In an October 1766 letter, Woodmason described his frontier flock as a “mix’d Multitude” of other denominations and nationalities. South Carolina’s frontier lacked adequate schools and school masters. As an educated clergyman, Woodmason organized a schooling ministry for “20 Poor Children.” Woodmason viewed the endeavor as an expression of the Church of England’s ingrained tradition of offering mercy to the poor. *The Book of Common Prayer* inspired the church’s philanthropic efforts with its numerous prayers and scripture lessons concerned with offering charity toward the poor. Woodmason mandated that all children he educated “attend Divine Service regularly.” Charitable education in the established church obligated its recipients to worship the God who had enabled such expressions of compassion. Benevolence to the backcountry’s poor children supported evangelistic goals since schooling made a favorable “Impressions on [the children’s] Relatives.”<sup>26</sup> Missionary zeal inculcated a sense of urgency into Woodmason’s concern for South Carolina’s poor. Woodmason aspired to rescue innocent children in the southern colonies from both the vicious depredation of imperial poverty and eternal damnation.

### **A Community of Pew Holders**

In religion, politics, and economics the Church of England mediated the early modern interactions that occurred between localities in the southern colonies and the immense British Empire. Early modernity at times conflicted with understandings of local community in

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<sup>26</sup> Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry*, 85. During the sacrament of Holy Communion, ministers had optional scripture readings at various points in the service such as: “Give alms of thy goods, and never turn thy face from any poor man, and the face of the Lord shall not be turned away from thee- Tobit 4:7” or “Whoso hath this worlds good, and seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?- 1 John 3:17.” See *The Book of Common Payer and Administration of the Sacrament...* (Cambridge: John Bakersfield, 1762).

southern parishes. Southern colonists in the Church of England preferred a society identified by its plantations and parishes, rather than connection to an empire. Reverent colonists in South Carolina and Virginia appreciated that properties were the literal “rocks upon which” their churches had been built. As a religious culture, the established church elevated an intricate symbol to communicate its understanding of the sacred nature of property— the pew. Church pews nurtured a southern resentment to the usurpations of early modernity. In the southern colonies, eighteenth century established churches had few common pews. Individuals and families owned or rented most church pews through a property system that provided owners with the status of pew holder in the church. Pew ownership supplied the necessary spiritual assets to the gentry in South Carolina and Virginia for the erection of a hierarchal society. Scholars have indeed noticed the central importance of pews. Louis P. Nelson in *The Beauty of Holiness* contends that “seating in the Anglican churches was carefully delineated according to social, political and economic station.” Established churches in the southern colonies believed that all properties had been given by God and ownership entailed certain obligations to both society and the divine that could best be honored through adherence to the Church of England’s doctrines.<sup>27</sup>

By the mid-eighteenth century, the Church of England had developed legal parameters for its pew property system. Pews represented far more than an interior accent to church architecture or even a mere seat. British society defined pews as “a small partition...or room in a church...for a family or select number of neighbors to be together in, to he[a]r divine service &

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<sup>27</sup> Louis P. Nelson, *The Beauty of Holiness: Anglicanism & Architecture in Colonial South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 325. See also Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, 64-65. The Church of England and later the Episcopal Church were not unique in their pew-property system, but the practice did have particular social connotations in the colonial and antebellum South. New England's congregational churches employed a similar pew system, although the cultural context would have been different. For examples of New England pew sales and rentals, see Mark S. Shantz, *Piety in Providence: Class Dimensions of Religious Experience in Antebellum Rhode Island* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), chapter one; Gretchen Buggelin, *Temples of Grace: The Material Transformation of Connecticut's Churches, 1790-1840* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2003), 40-72.

sermons & c.” Clearly, pews operated as social gathering places for religious nourishment and communal interactions. During the seventeenth century, “Family Pews with seats on two or more sides” increasingly typified the Church of England. Churches constructed family pews with wainscot and “decorative paneling.” Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century, pew holders inscribed dates and their initials on pews. Some of the most ostentatious pews in the Church of England might have also included “table, chairs, carpet, cushions, water caraffe and stove.”<sup>28</sup>

Pews functioned as a transitional social space where the private and public intersected. As a result, church leaders used pew property to establish societal boundaries. Centuries of negotiations between churchwardens and parishioners had created the pew property system. Churchwardens, in concert with bishops and parsons, exercised supreme authority over parish seating. Church leaders had to address what happened to the pews once a holder vacated a parish or particular church. Britain's legal theorists socially constructed pews under the legal principle of “church goods,” hence negating private property rights once a church member had departed.

As *Ecclesiastical Law* surmised:

And if a man erect a pew in the church, or hang up a bell in the church steeple, they do thereby become church goods (tho' they are not expressly given to the church), and he may not afterwards remove them ; if he does, the churchwardens may sue him. *Par. F. c. 25.*<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, the Church of England empowered churchwardens to sue any pew holder who attempted to remove property erected in a church or parish facility. Church law did place limitations upon churchwardens. For example, churchwardens could remove old pews or seats, but could not

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<sup>28</sup> Edward Lewes Cutts, *A Dictionary of the Church of England* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1889), 459.

<sup>29</sup> Richard Burn, *Ecclesiastical Law*, (London: H. Woodfall and W. Strahan, 1763), 254, 267.



destroy the retired pews without risking an “action of trespass” in the event the owner attempted to reclaim their property.<sup>30</sup>

Southern colonists transplanted the British conceptualization of pews as “church goods” into their parishes. Colonial legislators codified pews into laws relating to the Church of England’s establishment. In 1710, South Carolina’s Assembly passed a supplemental act to erect a church for St. Philip’s Parish in Charleston. In section four of “An Act for Erecting a new Brick Church at Charles-Town...” South Carolina’s Assembly emphasized the centrality of pews to the colony’s social structure:

The Pews to be built by the direction the Commissioners with the advice of the Vestry; in case of difference to be decided by the Governor and Council. The Governors’ Pew to be built as he shall direct.

For the southern colonies, pews had assumed religious, political, and social meaning. South Carolina’s Assembly codified a tradition whereby the colony’s governor derived part of his social status from a pew housed within an established church.<sup>31</sup>

Vestries in the southern colonies administered the pew property system in partnership with churchwardens. For example, St. Helena’s Parish Vestry in Beaufort, South Carolina ordered the construction of new pews, delineated pricing, and issued deeds in cooperation with the churchwardens. Beaufort’s vestrymen commissioned the construction of three new cedar pews measuring six feet in length. St. Helena’s Parish Vestry requested the pews be completed by Easter 1760 and placed at the east end of the church. Vestrymen mandated the new pews be sold for £ 25 each. Upon purchase, a pew holder gained a legal title that read:

We whose names are under written Church Wardens & Vestry Men for the Parish of St. Helena do Certify that \_\_\_\_\_ hath true and absolute Right and Title to

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<sup>30</sup> Joseph Shaw, *Parish Law Or, A Guide to Justices of the Peace, Ministers, Churchwardens...* (London: Henry Lintot, 1753), 89-92.

<sup>31</sup> Dalcho, *An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 437-454.

a Pew now standing in the Parish Church & is distinctly known by No.\_\_\_\_  
Having paid for the same the sum of \_\_\_\_\_

Countless individuals claimed membership in the parish gentry upon receipt of their pew title during the eighteenth century. For example, “J. Grayson” purchased pew number eighteen in St. Helena’s Parish and with the vestry’s issuance of the pew’s title received his passport into parish politics.<sup>32</sup>

Colonists in Virginia and South Carolina succeeded in making the pew property system conform to their social structure. As a result, the southern gentry constructed their pew holding status in connection to the lower classes. St. Michael’s Church Vestry demonstrated the concatenation between seating and social hierarchy in 1773. Churchwardens Samuel Leagare and John Baker informed the vestry that “a number of poor White People had applied...to carry Chairs...to be plac’d in the Aile for Seats.” The cost of purchasing or renting a pew was too steep a price for many colonists in South Carolina. Rectification of the insufficient public seating in St. Michael’s Church necessitated that poor whites negotiate with the vestry. St. Michael’s Church Vestry exercised its social hegemony by denying the chair request of the poor whites, and instead devising a solution that more clearly accentuated for all involved South Carolina’s eighteenth century social order. First, the vestry ordered the church sexton to remove the benches located in the aisles, which had been the “property of the Negroes” and transfer said benches to the gallery or under the belfry. Once completed, the vestry decreed that Benjamin Baker construct new benches and fix them in the aisle “leading from the N<sup>o</sup> to the S<sup>o</sup> Door, and others near the Pulpitt.” St. Michael’s Church Vestry then proceeded to use racism in order to minimize class antagonisms as it declared that the new benches were “solely to be appropriated

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<sup>32</sup> *Minutes of the Vestry of St. Helena’s Parish, South Carolina, 1726-1812* ed. A.S. Salley, Jr. (Columbia: The State Company, 1919), 17, 107-108. St. Helena’s Episcopal Church, Beaufort. Records [SCHS microform] 54-8. Vestry minutes, April 10, 1773. 79210276, SCL. Vestries, like St. Helena, often appropriated their rectors a pew funded at the parish’s expense.

for the use of Poor White People who may want seats” and furthermore that “no Negroes shall be permitted to sitt on the Benches so ordered to be made.” St. Michael’s Church Vestry designed an elaborate solution that provided seating in a manner that simultaneously empowered poor whites by elevating them over black parishioners, but still relegated the underclass to benches rather than the pews of the gentry. Poor whites at St. Michael’s Church reflected in their request the beginnings of a trend in the 1770s. Pew holding gentry in the Church of England became increasingly alarmed at the failure of their ecclesiastical community to maintain social order and hegemony. Cynicism regarding the vestry’s resolution should not distort the underlying religious catalyst for this elaborate social exercise: the desire of poor whites to attend St. Michael’s Church. Charleston’s poor whites so desired to hear the gospel through the established church’s divine service that they offered to bring their own chairs.<sup>33</sup>

Pews, as a form of private property, mirrored the social structure in the southern colonies. Property defined the interior and exterior landscapes of the southern parishes ruled by planter-vestrymen. St. Bartholomew’s Parish in South Carolina revealed a distinctive religious culture characterized by a devotion to piety and property. In 1706, South Carolina’s Assembly passed an act to establish the boundaries of the parish. Seven years later the inhabitants of St. Bartholomew’s Parish welcomed a missionary rector supported by the SPG. Despite what seemed to be a promising future, the fledgling church community experienced turmoil as a result of South Carolina’s conflicts with the region’s Indians during the second decade of the eighteenth century. Turmoil and war destroyed virtually all of the plantations located in the

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<sup>33</sup> St. Michael’s Episcopal Church (Charleston, S.C.). Vestry Minutes, April 27, 1773. St. Michael’s Church records, 1751-1983. (320.00) SCHS. Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood utilize this same episode and argue the seating plan demonstrated a “visible statement of spiritual distancing firmly grounded in white Anglicans’ pervasive racism.” See *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 77. Virginia’s established churches also used racism in seating to delineate class boundaries. For example, the lower church in Lunenburg Parish required that slaves sit in a separate gallery. See *The Virginia Gazette*, Purdie and Dixon, September 16, 1773.

parish, and as a result the missionary rector fled to Charlestown only to die shortly thereafter. For the next few decades, loyal members attempted to rebuild their parish and erect a church building. By the 1730s, the parish had acquired some 220 acres of glebe lands approximately three-quarters of a mile from a newly erected church building. In 1761 just as the parish celebrated the fact they confirmed seventy faithful communicants, financial necessities conspired to move property to the forefront of the St. Bartholomew community. Following the Indian war of 1715, the parish had decided to relocate the site of the plantations and churches of the parish from Chehaw to the Pon Pon River. Relocation had reduced the usefulness of the parish's glebe lands located near Chehaw. As a result, church leaders petitioned South Carolina's Assembly for the right to sell the glebe lands and use the proceeds to acquire more profitable property. The parish's supplication was not remarkable, except for the fact that St. Bartholomew's Parish desired to use monies gleaned from glebe sales to purchase slaves. Under the parish's proposal, human property performed a similar function as the glebe lands since the slaves would be entrusted to the rector for the parish's financial gain. St. Bartholomew's Parish had every eventuality considered. In times without a rector, the churchwardens would manage and hire out the slaves to fund the salary of a new minister. South Carolina's Assembly approved the parish's scheme since it appeared so conducive to the values of an eighteenth century "slave society."<sup>34</sup> St. Bartholomew's beseechment to South Carolina's Assembly exposed how localized properties of land, slaves, and pews supported the infrastructure of the established church. Southern properties assumed sacred worth as they funded rectors who would preach the gospel, pray the common prayers, visit the afflicted, baptize the young, bury the dead, and celebrate Holy

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<sup>34</sup> Dalcho, *An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 366-372. Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery In North America* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 8-14. For more on the Yamasee War (1715-1717) in South Carolina, see Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

Communion. By the 1770s, the southern gentry envisioned that their pew-centric social structure could not be coexistent with an early modern Church of England in North America.

### **Episcopal Republicanism**

In the 1770s, actions of the British Empire prompted the laity and clergy of the southern colonies to question the early modern nature of their beloved established church. Planter-vestrymen and rectors derived an answer in the credo of Episcopal republicanism. A deconstruction of the term “Episcopal republicanism” is required before tracing its prevalence in the South during the 1770s and 1780s. First, “Episcopal” and “Episcopalian” started as generic monikers to describe any individual who supported a church governed and disciplined by bishops. For eighteenth century Virginia and South Carolina, colonists who identified as Episcopalians desired bishops conformable to the Church of England’s theology and liturgy. After the American Revolution, “Episcopalian” morphed into a proper noun synonymous with members of the newly created Protestant Episcopal Church. Second, republicanism not only fascinated eighteenth century Americans, but it has captured the imagination of modern historians. A capacious historiography surrounding republicanism does call into question whether a singular definition of the concept existed in the eighteenth century or if the nebulousness of the ideology enhanced its popularity. Gordon Wood’s dissection of republicanism in *The Creation of the American Republic* provides a working definition in an otherwise untamed historiography. According to Wood, eighteenth century Americans understood republicanism as a political ideology that advocated a moral vision for a “utopian” republic. Eighteenth century republicanism embraced the following core principles: opposition to tyrannical monarchy, an elective politics defined by the public good, a society that exuded

virtuous conduct, and a commitment to liberty.<sup>35</sup> Republicanism and social class can not be separated in an analysis of the South. A regional variant of republicanism understood by its adherents through the material realities of plantations became yet one more ideology used by planters to both justify and maintain their hegemony over the South. Planters could easily reconstruct the abstractions of public good, virtue, and liberty to support their privileged position within the South's slave society.<sup>36</sup>

Recent scholarship has started to clarify the cohesive bond that existed between religion and republicanism in eighteenth century North America. In *America's God*, Mark A. Noll describes an eighteenth century "synthesis" of "Christian republicanism." Noll contends that in the age of revolution "political and religious figures were tailoring the project of republican independence to fit the language of traditional Protestant religion." Thomas S. Kidd in *God of Liberty* accepts and expands upon Noll's terminology of "Christian republicanism." Kidd states, "Patriots assumed that Christianity would, in some sense, be the cornerstone for the preservation of the new American Republic." Christian republicanism, as delineated by Noll and Kidd, requires some modification. Noll's "American synthesis" of Christianity and republicanism neglects what might be called a "southern fragmentation." In reality, a regionalized social class structure and church denominations produced gradations in the composition of republican ideology. As an intellectual amalgamation, Episcopal republicanism celebrated the virtue of the

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<sup>35</sup> Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), 46-90.

<sup>36</sup> Bernard Bailyn defines the ideology of the American Revolution in terms of republicanism. According to Bailyn, colonists sensed that the "balance of the constitution" had been corrupted in England resulting in a vicious tyranny that assaulted their liberties. British colonists envisioned that America had a "special role" in the protection of liberty and thus needed to create an independent nation. Americans ultimately concluded that only a republic of virtue and independence could be a "propagator" and "protector" of liberty. See Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 130, 135-143; Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, 268-269. For a valuable analysis of the historiography of republicanism see Daniel T. Rodgers, "Republicanism: The Career of a Concept," *The Journal of American History* 79:1 (1992), 11-38. For the connection between republicanism and gender see Ruth H. Bloch, "The Gendered Meanings of Virtue in Revolutionary America," *Signs*, 13 (1987), 37-58; Jan Lewis, "The Republican Wife, Virtue, and Seduction in the Early Republic," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 44 (1987), 690-721.

Roman Republic and the apostolic church. Adherents of Episcopal republicanism envisioned a South entrenched in the premodern values of localism, virtuous politics, slavery, and a patristic Christianity. Contrary to Noll's suggestion that the South did not make peace with republicanism until the 1790s, most leading planters and rectors accepted an Episcopal republicanism concomitant to their social structure in the 1770s. In addition, Kidd's postulation that Christian republicanism in the South "came to bless the perpetuation of bond servitude" implies an earlier "ambivalence." Kidd's assertion is perhaps correct for some evangelical varieties of republicanism, but a planter-dominated Episcopal republicanism depended upon slavery from its genesis in the early 1770s.<sup>37</sup>

Southern members of the Church of England rallied around the banner of "Episcopal" or "Episcopalian" during the debate over the creation of an American episcopacy. Questions regarding the sovereignty of parishes within Britain's early modern empire fueled the controversy over the appointment of a colonial bishop. For over a century, historians have debated the nature of episcopacy politics in the British Empire. Arthur Lyon Cross's *The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies* remains a classic work that deserves a rehearing in the historiography. Cross argues that the effort to establish an American episcopate dated back to Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud in the early seventeenth century. Laud

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<sup>37</sup> Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathon Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 9-13, 68-69, 85; Thomas S. Kidd, *God of Liberty: A Religious History of the American Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 114, 165. For the connections between slavery in ancient Rome and the American South see David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 40-47. According to Gordon Wood, Edmund Randolph suggested the Virginia constitutional convention was "treading upon the Republican ground of Greece and Rome." Wood contends that "the Americans' cult of antiquity cannot really be separated from their involvement in the English Commonwealth heritage, for the two were inextricably entwined." See Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic*, 50. Edmund Randolph also owned slaves and participated in the religious affairs of Henrico Parish. Randolph, thus, exemplified all three pillars: Greco-Roman politics, Episcopal religion, and slavery making him an exemplar of an Episcopal republicanism unique to the South. For more on Randolph and religion see Nelson, *A Blessed Company*, 295. *Journal of a Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia...May 18, 1785* (1836), 3. During the constitutional convention, Randolph owned 101 slaves, making him one of the five founders who owned over one hundred slaves. See Robert Allen McGuire, *To Form a More Perfect Union: A New Economic Interpretation of the United States Constitution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 54.

prompted King Charles I to issue a proclamation in the spring of 1637 that required New England only accept clergy with testimonials from the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Bishop of London. During the following year Archbishop Laud made preparations to send a bishop to New England. Unrest in Scotland, the resulting English Revolution, and Laud's execution halted the English government's attempt to establish episcopacy in North America. By starting his analysis with Laud, Cross sees the effort to establish an American episcopacy as an aspiration of the Church of England that dated back to the earliest moments of English colonization. Furthermore, Cross consistently minimizes the transatlantic politics of the debate over episcopacy. According to Cross, the Bishop of Durham's episcopacy plan in 1750 guaranteed colonists that an American bishop would have "no coercive power...over the laity" and the "maintenance of such bishops [was] not to be at the charge of the colonies." For Cross, "many of the advocates" of establishing an American bishop "were actuated by purely spiritual motives." Cross further decouples the question over the appointment of a bishop from the politics of the American Revolution as he contends:

...English statesmen saw that they had nothing to gain and everything to lose by involving themselves in the episcopal question. They knew that bishops with purely spiritual functions settled here would avail them little, and would arouse fully as much odium as an out-and-out state establishment...Though episcopacy, once established, might have strengthened the arm of the English executive here, yet the advantages did not seem alluring enough to tempt it. Hence, owing to the cautiousness of the Englishmen who had control of affairs, the introduction of bishops was not one of the final causes of separation from the mother country...

Cross does not dismiss colonial anxiety over the episcopacy as a possible component of the American Revolution, but denies that it can be viewed as a determining cause.<sup>38</sup>

Carl Bridenbaugh in *Mitre and Sceptre* interprets the entire debate over an American episcopacy through the prism of imperial politics. Bridenbaugh confesses a scholarly admiration

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<sup>38</sup>Arthur Lyon Cross, *The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1964) 6-7, 122-123, 257-258.



for Cross's research and describes his own monograph as merely "a supplement." In reality, Bridenbaugh seeks to overturn Cross's apolitical analysis. Bridenbaugh maintains that by the 1760s dissenters feared that "an Anglican cabal sought civil as will [sic] as religious control." For Bridenbaugh, the question regarding an American episcopacy amplified the Stamp Act Crisis because to "long standing religious grievances, fresh civil ones were now added and it was the conjunction that produced the crisis." For Bridenbaugh, an imperial conjunction yoked religious and political liberties into revolutionary tumult:

The colonial Dissenters could now see the threat of both mitre and sceptre and their English brethren saw it too. An explosive situation such as could never have resulted merely from the Parliamentary legislation of 1764-65, which did, however add political fuel to the already smouldering fires of social and religious discontent.

An unquenchable craving for dominion, according to Bridenbaugh, motivated the Church of England throughout the controversy. "Politically wise" Thomas Secker, elevated in 1758 to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, launched a sustained effort to consign a bishop to the North American colonies. Bridenbaugh describes Archbishop Secker as a conniving tactician who "used every art of political intrigue to accomplish his designs" for an American episcopate. *Mitre and Sceptre* concludes that the "ambitious" and "worldly" Secker employed "every temporal means to procure bishops for America." Archbishop Secker officially called upon the British government to appoint a bishop for the colonies in 1764. Prime Minister George Grenville promised to consider Secker's request, but the Grenville Ministry collapsed in 1765. For Bridenbaugh, a parasitic quest by the imperial establishment to impose sovereignty upon the colonies magnified the proposed American bishop into a rallying cry for revolutionary action.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Carl Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 30-31, 109-110, 208, 230, 258-259. Evarts B. Greene suggests that the absence of an American bishop created a "lessened sense of the dignity and value of this continuous tradition." which resulted

More recently, Stephen Taylor joins a growing historiography that describes the eighteenth century Hanoverian Church as effective in the “functions expected of it by both its lay and clerical members.” Eighteenth century bishops had responsibilities for ordination, confirmation, and clergy oversight. For Taylor, occupants of the See of London, like Thomas Sherlock, took seriously the “responsibility of the spiritual well-being of the Church of England in America.” Bishops in the eighteenth century earned their appointment through a system of political patronage. As spiritual lords, bishops possessed seats in Britain’s House of Lords. Older scholarship suggested that the patronage system mutated bishops into minions for the British government in the House of Lords. Revisionist scholarship has cast doubt on that interpretation. William Gibson’s analysis accentuates that from 1760 to 1775 twenty-one of the thirty-one bishops who attended the House of Lords voted against the British government’s official position at least once. In addition, bishops often abstained from overtly secular debates unconnected to the Church of England. Bishops reserved their most active participation for debates in the House of Lords that overtly pertained to religious policy.<sup>40</sup>

The Bishop of London assumed oversight responsibilities for the colonies bereft of the episcopacy. Although southern colonists recognized the Bishop of London’s sovereignty in church matters, vestries expected the See of London to consent to their local desires. For example, in 1771 Charles Woodmason had earned the ire of St. Mark’s Church Vestry in a complex episode that involved the social construction of clerical masculinity. Woodmason had accepted the pulpit at St. Mark’s Church in order to counter the growing popularity of Baptists in the vicinity. Upon acceptance, the vestry requested that Woodmason marry. Woodmason

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in a new American nationality. See Greene, “The Anglican Outlook on the American Colonies in the Early Eighteenth Century,” *The American Historical Review* 20: 1 (1914), 85.

<sup>40</sup> Stephen Taylor, “Whigs, Bishops, and America: The Politics of Church Reform in Mid-Eighteenth Century England,” *The Historical Journal* 36:2 (1993), 332, 337; William Gibson, *Church, State, and Society, 1760-1850* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 6-7, 122-123, 257-258.

scoffed at the request since “a fall received from an Horse, and a Kick received in the Scrotum” had rendered him impotent. St Mark’s Church Vestry “laughed” at Woodmason and considered his reproductive health “a joke.”<sup>41</sup> Southern conceptions of clerical masculinity defined by patriarchal marriage and an ability to engage in reproductive sexual intercourse had elicited the vestry’s mocking.

Woodmason attempted to engage in romantic relationships with women to satisfy his vestry’s unreasonable demand. After two disappointments at courtship, St. Mark’s Church Vestry connected Woodmason with a twenty-eight year old woman, and the couple quickly announced their engagement. Prior to the couple’s marriage, Woodmason learned that his fiancée had in his opinion a questionable sexual past in Virginia. Woodmason concluded that his bride-to-be had “no Nuns flesh about her.” Upon reaching this determination, Woodmason terminated the engagement and publically castigated the vestry for “their Deception.” Following Woodmason’s insubordination, St. Mark’s Church solicited the Bishop of London’s assistance in hiring a new rector for the parish. Woodmason resigned himself to the common expectation that the Bishop of London would accede to the vestry’s wishes. For rectors and planter-vestrymen, communications with the Bishop of London assumed a perfunctory formalism since the real decision-making occurred at the parish level.

Captive clergymen hoped an American bishop could liberate the Church of England from the hegemony of planter-vestrymen. Colonial rectors responded with enthusiasm to Archbishop Thomas Secker’s call for an American bishop in the 1760s. Thomas B. Chandler articulated the colonial clergy’s rallying cry in a pamphlet entitled *An Appeal to the Public on Behalf of the Church of England*. Chandler addressed the imperial politics that had complicated the appointment of an American bishop as he promised:

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<sup>41</sup> Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry*, 197-198.

*That the Bishops to be sent to America, shall have no authority but purely of a Spiritual and Ecclesiastical Nature, such as is derived altogether from the Church and not from the State...That the Bishops shall not interfere with the Property or Privileges, whether civil or religious, of Churchmen or Dissenters...But that they shall only exercise the original Power of their Office as before stated, i.e. ordain and govern the Clergy and administer Confirmation to those who shall desire it.*

Chandler recognized the growing influence of republicanism as he confessed: “Episcopacy can never thrive in a Republican Government, nor Republican principles in an Episcopal Church.” Nevertheless, *An Appeal* celebrated republicanism’s zealous faith in “liberty” and the “general Constitution of the British Colonies” as a poignant political justification for protecting the established church’s rights in North America. Chandler asserted that the Church of England should be entitled to the same institutional equality as dissenting denominations in the British colonies.<sup>42</sup>

Prime Minister Lord Frederick North’s government brought a semblance of stability to the British Parliament in 1770. Lord North’s Ministry refused to endorse or publically assist the plan for an American bishop. Although Lord North aspired to calm the debate over the appointment of a bishop, an untamed fear persisted in haunting the minds of anti-episcopacy southern colonists. Virginia joined the transatlantic disputation over bishops in 1771 with a colony-wide convention of clergy. William Rowark, the Bishop of London’s Commissary, summoned Virginia’s clergy to a convention to discuss the “Expediency of An American Episcopate.” For any number of unknowable reasons, only eleven other clergymen attended the meeting. In the end, eight clergymen voted in favor of an American bishop, while four opposed. Rowark’s convention unleashed a “paper war” inside the *Virginia Gazette*. Bishops accrued such a virulent political toxicity that the House of Burgesses had to publically vote against an American episcopate to ease the colony’s apprehension. Virginians who opposed the episcopacy

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<sup>42</sup> Thomas Bradbury Chandler, *An Appeal to the Public in Behalf of the Church of England in America* (New York: James Parker, 1767), 79, 115-117. Emphasis in the original.

worried that bishops would undermine the ecclesial laws that the colony had codified since its founding. Furthermore, as Rhys Isaac argues, vestries desired to retain a semblance of local control. Opponents believed that “the vestries have a Right to nominate any clergyman as their minister ‘who produces to the Governor, a Testimonial that he hath received ordination from some Bishop in England.’” Defenders of Archbishop Secker’s plan countered that vestries often did not fill clergy vacancies in a timely manner. Vestries had conceded that if a “Parish continues vacant above a year in that case, the Governor as exercising the Right as the Supreme Patron within this Dominion is empowered to... interfere.” Anti-episcopacy colonists preferred that their governor rather than a bishop enjoy clerical patronage. Virginia’s House of Burgesses exercised power over the salary of royal governors, and thus could use the colony’s appropriations process to influence clergy employment. Planter-vestrymen in the House of Burgesses could not expect any salary leverage over an appointed bishop.<sup>43</sup>

Archbishop Secker’s proposal for the creation of imperial bishops became entangled in a larger transatlantic discourse over constitutionalism. Jack P. Greene in *Peripheries and Centers* describes three overlapping constitutions in the British Empire. Colonists inhabited a political system with separate British, colonial, and imperial constitutions. Any appointment of bishops provoked questions of representation, sovereignty, and rights. As colonists in Virginia debated the episcopacy question, they framed their polemics in the language of constitutionalism. For example, Richard Bland warned his fellow colonists that if the crown commissioned an American bishop, “our whole ecclesiastical Constitution, which has been fixed with the King’s

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<sup>43</sup> G. M. Ditchfield, “Ecclesiastical Policy under Lord North,” in *The Church of England, c. 1689-c. 1833* ed. John Walsh, Colin Haydon, and Stephen Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 228-246; Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, 181-205. Section 7 of “An Act for the support of the Clergy; and for the regular collecting and paying the parish levies” stipulated that vestries lost “the sole right of presentation” when they allowed a pulpit to remain vacant for twelve months. See *The Statutes at Large Being A Collection of all the Laws of Virginia, From the First Session of the Legislature in the year 1619*, ed. William Waller Hening (Richmond: J & G Cochran Printers, 1821), 6: 90.

assent, must be altered.” Virginians desired the preservation of the ecclesiastical component to the imperial constitution. Although planter-vestrymen disapproved of any usurpation wrought by a bishop, they equally feared a fanatical reaction by dissenters to the installation of episcopacy. A balanced ecclesiastical constitution had to be maintained so that Virginians could navigate the unrest created by evangelicalism. Bland solemnly warned that an American bishop

...will produce greater Convulsions than any thing that has as yet happened in this part of the Globe. For let me tell you a Religious Dispute is the most fierce and destructive of all others to the Peace and Happiness of Government.

The Stamp Act, Townshend Duties, and non-importation agreements contributed to a highly combustible political environment. For Bland, the British Empire risked not simply further tensions with the appointment of a bishop, but a leveling social revolution led by dissenters. Bland alluded to the imagery of England in the 1640s, which had witnessed the bloody outcome of a social revolution polarized along religious lines. As the British Empire languished in political turmoil, Bland implied that any alteration to the ecclesiastical constitution would eliminate the possibility of imperial reconciliation. Bland provided his theological credentials by affirming himself a “sincere son of the established Church.” Good churchmen, Bland continued, could embrace the church’s “Doctrines without approving of her Hierarchy.”<sup>44</sup>

Contemporary scholarship has discussed the gregarious opposition to an American bishop to the near exclusion of pro-episcopacy colonists. Many southern colonists in the Church of England opposed not the idea of a bishop, but rather the eighteenth century nature of an imperial episcopacy. Isaac is correct in his suggestion that Virginia’s gentry desired to preserve local

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<sup>44</sup> Jack P. Greene, *Peripheries and Center: Constitutional Development in the Extended Politics of the British Empire and the United States, 1607-1788* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1986), 67-68; “Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman in Virginia to his Friend in their city,” 1 August 1771. Papers, 1672-1792, Section 6 Adams Family. CN: Mss 1 Ad198 a 48-49. Manuscripts, VHS. Opponents of Church of England bishops in the sixteenth and seventeenth century crafted an elaborate theological protestation, unlike the political opposition in eighteenth century Virginia. See Philip Benedict, *Christ’s Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 249-251, 395-405.

control, but that statement needs a caveat: if a scheme could have been devised to place the hypothetical bishop under the dominion of the local vestry, southern churchmen and churchwomen would have vocalized minimal objection. Unlike the theological opposition to bishops in England's long seventeenth century, structural and political reasons animated eighteenth-century Virginians to fight the appointment of an American bishop. For southern colonists, bishops embodied the great paradox of the mid-eighteenth century. Bishops personified the essence of premodern religion, yet the trappings of the early modern British Empire had ensnared the episcopacy. The prevailing historiography has consistently underappreciated southern support for bishops. Virtually all southern colonists who attended the established church abhorred plans for imperial bishops, but a great many welcomed republican bishops who would be "independent" of the political machinations of a corrupt British Empire. Virginia Episcopalians constructed a persuasive three dimensional rationalization for an American bishop grounded in theology, gender, and republicanism.

First, Episcopalians invoked the theological trinity of confirmation, ordination, and apostolic tradition. Episcopalians warned opponents of bishops that their fleeting concerns regarding imperial politics threatened the eternal salvation of colonial children, who had been denied a proper confirmation. The Church of England's theology demanded confirmation, an Episcopalian proclaimed, so:

...Children duly prepared to give an Account, in a Solemn Manner, of their principles of Religion to the Bishop, to take publickly [sic] before him the Profession of their Religion upon themselves and to receive thereupon [the Bishop's] prayers, Blessing, Assistance, and Encouragement, for their Proficiency in Godliness.

Bishops of London could not feasibly travel to the southern colonies to confirm every child. Episcopalians worried about the spiritual detriment imposed upon their children due to the

absence of a bishop. In addition, Episcopalians sympathized with clergy candidates regarding the mammoth inconvenience of traveling to Britain for ordination. A resident bishop would minimize the “Danger and Expense” incurred by prospective clergymen. In relation to ordination, Episcopalians rejected the notion that a resident bishop would diminish the power of parish vestries. As one unidentified Episcopalian reasoned with more ordinations:

...the Vestries when they come to elect a Minister into a vacant Parish would have more Choice of Candidates, would be applied to by more Candidates whose Conduct they have been previously acquainted, would have a better Chance and Opportunity of getting a Minister to their Liking...

A theologically orthodox and accessible mode of ordination, Episcopalians promised, would in fact guarantee increased control by planter-vestryman over clergy employment. Any boundaries that separated politics and theology evaporated as Episcopal republicanism decried how the absence of ordination and confirmation amounted to “an infringement of religious liberty.” In addition, Episcopalians argued that the failure to have resident bishops created a non-apostolic mode of church governance. Episcopalians cautioned their antagonists about liberal interpretations of the New Testament. For Episcopalians, resident bishops were not optional, but rather the only form of church government sanctioned by scripture. Timothy and Titus had created the template for episcopacy, argued an anonymous Episcopalian, because the New Testament depicted both men with ordination responsibilities, the right to govern clergy, and an authority to exercise “discipline” over many congregations. Consistent with their admiration for pre-modernity, Episcopalians summoned the writings of the ancient “church fathers” such as St. Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, and Eusebius. Episcopal republicanism looked to antiquity as it advocated a premodern bishop-led religion.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> “To the Country Gentleman,” *The Virginia Gazette*, Purdie and Dixon, May 3, 1771; “To Criticus,” *The Virginia Gazette*, Purdie and Dixon, March 5, 1772; “The Country Gentleman’s Answer to the Real Layman,” *The Virginia Gazette*, Purdie and Dixon, July 4, 1771; “Thoughts on an American Episcopate humbly offered to the



Second, Episcopalians responded in kind to the gendered discourse of their opponents. In Virginia, both sides in the controversy surrounding bishops used eighteenth century constructions of gender in their argumentation. Adversaries of episcopacy theorized that an American bishop would “bastardize” the Church of England in the colonies. Episcopalians responded that without a bishop the American branch of the Church of England:

...is bastarised [sic] already being without its nurturing Fathers the Bishops, and must forever remain in a State of Bastardy until it is restored and put under the Care of its lawful Parents; a thing the Clergy are now endavouring to do, that it may be treated not like bastards, but Sons.

Archbishop Secker’s antagonists had compared him to a mother “who miscarries a still born fetus.” Virginia’s paper war included countless other images of birthing and parental relationships that carried social implications in an eighteenth century patriarchal culture. Opponents derided bishops as mothers or women who “practice the Art of Midwifery.” In response, Episcopalians attempted to restore the masculinity of Archbishop Secker and the episcopacy by using the more socially acceptable metaphors of fathers and sons.<sup>46</sup>

To conclude their tripartite argument, Episcopalians espoused republicanism in their pursuit of an American bishop. Defenders turned republicanism’s opposition to episcopacy upside down as they suggested that a colonial bishop would in reality secure “religious liberty” for all colonists. Episcopalians asserted that bishops had been “interwoven with the Constitution of the state.” Republican bishops promised to operate as guardians of the “Principles of religious liberty.” An absence of bishops, Episcopalians reasoned, meant that southern colonists had been denied the “Rights and Privileges of British Subjects.” For southern

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Consideration of the Reverend of the Clergy of Virginia,” *The Virginia Gazette*, Purdie and Dixon, October 10, 1771. Another Episcopalian reminded opponents that members of the Church of England had an obligation to be “conformable to the Liturgy and Rubrick [sic] of the Church of England.” Under the church’s liturgy, a baptized child had to appear before a bishop to recite the Lord’s Prayer, Creed, Ten Commandments, and catechisms. See “To the Country Clergyman,” *The Virginia Gazette*, Purdie and Dixon, May 30, 1771.

<sup>46</sup> “A New Year’s Gift for the Reverend Mr. S. Henley,” *The Virginia Gazette*, Purdie and Dixon, January 9, 1772; *The Virginia Gazette*, Purdie and Dixon, July 11, 1771.

Episcopalians, the constitution that connected monarchical government and episcopacy provided stability for the social order. Episcopalians reminded hesitant rectors and planter-vestryman that England had abolished bishops in the seventeenth century resulting in “a long Variety of Confusion under which [England] could find no Rest” until the country restored episcopacy. Episcopal republicanism promoted bishops as both the vanguard of religious liberty and protection against the “disturbance” of Virginia’s dissenters.<sup>47</sup>

Exaggerated interpretations regarding the Church of England in the southern colonies obscure the centrality of Episcopal republicanism. Nancy Rhoden contends that eighteenth-century Virginians professed a “Low Church vision of episcopacy.” J. C. D. Clark makes an even more extreme characterization by suggesting the Church of England in Virginia had become “quasi-Presbyterian in practice if not in name.” In reality, many Virginia Episcopalians announced a vigorous commitment to a high church, apostolic episcopacy. Imperial politics, more than theology or ecclesiology, actuated many members of Virginia’s established church to combat the introduction of an American bishop. Once the American Revolution ended the transcendent political questions surrounding the British Empire and planter-vestrymen had secured control over their local churches, opposition to an Episcopal structure vanished across the South. Republicanism had made bishops safe for America during the course of the imperial crisis and resulting revolution. “A Friend to Equal Liberty” underscored in the *Virginia Gazette* how the American Revolution presented an opportunity to create a premodern episcopacy. According to “A Friend to Equal Liberty,” bishops had been corrupted by both Catholicism and

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<sup>47</sup> “A New Year’s Gift for the Reverend Mr. S. Henley,” *The Virginia Gazette*, Purdie and Dixon, January 9, 1772; “To the Reverend Samuel Henley...,” *The Virginia Gazette*, Purdie and Dixon, July 11, 1771; “An Answer to the Protest...,” *The Virginia Gazette*, Purdie and Dixon, June 13, 1771. As Virginia dissenters preached in “unlicensed” places and demanded access to Church of England pulpits, Episcopalians became increasingly concerned about the radical disruptions to their society. See for example, “To the Country Clergyman,” *The Virginia Gazette*, Purdie and Dixon, May 30, 1771.

England's sixteenth-century monarchs. "A Friend" chronicled how a corrupt British government perverted the democratic origins of the episcopacy and re-appropriated bishops as agents of tyranny. Apostolic episcopacy had in fact been a republican institution replete with elections by the "Clergy and laity." Liberated from the oppressive early modern British Empire, "A Friend" proposed Virginians convene an assembly to elect a bishop that would return Episcopalians to the "primitive apostolic mode" of church governance described in the Book of Acts.<sup>48</sup>

Following the debate over the episcopacy, the British Empire's tea crisis radicalized and mobilized Episcopal republicanism for a revolution. Charleston's tea disturbance marked the first evidence of republicanism's political saliency within southern parishes. Despite garnering less attention than the tea protest in Boston, Charleston experienced tea-related unrest resulting from Parliament's passage of the Tea Act. In late June 1774, the *Magna Charta* under the command of Captain Richard Maitland arrived in Charleston with a shipment of tea. Ships importing tea motivated a group identified as "patriots" to organize the masses. James Laurens summarized the raucous events in a detailed letter to a relative:

We have just had a disagreeable Instance of a rash & Violent attempt in this town of a great body of People or Mob, to take Capt. Maitland out of his Ship with Intent to tar & feather him & 'tis generally thought had he fallen into their hands it would have cost his Life. The Populace had been in great agitation for several days on account of three half Chests of Tea...

Laurens repeatedly described the Charleston protesters in terms of social class as "a mob" and an "Unthinking Part." Charleston's gentlemen and "judicious & moderate part" refused to succumb to the popular democratic passions of mob rule. Anger over the tea shipment continued to

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<sup>48</sup> *The Virginia Gazette*, Dixon and Hunter, April 24, 1778. In particular, "A Friend to Equal Liberty" pointed to what he called the "election" of Matthias to replace Judas in Acts: 1: 21-26. Nancy L. Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism: The Colonial Church of England Clergy during the American Revolution* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 42-43; J.C.D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty, 1660-1832: Political Discourse and Social Dynamics in the Anglo-American World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 340.

permeate Charleston, until Maitland enlisted the assistance of British red coats and towed the *Magna Charta* out of the harbor in early August.<sup>49</sup>

Ten days following the departure of the *Magna Charta*, Reverend John Bullman of St. Michael's Church delivered a "political sermon." Bullman castigated Charleston's patriots for questioning the policies of the British Empire. The Rector of St. Michael's Church proclaimed on August 14:

...from this unhappy Temper that every idle Projector, who cannot perhaps govern his own household or pay the debts of his own contracting, presumes he is qualified to dictate how the State should be governed, and to point out the means of paying the debts of a Nation.

In a common analogy, Bullman unfavorably compared family governance to the larger political state. British colonists often envisioned their families as "little commonwealths" or "uneasy kingdoms." Bullman bemoaned how "every silly Clown, and illiterate Mechanic" felt compelled to "censure the conduct of his Prince or Governor." Colonial protest against British policies had destroyed adherence to proper social deference.<sup>50</sup> Planters and merchants may have organized the intellectual political assault upon Britain's policies, but they had awakened the lower classes throughout the colonies including in Charleston. As a clergyman, Bullman attempted to use religion to demonize republicanism. For in his opinion, when the "great Multitude" is exposed to "discontent" the end result "is Schisms in the Church and sedition and Rebellion in the State." In Bullman's sermon, the ideologies of evangelicalism and republicanism spawned immoral divisiveness, which fractured societal cohesion. Bullman proclaimed that peace could reign so

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<sup>49</sup> James Laurens to Henry Laurens, July 22, 1774 in *The Papers of Henry Laurens: Volume Nine: April 19, 1773-Dec. 12, 1774* ed. George C. Rogers, David R. Chesnut, et al. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1981), 524-528; William Randolph Ryan, *The World of Thomas Jeremiah: Charles Town on the Eve of the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 21-22.

<sup>50</sup> St. Michael's Episcopal Church (Charleston, S.C.). Vestry Minutes, August 15, 1774. St. Michael's Church records, 1751-1983. (320.00) SCHS. See John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) and Isaac, *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom*.

long as “every Man...keep his own Rank, and to do his Duty to his own station.”<sup>51</sup> For Bullman, the greatest danger to mid-eighteenth century colonial society originated not from the Tea Act, but rather the wanton abandonment of proper deference to the social hierarchy.

Bullman’s sermon unleashed quite a firestorm within St. Michael’s Church. In response, the parish vestry called a meeting the following day in order to “quiet the minds of the People.” An unrepentant Bullman appeared before the vestry with a copy of the controversial sermon. St. Michael’s Parish Vestry reviewed the sermon and then excoriated Bullman on the dangers of “entering upon Politicks in the Pulpit.” After listening to the vestry’s reasonable concerns, Bullman diplomatically proclaimed “he wou’d not be dictated to by the Vestry or Parishioners” even if his arrogance resulted in dismissal. Bullman’s insults did not hasten the decisions of an ever cautious vestry. St. Michael’s Church Vestry decided to call and advertise another meeting of parishioners to continue its consultation with the congregation. St. Michael’s Church Vestry considered the vociferous and hostile response to Bullman’s sermon a parish crisis for vestrymen aspired to “promote an universal Attendance on Divine Worship.” Attacks upon republicanism from the pulpit had alienated a great many parishioners in South Carolina. On August 18, St. Michael’s Vestry asked the assembled parishioners whether they “approved of Mr. Bullman’s conduct, or Not.” Upon a division, forty-two parishioners expressed disapproval, while thirty-three endorsed their rector’s conduct. St. Michael’s Vestry accepted the results of the vote, composed a dismissal letter to Bullman, and mandated the parish’s ex-rector be paid the salary owed to him for his services.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> St. Michael's Episcopal Church (Charleston, S.C.). Vestry Minutes, August 15, 1774. St. Michael's Church records, 1751-1983. (320.00) SCHS.

<sup>52</sup> St. Michael's Episcopal Church (Charleston, S.C.). Vestry Minutes, August 18, August 27, 1774. St. Michael's Church records, 1751-1983. (320.00) SCHS.

On August 22, seventy-four inhabitants of the parish delivered a letter to the vestry demanding the reinstatement of their beloved and petulant rector. In their letter, Bullman's supporters identified themselves as parishioners "who conform to the Church of England." Following a reading of the pro-Bullman epistle, the vestry reaffirmed its previous decision. Despite their vocal efforts, Bullman loyalists could not punish the vestry for terminating their ex-rector. Edward Blake, Thomas Heyward Jr., George Abbot Hall, Peter Leger, and Robert William Powell all signed Bullman's dismissal letter in August 1774. St. Michael's Church reelected all five vestrymen on the subsequent Easter Monday in 1775. The laity's decision to reelect St. Michael's Parish Vestry is telling. Episcopal republicanism motivated a majority of parishioners to electorally defend St. Michael's Parish Vestry. In the wake of Charleston's tea crisis, parishioners had organized to secure their pulpits for republicanism.<sup>53</sup>

The Church of England in Virginia also vocalized a political theology regarding the imperial tea crisis. In June 1774, colonists in Fredericksburg gathered at their church for a day of prayer and politics. Parishioners congregated seeking "Divine interposition" to end the "Destruction to the civil rights of America." To begin the day's activities, the Reverend James Marye of St. George's Parish delivered a sermon using the twelfth chapter of Psalms. Marye likely selected the Psalm because it evoked themes of God's protection from "depravity" and the "wicked." Another clergyman "read prayers" to the assembly of parishioners. St. George's Parish conducted the religious service to herald Virginia's boycott of tea. In *The Marketplace of Revolution*, T. H. Breen suggests that some women used their involvement in the consumer politics resulting from the tea crisis to challenge societal gender norms. Indeed, women in St. George's Parish had brought "Honour to their Sex," observed one attendee. Parish women

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<sup>53</sup> St. Michael's Episcopal Church (Charleston, S.C.). Vestry Minutes, August 18 and 27, 1774; April 17, 1775. St. Michael's Church records, 1751-1983. (320.00) SCHS.

boycotted the purchase of new tea and “sealed up the Stock they had on Hand.” Episcopal republican women in the southern colonies strengthened the religious and economic values of their plantation society as they rejected market-centered imperial mercantilism.<sup>54</sup>

Radicalization advanced across Virginia as the tea crisis germinated more outpourings of Episcopal republicanism. For example, colonists assembled in Northfarnham Parish in June 1774 to dramatize their Episcopal republicanism. Festivities commenced with a “patriotic sermon” by Reverend William McKay— the rector of the parish. McKay’s sermon utilized the words “Be men, and fight” located in 1 Samuel 4:9. Episcopal republicanism summoned southern colonists to exude a militant masculinity lest they be subjugated. Upon the conclusion of McKay’s sermon and the entire liturgical divine service, parishioners leveled a political indictment against British Prime Minister Lord North. McKay’s congregation organized a “court of liberty” and “jury of freemen” to determine Lord North’s culpability in the imperial crisis. Northfarnham Parish charged Lord North with high treason, subversion of the British constitution, and taxation policies that had violated the rights of “free born subjects.” Northfarnham Parish’s court of liberty returned a verdict of guilty and demonstrated its revolutionist impulse when it informed Lord North he was “to be hanged by the neck until you are *dead*, your body burnt, and your ashes dispersed in the air.” At two o’clock in the afternoon, parishioners administered the court of liberty’s punishment to a “penitent” Lord North. Once the effigy of Lord North’s body had been consumed by fire and transformed into ashes it brought “joy to every spectator.” In addition to its radicalism, the gathering in Northfarnham Parish illuminated how women played an indispensable role in Episcopal republicanism. Observers reported that “a company of ladies and gentlemen, daughters and sons of liberty” accompanied

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<sup>54</sup> *The Virginia Gazette*, Purdie and Dixon, June 9, 1774; Nelson, *A Blessed Company*, 315; T.H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 282-289.

Lord North to the location of his execution. Republicanism cloaked in the trappings of an emergent Episcopal theology had created a sufficient intellectual impetus for the southern gentry to participate in rebellion against the British Empire.<sup>55</sup>

Planters and rectors declared sinful those demonic economic forces they could not entirely understand, much less control following the tea crisis. Episcopal republicans worried that merchants would succumb to their natural economic inclinations of “self-interest.” Conniving merchants threatened non-importation agreements with their insatiable attachment to profiteering. Episcopal republicanism in the southern colonies deemed the plantation economy incommensurate with the capitalist ethics which lurked within mercantilism. Planters and clergymen used county meetings to foment resistance to a monarchy of the market. In June 1774, freeholders elected Reverend Isaac William Giberne to serve as moderator of a Richmond County meeting. Giberne presided as the colonists in attendance adopted eight resolutions. Richmond County freeholders prohibited lawyers in the county from engaging in lawsuits for the collection of debts during the time of non-importation. In addition to ordering the “disuse” of tea, the protesters in Richmond County demanded the planters keep all unused tobacco, corn, and wheat on their plantations so as to prevent “designing men” from profiting off an “empty Market.” Before concluding the meeting, Richmond County freeholders lambasted the East India Company as “tools to Ministerial oppression.” For southern colonists, tyranny had created a reprehensible alliance between ravenous commercial companies and Parliament that only served to subvert the liberties of the colonies. Mercantilism had become an abhorrence to the religious, social, and political ideologies of the southern colonies.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *The Virginia Gazette*, Rind, June 16, 1774.

<sup>56</sup> *The Virginia Gazette*, Purdie and Dixon, July 7, 1774. Allan Kulikoff acknowledges that a “slow” American transition to capitalism centered upon merchants perhaps started in the late colonial period. This dissertation’s discussion of an economic divergence accelerated by the American Revolution is informed by Kulikoff’s depiction



Tea cemented Episcopal republicanism in the minds of leading southern colonists. Established parishes lent their buildings, pews, and resources to enable the burgeoning political resistance. With the support of parishioners, southern vestries dismissed rectors who dared oppose this fermentation of revolution. Despite an inherent disdain for social unrest, many planter-vestrymen welcomed the religious-centered protests against the Tea Act. Parliament's enactment of the Tea Act reminded planters of the uncontrollable external threats to their slave society: bankruptcies, transatlantic companies, imperial backed monopolies, rapacious profiteering by merchants, and a centralization of political power in a distant government. Episcopal republicanism, thus, became a theological defense for the plantation centric social structure that characterized the eighteenth century South<sup>57</sup>

Radicalized southern parishes persisted in their prayers for the formation of a Christianized-plantation republic following the commencement of the American Revolution. Episcopal rectors used Republicanism's Creed to construct jeremiads targeting the British Empire.<sup>58</sup> In June 1777, Reverend John Lewis delivered a sermon entitled *Naboth's Vineyard* to both St. Philip's Church in Charleston and St. Paul's Church at Stono. Lewis preached upon the themes of faith, republicanism, and social class using the twenty-first chapter of 1 Kings. *Naboth's Vineyard* started from the exegetic supposition that in seeking to acquire the vineyard, King Ahab had propounded an "unjust demand" upon the "most noble and intrepid" Naboth.

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of the war as an event that set the North and South on differing social trajectories. According to Kulikoff, subsequent to the American Revolution: "Northern development of a full market society, with growing classes of capitalists and proletarians, proceeded apace through the antebellum decades. Slavery became even more fully embedded in the South. Slaveholders created an anticapitalist niche for themselves in the capitalist world economy." See Kulikoff, *The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), 99-126.

<sup>57</sup> *The Virginia Gazette*, Purdie and Dixon, August 11, 1774; *The Virginia Gazette*, Purdie and Dixon, July 7, 1774. According to Bruce Ragsdale, forty-one of Virginia's sixty-one counties held similar meeting in June-July 1774. See Ragsdale, *A Planters' Republic*, 186.

<sup>58</sup> Scholars estimate that 75% of Church of England clergymen in both South Carolina and Virginia aligned themselves with the cause of American independence. See Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven*, 210.

Lewis incorporated gender into his homily as he celebrated Naboth's "admirable and manly answer" to Ahab. Although Naboth subscribed to the social order as he acknowledged the "exalted rank" of King Ahab, he appreciated that protecting his "inheritance and birthright" from tyranny superseded proper deference. Naboth resisted King Ahab's demands because the vineyard was his most profitable possession. Jezebel, the king's wife, dispatched letters to the "elders and to the nobles" of Naboth's city demanding the execution of Naboth for blasphemy against both God and Ahab. Nobles within Naboth's city complied with the ancient monarch's bloody demands. Lewis's sermon used biblical exegesis to deprecate aristocracies who operated as blind collaborators with the rule of tyrannical and bloodthirsty kings. *Naboth's Vineyard* alerted South Carolina's planter aristocrats not to replicate the sins of their ancient predecessors.<sup>59</sup>

John Lewis interpreted the biblical vineyard as a complex religious symbol imbued with rich economic and political meanings. Naboth's vineyard provided the scripture lesson with a rendering of inheritable property defined as "everything that can be dear or valuable to man." For eighteenth-century South Carolina, the vineyard would have been translated in the congregation's mind as plantations lush with land, staple crops, and slaves. Along with such materialistic manifestations of vineyards, Lewis also ideologically construed Naboth's inheritance as a metaphorical vineyard of liberty. Episcopal republicanism compelled Lewis to equate the actions of King Ahab with those of King George III. Both the "ancient" and "modern" monarch had threatened:

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<sup>59</sup> Rev. John Lewis, *Naboth's Vineyard, A Sermon; Preached at the Parish Church of St. Paul...and at St. Philip's Church in Charles-Town on Sunday the First of June 1777* (Charleston: Peter Timothy, 1777), 5, 10-11, 16-17. Nancy L. Rhoden uses this sermon in her broader analysis of "Patriot ministers," instead of as an exemplar of the distinctive Episcopal republicanism in the South that is the focus of this chapter. See Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism*, 78-79.

...not only the vineyard- our inheritance- but even the great and glorious inheritance of liberty, by far more precious than all the vineyards upon earth and which our illustrious and undaunted ancestor transmitted to us at the expense of their dearest blood would have been taken away for ever at the will of a tyrant without our receiving or even being offered any thing in return for it.

Lewis insinuated, that in the Bible's rendition, Naboth had claimed two inheritances threatened by an avaricious monarch—the literal vineyard and the allegorical vineyard of liberty.

Inheritable property had enabled Naboth to attain the economic independence necessary for republican liberty. *Naboth's Vineyard* depicted George III as a more ruthless incarnation of Ahab. Although King Ahab by “infernal machinations” killed only Naboth, George III had caused according to Reverend Lewis “the death of thousands.” In *Naboth's Vineyard*, St. Paul's Parish and St. Philip's Parish had been summoned to resist monarchs “invested with supreme power” and “wallowing in wealth and luxury.” South Carolina planters had a scriptural calling to defend their earthly vineyards against George III or profane republicanism's uppermost doctrines of economic independence and liberty.<sup>60</sup>

Episcopal republicanism combed the Bible for prophetic verses to inspire an eighteenth-century revolution. At the conclusion of *Naboth's Vineyard*, Lewis quoted verses from 1 Kings as a religious manifesto against the corrupt monarchy of the British Empire. Lewis portrayed the Bible's Elijah as a prophet of Episcopal republicanism inviting South Carolinians to participate in a holy revolution because:

...the Lord came to Elijah saying “*Arise, go down to meet AHAB, king of ISRAEL: Behold, he is gone down to possess it, and thou shalt speak unto him saying, thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed and also take possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying: In the place where dogs licked the blood of NABOTH, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine O AHAB!*”

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<sup>60</sup> Lewis, *Naboth's Vineyard*, 12, 18-19.

South Carolina's established churches worshiped a God committed to dispensing justice to wicked monarchs. St. Paul's Parish and St. Philip's Parish studied a Bible that promised that the sacrificial blood of corrupt monarchs could redeem liberty. Republicanism anticipated apocalyptic bloodshed, and that understandably created anxieties that only religion could assuage. In response, Lewis alleviated worry as he reminded parishioners only their "mediator and redeemer Christ Jesus" could restore peace and contentment to South Carolina. Ministers had at their disposal an ornate tapestry of religion that could supply resurrection hope for a republican people confronting an uncertain future. In 1777, South Carolinians envisioned that King George III lusted after their southern vineyards. As the "rightful" inheritors of a plantation-based liberty, southern colonists accepted a theology dedicated to Christian righteousness, republicanism, and property rights.<sup>61</sup>

Rectors of the established church in Virginia joined their South Carolina colleagues in sermonizing a syncretism of republicanism and Episcopal religion. The Shelburne Parish Vestry hired Reverend David Griffith as their new rector in 1771 and offered him a salary of 5000 lbs of tobacco per year in lieu of a glebe. Four years later, Griffith delivered a sermon entitled *Passive Obedience Considered* to herald the virtues of republicanism. *Passive Obedience Considered* concentrated on verses in the thirteenth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, which reminded Christians that all political powers on earth had been "ordained of God." Griffith's homily suggests that it would be an overgeneralization to characterize Virginia's established clergy as "diesitic" or subservient to their parishioners' politics during the American Revolution.<sup>62</sup> In the sermon, Griffith rationalized that the doctrine of passive obedience amounted to a misinterpretation of the Bible. Using the Book of Acts, Griffith proposed that the actions of the

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<sup>61</sup> Lewis, *Naboth's Vineyard*, 22-23.

<sup>62</sup> David Hein and Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr., *The Episcopalians* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2004), 42-43.

apostles evidenced a sacred truth that “no obedience is due from Christians, to the impious and unlawful commands of their superiours.” Griffith brandished the constitutional theory of republicanism to absolve colonists of any perceived sins committed while challenging a king professing divine rights. Although King George III might have been ordained by God, Griffith assured his listeners that colonists were not “labouring to subvert the constitution; to abolish monarchy, or even to diminish the just prerogative of the crown.” Colonists, Griffith reasoned, simply wanted “their former privileges and liberties confirmed.” After all, Griffith suggested, southern colonists should be entitled to the lives, liberties, and property guaranteed under the “constitution.”<sup>63</sup>

An anxious Griffith navigated the ambiguities of scripture to justify Episcopal republicanism. The Rector of Shelburne Parish confessed to the congregation that it contradicted “the character of a minister of the gospel of Christ to inspire rebellion and foment disorder and confusion.” Griffith insinuated that the corruption of the British Empire had seeped into the Church of England. God might bless disobedience to temporal authorities if Christians labored to eradicate the pollutions of “tyranny and oppression” in religion. Griffith encouraged southern colonists in the Church of England to emulate Paul’s example at Philippi. According to the sixteenth chapter of Acts, Paul affirmed his Roman citizenship and Christian faith in response to harassment by magistrates. Griffith deduced the “tyrannical manner” of the magistrates precipitated Paul’s resistance to earthly authorities. The Rector of Shelburne Parish had quite cunningly deflected attention away from the passive Paul of Romans to the more radical Paul of Acts. New Testament lessons homogenized Christian theology and republican politics in the

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<sup>63</sup> David Griffith, *Passive Obedience Considered: In A Sermon Preached at Williamsburg (1775)*, 19-23; Shelburne Parish (Loudoun County, Va.), Vestry Book, December 23, 1771 (1771-1805), Accession 19746, Church records collection, LV.

1770s. As a result, Griffith converted the biblical Paul into an apostle for a revolutionary church.<sup>64</sup>

Virginia rectors ensured that both piety and politics emanated from their pulpits as the war progressed. Wartime weariness could not be allowed to undermine the orthodoxy of Episcopal republicanism. Reverend James Madison delivered a sermon in Botetourt County on a day appointed by Congress for prayer and thanksgiving in 1781. Madison conjured almost millenarian imagery as he asserted that America had become “the theatre, whereon the providence of God is now manifested.” In the thanksgiving discourse, Madison promulgated the sacred dogma of republicanism:

...It was the voice of liberty which called you forth to this arduous contest; it is her voice which now bids you to persevere, which recommend the simplicity of manner, that invincible firmness, that love of pure disinterested virtue, which are the pillars of a republic. For without them, a republic loses its very soul... You then who are parents...instill into [your children's] minds, ...those principles of religion and virtue, which a republic demands. Whilst you teach them their duty to their God, point out to them what becomes them as citizens...

For Madison, religion would be essential to the future republic since it provided the moral teachings necessary for virtuous citizenship. Madison concluded his patriotic preaching by using Christian theology to prepare the congregation for the reality that their utopian republic might demand the ultimate sacrifice. According to Madison, republican Christians should be prepared to “*die the death of the righteous*” so that they might “fall into the hands of an ever living God.” Southern rectors reassured parishioners that wartime death should not be feared since it advanced the cause of the republic and the fallen could be assured of a Christian resurrection. Southern clergymen expanded Episcopal republicanism beyond a simple justification for the war into theological sustenance that would transcend the historical moment and nourish congregations during the wilderness years following the American Revolution. Republicanism’s Creed joined

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<sup>64</sup> Griffith, *Passive Obedience, Considered*, 16, 24-26.

the Apostle's Creed in defining the established church's religious culture in the southern colonies.<sup>65</sup>

War could not deter South Carolina's rectors in their prayers for republicanism. For example, in June 1777 Charleston marked the one year anniversary of Commodore Sir Peter Parker's failed invasion at Fort Moultrie. During the commemoration, Reverend Henry Purcell, a regimental chaplain, presided over divine service for the "heroes" of Fort Moultrie at St. Michael's Church. Observers described Purcell's exposition as a "suitable sermon" for the occasion. In addition, Reverend John Lewis of St. Paul's Parish and author of *Naboth's Vineyard*, preached at the remembrance service held at Fort Moultrie.<sup>66</sup> Celebrations proved premature as British military forces successfully invaded South Carolina in 1780. Southern rectors of republicanism and their congregations soon encountered the harsh devastation and displacement of wartime. British occupation damaged the infrastructure of the established church in South Carolina. Some South Carolina parishes used subterfuge to escape the carnage of wartime. For instance, residents in St. James's Parish at Goose Creek kept the Royal Arms on their church altar as a preventive measure. Although the tactic of St. James's Parish worked as it shielded the church building from being torched or converted into a garrison, barrack, or hospital, many South Carolina parishes were not so fortunate. For example, parishioners in St. George's Parish witnessed the interior of their church set ablaze during the Revolution. General Augustine Prévost torched the church located in Prince William's Parish as he marched British forces from Savannah to Charleston. Likewise, St. Peter's Parish could not secure a rector to perform divine service during the entirety of the American Revolution, and as result the congregation completely disintegrated. In addition, His Majesty's forces occupied Charleston

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<sup>65</sup> James Madison, *A Sermon, Preached in the County of Botetourt* (Richmond: Nicolson & Prentis, 1781), 11-19.

<sup>66</sup> *The Virginia Gazette*, Dixon and Hunter, August 15, 1777.

and confiscated church bells as tokens of war. Upon the “reduction of Charles Town,” Lord Cornwallis granted British soldiers permission to remove the eight bells from St. Michael’s Church and the bells located at the Presbyterian Meetinghouse. Charleston’s church bells traveled onboard the *Flora* back to London. For many parishioners, the removal of the bells crystallized the menacing disruptions wrought by the American Revolution to structures both architectural and social.<sup>67</sup>

Revolution fomented a new dissenting movement in Virginia. Formation of an independent Methodist church sapped membership from the established churches, since Wesleyans started as a society within the Church of England. Methodist separatism demonstrated that the war could devastate parishes without any military bombardment. Early Methodists relaxed the educational requirements for their teachers and preachers. In response, Virginia Episcopalians renewed their pleas for a republican bishop. In the *Virginia Gazette*, “Philoepiscopus” issued a warning to the Virginia General Assembly regarding the leveling influence of dissenters. To illustrate that threat, Philoepiscopus pointed to the indispensability of an Episcopal clergy. Philoepiscopus bemoaned that for dissenters like the Methodists any:

...layman or mechanic if he finds a motion within him from the Spirit, may leap from the anvil or plough and in a few minutes without...sitting a number of years in a college...spring up an apostle and go forth a preacher of the word of GOD.

For Virginia’s gentry, the American Revolution underscored how dissenting religion threatened the commonwealth’s social structure. Mechanic preachers had turned religion into a political and social weapon. As Philoepiscopus warned:

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<sup>67</sup> Dalcho, *An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 263, 282, 308, 323-324, 384, 386. The British also supposedly burned established churches in Christ Church Parish and St. Mark’s Parish. St. Michael’s Episcopal Church (Charleston, S.C.). Vestry Minutes, June 20, December 5, 1783. St. Michael’s Church records, 1751-1983. (320.00) SCHS. The June 20, 1783 entry is not a formal meeting, but rather a transcription of letters received by the vestry in the winter and spring regarding the bells.



...[dissenters] take their text out of the bible, and deliver nonsense and blasphemy when they rail against the established church and preach down its doctrines and discipline

Episcopal republicanism in the South had no place for mechanic preachers within a planter-dominated society.<sup>68</sup> The Methodist insurgency threatened both the numerical strength of the emerging Episcopal Church and the southern social order.

Francis Asbury created both the institutional and intellectual framework for a middling Methodist republicanism. Asbury seized control of Wesley's reformism within the Church of England and revamped it into a separatist faction within Virginia. Asbury's evangelization exemplified the Methodist approach to the non-gentry and poor in Virginia. Asbury recorded a likely common occurrence for Methodists on an average Sunday when "many attended of rich and poor: but in the afternoon wind or the rain kept the gentry away [while] many of the common people heard gladly." Established church ministers appeared confined to parsonages and elaborate pulpits, while Methodist preachers engaged with the non-gentry in their social settings without overt demands for deference.<sup>69</sup>

For Asbury the connectional nature of religion and republicanism encouraged Methodist independence in March 1784. On a preaching tour in North Carolina, Asbury read a publication by Baptist Silas Mercer. Asbury warned that Mercer epitomized "republicanism run mad." Mercer advocated a radical republicanism that in Asbury's opinion would "decapitate every crowned head" and abolish all "existing forms of Church government." Leaders of the established church had long mocked the "plunging-baptism" of Baptists. Asbury concurred that Baptist theology taken to its logical conclusion questioned whether "Christ had a Church until

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<sup>68</sup> *The Virginia Gazette*, Dixon and Hunter, December 13, 1776.

<sup>69</sup> Francis Asbury, *Journal of Reverend Frances Asbury in Three Volumes* Vol. 1 (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1821), 196; Cynthia Lynn Lyerly, *Methodism and the Southern Mind, 1770-1810* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 17.

the Baptists *plunged* for it.” Asbury’s travels only compounded his concern over the Baptists. He described entire regions of North Carolina as “poisoned” by Antinomianism. Only the erection of distinctive Methodist chapels in North Carolina, Asbury believed, could stymie a certain Baptist ascendancy.<sup>70</sup> Asbury’s evaluation of the North Carolina Baptists reflected the denominational and social stratification of republicanism. Middling Methodist republicanism positioned itself between a leveling Baptist republicanism and the gentry-led Episcopal republicanism in the South

Following his labors in North Carolina, Asbury spent the spring and summer in the Chesapeake. At Cheat River in Virginia, Asbury slept in a crowded lodging “three thick” so he could preach his version of the gospel to a “mixed congregation of sinners, Presbyterians, [and] Baptists.” Methodists evangelized to people without regard for their religious identity or class status. By the early fall, Asbury had returned to the Chesapeake, where he was once again reminded of the social nature of the Methodist movement in two episodes. First, on October 14 Asbury encountered George a black Methodist sentenced to death for theft. George’s alleged crime occurred prior to his conversion to Methodism. A pietistic George earned a reprieve “under the gallows.” For Asbury, divine justice culminated when a merchant, who had cursed George for praying, died “in horror.” In Asbury’s construction, faith saved George while blasphemy had dammed the merchant of mercantilism. Planters did not escape Asbury righteous moral dictates against economic sinfulness, because he prayed to God to “pity the poor slaves...look down in mercy and take their cause in hand.” Methodists blamed profane economic values for the ultimate sacred destinies of George and the merchant. Unlike planter-

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<sup>70</sup> Asbury, *Journal of Francis Asbury*, 470-471.

driven Episcopal republicanism, Methodist republicanism attacked the corruption within both the plantation economy and mercantilism.<sup>71</sup>

Approximately three weeks later in Virginia, Asbury experienced his second epiphany regarding the social nature of religion in the late eighteenth century Chesapeake. Asbury reflected upon how the Presbyterians had arrived in Virginia some three decades prior in the waning days of the Great Awakening. Baptists had entered the region and caused a “stir among the people” in the midst of the American Revolution. For Asbury, Virginia appeared to be fertile ground for an alternative independent Methodism because he observed the “inhabitants are generally Episcopalians.” Asbury exhorted a growing separatist identity within American Methodism. Methodist separatists believed they could ignite a “great and glorious work” by appealing to the finest traditions of the Church of England while discarding its social impediments.<sup>72</sup> Asbury situated Methodism as the social repository for individuals apprehensive about the leveling Baptists and disdainful of the gentrified hegemony that defined the Church of England.

Just over a week later, Asbury attended a meeting of Methodist-affiliated preachers in Maryland. At the summit, clergymen agreed to call a general conference for “the design of organizing the Methodists into an Independent Episcopal Church.” Separatists sent an announcement to Virginia to mobilize other Methodists to join their revolutionary general conference for denominational independence. Over the next five weeks, Asbury prepared for the impending Methodist conference. Asbury persisted in ministering to both the “rich and poor.” Labors in the Chesapeake also animated Asbury to praise “the work of God among the coloured

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<sup>71</sup> Asbury, *Journal of Francis Asbury*, 482. In Sharpsburg, Asbury continued to connect with those relegated to the margins of society. “A poor Irish woman” who had earlier rejected Methodists summoned Asbury to pray with her during this preaching tour, thus reflecting his solidarity with people on the margins.

<sup>72</sup> Asbury, *Journal of Francis Asbury*, 483-484.

people.” For Asbury, preaching to the middling and lower classes in Chesapeake society represented the groundwork for whatever church emerged from the upcoming general conference.<sup>73</sup>

Methodists issued their declaration of religious independence from the established church at the Baltimore Conference in 1784. Early in the American Revolution, Methodist leaders had aspired for union and cooperation with the established church. Methodism’s progenitor John Wesley had implored his followers in North America to not separate, but instead reform the established church. Wesley and the established church miscalculated the potency of class-based resentment directed toward the Church of England in Virginia. As Methodist insurgents questioned slavery and went into the neighborhoods of poor whites across the Chesapeake they completed the “transformation” that had been underway since the Great Awakening. Non-gentry Virginians supported Methodist independence not because they disagreed with the Church of England on the nature of sacraments or salvation, but rather they yearned for a less hierarchal structure. Methodist independence corroborated the reality that denominational and class difference created divergent forms of republicanism in the South. After the American Revolution ended, Episcopalians in the United States gathered at their first General Convention and declared their own “ecclesiastical independence” from the British Empire as they organized the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1785. As Methodist independence emptied pews in established churches, it ironically guaranteed unquestioned planter dominance over the remnant Protestant Episcopal Church in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century South.<sup>74</sup> In the South, the American Revolution had displaced established congregations, demolished church

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<sup>73</sup> Asbury, *Journal of Francis Asbury*, 485. Asbury made two entries related to black Methodists on November 23 and 30. For a similar social class-driven interpretation of Southern Methodists, see Lyerly, *Methodism and the Southern Mind*, 73-93. Lyerly describes Methodists as a denomination “at odds with that of the southern gentry.” According to Lyerly, Methodists provided the poor with a “welcome change from Anglican practice.”

<sup>74</sup> Robert Pritchard, *A History of the Episcopal Church* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1999), 90-94.

buildings, and prompted a deleterious Methodist offensive. Outnumbered by evangelicals and seemingly destined for extinction, a beleaguered group of Episcopalians in the South would endure the transition, revive their religion, and thus ensure their church would become one the region's most influential institutions prior to the Civil War.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies, As Revised and Proposed to the Use of The Protestant Episcopal Church...* (Philadelphia: J. Derbett, 1789), xvi.

## **CODA: EPISCOPAL REPUBLICANISM AND GEORGE WASHINGTON**

As the planter of Mount Vernon and Pohick Church, George Washington personified the emergence of Episcopal republicanism in the southern colonies. Washington's service to Truro Parish evidenced both the early modern nature of the Church of England and the aspirations of the planter class for a premodern Episcopal republicanism. Washington has secured historical fame for a variety of his eighteenth century military and political accomplishments. Few historians, however, have elevated Washington's tenure as churchwarden and vestryman. Washington's role as both a "founding father" and the first president of the United States has resulted in the rapacious politicization of his faith in modern discussion. Some scholars, religious leaders, politicians, and media personalities find it a useful exercise to engage in a hyperbolic debate concerning whether or not the United States began as a "Christian nation." In the process, Washington's religious habits and words have become fodder for grandiose polemics. Washington accepted a plantation-centered Episcopal republicanism that must be understood, but not celebrated in nonsensical jingoism or summarily dismissed as irrelevant. Scholars estimate that from 1769 to 1773, Washington attended church services anywhere from seven to ten times per year. Church attendance, however, should not be seen as the most accurate

metric for religious piety. For Washington and countless other eighteenth century planters, patronization of the established church illustrated personal faith more so than perfect attendance on Sundays or even pious utterances. Mary V. Thompson's recent analysis of Washington's religious disposition appears accurate. Thompson contends in *"In The Hands of a Good Providence": Religion in the Life of George Washington* that Washington lived as a "liberal, Latitudinarian" in the Anglican Church—not a deist or a pietist. In the pre-American Revolution period examined here, Thompson unearthed a letter that described Washington as practitioner of the sacraments who "regularly took communion with his wife before taking command of the Continental Army." As Thompson convincingly asserts, too often historians have wrongly assessed Washington's religiosity by the more effusive oratory and emotional worship standards of evangelicalism, rather than the "formality" of the ritualistic devotions practiced in the Church of England. In describing the charitable endeavors of George and Martha Washington, Thompson acknowledges that such compassionate deeds "were probably expected from members of their social class," but she rightly adds that benevolence "may also have been a way of expressing religious beliefs through action." This coda will cast a narrow spotlight upon Washington's faithful actions in support of the Church of England prior to the American Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

Washington's service to Truro Parish coincided with his efforts to cement his place within Virginia's planter class. During the years following his marriage to Martha Custis in 1759, Washington dedicated himself to the revitalization of his Mount Vernon plantation. Washington's parish activism also corresponded with the interregnum between the French and Indian War and the American Revolution. Mount Vernon's acreage reached 4,715 in 1757 and

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<sup>1</sup> Upton, *Holy Things and Profane*, 188-189; Mary V. Thompson, *"In The Hands of A Good Providence": Religion in the Life of George Washington* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), 3-6, 21-22, 77-79, 94-96, 124-125.

had increased to 4,802 acres in 1760. From 1760 to 1770, the number of slaves Washington owned over the age of sixteen increased from forty-three to eighty-one. Mount Vernon's expansion permitted Washington to engage in large-scale tobacco production. Virginia planters considered the quality of their plantation's tobacco an insignia of social identity. In 1760, lands under Washington's control produced 147,357 pounds of tobacco. Washington unsuccessfully labored to develop a tobacco crop that could garner the favorable attention of transatlantic merchants. As Mount Vernon accumulated debts and a reputation for inferior tobacco among merchants, Washington continued to enlarge his plantation. In 1762, Washington purchased an additional 314 acres of land and new slaves valued at £ 415. In the 1760s, Washington's unquenchable desire to become a planter inspired him to contest the mythologies of mercantilism which taught that debt, inefficiencies, and unprofitable relations with merchants were harbingers of certain doom. Since Alexander Hamilton had not yet become the planter's economic conscience, Washington rejected the negative verdicts delivered against Mount Vernon by the marketplace. Virginia's plantation society operated upon the premise that the relentless acquisition of land and slaves— not profitability— granted one entry into the planter class. For aspiring planters, the anxiety ridden pursuit of land, slaves, and successful tobacco necessitated religious nourishment. Washington realized he needed a piece of holy property in the form of a pew to enlist the support of the established church in Mount Vernon's configuration. As biographer Douglas Southall Freeman observes, "during those difficult years of the struggle to make Mount Vernon a profitable tobacco plantation, Washington had been drawn closer to the church." Washington's election to the Truro Parish Vestry provided him with the religious resources necessary for the cultivation of his planter class identity.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> "The Papers of George Washington" website sponsored by the University of Virginia. <http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/maps/mtvernon/growth.html> Date accessed February 6, 2011; Douglas Southall



On October 25, 1762, George Washington replaced William Peake as a member of the Truro Parish Vestry. From that moment until the American Revolution, George Washington's career in church governance alternated between the positions of vestryman and churchwarden. Subsequent to Washington's election, the Truro Parish Vestry confronted a decision concerning the dilapidated Falls Church. Following a discussion about repairing the building, the vestry agreed to construct a new church. Virginia's decision to realign parish boundaries nullified the parish's efforts. In 1764, the House of Burgesses used Washington's plantation to redraw Truro Parish's boundaries. Truro Parish and the newly created Fairfax Parish would henceforth be divided by the Doeg Creek "to Mr. George Washington's mill, and from thence by a straight line, to the plantation of John Munroe." The House of Burgesses' reorganization of parish boundaries once again left Truro Parish bereft of a church building. Like other southern vestries, Truro Parish prided itself on providing worship opportunities for its parishioners. As a temporary solution, the Truro Parish Vestry negotiated with Samuel Littlejohn to use the "tobacco house" on his plantation for divine services. Littlejohn pledged to keep the tobacco house clean and to "provide water" for the congregation.<sup>3</sup> Tobacco house churches and plantation derived parish boundaries defined the sacred landscape of Washington's Virginia.<sup>4</sup>

Plank benches in a tobacco house could not properly communicate the social order for Truro Parish. In February 1766, the Truro Parish Vestry decided to erect a new church "on the middle Ridge near the Ox Road." Washington had two essential responsibilities in the

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Freeman, *George Washington: A Biography Volume Three: Planter and Patriot* (New York: Charles Scriber's Sons, 1951), 39, 46-51, 76-77, 87, 90. According to T. H. Breen, Washington like other Virginia planters "negotiated social identity in part through the crop that so occupied their time." Tobacco provided Virginia planters with a language "to locate themselves in a web of human relations." See Breen, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), xiii, 22.

<sup>3</sup> Truro Parish (Fairfax County, VA.), Vestry minutes, October 25, 1762, Accession 27586, Church records collection, LV. See also Rev. Philip Slaughter, *The History of Truro Parish in Virginia* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Company, 1908), 34-36.

<sup>4</sup> *The Statutes at Large Being A Collection of all the Laws of Virginia, From the First Session of the Legislature in the year 1619*, ed. William Waller Hening (Richmond: J & G Cochran Printers, 1821), 8: 202-203.

construction of the church. First, to ensure the parish treasury had sufficient resources the vestry commanded Washington and fellow churchwarden George William Fairfax to sell 31,549 pounds of tobacco “to the highest bidder, before the Court House door.” Second, the vestry appointed George Washington to serve on a rotating inspection committee of three members to “examine the said building from time to time as shall be required.” In addition, the Truro Parish Vestry authored a “Memorandum of an Agreement” with builder Edward Payne regarding the minute, yet noteworthy details of the architectural design for the new church. Truro Parish’s proposed church would be fifty-three feet six inches in length and thirty feet in width. Washington’s vestry desired that Payne erect walls three inches thick with bricks laid by a half-lime and half-sand mortar. Pine plank was to be used for two inch thick doors and floors of a similar thickness. Truro Parish requested that Payne construct a gallery “a size and proper Proportion to the Building” using oak and poplar. Columns that extended to the second window on the west side of the church would support the proposed gallery.<sup>5</sup>

Washington’s vestry took care to ensure that Payne designed the appropriate worship environment inside the church. The Truro Parish Vestry desired an altar sixteen feet high and twelve feet wide. Parishioners would take communion on a floor raised twelve inches above the remainder of the building. Furthermore, vestrymen in Truro Parish selected black walnut as the material for the pulpit, canopy, reading desks, and communion banisters. Truro Parish’s meticulousness in designing the interior of the church reflected an abiding commitment to the liturgy and worship of the Church of England. Vestrymen financed the project in November 1766 by appropriating an additional 35,000 pounds of tobacco for the church’s construction.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Truro Parish (Fairfax County, VA.), Vestry minutes, February 3-4, 1766, Accession 27586, Church records collection, LV. See also Slaughter, *The History of Truro Parish*, 50-54.

<sup>6</sup> Truro Parish (Fairfax County, VA.), Vestry minutes, February 4, 1766, Accession 27586, Church records collection, LV.

Vestryman Washington participated in clergy job searches in addition to supervising church building projects. In 1766, Lee Massey “an inhabitant” of Truro Parish approached the vestry and offered to serve as minister. Upon examination, the Truro Parish Vestry informed Massey that it arrived at:

the opinion he is a Parson well qualified for the Sacred Function, have agreed to recommend him to the Favour of his Grace the Bishop of London & the Governor of this Colony for an introduction to this said Parish...

The Truro Parish Vestry further ordered that copies of their recommendations be dispatched to the Bishop of London and Governor of Virginia. Due to the clergy employment process codified in Virginia law, the Truro Parish Vestry sent a letter to Lieutenant Governor Francis Fauquier. Washington and his colleagues desired the support of Fauquier should the vestry need the support of the colony’s executive under existing legal precedent such as section seven of “An Act for the support of Clergy...” adopted in 1748.<sup>7</sup> Washington’s involvement in the employment proceedings of Lee Massey revealed his awareness of the Church of England’s early modern imperial structure in Virginia. Absent a bishop, Vestryman Washington navigated the imperial bureaucratic process for clergy recruitment that spanned the empire from the See of London to the political chambers of Williamsburg.

Late in 1766, the House of Burgesses passed “An Act to impower [sic] the vestry of Truro in the county of Fairfax, to sell their glebe...” Virginia’s government adopted the legislation to remedy outstanding issues from their prior parish reorganization of Cameron and Truro parishes. Truro Parish desired to use their portion of the proceeds to purchase “a more

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<sup>7</sup> Truro Parish (Fairfax County, VA.), Vestry minutes, February 3-4, 1766, Accession 27586, Church records collection, LV; Truro Parish Vestry to Francis Fauquier, 4 February 1766, *The Papers of George Washington Colonial Series 7, January 1761-June 1767* ed. W.W. Abbot and Dorothy Twohig. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 428-429; *The Statutes at Large Being A Collection of all the Laws of Virginia, From the First Session of the Legislature in the year 1619*, ed. William Waller Hening (Richmond: J & G Cochran Printers, 1819), 6: 88-90.

convenient glebe” within their parish’s new boundaries. At their meeting in February 1767, the Truro Parish Vestry read aloud the text of the legislation. Following the reading, the Truro Parish Vestry directed Churchwardens George Washington and William Gardner to hire a surveyor to plot the glebe and then advertise the property in local newspapers. Churchwarden Washington executed the vestry’s commands.

Following Washington’s glebe land transactions, the Truro Parish Vestry approved the construction of a second church.<sup>8</sup> The Truro Parish Vestry debated the exact location before voting 7-5 to ensconce the church on the crossroads “from Hollis’s to Pohic [sic] warehouse.” Washington’s Mount Vernon plantation would be conveniently situated near the new Pohick Church. Bishop William Meade later shared a possibly apocryphal account regarding a debate between George Mason and George Washington regarding the Pohick Church site. According to Meade, George Mason preferred to build the new Pohick Church on an older church lot at a greater distance from Mount Vernon. Washington opposed Mason’s recommendation and persuaded the vestry to construct the new church nearer to his Mount Vernon residency.<sup>9</sup>

In September 1769, the Truro Parish Vestry ratified the design for the proposed Pohick Church. Truro Parish, once again, elected Washington to serve on a select building committee. Washington, thus, played a leading role in the construction of the Pohick Church. The Truro Parish Vestry envisioned a more extravagant church, than the Payne Church as they prescribed a brick structure sixty feet in width and forty-five feet in length. Pohick Church’s pulpit, canopy, and reading desks were to be constructed of pine and wainscoted. For worship, parishioners

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<sup>8</sup> *The Statutes at Large Being A Collection of all the Laws of Virginia, From the First Session of the Legislature in the year 1619*, ed. William Waller Hening (Richmond: J & G Cochran Printers, 1821), 8: 202-203. The advertisement for the Truro Parish glebe lands listed George Washington as a churchwarden. See *Virginia Gazette*, Purdie and Dixon, March 19, 1763.

<sup>9</sup> Bishop William Meade, *Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia: Volume II* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1857), 227-228.

requested an altar with a height of twenty feet and a width of fifteen feet. Vestrymen desired the “Communion Place” be raised twenty inches higher than the flooring in the remainder of the church. Truro Parish desired a black walnut frame for Pohick Church’s Communion Table. Unlike Payne’s Church, the Truro Parish Vestry added a theological accent to the chancel of Pohick Church: “The Apostles Creed, the Lords Prayer, and the ten Commandments [sic] to be neatly painted on the Altar-piece in black letters.” Vestryman Washington and his planter colleagues conformed to the venerable religious culture of the Church of England.<sup>10</sup>

In 1772 as construction neared completion, the Truro Parish Vestry accelerated their preparations for worship in the Pohick Church. Vestrymen mapped out the pew geography within their new sanctuary. Washington purchased pew number twenty-eight at a price of £16 in November 1772. Figure 1.1 shows Washington’s pew real estate resided near the Communion Table. Washington’s purchase had both social and religious meaning. Eighteenth century Virginia determined social class identity through the core properties of land, slaves, and pews. Pew ownership helped a planter-vestryman, like Washington, solidify his status within the colony’s gentry. Washington made a conscious decision to purchase one of the most expensive pews in the Pohick Church not simply for social currency. Pews ranged in value depending on their liturgical location. The Truro Parish Vestry had emplaced pew twenty-eight next to the Communion Table and some distance from the pulpit. Washington must have valued the sight of his religion’s ancient sacramental rituals. Under the pew property system, Washington’s family claimed a front row seat to the core of the Church of England’s distinctive theological uniqueness: the sacrament of Holy Communion.<sup>11</sup> In February 1774, the Truro Vestry revised the church’s pew seating arrangement, to accommodate a fluctuating social geography.

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<sup>10</sup> Truro Parish (Fairfax County, VA.), Vestry minutes, April 7, 1769, Accession 27586, Church records collection, LV; Upton, *Holy Things and Profane*, 120-133.

<sup>11</sup> Slaughter, *The History of Truro Parish*, 80-83.

Vestrymen allotted the upper pew adjoining the south wall of the church for the magistrate and strangers. The pew directly opposite the upper pew would be used for the wives of the magistrate and visitors. The next two pews behind the upper pew would be reserved for “vestryman and merchants” and of course their wives would be seated opposite “in like manner” to the magistrate and visitors. The Truro Parish Vestry then appropriated the next eight pews adjoining the cross isle for the “the most respectable Inhabitants.” Washington clearly understood and accepted the socio-liturgical hierarchy of his church’s pew property system.<sup>12</sup>

Vestryman Washington had to ensure that hired clergy had the necessary resources to practice the established faith. In 1774, the Truro Parish Vestry ordered the purchase of a pulpit cushion and liturgical red velvet cloths for the door and the Communion Table. In addition, the vestry approved the acquisition of two “Folio Prayer Books” with a blue leather cover bearing the parish’s name in gold. The Truro Parish Vestry charged George Washington with the mission of acquiring the instruments of the established faith. Attention to the appearance of the church’s pulpit, prayer book, and Communion Table illuminated Truro Parish’s abiding commitment to the liturgical worship of the established faith.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Truro Parish (Fairfax County, VA.), Vestry minutes, February 24, 1774, Accession 27586, Church records collection, LV; Upton, *Holy Things and Profane*, 180-183, 226-277.

<sup>13</sup> Truro Parish (Fairfax County, VA.), Vestry minutes, February 24, 1774, Accession 27586, Church records collection, LV.

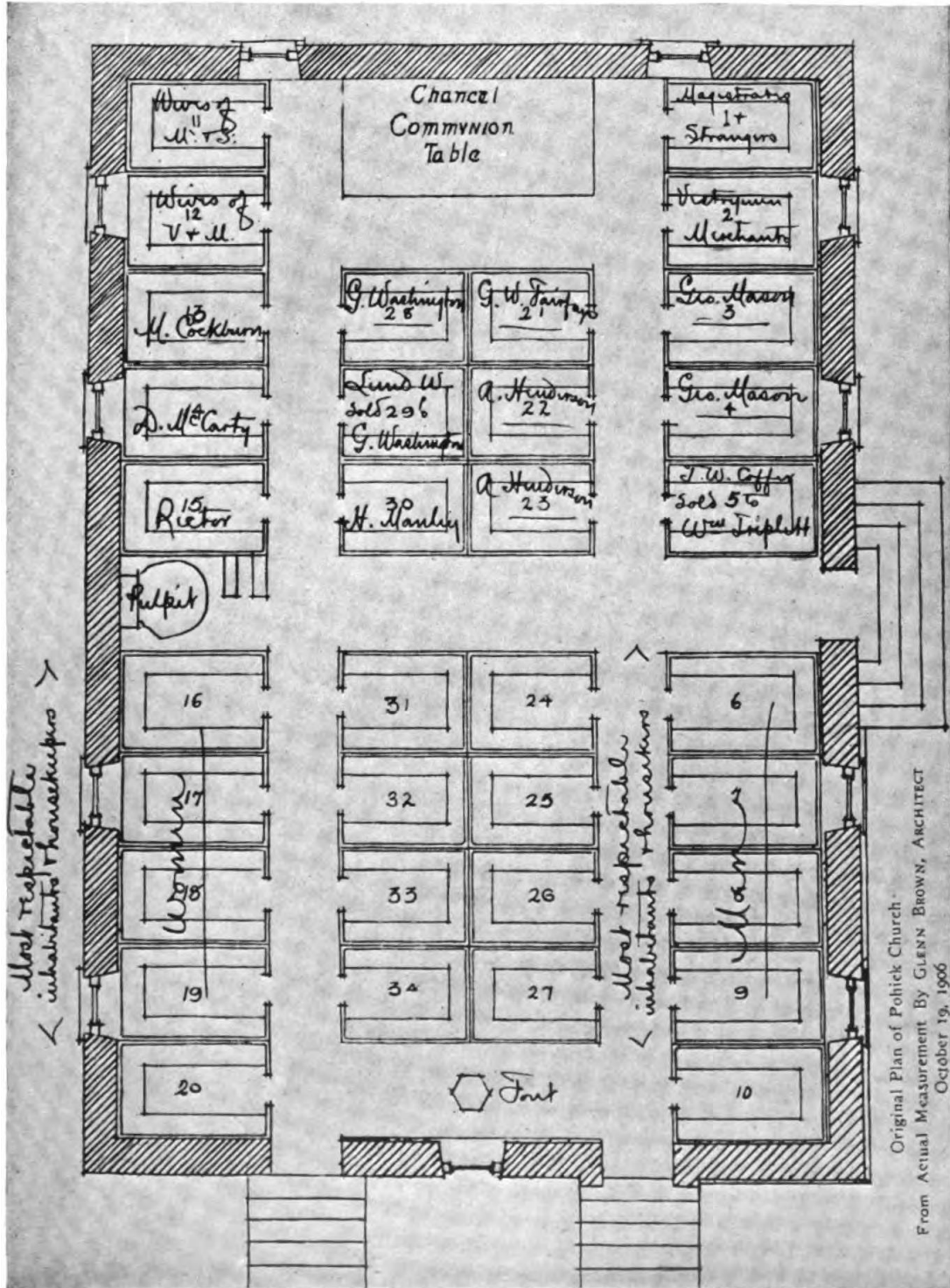


Figure 1.1: Pew Property at Pohick Church  
 Source: Mary Newton Standard, *Colonial Virginia Its People and Customs*  
 (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1917).

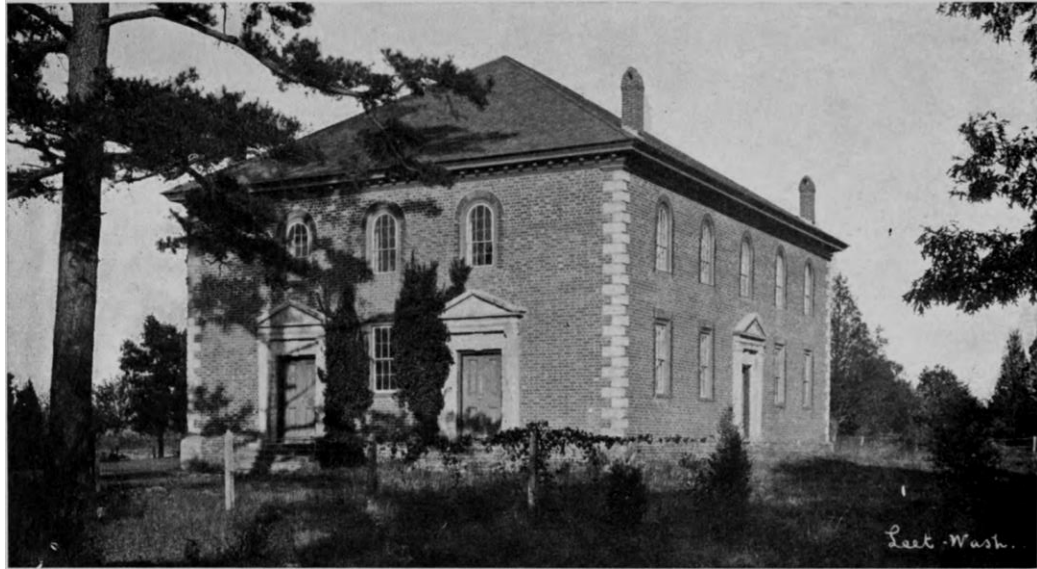


Figure 1.2: Pohick Church (Top) and Christ Church (Bottom) in Alexandria, Virginia

Sources: Reverend Philip Slaughter, *The History of Truro Parish in Virginia* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Co., 1908); Bishop William Meade, *Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia Volume II* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1857).



Hallowed words emanated from Truro Parish's prayer books, Communion Table, and pulpit. For Washington, the Church of England sequenced those pious words into a compelling religious message that inspired the planter-vestryman and his family. Martha Washington's sister Patsy Custis died on June 19, 1773. In mourning, George and Martha Washington turned to the Church of England for worship and prayers. During the eighteenth century, the colony of Virginia regulated the cost of the Church of England's funeral services. An earlier law stipulated that ministers should be entitled to forty shillings in funeral sermon fees. Washington paid Reverend Lee Massey £2.6s.3d for the funeral services of Patsy Custis, ensuring the rector would solemnly conduct the Church of England's order of service for the burial of the dead. A series of poignant clerical and collect prayers concluded the burial service outlined in *The Book of Common Prayer*:

Priest.

Almighty God... We give thee hearty thanks, for that it has pleased thee to deliver our [sister] out of the miseries of this sinful world; beseech thee...that we with all those that are departed in the true faith of thy holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul, in they eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *Amen*.

The Collect

O Merciful God... We meekly beseech thee O Father to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him as our hope is this our [sister] doth...*Amen*.

The Church of England provided the southern gentry with comfort as its rituals transformed death into the promise of eternal life. Following the service, Massey stayed overnight with his parishioners George and Martha Washington in their time of bereavement. Patsy Custis's funeral exhibited that Washington owned a pew not just to bolster his position within the planter class. Maybe Washington did not attend divine service every Sunday, but he still needed religion. Social and economic hegemony could not eradicate the human frailties of the southern

gentry. Planter-vestrymen solicited a religion capable of providing a sense of liturgical order to events beyond their control and comfort in moments of emotional apprehension. For Washington, church pews proved a worthy investment because ownership simultaneously solidified his social class, while guaranteeing the proprietor unfettered access to the mysterious realm of the sacred.<sup>14</sup>

Prior to the American Revolution, George Washington also participated in the affairs of adjacent Fairfax Parish. The House of Burgesses had divided Washington's Mount Vernon plantation among both parishes. In 1767, the Fairfax Parish Vestry authorized James Parsons to replace the old church in Alexandria. To fund the project, the vestry granted Parsons ten pews, which he could sell to subscribing residents of the parish. Washington joined a group of subscribers dedicated to financing an extension of the proposed building. Washington purchased pew number five for £36.10. In 1772 it became evident that Parsons would be unable to complete the religious edifice. The Fairfax Parish Vestry proposed to reclaim the ten pews allotted to Parsons in order to subsidize the completion of the unfinished church building. Subscriber George Washington demonstrated his commitment to the established church's pew system in a February 1773 letter to John Dalton regarding Fairfax Parish's plan that appeared to threaten property rights. Washington denounced the idea that a vestry had "the right of reclaiming the Pews." Washington opposed the pew reclamation scheme for at least four reasons. First, the Fairfax Parish Vestry failed to take into account that pew holders had not

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<sup>14</sup> George Washington to Burwell Bassett, 20 June 1773 in *The Papers of George Washington Colonial Series 10, March 1774-June 1775* ed. W.W. Abbot and Dorothy Twohig. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 243-244; Cash Accounts in *The Papers of George Washington Colonial Series 10, March 1774-June 1775* ed. W.W. Abbot and Dorothy Twohig. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 237; George Washington, *The Diaries of George Washington Volume III: 1771-1775, 1780-1781* ed. Donald Jackson and Dorothy Twohig (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), 188; *The Statutes at Large Being A Collection of all the Laws of Virginia, From the First Session of the Legislature in the year 1619*, ed. William Waller Hening (Richmond: J & G Cochran Printers, 1819), 6: 84; *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacrament...* (Cambridge: John Bakersfield, 1762). The gendered and italicized word *brother* from the original has been replaced with the more appropriate *sister* in the quoted prayers.

simply expended their yearly subscription money, but many of the pews in question had “been Built by Private contribution.” Second, Washington underscored how the pew system allowed the church to endorse patriarchal family structures. Washington bemoaned to Dalton how the reclamation proposal undermined the church’s role in conjoining faith and family. Washington wrote that since he “meant to lay the foundation of a Family Pew in the New Church I shall think myself Injured.” For Washington and other planters, pews contained indispensable social and religious meaning. In Washington’s view the vestry’s proposal threatened whether a pew-holding subscriber “Assembles his whole Family into one Pew or...have them dispers’d into two or three.” Third, contemporaneous political events conspired to make a supplementary levy on pew holders obnoxious to Washington. “I am equally averse to a Tax,” Washington expressed to Dalton. As a transatlantic debate raged over the nexus between taxation and representation, Washington pondered what might happen should the initial levy be deemed insufficient to complete the construction or cover future expansions. Could a future vestry “bear a fresh Tax” and the ensuing outcry from parishioners? Fourth, Washington’s opposition rested on the sanctity of social class. The Fairfax Parish Vestry had extended the “privileges” of social class in the form of a pew. Washington’s passionate craving for a family pew originated both from his class aspirations and desire that his family have guaranteed access to the Church of England’s means of grace provided through the sacraments. The Fairfax Parish Vestry proceeded with its reclamation scheme despite the pew holder hostility. Although Washington remained disappointed with Fairfax Parish Vestry’s decision, he still purchased pew number four in the remodeled Christ Church.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Washington, *The Diaries of George Washington Volume III*, 152; George Washington to John Dalton, 15 February 1773 in *The Papers of George Washington: Colonial Series January 1772-March 1774* ed. W. W. Abbot and Dorothy Twohig. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 180-183.

Tea politics radicalized Washington and compelled him to join the chorus of Episcopal republicanism in 1774. Like other planter-vestrymen, Washington utilized his parish connections to enable political mobilization. A meeting of the freeholders and inhabitants of Fairfax County gathered at the courthouse in Alexandria on July 18. Washington not only attended, but chaired the day's proceedings. Washington's two rectors Reverend Lee Massey (Truro Parish) and Reverend Townshend Dade Jr. (Fairfax Parish) participated in the conclave too. Fairfax County politics had brought together clergy and planter-vestrymen in a vivid expression of Episcopal republicanism's parish solidarity. The Washington-led assemblage embraced the colonial plan for non-exportation as the county planters in attendance agreed "to not plant or cultivate any tobacco." Given their inclination to cease the shipment of tobacco exports across the Atlantic, Fairfax County freeholders temporarily absolved debtors of their repayment obligations to creditors. As Bruce Ragsdale contends, the Fairfax County resolves envisioned "an integrated economy in which merchants, manufacturers, and skilled free laborers supported the dominant agricultural interests of the planter gentry." Fairfax County planters had declared economic independence from creditors and mercantilism, before seeking political independence. In the southern colonies, plantations and parishes incubated a regionalized "contagion of liberty." Prior to adjournment, the meeting elected Washington, Dade, and Massey to a county committee that could call "special meetings" to address unforeseen contingencies that might arise as the relationship between the British Empire and the American colonies deteriorated. Following the Fairfax County concourse, churches provided a social network for Episcopal republicanism. Washington encouraged Reverend Townshend Dade Jr. to announce emergency or scheduled county meetings in both Fairfax Parish churches. Washington requested Reverend Lee Massey do the same inside Truro Parish churches. A transatlantic tea crisis

prompted Washington and his two rectors to coalesce around a regional Episcopal republicanism that defined independence through a plantation economy and Christian theology.<sup>16</sup>

Decisions of the Second Continental Congress in 1775-1776 terminated George Washington's parish-level activism as the United States beckoned him to assume national offices. Nevertheless, the Episcopal republicanism nurtured in Truro Parish and Fairfax Parish guided Washington as he traversed the continent during his extensive military and political career. In the decade after the American Revolution, the frequency of services at the Pohick Church declined. As one parish historian suggested, the "leading men" associated with Pohick Church could not sustain their church community so affiliated with the "old regime" against "popular odium." Pew number four in Alexandria's Christ Church guaranteed Washington maintained his Episcopal identity until his death (see Figure 1.2).<sup>17</sup> Fourteen years after Washington had married Martha Custis, Mount Vernon had grown to encompass 119 slaves over the age of sixteen and land holdings in excess of 6,500 acres. In the five years preceding the convening of the Second Continental Congress in 1775, the number of slaves owned by Washington had doubled.<sup>18</sup> Land and slaves should not be minimized in the cultivation of planter class identity, but Washington also necessitated established church pews. At a critical time as he labored to secure his membership in the planter class, George Washington incorporated pews

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<sup>16</sup> *The Virginia Gazette*, Rind, August 4, 1774; George Washington to Reverend Townshend Dade, Jr. 19 November 1774, *The Papers of George Washington: Colonial Series March 1774-June 1775* ed. W.W. Abbott and Dorothy Twohig (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 10: 187-188; Ragsdale, *A Planters' Republic*, 195. Woody Holton provides a compelling interpretation that differs from this dissertation. Holton acknowledges the economic motivation of the planters involved in the non-exportation movement, but suggests they desired to raise tobacco prices and thus embraced the market values of mercantile capitalism. See Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves & the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 106-129. For the contagion of liberty in the South, see Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, 236.

<sup>17</sup> Slaughter, *The History of Truro Parish*, 91-96.

<sup>18</sup> Robert E. Dalzell, Jr. and Lee Baldwin Dalzell, *George Washington's Mount Vernon: At Home in Revolutionary America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 130-131. According to Dalzell and Dalzell, Washington owned or rented 317 slaves at Mount Vernon when he died in 1799. Fritz Hirschfeld, *George Washington and Slavery: A Documentary Portrayal* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 12-16.

into an ever-expanding inventory of plantation properties. For Washington and numerous other planter-vestrymen, the Church of England provided a social space to both manufacture a planter community and receive theological edification. Washington's military efforts in the American Revolution supported independence for the United States, Mount Vernon, and the Episcopal Church. Republicanism, a tobacco plantation, and Episcopal pews—the three pillars of George Washington— motivated him to engage in the American Revolution. Or to borrow the allegorical language of Reverend John Lewis: Washington elected to defend his three vineyards from an eighteenth-century reincarnation of King Ahab. By doing so, the vestryman emeritus bequeathed a distinctive inheritance of Episcopal republicanism to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century South.

## CHAPTER 2: THE COTTON COMMUNION

...the Rector is cheered with the hope that a day of better things is dawning on our Zion.  
- Parochial Report 1829, Bedford County, Virginia

A clergyman of the Episcopal Church, of very frank and engaging manners, said in my presence that he had been striving for seven years to gain the confidence of the small number of Africans belonging to his congregation...A planter present, a member of his church, immediately observed that these were dangerous views, and advised him to be cautious in the expression of them.  
- Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, 1859

In 1817, Reverend John S. Ravenscroft turned to the Hebrew prophet Haggai to contextualize the hopelessness that defined the state of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Mecklenburg County, Virginia. Ravenscroft used Haggai 2:3 as the basis for a sermon that asked Episcopalians in attendance at Speed's Church to reflect upon the "first glory" of their church and its subsequent decline. Speed's Church, like so many church buildings in the South affiliated with the Protestant Episcopal Church, had assumed a "forlorn, neglected, and forsaken appearance." Ravenscroft construed Episcopalians in Virginia as an analogous community to the "Jewish Nation" to whom Haggai had prophesied. According to Ravenscroft, Haggai addressed his remarks to the "Jewish Nation" within the context of the Babylonian Captivity. In the three decades following the American Revolution, Ravenscroft suggested that Episcopalians in the

South had endured a captivity-like experience of decline and abandonment. Episcopalians as a chosen people had suffered “the righteous judgment of God because of the depravity of both Priests and People.” Due to the “state of corrupt departure from the spirit of the Gospel, which prevailed against [the church] about the time of our revolution,” Ravenscroft argued, God became understandably “angry with his people” in Virginia. The ancient words of Haggai spoke once more to a defeated and demoralized community of faith as they passed through the lips of Reverend Ravenscroft.<sup>1</sup>

Episcopalians had read the Bible and understood that following the pains of captivity a chosen people could expect deliverance, restoration, and renewal. Haggai’s prophetic words regarding the revivification of God’s “house” originally referenced the sacred Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Reverend Ravenscroft pleaded with Episcopalians in Virginia to see their parish churches as temples of a chosen people. Ravenscroft assured the congregation at Speed’s Church that since it had been “Chastised in adversity, and purified through sufferings,” the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia would overcome its “depressed condition.” Unlike the South’s thriving evangelical denominations, Ravenscroft suggested that Episcopalians had something “tangible” and unique to offer the world each Sunday due to their liturgical calendar. Episcopal parishes worshiped a living Christ, Ravenscroft proclaimed, because “his life from the Manger to the Cross, from the Cross to his Resurrection and Ascension, are interwoven with the Worship of the year...each Sabbath, presents us with something actual and real.” To conclude his sermon, Ravenscroft reminded Episcopalians in Mecklenburg County that their post-Revolution captivity had ended and even their dilapidated “building” could become once again a

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<sup>1</sup> Reverend John S. Ravenscroft, *Sermon...To the Congregation Assembled at Speed’s Church...On the Occasion of Carrying Among Them After a Long Interval THE SERVICE of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (Fredericksburg: William F. Gray, 1817), 3-6.



“Holy Temple in the Lord” simply by fulfilling the command of the “Glorious Head” to preach “the Gospel to every creature.”<sup>2</sup>

As he labored in the decaying Diocese of Virginia, Reverend Ravenscroft utilized structural metaphors centered upon the imagery of buildings and temples to expound upon the hope of future glory for the Episcopal Church. Clergymen and lay leaders of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the South understood that any sustained renewal required structures: both institutional and social. This chapter begins with an exploration of how republicanism shaped the creation of a denominational structure for the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States in the decades following the American Revolution. As Episcopalians hemorrhaged membership, republicanism proved to be bureaucratic and inefficient in responding to an unfolding crisis. Lackluster church governance from 1785 to 1820, along with economic uncertainty propelled the Episcopal Church in Virginia and South Carolina into a nadir. Starting in the 1820s, an expanding planter class in the throes of a cotton revolution altered the South's religious destiny. Resurgent Episcopal planters, flush with slave-produced cotton fortunes, had new financial resources to support their church's expansion. For many Episcopalians in the South it became obvious in the forty years prior to the Civil War, that cotton had a sacred power in that it enabled the contemporary fulfillment of Haggai's prophecy by restoring the “glory” to God's holy temples.

### **Government and Episcopal Republicanism**

Republicanism persisted after the American Revolution and induced the structure of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the late eighteenth century through the creation of constitutional church government, legal disestablishment, and the election of republican bishops. In 1785 at

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<sup>2</sup> Ravenscroft, *Sermon...To the Congregation Assembled at Speed's Church*, 5-6, 14-15.

the church's General Convention, Episcopalians declared their "ecclesiastical independence" from the Church of England. The General Convention of 1785 accomplished three crucial functions for the new church. First, deputies approved sundry "alterations in the Liturgy to make it consistent with the American Revolution and Constitutions of the respective States." Second, deputies composed a letter to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York along with other bishops within the Church of England. Episcopalians in the United States requested the assistance of the Church of England's bishops to preserve apostolic succession in their consecration and ordinations. Third, deputies drafted "A General Ecclesiastical Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church" consisting of eleven articles. The General Convention approved a final version of the constitution with nine articles in 1789.<sup>3</sup>

Akin to the Constitution of the United States, the Episcopal Church's constitution vested power in an elected and bicameral legislative branch consisting of a House of Deputies and a House of Bishops. The General Convention would hold triennial meetings, but could be called into special session if needed to address a pressing concern or an emergency. Bishop James H. Otey of Tennessee argued that the Episcopal Church's government "conforms more nearly to the civil government than any religious denomination in the country." Bishop Otey told Episcopalians that the "cardinal principle of representation prevails through our whole system." Republicanism, it seemed, had served as the catalyst for the constitutional governance of both the United States and the Protestant Episcopal Church.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies as Revised and Proposed to the Use of the Protestant Episcopal Church...* (Philadelphia: J. Debrett, 1785), xvi; *Journals of General Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the United States, 1785-1835* ed. William Stevens Perry, Vol. 1 (Claremont, NH: The Claremont Manufacturing Company, 1874), 21-23, 83-85; Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1778* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 47-93; Robert Pritchard, *A History of the Episcopal Church* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1999), 94-97.

<sup>4</sup> James Hervey Otey, *Trust in God, The Foundation of The Christian Minister's Success: A Sermon* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1850), 37, MDAH.

Rectors in the South occasionally delivered sermons to their congregations defending the apostolic and republican nature of their church's government. For example, Reverend Edward Thomas delivered a series of sermons in South Carolina on the "subject of church government" in the late 1820s. According to Thomas, Episcopalians only needed to consider Timothy who "was appointed Bishop of Ephesus." For Thomas, a careful reading of the epistles to Timothy demonstrated that St. Paul had made clear that the Bishop of Ephesus had exclusive powers to ordain new clergy, enforce discipline, and uphold orthodoxy. In addition, Edwards cited Titus 1:5 to assure South Carolinians that the Protestant Episcopal Church had "organized its ministry according to the model of Scripture & primitive truth." For Edwards and most Episcopalians in the South, the Bible sanctioned "the primitive character of [Episcopal] church government, & the Apostolic derivation of those duties which are exercised by [Episcopal] Bishops." Like Southerners who advocated Episcopal republicanism prior to the American Revolution, Thomas argued that apostolic bishops complemented republicanism in creating a premodern system of church government. Thomas approvingly summarized an argument for Episcopal republicanism that he had heard articulated by a layman. Even into the 1820s, Episcopalians in the South remained sensitive to evangelical charges that their church remained "monarchical in its principles" and "dangerous to liberty." Thomas summarized in his sermon the republican nature of both the United States and the Protestant Episcopal Church:

Episcopalians...are proud of the analogy which plainly exists between the structure of their ecclesiastical government, & the civil government of the United States...The operations of each are regulated by a written constitution... Each state or Diocese is vested with independent and sovereign powers. ...The sources whence the acts of legislation in the Ecclesiastical (as in the civil) constitutions, derive their obligatory force is from the consent of the governed expressed through their representatives. Representation, therefore, is also the foundation of such governance...

In addition, Southerners undoubtedly appreciated Thomas's coextensive understanding of church and civil federalism, whereby constitutional principles limited the General Convention and granted diocesan state conventions extensive sovereignty. Thomas concluded his sermon with an explicit affirmation of Episcopal republicanism: "Thus, the legislative power of the Episcopal Church is distinctly placed upon the true republican principles of equal representation." Thomas and other Episcopalians in the South affirmed Episcopal republicanism as a synchronized theological and political defense against attacks upon their church. For Episcopalians in the South, after the American Revolution the hybrid ideology of Episcopal republicanism allowed them to be simultaneously decedents of Christ's apostles and patriotic Americans.<sup>5</sup>

Republicanism had also ensured that the General Convention's bicameral structure mimicked the United States Congress. The House of Deputies became analogous to the United States House of Representatives, while the House of Bishops clearly correlated with the United States Senate. In the debate over the Constitution of the United States, many Americans had attacked the Senate as an aristocratic assembly with legislative powers contrary to the values of republicanism. Proponents of Episcopal republicanism in the South expressed similar concerns regarding the House of Bishops. Reverend Henry Purcell of South Carolina impelled the republican assault upon the prerogatives of the House of Bishops. Purcell appealed to Episcopal republicanism's premodern disposition as he pointed "to the records of antiquity" to protest the proposed powers granted to bishops in the Protestant Episcopal Church. Similar to the secular political critique of the United States Senate, Purcell warned that under Article III of the Episcopal Church's constitution, the House of Bishops risked becoming an aristocratic bastion.

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<sup>5</sup> Edward Thomas, Untitled Sermon Begins with Titus 1:5, 5 October 1827, Thomas Family Papers, Accession 5183, SCL.

Bishops should not be allowed, Purcell advised, to veto the decisions of the more democratic House of Deputies. Purcell averred:

For our bishops, then, assembled in convention to arrogate to themselves the power of an *absolute negative*, and to require others to submit to their determinations, as rules of faith or practice...without first making it plain to our understandings, that things are agreeable to ancient usage...without the laity and clergy being present in consultation...is really making themselves *lords of faith*, and exercising a dominion which the apostles of our blessed Lord never exercised.

Episcopal republicanism in the South incited agonizing over the concentration of power in a House of Bishops, where the laity and clergy lacked adequate representation. Opponents of the United States Senate and House of Bishops both conjured in American minds the negative imagery of the British House of Lords to build opposition to aggrandized legislative bodies. Bishops in England, Purcell asserted, “sit as barons in the house of lords” and thus had become “detached from the general mass of ecclesiastical representatives.” Episcopal republicans hoped that Christians in the United States would hold the British model of the episcopacy in “abhorrence.” For Purcell, republican bishops should not function as “lords of faith,” but rather had to operate as democratic representatives of the Protestant Episcopal Church’s membership.<sup>6</sup>

Purcell’s Episcopal republicanism reflected the South’s concern regarding the potential of bishops countermanding planter-vestrymen control over parish decisions. Purcell argued that congregations had the “liberty of making their election” of rectors who they would then present to bishops as candidates to “obtain the gift of office.” Bishops who refused the choice of a parish failed to adhere to “apostolic usage” and exemplified a non-republican “*lust of power*.”

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<sup>6</sup> Henry Purcell, *Strictures on the Love of Power in the Prelacy; Particularly in a late claim of a complete Veto, on all the Proceedings of the Clergy and Laity in legal Convention Assembled* (Charleston: W.P. Young, 1795), 23-25; Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic*, 224-225, 563. For a similar discussion of the connections between the republicanism and the early formation of the Protestant Episcopal Church, see Nancy L. Rhoden, *Revolutionary Anglicanism: The Colonial Church of England Clergy during the American Revolution* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 136-143.

For Purcell, since Americans enjoyed the “liberty of choosing” physicians and lawyers for secular matters, he argued parishes should enjoy the choice of minister since the position presided over “the all important affairs of our souls.” Episcopal republicanism envisioned apostolic bishops as “servants” of the church. Proponents of Episcopal republicanism feared the Protestant Episcopal Church risked the creation of “so strange a metamorphous” whereby servant bishops could become masters over the laity. According to Episcopal republicanism, the Bible and writings of the church fathers described bishops and presbyters as “one and the same thing.” Purcell concluded rather than a system of hierarchy, apostolic bishops and the clergy existed in a “state of equality, brotherly love, and humility.” Radical Episcopal republicans hoped to return to the ancient and apostolic mode of episcopacy, which had been polluted by worldly values, biblical misinterpretation, and temporal politics. Rather than “preach up...divine prerogatives and powers,” Purcell encouraged bishops to “let apostolic meekness, humility and a simplicity of deportment” define the episcopacy. The South Carolinian concluded his jeremiad by warning newly consecrated American bishops that any pursuit of superiority, aggrandizement, or wealth by the episcopacy would ruin the “truth and piety” of the Protestant Episcopal Church.<sup>7</sup>

Purcell’s *Strictures on the Love of Power* circulated as an anonymous pamphlet five months prior to the opening session of the General Convention of 1795. South Carolina’s Episcopalians had elected Purcell to a seat in the House of Deputies. At the General Convention, bishops addressed Purcell’s efforts to reduce their sovereignty by making clear that despite concern from some within the House of Deputies “the legislative power of the House of Bishops shall remain as fixed by the third article of the Constitution of this Church.” Meanwhile Reverend John Andrews, an elected clergy deputy from Pennsylvania, called upon the House of Deputies to take action since *Strictures on the Love of Power* “was alleged to be written by a

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<sup>7</sup> Purcell, *Strictures on the Love of Power*, 28-29, 40-43, 67-68.

member of this house.” Andrews called the pamphlet a “virulent attack” upon the doctrines of the Protestant Episcopal Church and “a libel against the House of Bishops.” The House of Deputies authorized the Committee of the Whole to determine the authorship of *Strictures on the Love of Power*. Purcell eventually confessed responsibility for the pamphlet to the Committee of the Whole in the House of Deputies and expressed “sorrow” for his publication. The House of Deputies accepted Purcell's apology.<sup>8</sup>

Purcell's radical republicanism had failed to completely democratize the Episcopal Church. Episcopal republicanism had created a balanced church government with a dispersion of power throughout the national, state, and local level. As a result of the House of Bishops and the power exercised by bishops at the state level, lay Episcopalians maintained less sovereignty over their church when compared to other Protestant denominations in the early United States. Purcell's effort to weaken bishops and provide parishes with unquestionable authority had proven unsuccessful. The General Convention of 1795 supported the creation of republican bishops independent of both the tyranny of the British Empire and the excessive democratic passions of the Episcopal laity. Episcopal republicanism as expressed in the church's constitution had established a representative government with a diffusion of power.

The General Convention did not exert unchecked power in the Protestant Episcopal Church. State dioceses wielded extensive power within the framework of an Episcopal republicanism that balanced national and state sovereignty. Each diocese in the South authored and ratified a diocesan constitution enumerating its state-level sovereignty. Most significantly, diocesan constitutions defined the responsibilities, procedures, and election requirements for their state conventions. Annual state conventions were in essence Episcopal state legislatures comprised of lay and clergy delegates. Episcopalians considered clergymen officiating in one of

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<sup>8</sup> *Journals of General Conventions*, 188, 192-194, 202.

their diocese's churches to be ex-officio clergy delegates to their state convention. Some diocesan constitutions allowed non-parish clergymen to claim seats in state conventions. For example, Article II of Virginia's diocesan constitution in 1836, made ordained professors at the Virginia Theological Seminary clergy delegates to the annual state convention. In 1860, Article III of Louisiana's diocesan constitution granted ordained Episcopalians who served as United States Army and Navy chaplains seats as clergy delegates at the state's conventions. Diocesan constitutions also guaranteed each congregation "in union" with the state's Protestant Episcopal Church representation in the form of lay delegates. In the South, most diocesan constitutions permitted parish vestries to create their own election procedures for lay delegates, however, many of those same constitutions capped a parish's maximum number of lay delegates. For instance, Article IV of Texas's diocesan constitution authorized churches to elect a lay delegation "not exceeding four." Virginia's revised diocesan constitution in 1836 restricted the number of lay delegates on the basis of clergy employment. Article II of Virginia's constitution authorized churches to send "as many lay delegates as it has ministers." Parishes without a minister in Virginia could still send one lay delegate to the state conventions to ensure adequate representation. After parishes had elected lay delegates, state conventions gathered for a yearly meeting lasting on average three to four days. Acting under the authority of their diocesan constitutions, clergy and lay delegates at state conventions passed legislation, authorized financial appropriations, levied revenue policies, drafted budgets, and crafted church laws that applied only to their particular diocese. Annual state conventions also required their presiding bishops to present to the laity a detailed report on the state of the diocese along with a record of their episcopal activities for the preceding year.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: James C. Walker, 1836), 40-42; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Convention of the Protestant Episcopal*



Emulating the United States government once again, Episcopal state conventions guarded their understanding of ecclesiastical federalism. Under the federalist theory of Episcopal republicanism, the national church constitution would be supplemented by individual state diocesan constitutions. The first article in many diocesan constitutions in the South explicitly stated their state's "accession" to the national "General Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church." Under the federalism of Episcopal republicanism, annual state conventions had a constitutional check upon the national General Convention. State conventions controlled the elections to the General Convention. Delegates at state conventions elected clergy and lay deputies to represent their diocese in the House of Deputies. In addition, state conventions elected bishops for consecration to preside over their diocese when a vacancy occurred. State conventions, therefore, determined the composition of every General Convention since at some point every member of the House of Bishops and House of Deputies had been elected by a state convention. Dioceses dissatisfied with decisions of the General Convention could overtime vote out their representatives in the House of Deputies and at the next episcopal vacancy elect a succeeding bishop more aligned with their state's church politics.<sup>10</sup>

Since Episcopal republicanism had created a system of denominational federalism, diocesan constitutions in the South developed state-to-state variations prior to the Civil War. A common difference centered upon constitutional limitations for bishops. Article VI in Tennessee's diocesan constitution prohibited the bishop from engaging in a state convention's legislative deliberations. Additionally, Tennessee's Episcopal constitution barred the bishop

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*Church in the Diocese of Louisiana* (New Orleans: Isaac T. Hinton, 1860), 59-61; *Journal of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas* (Houston: The Telegraph Power press Book Office, 1858), 37-39. Article II of South Carolina's constitution allowed congregations to decide the number of lay delegates they wished to send to state convention. *Journal of the Proceedings of the 50th Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1839), 47-49.

<sup>10</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1840), 17.

from expressing his "sentiment" on a legislative matter prior to a vote of the state convention. Virginia's Episcopalians disagreed with Tennessee's approach. Episcopalians in Virginia granted their bishop the constitutional right to "deliver his sentiments on any subject...before a vote thereon" in Article VI of their diocesan constitution. Other idiosyncrasies between diocesan constitutions in the South included different requirements for: the state constitutional amendment process, the diocese's secretary, and the diocese's treasurer.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to national and state governance, Episcopalians remained committed to the vestry system of local sovereignty. Every Episcopal parish in the South continued to elect a vestry usually on Easter Monday of every year, to administer the local government for the church. Vestries exercised oversight over all parish activities, hired parish staff, adopted legislation that applied only to their parish, and managed their parish's budget. Vestries also performed two critical constitutional functions for the republican governance of the Episcopal Church. First, vestries maintained their pre-Revolution right to control clergy employment and compensation in their parish. In hiring rectors, vestries exercised their greatest constitutional check on the powers of their denomination's clergy and bishops. Additionally, since vestries retained hiring powers, they helped determine the clergy composition of their annual state conventions. For example, St. Paul's Church in Columbus, Mississippi "elected" James D. Gibson as the parish's new rector in 1858. The Vestry of St. Paul's Church offered Gibson a compensation package that included a \$1000 salary along with church-funded housing. After accepting the vestry's terms, Gibson then attended Mississippi's state convention in 1859 representing St. Paul's Church as a clergy delegate. Second, parish vestries fulfilled their constitutional mandate to conduct elections for lay delegates to their annual state conventions.

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<sup>11</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: Nye & Co., 1837), 35-36; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: James C. Walker, 1836), 40-42.

For example, the Vestry of Lynnhaven Parish "unanimously elected" Thurmond Hoggard to serve as the parish's lay delegate to Virginia's state convention in 1852. Sometimes, parish vestries elected secular political leaders to tend their church politics. The newly minted Monumental Church in Richmond elected the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, John Marshall, to serve as their parish's lay delegate during Virginia's state convention in 1814. Marshall's election epitomized how planters, secular politicians, along with educated professionals occupied the Episcopal Church's elective offices in the South. Episcopal republicanism had created a federal system of denominational governance that dispersed power between the national, state, and local level. Furthermore, Episcopalians in the United States enshrined the core of constitutional governance: elected representation. Episcopalians had heeded republicanism's warning concerning the concentration of power by creating a system of federalist and elective politics.<sup>12</sup>

Just as republicanism created a constitutional and representative government for the Protestant Episcopal Church, it also reformulated the relationship between church and state in the South. The American Revolution's commencement destroyed the Church of England's ecclesial empire in North America in 1776, which prompted the Commonwealth of Virginia to embark on an uncertain course that historians would later recognize as the beginnings of disestablishment. In a sweeping law entitled "An Act for exempting the various societies of Dissenters," Virginia's General Assembly announced that the "oppressive acts of Parliament" restricting religious

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<sup>12</sup> Minutes of the Vestry Meetings, 11 September 1858, Z/1438.000: St. Paul's Episcopal Church (Columbus, Miss.) Records, MDAH; Lynnhaven Parish (Princess Anne County, Va.), Vestry Minutes, May 7, 1852, Accession 19751, Church Records Collection, LVA; *Journals of the Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia: From the Year 1785 to the Present Day* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1836), 91. Vestries also remedied complaints against their parishes. For example, a neighbor of St. Paul's Church wrote a letter to the vestry complaining of the "annoyance" of their church's bells in July 1852. The complaining neighbor described the horror of the bells, especially when his family members experienced sickness or a "head ache." The Vestry of St. Paul's Church encouraged the neighbor to send a note "apprising" the parish's rector when his family suffered from illness and they would not ring their bells. See Minutes of the Vestry Meetings, 30 July 1852, Z/1438.000: St. Paul's Episcopal Church (Columbus, Miss.) Records, MDAH.

opinion would henceforth be invalid in the new commonwealth. In addition, dissenters of all denominations gained an exemption “from all levies, taxes, and impositions” required for the maintenance of the established church, which at least for the time being retained its legal establishment. The Exemption Act of 1776 recognized that Virginians remained divided over whether to implement a “general assessment” to support ministers and teachers of the gospel of various denominations or instead require denominations to raise voluntary contributions. Like savvy politicians, Virginia’s General Assembly announced in the Exemption Act it had not taken an official position on the matter, but rather deferred the question to a later date. The General Assembly suspended all existing laws that required financial support of established clergy and recommended that financing, at least temporarily, be achieved through “voluntary contributions.” Despite clear setbacks, the established church not only retained its establishment, but section four of the Exemption Act made clear that parishes retained the rights to all glebe lands, chapels, books, ornaments, donations, tobacco, monies, and arrears already in their possession. In doing so, the Exemption Act suggested that any additional disestablishment policies would affect the future, but not alter the past. Legislators professed that Virginia’s subsequent religious policies might remove current legal privileges for the established church, but laws would not be used to reallocate the historical advantages that had accrued over one-hundred and seventy years. Furthermore, it is critical to remember that the Exemption Act represented not the first step toward disestablishment, but rather a peace-keeping initiative between the established church and dissenters until the social and political turmoil of the revolution abated. Piecemeal legislating on religion persisted in Virginia. For example, to supplement the Exemption Act during the American Revolution, Virginia adopted “An Act Declaring what shall be a lawful marriage” in 1780. Under the law, dissenting clergy gained

limited authority to preside over weddings. The Episcopal Church had lost its monopoly on legal marriage ceremonies.<sup>13</sup>

From 1784 to 1786, Virginia debated the three most significant bills related to the state's establishment policy. To understand the enactment of disestablishment, it is critical to understand the chronology of Virginia's legislative process. Prior to leaving the House of Delegates in 1784, newly elected Governor Patrick Henry had devised two bills to diffuse the religious turmoil in Virginia. In 1784, Henry and Virginia's legislators responded to an array of petitions related to the commonwealth's religious policies as they crafted an incorporation bill for the Protestant Episcopal Church alongside a so-called assessment bill which would have levied a tax to support the multiple denominations of the Christian religion in the state. Henry's linkage of the two laws demonstrated a remarkable political acumen. The incorporation bill would strengthen the Protestant Episcopal Church, and thus agitate the state's dissenters. To minimize those tensions, Henry's general assessment bill would be a concession as it proposed new financial protections for Christian dissenters. Henry's elevation to the governorship meant that the bills' most articulate orator no longer served in the House of Delegates. In Henry's absence, James Madison became a leader in ushering the pending religious legislation through the House of Delegates. Virginia's House of Delegates passed the Episcopal Church's Incorporation Act in December 1784 by a vote of 47-38. The Incorporation Act enraged dissenters, thus creating a popular revolt against any supplementary legislation that appeared to provide any privileges to the established church. As Baptists and other dissenters bombarded the House of Delegates with petitions and memorials, opposition to the general assessment bill escalated. On Christmas Eve

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<sup>13</sup> *The Statutes at Large; Being A Collection of all the Laws of Virginia, From the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619... Volume IX* ed. William Waller Hening (Richmond: J & G Cochran, Printers, 1821), 164-167; Monica Najar, *Evangelizing the South: A Social History of Church and State in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 125-126.

1784, Madison moved that the House of Delegates postpone the general assessment bill until the following year. In December 1785, the House of Delegates officially killed the general assessment bill. Madison responded by proposing that the House of Delegates instead enact Thomas Jefferson's Bill Concerning Religious Freedom. The House of Delegates passed Jefferson's bill in December 1785, and after some legislative maneuvering it became law in January 1786. Episcopalians had retained their property under the earlier passed Incorporation Act, while dissenters had succeeded in their contemporaneous effort to codify an expansive definition of religious liberty.<sup>14</sup> Historians have overplayed the negative effects upon the Protestant Episcopal Church wrought by the disestablishment contemplated by Jefferson's Act Concerning Religious Freedom. Lost in most historical analysis is the fact that preexisting legislation along with the Incorporation Act shielded Episcopalians from the harshest effects of Jefferson's Act Concerning Religious Freedom. Many Episcopalians, though for sure not all, were willing to pass Jefferson's Act Concerning Religious Freedom because of the protections they had secured under previous legislation, including the Incorporation Act. Contrary to most historical renditions regarding the supremacy of the Act Concerning Religious Freedom, earlier legislation, such as the Incorporation Act, proved more consequential to the financial viability of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia. Although historians have not completely appreciated the significance of both the Exemption Act and Incorporation Act, during the 1790s evangelicals in Virginia had no doubt about the financial value of the property entrusted to the

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<sup>14</sup> Charles F. James, *Documentary History of the Struggle for Religious Liberty in Virginia* (Lynchburg: J. P. Bell, 1900), 122-141; Lance Banning, "James Madison, the Statute for Religious Freedom, and the Crisis of Republican Convictions," in *The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom: Its Evolution and Consequences in American History* ed. Merrill D. Peterson and Robert C. Vaughan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 114-117, 122-123; *The Statutes at Large; Being A Collection of all the Laws of Virginia, From the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619... Volume XI* ed. William Waller Hening (Richmond: George Cochran, Printers, 1823), 532-537.

Protestant Episcopal Church in their commonwealth. Finding Jefferson's bill insufficient, evangelical Protestants persevered in their agitation for legislative relief.<sup>15</sup>

Virginia's state government, once again under pressure from Baptists and other evangelicals, passed the sweeping Repeal Act in 1799 that expunged at least six religious laws from the statutes of the commonwealth. Virtually all of the laws annihilated by the Repeal Act of 1799 pertained to or explicitly referenced the Protestant Episcopal Church. Most notably, legislators had repealed the Episcopal Church's Incorporation Act. At the conclusion of the Repeal Act, Virginia legislators declared that only Jefferson's Act Concerning Religious Freedom could be deemed consistent with the constitutional and republican mandates for religious liberty. In passing the Repeal Act, Virginia legislators attempted to remove any lingering vestiges of establishment. The enactment of the Repeal Act in 1799, therefore, granted dissenters a complete and near unqualified victory in their state's religious warfare.<sup>16</sup>

Evangelicals and Virginia's politicians could have stopped their legislative machinations after the Repeal Act, and thus they would have ensured that disestablishment in the commonwealth would have routed the Episcopal Church. Indeed, some historians depict disestablishment as an unadulterated conquest for Protestant evangelicals in the South by ending the narrative with Jefferson's Act for Establishing Religious Freedom. Evangelicals did triumph in legislating religious freedom, but historians have overlooked an important symbolic victory of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia. Virginia politicians, pressured by evangelicals, decided to pursue their most radical disestablishment policies related to the Episcopal Church in 1802. Virginia's state legislature passed a landmark piece of legislation entitled "An Act

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<sup>15</sup> *The Statutes at Large; Being A Collection of all the Laws of Virginia, From the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619... Volume XII* ed. William Waller Hening (Richmond: George Cochran, Printers, 1823), 84-86.

<sup>16</sup> *Collection of All Such Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, of a Public and Permanent Nature, as Are Now in Force...* (Richmond: Samuel Pleasants, Jr. and Henry Pace, 1803), 380-389.

concerning the Glebe Lands and Churches within this Commonwealth." According to the law, Overseers of the Poor in every county:

...wherein any glebe land is vacant or shall become so by the death or removal of any incumbent shall have full power and authority...to sell such lands and appurtenances and every other species of property incident thereto on the premises...

Virginia proclaimed that possession of the glebe land property in question had "devolved" from the Episcopal Church to the citizens of the commonwealth following the American Revolution. From the perspective of Virginia's General Assembly, Episcopal Churches had lost their claim to the glebe lands following the Declaration of Independence and the adoption of Jefferson's Act Concerning Religious Freedom. Legislators did seek to reassure Episcopalians by prohibiting Overseers of the Poor from selling the Episcopal Church's buildings or church yards. In the Glebe Lands Act, the Commonwealth of Virginia had voted to confiscate and redistribute religious property as part of its disestablishment program.<sup>17</sup>

Virginia's Glebe Lands Act of 1802 unleashed a ferocious legal battle and as a result removed the debate over disestablishment from legislative politicians and placed it in the dominion of the judiciary. Thirteen years after its passage, Virginia's Glebe Lands Act reached the Supreme Court of the United States. The Supreme Court accepted the case under the name *Terrett et al. v. Taylor et al.* in 1815. Overseers of the Poor in Fairfax County, Virginia (listed with Terrett) appealed a lower court decision that had granted the Vestry of Christ's Church in Alexandria (listed with Taylor) the right to sell 516 acres of glebe lands located in the District of Columbia for the benefit of Christ's Church. The Supreme Court's acceptance of the case

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<sup>17</sup> Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 278-285; Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 174-175; David Hein and Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr., *The Episcopalians* (Westport, CT.: Praeger, 2004), 44-45; *Collection of All Such Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, of a Public and Permanent Nature, as Are Now in Force...* (Richmond: Samuel Pleasants, Jr. and Henry Pace, 1803), 421-423; David L. Holmes, *A Brief History of the Episcopal Church* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993), 24-28.



marked a decisive moment in the history of American jurisprudence since it would adjudicate the constitutionality of a disestablishment law and begin to define the role of the nation's courts in questions of religious liberty. Although Virginian and Episcopalian John Marshall served as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court during the case, Associate Justice Joseph Story wrote the opinion for the court's majority.<sup>18</sup>

The Supreme Court's decision first addressed itself to the definition of disestablishment. In doing so the Supreme Court advised states not to radicalize the meaning of free exercise of religion. Justice Story proclaimed that the goal of religious liberty should not be used by state legislatures as a license to attack religious institutions, thus while lawmakers:

...might exempt the citizens from a compulsive attendance and payment of taxes in support of any particular sect, it is not perceived that either public or constitutional principles required the abolition of all religious corporations.

Justice Story's assertion, therefore, hinted that the Supreme Court would have considered the Episcopal Church's defunct Incorporation Act in Virginia as not only constitutional, but consistent with the court's definition of religious liberty. Following the Supreme Court's logic then, justices suggested Virginia's Repeal Act of 1799 had been unnecessary to safeguard the free exercise of religion for Protestant evangelicals.<sup>19</sup>

The Glebe Lands Act of 1802 could not be struck down by the Supreme Court as a violation of the First Amendment. American legal theory in the early nineteenth century abounded with "strict constructions" of the United States Constitution, resulting in a jurisprudence that refused to apply the Bill of Rights to state governments. Since the First Amendment remained inoperative for the pending case, the Supreme Court had to manufacture an alternative legal route to intervene in Virginia's disestablishment legislation. Justice Story in

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<sup>18</sup> *Reports of Cases Argued and Adjudged in the Supreme Court of the United States in February Term 1815.* ed. William Cranch, Vol. IX (Washington: Daniel Rapine, 1817), 43-55.

<sup>19</sup> *Reports of Cases*, 49.

a creative legal maneuver established a legal nexus between religious organizations and corporations:

...But the free exercise of religion cannot be justly deemed to be retrained by aiding with equal attention the votaries of every sect perform their own religious duties or by establishing funds for the support of minister, for public charities for the endowment of churches for the sepulture of the dead. And these purposes would be better secured and cherished by corporate power...

Republicanism clearly informed Justice Story's postulation in its suggestion that state governments had a compelling interest in "aiding" religious organizations for the betterment of society. Republicanism taught that citizens had to act virtuously and that religious organizations could instill virtue in the citizenry. For Justice Story, states could fulfill those aspirations through state-created religious corporations.<sup>20</sup>

Having signaled the Supreme Court's willingness to curtail both disestablishment and the separation of religion from the state, Justice Story proceeded to find a constitutional objection not grounded in the First Amendment. The Supreme Court pointed to the Episcopal Church's extinct Incorporation Act, which had made the Episcopal Church in Virginia a legal corporation. The Supreme Court rejected the analysis of Virginia's General Assembly when it declared the Incorporation Act to be unconstitutional in the preamble of the Repeal Act of 1799. The justices of the Supreme Court held that because of the Incorporation Act, the Episcopal Church had existed as a constitutional and state-chartered corporation until 1799. Justice Story then proceeded to define the differences between "private corporation" rather than a "public corporation." After establishing that the Episcopal Church had existed as a religious corporation, the Supreme Court then overturned the Glebe Lands Act of 1802 by declaring it unconstitutional:

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<sup>20</sup> *Reports of Cases*, 49; Steven Green, *The Second Disestablishment: Church and State in Nineteenth-Century America: Church and State in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 191-194; Jonathon Wright, *Shapers Of The Great Debate On The Freedom Of Religion: A Biographical Dictionary* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005), 131-133.

But that the legislature can repeal statutes creating private corporations, or confirming to them property already acquired under the faith of previous law, and by such repeal can vest the property of such corporations exclusively in the state or dispose of the same to such purposes as they may please without the consent or default of the corporaters we are not prepared to admit; and we think ourselves standing upon the principles of natural justice, upon the fundamental laws of every free government, upon the spirit and the letter of the constitution of the United States...The statutes...are not, therefore in our judgment operative so far as to divest the Episcopal church of the property acquired previous to the revolution by purchase or by donation.

Although Justice Story does not cite his "letter" of the Constitution, most legal scholars contend the opinion appears to rest on the Contract Clause located in Article I Section 10 of the United States Constitution, which states: "No state shall...pass any...Law impairing the obligations of Contracts." Christ's Church in Virginia had received its title to glebe lands under procedures outlined in both colonial legislation and the Incorporation Act. Virginia's Glebe Lands Act of 1802 had invalidated implied and binding contracts for corporate land ownership. Justice Story embedded in the majority's opinion the judicial philosophy of the Marshall Court which included the expansion of the federal government's authority over states, a vigorous defense of property rights, and a propensity for granting corporations constitutional protections. Regardless of the economic-based legal reasoning surrounding property and corporations, *Terrett et al. v. Taylor et al.* marked a landmark case in American religious history. The Supreme Court of the United States had struck down a state disestablishment law, and justices further signaled that the federal courts could be used to protect religious corporations from antagonistic policies adopted by state governments.<sup>21</sup>

Given the colonial history of establishment, it should not be surprising that one of the Supreme Court's first major decisions on questions of religious liberty involved Episcopalians in the South. By 1815, Episcopalians had been reduced to a religious minority in the

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<sup>21</sup> *Reports of Cases*, 52; Sylvia Snowiss, *Judicial Review and the Law of the Constitution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 136.

Commonwealth of Virginia. From the perspective of the Supreme Court, Virginia's state government now appeared hostile to its former established church, especially in the Glebe Lands Act. Adherents to Episcopal republicanism in Virginia had to turn to the judiciary to protect their church from attacks carried out by leveling evangelicals and revenue-hungry politicians. Despite the limitations of a strict construction of the First Amendment, Justice Story had applied a "spiritual" understanding of "prohibiting the free exercise" of religion by using property, contracts, and corporations. The Supreme Court implied in its rationalization that if the state denied Christ's Church in Alexandria the proceeds from glebe land sales it would have impeded the free exercise of religion for Episcopalians. *Terrett et al. v. Taylor et al.* also provided a precedent that should the Supreme Court have a willingness to intervene in a state's religious affairs in support of minority sects it could find other constitutional routes outside of the First Amendment to protect "religious corporations." *Terrett et al. v. Taylor et al.* meant that Episcopalians in the South had won a major legal battle over disestablishment by halting what the Supreme Court deemed Virginia's legislative overreach. Episcopalians in the South had to temper their celebration, however, since they were losing the broader cultural war to evangelical Protestants in the region.<sup>22</sup>

Disestablishment policy in South Carolina initially embraced the multiple Christian establishment approach. In 1778, South Carolina replaced its temporary frame of government with a new state constitution that codified a general establishment for Protestant Christianity in Article XXXVIII. Any religious organization seeking legal incorporation "as a Church of the established religion" of South Carolina had to subscribe in writing to the following five principles:

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<sup>22</sup> David P. Currie, *The Constitution in the Supreme Court: The First Hundred Years, 1789-1888* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 138-141.

1. That there is one eternal God, and a future state of rewards and punishments.
2. That God is publically to be worshipped.
3. That the Christian religion is the true religion.
4. That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are of divine inspiration, and are the rule of faith and practice.
5. That it is lawful, and the duty of every man, being thereunto called by those that govern, to bear witness to truth.

Article XXXVIII of South Carolina's new constitution also required that ministers of established Christian churches pledge allegiance to a prescribed oath affirming among other promises to "fashion his own self and his family according to the doctrines of Christ." South Carolina's five articles of faith along with the ministerial oath had been designed to enshrine Christianity as the state's religion. Other Protestant Christians appeared to have been elevated to the status that had been formerly reserved for Episcopalians alone. Drafters of South Carolina's constitution, however, provided Episcopalians with a generous protection from those who wished to use religious liberty as a tool for social leveling. Article XXXVIII made explicit that "the churches, chapels, parsonages, glebes, and all other property now belonging to any Societies of the Church of England or any other religious Societies shall remain and be secured to them forever." South Carolina's Episcopalians had been granted a state constitutional right to the properties acquired during colonial establishment. Under the new constitution, religious liberty in South Carolina promised equal protections under the law for Christians henceforth, but would not remedy past inequities created by establishment.<sup>23</sup>

After the American Revolution, South Carolina abandoned the experiment of Protestant establishment when the state ratified a new constitution in 1790. Article VIII of South Carolina's newest constitution guaranteed that the state would henceforth protect the "free exercise" of religion "without discrimination or preference." South Carolinians had discarded their

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<sup>23</sup> *The Constitutions of the Several Independent States of America...* ed. William Jackson (London: J. Stockdale, 1783), 337-342.

establishment of Protestant Christianity. Religious liberty would now extend to all persons, not just Protestant Christians. During the following year, various congregations of Protestants throughout South Carolina applied for incorporation pursuant to Article VIII of the state's new constitution. Unsurprisingly, South Carolina's state legislature enacted multiple acts of incorporation for the sundry Protestant Christian applicants. In 1791, South Carolina granted a charter of incorporation to the Catholic Church of Charleston, thus symbolizing the end to the general Protestant establishment. Perhaps, the most salient test to South Carolina's constitutional protections of "free exercise...without discrimination" came when Beth Elohim applied for legal incorporation in 1791. South Carolina's legislature passed an act of incorporation for Charleston's Jewish congregation that explicitly cited Article VIII of the state's constitution in the law's preamble. After 1790, non-Christians in South Carolina could expect the equal protection and rights under the laws of their state. Establishment in South Carolina had truly ended with the constitution of 1790. Religious liberty in the Palmetto State had been redefined as equality for all Christians and non-Christians. Republicanism had compelled both Virginia and South Carolina to legislate religious liberty as a component of their expansive eighteenth century politics of liberty.<sup>24</sup>

As republicanism revamped the relationship of the Episcopal Church with secular and ecclesial governments, Episcopalians in the South installed their first bishops during the 1790s. Southerners demanded that their first bishops serve as guardians of Episcopal republicanism. Clergy and laity elected the region's first Episcopal bishop when the Diocese of Virginia voted

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<sup>24</sup> *The Constitutions of the United States; According to the Latest Amendments...and the Federal Constitution* (Philadelphia: William Duane, 1806), 191; *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, From February, 1791, to December, 1794, Both Inclusive* Vol. 1 (Columbia: D & J.J. Faust, 1808), 136-144; James L. Underwood and William Lewis Burke, *The Dawn of Religious Freedom in South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 79-81; Solomon Breitbart, "Beth Elohim," in *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South* ed. Samuel S. Hill, Charles H. Lippy, and Charles Reagan Wilson (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2005), 112-113.

by a margin of 46-9 to recommend James Madison for consecration on May 7, 1790. A year later when the state convention reassembled, James Madison had been consecrated as the Bishop of Virginia by three bishops, thereby preserving the Episcopal Church's connection with apostolic succession. Three years later, Episcopalians in South Carolina voted to nominate the Reverend Robert Smith for consecration as their state's first bishop. Smith had served as the Rector of St. Philip's Church in Charleston and the College of Charleston's Provost prior to his nomination. As a "bishop-elect," Smith had to wait until the House of Bishops convened at the next General Convention in 1795 so members could review his credentials and testimonies before authorizing four bishops to canonically consecrate him as the Bishop of South Carolina. Episcopal republicanism had reached its fruition as the elevations of Madison and Smith epitomized the two hallmarks of republican bishops. First, Virginia and South Carolina had created episcopal offices free of the imperial control of the British monarchy and Parliament. Second, republican bishops would not have unchecked authority since they had to abide by the church's constitutional limitations upon their office. Bishops governed the Episcopal Church with the consent of the electoral power vested in clergy and lay voters.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to adhering to the South's understanding of apostolic republicanism in their elections, the region's first bishops used their offices to promote the teachings of Republicanism's Creed. Bishop Smith had delivered sermons that encapsulated Episcopal republicanism prior to the conclusion of the American Revolution, and persisted in doing so after his election. For example, Bishop Smith preached to St. Philip's Church in 1795 that South Carolinians should give thanks for "the possession of constitutions of government which unite

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<sup>25</sup> *Journals of the Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia: From the Year 1785 to the Present Day*, 29-46; Frederick Dalcho, *An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina From the First Settlement of the Province*. .. (Charleston: E. Thayer, 1820), 481; *Journals of General Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, 1785-1835*, 189, 201.

and by their union establish liberty with order; and generally for the prosperous course of our affairs public and private.” Smith argued that the United States had an obligation to show its gratitude to God “the only true benefactor of ours.” The Bishop of South Carolina constructed Episcopal republicanism as a premodern moral counterweight to the modernizing tendencies in American society. “The arrogance of prosperity,” Smith warned, needed to be tempered in a republic by Christian morality and piety. Bishop Madison also incorporated republicanism into his sermons. Vestryman Emeritus George Washington died in 1799, and in response Bishop Madison inquired: “When WASHINGTON becomes a preacher, who will not listen? O! ye who love your country, and for the preservation of her liberties.” Madison reminded his congregation at Williamsburg of the connection between religious virtue and republicanism:

Ah! fellow citizens, remember that virtue only is estimable in the eyes of God; and that, without it, republics are victims destined for the altars of ambition. Remember, that without just sentiments of religion, virtue perishes...ye who would preserve, for yourselves and your posterity, republicanism pure and uncontaminated, again I entreat you, be it yours to cherish religion, and to bear in mind the example of WASHINGTON.

Southerners had elected unapologetic republican bishops to lead the Episcopal Church in Virginia and South Carolina. Bishops Madison and Smith committed themselves to the protection of the vineyards of the vestry that they had inherited from the revolutionary generation. Republicanism's Creed remained orthodoxy for the Episcopal Church in the South for three decades following the American Revolution.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Bishop Robert Smith, “His Mercy Endureth Forever,” in *The American Revolution and Righteous Community: Selected Sermons of Bishop Robert Smith* ed. Charles Wilbanks (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 194-195; Bishop James Madison, *A Discourse on the Death of General Washington, Late President of the United States...* (London: John Hatchard, 1800), 42, 46-47; Ruth H. Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 159.



### **The Nadir of Republicanism**

Embracing republicanism had consequences for Episcopalians in the South. As the Protestant Episcopal Church in the South hemorrhaged membership after the Revolution, republicanism enabled a confluence of structural change that hindered church growth. First, due to disestablishment Episcopalians could no longer look to state governments for financial and legislative relief. Second, Episcopal republicanism had created an elaborate governing bureaucracy that expended resources simply to sustain itself and coordinate church politics at the national, state, and local level. At a time of scarce resources, the church's republican bureaucracy provided slow responses to the membership crisis. As a result, the Protestant Episcopal Church's republican bureaucracy could not stem the stagnation that inhabited parishes in the South prior to the 1820s. In the three decades following the conclusion of the American Revolution, many Episcopalians worried that their church might not be coterminous with the South as it marched westward. From 1790 to 1820, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the South suffered a generation of declension and nadir.

Virginia's Episcopalians wrote lengthy expositions on their nadir throughout the 1790s. Churchmen and churchwomen in Virginia looked to their state's newly elected bishop to propose a remedy to the crisis. Bishop Madison acknowledged the seemingly insurmountable crisis in his address to the state convention in 1791. Rather than inciting hope, Bishop Madison expressed unease concerning the church's future:

...when I consider the present situation of our church; and further, when I cast my eyes towards the many obstacles to prosperity which present themselves on every side, I confess to you that, struck with the arduous enterprise, I feel myself for a moment intimidated; there for a moment despondency instead of hope, fear of evils greater than we have yet experienced instead of the consolatory anticipation of better prospects, take possession of my soul...

As an academic clergyman, Bishop Madison urged Virginia's state convention to ensure that clergy had sufficient financial and educational support to lead a renewal. In particular, Bishop Madison urged all rectors to commit themselves to "pulpit eloquence." Madison defined effective preaching as an "ethereal fire, which if properly excited and conducted, will not fail to restore our enfeebled church." Madison surmised that proper piety and learning could reverse the "declension" of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia. In closing his address, Bishop Madison conceded that the "prosperity of our Zion" depended upon the will of God. Bishop Madison reminded Episcopalians in Virginia that their God supplied "abundantly the means, the rest is left to human industry... salvation, though originally the work of God, require the protection of human aid."<sup>27</sup>

Eight years later the strategy of pulpit eloquence had not resulted in a revival of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia. Bishop Madison once again addressed his state convention to both reassess the problem and offer new solutions. In 1799, Madison framed the declension of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia as a part of a larger societal trend of secularization. According to Madison, in late eighteenth century Virginia

Even they who still call themselves Christians, have grown cold and languid; while thousands, availing themselves of that languor treat religion as a prejudice which debases the human mind; deride its sacred obligations, and exultingly anticipates its obliteration from the earth...

Bishop Madison warned the state convention that the menacing "apostles of irreligion" threatened the security of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia. Rather than articulating an evangelizing counteroffensive to halt the perceived secularization, Bishop Madison rallied Episcopalians to mobilize not for Christianity's Great Commission, but rather for

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<sup>27</sup> *Journals of the Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia: From the Year 1785 to the Present Day*, 37-45.

Republicanism's Creed. The Bishop of Virginia summoned the clergymen, vestrymen, and the laity under his charge to remember:

The cultivation of piety is ranked by the most eminent writers among the highest duties which a nation owes to itself. Perhaps the time may not be far distant, when the enlightened patriots of this country...preferring the prevention of crimes to the multiplication of sanguinary laws; or the perfection of citizens to their extermination; will bring forward some well-digested plan for the security of this great object. Whether a general assessment, upon principles suited to the nature of a great government, would not be the most happy expedient and productive of really great and extensive public good, is a subject worthy of the most serious consideration of every friend to virtue and genuine republicanism...

Episcopal republicanism had survived the American Revolution, and Bishop Madison hoped to marshal the ideology as a basis for revival in his diocese. Bishop Madison envisioned that Episcopal renewal in the commonwealth could be a byproduct as Christians mobilized for a political war against “the madness of libertinism.” Virginia’s Episcopalians could help their nation as “patriots” by endeavoring to create a “Christian society” of virtue, and in the process resuscitate their church’s popularity.<sup>28</sup>

Bishop Madison appeared to be an individual with incredible intellectual perspicacity. Madison’s academic tendencies embodied the crux of the crisis because the classroom lectern and Episcopal pulpit competed for his time. One traveler in Virginia witnessed Bishops Madison engaged in chemical experiments to determine the “property of the waters” at Sweet Springs in 1805. Following the scientific experiments, Bishop Madison committed his results to writing. On the following Sunday, Bishop Madison made time to deliver an “excellent” sermon at the courthouse near Sweet Springs. Episcopal critics of Bishop Madison might have suggested that

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<sup>28</sup> *Journals of the Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia: From the Year 1785 to the Present Day*, 78-82. Some scholars have characterized Bishop Madison as a "virtual" deist. For example: Hein and Gardiner, *The Episcopalians*, 60.

as his endangered church confronted extinction he should have been using all the water at his disposal for baptisms, rather than scientific experiments.<sup>29</sup>

In 1805, clergy and lay delegates reflected the unease of their constituent parishes as they gathered at Virginia's annual state convention. Delegates expressed their disgust with the "want of such regulations and provisions as the good and wholesome government of the church required." Clergy and lay deputies demanded that the canons and rules promulgated by both the state convention and General Convention be "strictly observed and enforced" in order to assure the "prosperity of the church." Fifteen years following Bishop Madison's ascension to the episcopacy, lay and clergy leaders, without mentioning their bishop's name, decried the lack of discipline that exacerbated the nadir which continued unabated in their diocese.<sup>30</sup>

Bishop Madison died in 1811. Virginia's state convention elected Richard Channing Moore in 1814 to succeed the first bishop of their state. Bishop Moore inherited the nadir that Bishop Madison had been unable to eviscerate. At the General Convention of 1814, Episcopalians received a graphic report on the unrelenting despair that had consumed Bishop Moore's diocese. The Protestant Episcopal Church in the tobacco commonwealth had

...fallen into a deplorable condition; in many places her ministers have thrown off their sacred professions; her liturgies are either condemned or unknown, and her sanctuaries are desolate. It would rend any feeling heart to see spacious temples, venerable even in their dilapidation and ruins, now the habitations of the wild beasts of the forest.

Given the crisis, Bishop Moore demonstrated a new vigorous mode of leadership as he traveled to vacant parishes up to thirty miles outside of Richmond to perform the Episcopal divine service during his first year in the episcopacy. Bishop Moore summarized the apathy that paralyzed the state's Episcopalians in the early nineteenth century by writing: "the depressed state of the

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<sup>29</sup> John H. Briggs, Diary, July 23-September 29, 1804, VHS, Manuscripts, Mss 5:1 B7687:1.

<sup>30</sup> *Journals of the Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia: From the Year 1785 to the Present Day*, 82-87.

church in Virginia had excited in the minds of its adherents a fear, that its extinction was at hand; and the enemies were delighted with the ideas that it had fallen.” Optimism pervaded Moore's disposition in the 1810s. For instance, he expressed in a letter his conviction that “the sun of righteousness...has risen with healing under his wings.” Bishop Moore also implicitly criticized his predecessor as he described the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia as a “plant which [Christ’s] own right hand hath planted, & which I hope will never more be permitted to languish for the want of cultivation.” The languishment under Bishop Madison had been replaced with a kinetic energy under Bishop Moore.<sup>31</sup>

Bishop Moore’s cheery public pronouncements could not mask the ominous realities of the Episcopal faith in Virginia. Bishop Moore had inherited a number of parishes he described as “waste places” and “desolate temples.” The Bishop of Virginia summoned Episcopalians to return to a church characterized by “primitive purity” and the “spirit of gospel times.” In 1817, Bishop Moore acknowledged the slow pace of progress as he informed the state convention that the Episcopal Church in Virginia had “been prostrate in the dust, but from her ruins she implores our united aid.” Slow progress and an absence of tangible signs of revival forced the Bishop of Virginia to redefine missionary success as a generational struggle whereby in Moore’s words: “Unborn generations will enjoy the benefit of our labours and embalm our memory with the tear of gratitude and affection.” From Moore’s perspective the depths of the nadir he acquired from Bishop Madison would necessitate decades to overcome.<sup>32</sup>

Episcopalians in South Carolina confronted similar struggles following the American Revolution. Bishop Smith, like his colleague Bishop Madison, had deep connections with

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<sup>31</sup> *Journals of General Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, 1785-1835*, 416-417; Richard Channing Moore to Benjamin Allen Jr., 25 November 1814 and Richard Channing Moore to Benjamin Allen Jr., 3 January 1815, Letters, 1814-1821, Accession 41498, Personal Papers Collection, LVA.

<sup>32</sup> *Journals of the Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia: From the Year 1785 to the Present Day*, 100, 120-121, 134.

academia. In 1789, trustees elected Bishop Smith to serve as President of the Board of Trustees for the College of Charleston. Smith had additional responsibilities for Charleston College, which included functioning as the institution's principal. A multitude of obligations competed for Bishop Smith's time prior to his death in 1801. South Carolina's Episcopalians voted unanimously to elect Reverend Edward Jenkins as the state's new bishop in 1804. Jenkins declined the office citing his inability to "fully and faithfully discharge" the duties of the office of bishop. During the nadir of Bishop Smith's tenure and the ensuing interregnum, South Carolina's Episcopalians felt besieged by growing evangelical churches. For example, Harriet Simmons wrote to her father in 1811 and described the "strange" evangelical ascendancy in Columbia:

It is strange to me, but a great many families hear [sic] are Methodists, they [sic] are no other persuasions, but those and the baptists [sic]...They have no episcopal [sic] minister hear [sic] at present however I believe they expect shortly to get one to preach in the chapel, we have not yet attended divine service.

Once the established religion of South Carolina, Episcopalians appeared to be in a vicious downward spiral. Throughout Bishop Smith's tenure and the interregnum prior to the election of a replacement bishop, the Diocese of South Carolina "had sunk very low." The South's Episcopal nadir had stretched beyond the borders of Virginia.<sup>33</sup>

South Carolina remained without a bishop until the state convention elected Thomas Dehon in 1812. Bishop Dehon, like Virginia's Bishop Moore, reflected a new generation of Episcopal leadership in the South. A New Englander, Dehon had graduated from Harvard prior to starting his ministry in Rhode Island. Bishop Edward Bass ordained Dehon as an Episcopal priest in 1800. Reverend Dehon visited South Carolina for the first time in 1803. During the

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<sup>33</sup> Dehon, *An Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 488-489; Harriet Simmons to James Simmons, 26 November 1811, in Simmons Family Papers, Accession 1135, SCL; *Journals of General Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, 1785-1835*, 418-419.

first decade of the nineteenth century, Dehon's health rapidly declined. Dehon blamed his health problems on the climate of Newport, Rhode Island and decided to accept the rectorship of St. Michael's Church in Charleston, South Carolina in 1809. In the three years preceding Dehon's election to the episcopacy, the Rector of St. Michael's Church became involved in his diocesan restoration, such as by providing assistance to the Protestant Episcopal Society for the Advancement of Christianity in South Carolina. The unanimous election of Dehon by Episcopalians in South Carolina reflected the growing mobilization for renewal within the diocese.<sup>34</sup>

A "missionary spirit" characterized Bishop Dehon's abbreviated administration. Bishop Dehon remained Rector of St. Michael's Church, but committed himself to "reviving episcopal worship" in long neglected parishes outside of Charleston. In addition, Bishop Dehon harnessed the resources of his diocese to support the "Protestant Episcopal Society for the Advancement of Christianity in South Carolina" (PESAC-SC). In 1810, Episcopalians in South Carolina expressed their "painful concern for the welfare" of their diocese and in response created PESAC-SC. Nathaniel Bowen estimated that during the first seventeen years of the PESAC-SC members distributed 307 Bibles, 1,641 prayer books, and 15,075 religious tracts. In addition to the dissemination of religious literature, the PESAC-SC organized mission stations and new churches. For example, the PESAC-SC initiated one of its most significant renewal initiatives in 1813 as it moved to organize a church in Columbia. Members of the PESAC-SC targeted Columbia since "the Seat of Government is there...the South Carolina College is there." Episcopal planters needed to erect a church in Columbia since their legislative representatives

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<sup>34</sup>*Episcopal Watchman* 1, no.19 (July 1827): 145-147; *Episcopal Watchman* 1, no. 20 (August 1827): 153-154.

would gather in the city to govern and their sons could “serve God in the manner of their Fathers” while in college.<sup>35</sup>

To supplement his support for missionary labors in South Carolina, Bishop Dehon became a proponent in the House of Bishops for a national Episcopal seminary to enhance clergy and missionary effectiveness. Dehon’s advocacy during the General Convention of 1814 did not prevail. Three years later, Bishop Dehon’s succeeded in persuading his fellow Episcopalians on the need for a church administered college. At the General Convention of 1817, the House of Deputies and House of Bishops authorized the creation of the Protestant Episcopal Church’s Theological Seminary in New York. Upon returning home to South Carolina with a major legislative victory at the General Convention, Dehon succumbed to illness and died at the age of thirty-one. After five years of leadership, Bishop Dehon demonstrated remarkable potential as he restored administrative order, began renewal efforts, demonstrated pastoral effectiveness, and increased South Carolina’s standing among national Episcopalians within the General Convention.<sup>36</sup> Five years, however, could not reverse the totality of the nadir in South Carolina. In 1818, the Diocese of South Carolina elected Nathaniel Bowen to serve as its third bishop. Bishop Bowen’s election reflected continuity with the ongoing renewal efforts. Bishop Dehon had cast a vision, but the brevity of his tenure prevented his visions from reaching fruition. Bowen, therefore, inherited a diocese still in nadir, but energized for revitalization by his predecessor. Prior to his election, Bowen as a clergyman had been advocating a more

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<sup>35</sup> Nathaniel Bowen, *Address to the Members of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*. (1827) 3-7, Rare Books, p283.06 B67a, SCL; “An Episcopal Church to be built in Columbia, So. Carolina,” (typescript), January 1813, Accession 4855, SCL.

<sup>36</sup> *Journals of General Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, 1785-1835*, 493-494; *Episcopal Watchman* 1, no. 20 (August 1827): 153-154; Pritchard, *A History of the Episcopal Church*, 122-123.



evangelical theology and harnessing resources to revive the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina.<sup>37</sup>

Alongside governmental structures, it is essential to underscore the socio-economic causes of the Episcopal nadir in the South. Episcopal republicanism had created a church operation on the ground in the South severed from state support and characterized by ineffective bureaucracies managed by weak bishops. Sufficient financial support could have minimized institutional defects within the Episcopal Church. Republicanism's bureaucracy, therefore, did not provide the sole cause of the nadir of the Episcopal Church in the South following the American Revolution. The nadir coincided with the South's transition to a cotton-centered economy, and a simultaneous uncertainty in the rice and tobacco markets. The centrality of the planter class in the Protestant Episcopal Church meant religion and economics had become interconnected. Paul Gates contends that the tobacco regions of Virginia experienced in the early nineteenth century a “chronic state of depression” due to soil exhaustion, low prices, declining yields, and debt. In the period from 1790 to 1860, tobacco exports peaked in 1790. Tobacco prices cratered to an average 6¢ per pound from 1810 to 1813. In South Carolina, rice prices likewise sustained erratic fluctuations, with a general downward trend prior to 1815.

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<sup>37</sup> Dalcho, *An Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 562-573.

<b>Table 2.1: South Carolina Crop Prices Per Pound<sup>38</sup></b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Rice</b>	<b>Short-Staple Cotton</b>
<b>1800</b>	3.85¢	24.9¢
<b>1802</b>	3.89¢	17.4¢
<b>1804</b>	3.97¢	16.4¢
<b>1806</b>	3.61¢	19.9¢
<b>1808</b>	2.15¢	12.8¢
<b>1810</b>	2.50¢	14.0¢
<b>1812</b>	3.85¢	8.7¢
<b>1814</b>	1.99¢	14.2¢

Rice production began an intensive decline in the 1840s as planters in the state began directing their resources toward cotton. Cotton production expanded in the first decade of the nineteenth century, but began to erode as planters lost access to European markets as a result of the Jefferson Administration’s embargo in 1808. As Table 2.1 indicates, cotton prices tumbled sharply after the embargo of 1808 and did not rebound until after the War of 1812 ended. The Episcopal nadir, thus, occurred in three decades of economic instability as the South’s planter class confronted a downward trajectory in prices for their core staple crops of tobacco, rice, and cotton. The coalescence of ineffective church leadership with a planter class struggling with economic anxieties combined to weaken the Protestant Episcopal Church starting in 1790 and those conditions lingered until 1820. Disestablishment had severed the Episcopal Church's linkages to southern state governments, but the region's planter class proved unable to immediately assume all of the financial responsibilities for their local Protestant Episcopal Churches. Instead, planters invested their time, energy, and money into the development of a stable cotton infrastructure rather than reviving the Protestant Episcopal Church prior to 1820.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 361-363. Prior to 1815, South Carolina rice prices peaked in 1803 with an average price of 5.31¢ per pound.

<sup>39</sup> Paul W. Gates, *The Farmer’s Age: Agriculture 1815-1860—The Economy History of the United States Volume III* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Watson, 1960), 4-5, 118-122; Curtis P. Nettels, *The Emergence of a National Economy, 1775-1815* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Watson, 1962), 193-196.

### **Planting An Episcopal Renaissance: Geography and Numbers**

During the 1820s it became obvious that the investments of the South's planters had guaranteed that slave-produced cotton would define the region's economic structure. As international markets stabilized following the War of 1812, cotton ascended to what James Henry Hammond would later describe as an economic kingship in the South. Indeed, Adam Rothman describes the years after 1815 as a "postwar boom" that animated cotton planters to rapidly settle the Deep South and "to prosper." In South Carolina, cotton prices reached a high of 30.8¢ per pound in 1818 and remained a strong 18.1¢ per pound as late as 1825. Cotton's viability, new lands in the southwest, and the construction of a domestic slave trade provided the South's plantation families with a renewed sense of economic affluence after 1820. Cotton production in the United States stood at around 9,000 bales in 1790 as the Episcopal Church entered nadir in the South. In 1821, at the dawn of the Episcopal Church's renaissance in the South, cotton production had grown to 525,000 bales. On the eve of the Civil War, cotton production in the United States exceeded 5,500,000 bales. The South's planter class, buoyed by its cotton fortunes, reconnected with the Protestant Episcopal Church to both solidify its social power on earth and to seek salvation in the world to come.<sup>40</sup>

Episcopal leaders and missionaries in the South recognized the correlation between their church's vitality and plantation families. Reverend John Shellwood admitted that Episcopalians

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<sup>40</sup> Adam Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 176-178; *Internal Commerce: Cotton Trade of the United States and the World's Cotton Supply and Trade, From the Summary of Commerce and Finance* (Washington: Treasury Department Bureau of Statistics, March 1900), 2547. For very useful scholarly analyses of cotton's centrality to the development of the antebellum South see: Gavin Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978); Joseph G. Reidy, *From Slavery to Agrarian Capitalism in the Cotton Plantation South: Central Georgia, 1800-1880* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992); John Hebron Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom in the Old Southwest: Mississippi, 1770-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988).

in the South had a reputation of being "the Church of the rich— not the poor." Shellwood conceded that his Church of the Holy Trinity in Grahamville, South Carolina existed as "the Church of the rich, but provision is made also for the poor." Planters and the Episcopal Church maintained their synergism as the South expanded westward. After a visit to Mississippi in 1830, Bishop Thomas Brownwell of Connecticut reflected on his experiences at Christ Church in Jefferson County:

The church here is very neat brick building erected by a few wealthy planters in the vicinity. It contains spacious galleries for the accommodation of their slaves, and both on this day and on the following Wednesday, more than one hundred of them were in attendance.

Although specific to Christ Church, Bishop Brownwell's depictions would have applied to a great many southern parishes supported by wealthy planter "proprietors." Bishop Brownwell recommended that the Episcopal Church dispatch itinerant clergy to the southwest since the "planting of cotton and sugar" created extensive rural plantation communities in both Mississippi and Louisiana. Bishop James H. Otey echoed the planter class's centrality to the Episcopal Church's fortunes in Washington County, Mississippi. Bishop Otey recalled that after "spending a few days among the planters there, I found every disposition manifested favorable to the erection of a church." In South Carolina, a similar social geography for the Episcopal Church emerged. American Bible Society agent Edwin A. Bolles reported in 1856 that rice planters near Adams's Run, South Carolina were "of the Protestant Episcopal Church" and "contributed very liberally to the Bible Cause." Planters carried the Episcopal Church all the way to Texas. For example, W. T. Dickinson Dalzell explained that some unidentified "parties" along with "planters in the neighborhood" of Richmond had subscribed \$1200 for the construction of a church. Southerners and visiting Northerners appreciated how many planters in the South had an

abiding allegiance to a Protestant Episcopal Church that had been revived by an ever expanding cotton frontier.<sup>41</sup>

Episcopalians in Tennessee pursued strategies to maximize their church's connection to the planter class. In 1829, James H. Otey advised Episcopalians to be strategic as they attempted to settle Tennessee. Otey encouraged church leaders to establish a congregation in Nashville for the city represented an “emporium of commerce” and “seat of learning” for Tennessee's elites. According to Otey, Nashville’s cultural influence extended beyond the state lines of Tennessee into Alabama and Kentucky. Outside of Nashville, Otey suggested that region between the Tennessee River and Mississippi River would have “no difficulty in forming a respectable congregation.” As Otey knew, plantations in Tennessee claimed their greatest success in the middle and western regions of the state. Otey's recommendation asserted that the Episcopal Church could establish strong parishes outside of Nashville in the cotton-producing and plantation regions of middle and western Tennessee. Tennessee missionaries argued that the Episcopal Church had friends in the Western District who "could give comfortable aid in support of the Gospel." Episcopal clergymen in Tennessee even provided worship to planters in neighboring states. Reverend Albert A. Muller of Trinity Church in Clarksville, Tennessee crossed over the state border into the Bluegrass State. Muller visited George Tyler's plantation in Kentucky. Muller preached in a "commodious tobacco barn" on Tyler's plantation. The

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<sup>41</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1855), 67; *Episcopal Watchman* 3, no. 48, (February 1830): 381-382; *Missionary Record of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society* 3, no. 8, (August 1835):130-132; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi*,(Jackson: The Southron Office, 1844), 17; *Bible Society Record* 5, no. 5, (May 1856): 94; *Journal of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas*, 25.

planter class, then, determined the Episcopal Church's organizational geography in Tennessee as it did in other southern states.<sup>42</sup>

Episcopal missionaries used social geography in Alabama as well. Reverend Robert Davis petitioned the Episcopal Church for the procurement of the resources necessary to gain a foothold in Tuscaloosa. Plantation families frequented the commercial, political, and educational institutions located in Tuscaloosa. Davis, therefore, conveyed to his Episcopal superiors the following:

We are so busy raising money to build a house of worship which we intend shall contain from 60 to 70 pews...Tuscaloosa is the capital of the state, situated at the head of steam boat navigation, on the Tuscaloosa or Black Warrior river, and contains between 1500 and 2000 inhabitants...The bank of the state, which brings a weekly concourse of people from every section of Alabama is located here. The Supreme Court, which collects the most intelligent men from every quarter of the state, is also located here; during the present month, the legislature located the university the most richly endowed institution of the kind in America in Tuscaloosa...

The detailed nature of Davis's analysis made clear that locales with concentrations of wealth, political power, or education would be the most likely to support an Episcopal congregation in the South. In addition to Tuscaloosa, Reverend William H. Judd reported to the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society on the good prospects of for the congregation in Mobile because the city had "many who have influence and wealth...and desirous for its permanent establishment."<sup>43</sup> Episcopalians strategically located their southern churches in rural areas dominated by plantations along with the region's university towns, port towns, and state capitals frequented by planter-class families.

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<sup>42</sup> *Episcopal Watchman* 2, no. 48, (February 1829): 378-379; *Episcopal Watchman* 3, no. 51, (March 1830): 408; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Tennessee*, 19.

<sup>43</sup> *Episcopal Watchman* 2: 48 (February 1829): 381-382. *Episcopal Watchman* 3, no. 15 (June 1829): 115.

Although the preceding anecdotal reports demonstrate how church leaders understood the symbiosis between planters and planter-controlled towns with the Episcopal Church in the South, the raw numbers are even more compelling. To understand the social geography of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the South, this dissertation will utilize the term "Episcopal County" as an analytic construction. "Episcopal Counties" will be defined as any state created district, parish, or county in which activity by the Protestant Episcopal Church can be documented. Episcopal activity in counties might have included a flourishing congregation, the presence of church property, missionary efforts, clergy visitations, or any active operation of a church agency. Episcopal Counties in 1860 are shaded in Diagrams 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, and 2.11.<sup>44</sup> The South's Episcopal Counties exhibited a direct correlation between common

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<sup>44</sup> State maps and county locations used in Diagrams 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, and 2.11 rely upon the wonderful maps provided by the Historical Census Browser. Retrieved August 12, 2012, from the University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center: <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/collections>. Episcopal Counties in 1860 identified using the following sources: *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana* (New Orleans: Isaac T. Hinton, 1860); *Journal of the Sixty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: Chas. H. Wynne, 1860); *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Memphis: WM. F. Hutton & Co. Book and Job Printers, 1860); *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventy-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1860); *Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Jackson: Mississippian Book and Job Office, 1860); *Journal of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia* (Savannah: Geo. N. Nichols, 1860); *Journal of the Forty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of North Carolina* (Fayetteville: Edward J. Hale & Son, 1860); *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama* (Mobile: Farrow & Dennett, Book and Job Printers, 1860); *Journal of the Proceedings of The Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America Assembled in a General Convention...In the Year of Our Lord, 1859* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1860), 444; *De Bow's Review* 26 (January 1859): 111. Texas and Arkansas were not as organized as more eastern dioceses in 1860, therefore sporadic reports provided a challenge to identifying all Episcopal Counties. To map the Episcopal Counties in both states it became necessary to consult additional sources on the extensive missionary activity in the region: *Journal of the Proceedings of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity, of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America Assembled in General Convention....in the Year of Our Lord 1847* (New York: Daniel Dana, Jr., 1847), 208-210, 262, 268; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America Assembled in General Convention....in the Year of Our Lord 1850* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1851), 202-205, 267-268; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, Assembled in a General Convention...in the Year of Our Lord 1856* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1857), 275-279; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. Assembled in a General Convention...in the Year of Our Lord, 1859* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1860), 334-336; *The Spirit of Missions* 18, no. 1, (January 1853): 4, 11-14; *The Spirit of Missions* 18, no. 5, (May 1853): 139-140; *The Spirit of Missions* 18, no. 11, (November 1853): 489-503; *Journal of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas*

prayers and cotton gins. Every state, except Georgia, produced a majority of its cotton in Episcopal Counties. In 1860, Episcopal Counties in the South collectively raised and baled 64.8% of the region's cotton. The production of that cotton depended upon the exploitation of slave labor, and therefore at least 69.1% of the South's slave population resided in the region's Episcopal Counties. Planters owned a large portion of the slaves living in Episcopal Counties. Episcopal Counties had high concentrations of planters (defined as slaveholders with twenty or more slaves). Approximately 69.2% of the South's planter class resided in the region's

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(Houston: The Telegraph and Power Press Book Office, 1858); *Journal of the Tenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas* (San Antonio: The Herald Office, 1859); *Journal of the Eleventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas* (1860). For county-level cotton production, tobacco production, rice production, cane sugar production, slave population, and slaveholder statistics in 1860: *Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior* ed. Joseph G. Kennedy (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), 2-9, 18-29, 66-69, 84-87, 104-111, 128-151, 154-165, 223-245. Census statistics used the following units in compiling data: cotton- 400lb bales, tobacco- pounds, rice-pounds, and cane sugar 1,000lb hogsheads. State communicant totals: *Journals of General Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the United States, 1785-1835*, 495-497, 701-703; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America in a General Convention* (New York: Swords, Stanford & Co., 1838), 142; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America* (New York: Swords, Stanford & Co., 1841), 148; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America Assembled in a General Convention...in the Year of Our Lord 1844* (New York: James A. Sparks, 1845), 212; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity, of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America Assembled in a General Convention...in the Year of Our Lord 1847* (New York: Daniel Dana, Jr., 1847), 198-199; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America assembled in a General Convention...in the Year of Our Lord 1850* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1851), 188; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church...in the Year of Our Lord 1853* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1854), 285-286; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America...in the Year of Our Lord 1856* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1857), 260-261; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America Assembled in a General Convention...in the Year of Our Lord, 1859* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1860), 317-318. Data on slaveholders and aggregate slave populations incorporated 1850 and 1860 census data from Historical Census Browser. Retrieved August 12, 2012, from the University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center: <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/collections>. Formula for Membership Projections = Size of Average Episcopal Congregation X Number of Organized Churches in Diocese. Size of Average Episcopal congregation in 1860 based upon: Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (Piscataway (NJ): Rutgers University Press, 2006), 30.

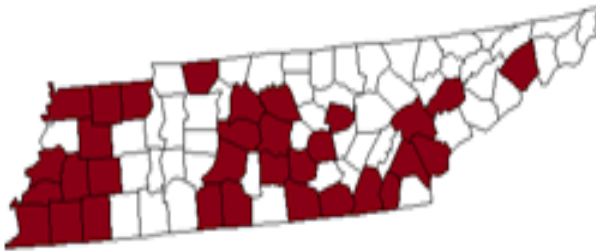


## Episcopal Counties: Tennessee, 1860

### Diagram 2.1

Membership Projection for the Diocese of Tennessee-  
Congregants in Organized Churches, 1860

1,474



#### Tennessee's Episcopal Communicants

Year	Communicants
1838	210
1841	279
1844	650
1847	545
1850	653
1853	770
1856	862
1859	1,300

#### Episcopal Counties as a % of State Totals, 1860

Episcopal Counties produced **88.9%** of cotton bales in Tennessee

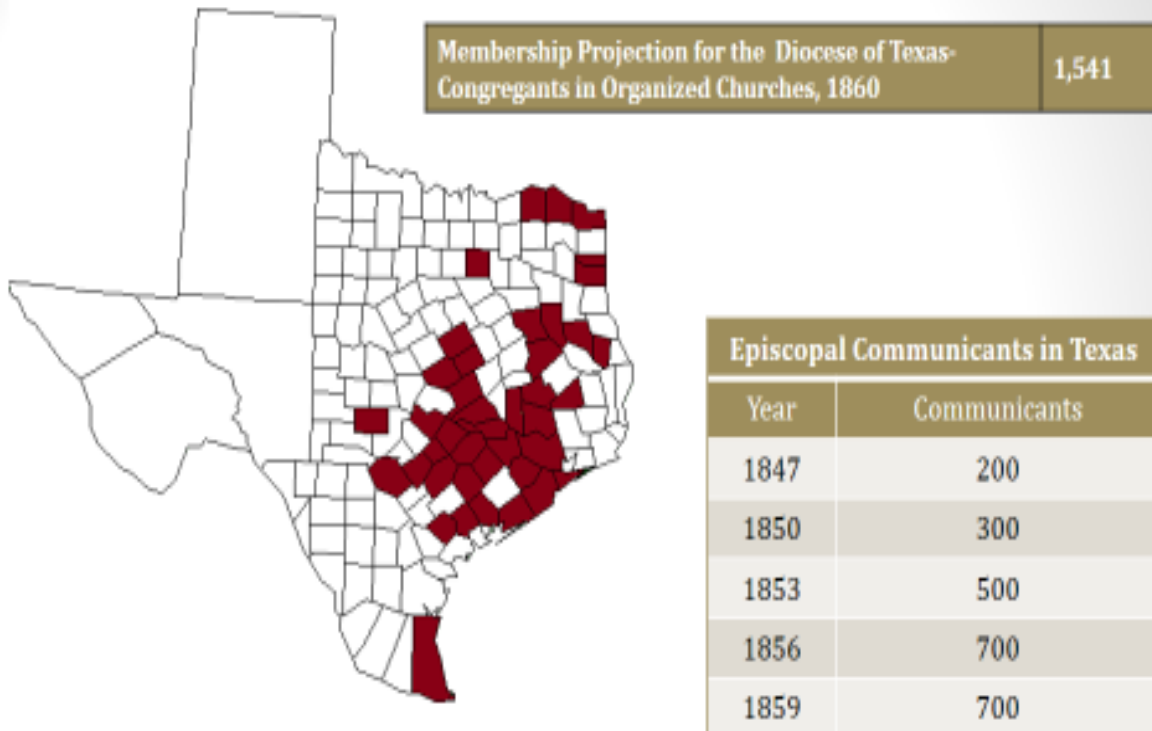
**79.3%** of planters in Tennessee resided in Episcopal Counties

**72.1%** of slaves in Tennessee resided in Episcopal Counties

Episcopal Counties produced **58.1%** of tobacco in Tennessee

## Episcopal Counties: Texas, 1860

### Diagram 2.2



#### Episcopal Counties as a % of State Totals in 1860

Episcopal Counties produced **66.3%** of all cotton bales in Texas

**66.7%** of planters in Texas resided in Episcopal Counties

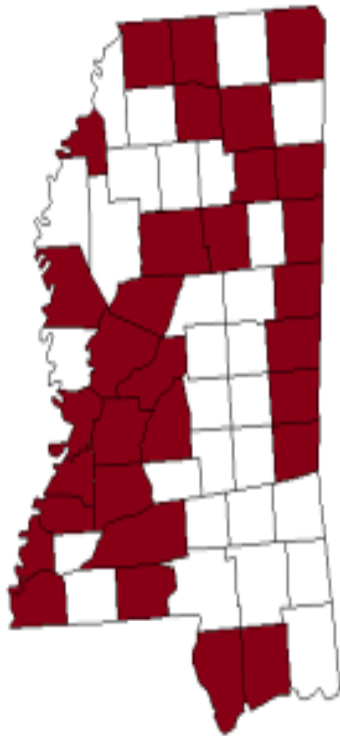
**61.6%** of slaves in Texas resided in Episcopal Counties





## Episcopal Counties: Mississippi, 1860

### Diagram 2.5



Membership Projection for the Diocese of Mississippi-  
Congregants in Organized Churches, 1860

2,814

#### Mississippi's Episcopal Communicants

Year	Communicants
1838	116
1841	179
1844	297
1847	450
1850	500
1853	572
1856	1,037
1859	1,400

#### Episcopal Counties as a % of State Totals, 1860

Episcopal Counties produced **72.2%** of cotton bales in Mississippi

**74.2%** of planters in Mississippi resided in Episcopal Counties

**77.3%** of slaves in Mississippi resided in Episcopal Counties



## Episcopal Counties: Florida, 1860

### Diagram 2.7

Membership Projection for the Diocese of Florida- Congregants in Organized Churches, 1860	<b>603</b>
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Florida's Episcopal Communicants	
Year	Communicants
1838	100
1841	150
1844	182
1847	220
1850	244
1853	410
1856	515
1859	630

#### Episcopal Counties as a % of State Totals, 1860

Episcopal Counties produced **63.6%** of cotton bales in Florida

**54.2%** of planters in Florida resided in Episcopal Counties

**55.6%** of slaves in Florida resided in Episcopal Counties

## Episcopal Counties: North Carolina, 1860

### Diagram 2.8

Membership Projection for the Diocese of North Carolina- Congregants in Organized Churches, 1860	3,953
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#### North Carolina's Episcopal Communicants

Year	Communicants
1838	1,233
1841	1,304
1844	1,711
1847	1,850
1850	2,137
1853	2,000
1856	2,475
1859	3,036

#### Episcopal Counties as a % of State Totals, 1860

Episcopal Counties produced **71.7%** of cotton bales in North Carolina

**70.4%** of planters in North Carolina resided in Episcopal Counties

**56.5%** of slaves in North Carolina resided in Episcopal Counties

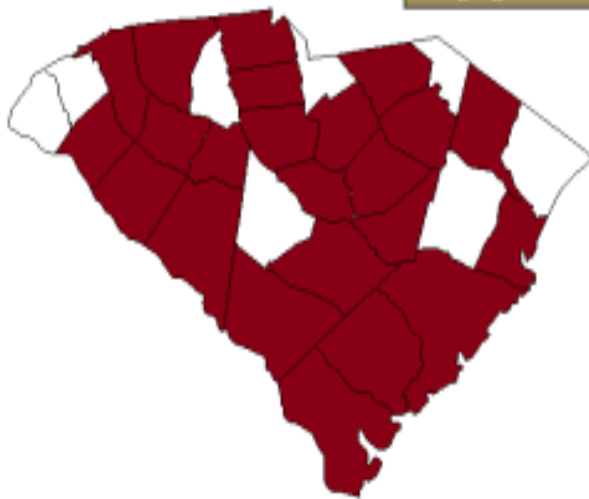
Episcopal Counties produced **66.6%** of tobacco in North Carolina



## Episcopal Counties: South Carolina, 1860

### Diagram 2.9

Membership Projection for the Diocese of South Carolina-  
Congregants in Organized Churches, 1860 4,690



#### South Carolina's Episcopal Communicants

Year	Communicants
1838	2,808
1841	3,344
1844	3,535
1847	4,324
1850	4,916
1853	5,597
1856	5,993
1859	5,672

#### Episcopal Counties as a % of State Totals, 1860

Episcopal Counties produced **85.2%** of cotton bales in South Carolina

**88.0%** of planters in South Carolina resided in Episcopal Counties

**88.5%** of slaves in South Carolina resided in Episcopal Counties

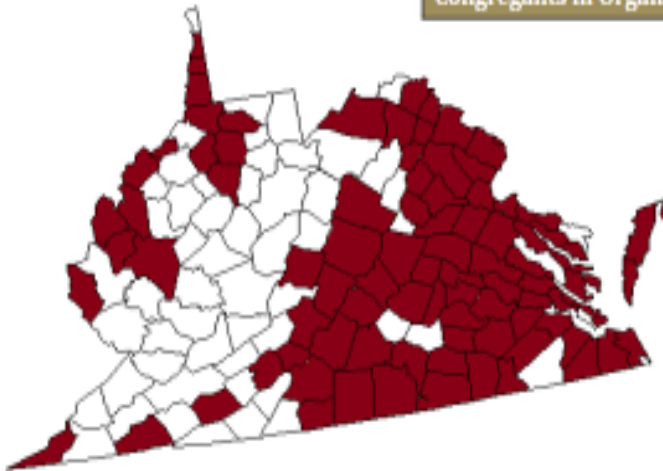
Episcopal Counties produced **99.4%** of rice in South Carolina

## Episcopal Counties: Virginia, 1860

### Diagram 2.10

Membership Projection for the Diocese of Virginia-  
Congregants in Organized Churches, 1860

11,725



Virginia's Episcopal Communicants	
Year	Communicants
1838	3,297
1841	3,722
1844	5,000
1847	6,000
1850	5,347
1853	5,299
1856	6,572
1859	7,487

#### Episcopal Counties as a % of State Totals, 1860

Episcopal Counties produced **77.9%** of cotton bales in Virginia

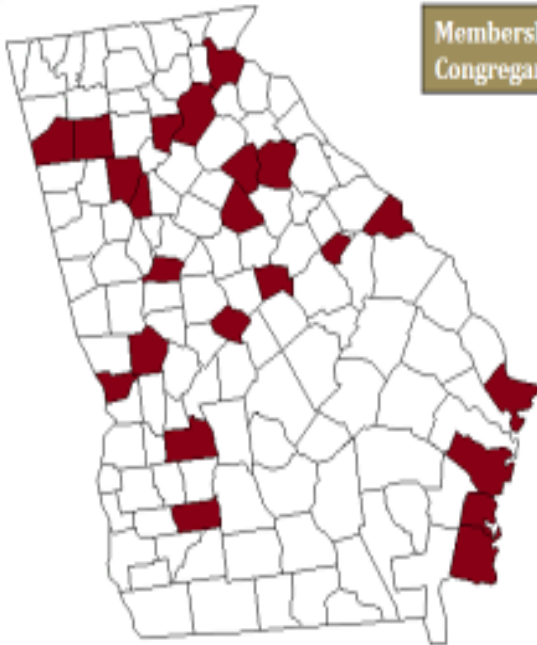
**90.6%** of planters in Virginia resided in Episcopal Counties

**89.8%** of slaves in Virginia resided in Episcopal Counties

Episcopal Counties produced **92.3%** of tobacco in Virginia

## Episcopal Counties: Georgia, 1860

### Diagram 2.11



Membership Projection for the Diocese of Georgia-  
Congregants in Organized Churches, 1860 1,809

Georgia's Episcopal Communicants	
Year	Communicants
1838	293
1841	302
1844	700
1847	894
1850	950
1853	1,120
1856	1,736
1859	1,998

#### Episcopal Counties as a % of State Totals, 1860

Episcopal Counties produced **16.9%** of cotton bales in Georgia

**23.4%** of planters in Georgia resided in Episcopal Counties

**25.5%** of slaves in Georgia resided in Episcopal Counties

Episcopal Counties produced **90.5%** of rice in Georgia

Episcopal Counties. A majority of planters in every southern state, except Georgia, called Episcopal Counties home. Episcopal Counties and the South's leading plantation counties claimed a concurrent social geography.<sup>45</sup>

Inhabitants of the South's Episcopal Counties filled church coffers with financial resources generated from plantation agriculture, subscribed to diocesan fundraising campaigns, and made generous donations to religious societies. Revivified financial support enabled the Episcopal Church to create the infrastructure of renaissance ranging from chapels to seminaries throughout the South. For example, Virginia Episcopalians authorized the creation of a “theological school” at Williamsburg in 1821. Episcopalians in the tobacco commonwealth hoped the theological school would remedy clergy shortages and revitalize their struggling church. During the state convention the following year, Bishop Moore conveyed to delegates the renaissance underway within his diocese. Moore asserted that Virginians had provided in one year very “liberal subscriptions” to support the construction of the theological school. The Virginia Theological Seminary opened in 1823. Before the end of the decade, the Virginia Theological Seminary purchased a sixty acre farm for \$5000 near Alexandria for its permanent location. In addition to the proposed seminary, Bishop Moore underscored the progress that had occurred during the first eight years of his tenure. In 1814, when Moore took over the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia only had seven clergymen. In 1822, Moore’s diocese that number of clergymen had increased to twenty-three. Bishop Moore encouraged the Diocese of Virginia to consolidate and expand its gains with “evangelical” precepts demarcated by the “doctrines of the cross; preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified.” Moore seemed to genuinely envision that in the 1820s the diocese in Virginia appeared to be “rising from the ruin...taking her harp from

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<sup>45</sup> Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 60; Stanley L. Engerman and Robert E. Gallman, *The Cambridge Economic History of the United States* Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 340.

the willows and proclaiming the praises of her Almighty deliverer.” Episcopal educational facilities along with enhanced compensation from wealthier parishes promised to alleviate the clergy shortage that had plagued the South since the American Revolution. After 1820, southern dioceses imbrued with donations from a revived planter class engaged in elaborate fundraising campaigns that enabled the Episcopal Church's renaissance.<sup>46</sup>

Church leaders understood the clear linkage between plantation agriculture and the architecture of their renaissance. In many parishes in the South, cotton yields often determined church construction plans. For instance, Immanuel Church in Lagrange, Tennessee communicated to the state convention that \$567.00 worth of cotton had been "collected for building a Rectory" in 1859. Dependency on cotton and other plantation staple crops ensured that sometimes agricultural productivity rather than a vote of the vestry determined the timing of church construction. Calvary Church in Holmes County, Mississippi commenced building a parsonage for their rector in 1853. A year later, Reverend Benjamin Halsted reported that Calvary Church's parsonage remained unfinished due to "a destructive fire in Tchula, consuming almost the entire cotton crop." In 1848, Edward Fontaine used cotton production near Aberdeen, Mississippi as the reason to establish an Episcopal Church. According to Fontaine, "fertile portions of the prairie and hammock lands of North Mississippi" were situated around Aberdeen. Fontaine estimated that Aberdeen had shipped 24,000 bales of cotton during the last "boating season." Fontaine pleaded with the Diocese of Mississippi not to neglect St. John's Parish in Aberdeen. A fixation on cotton production propelled Fontaine to over exaggerate his appeal by promising that Aberdeen would be "in a few years be the largest city" in the state of Mississippi. In many Episcopal parishes across the South, cotton emerged as the currency of

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<sup>46</sup> *Journals of the Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia: From the Year 1785 to the Present Day*, 144-175; *The Quarterly Journal of the American Education Society* 4 (October 1828): 120; Pritchard, *A History of the Episcopal Church*, 123.

their ecclesial renaissance. Problems with cotton production, therefore, could also hinder the Episcopal Church. St. John's Church in Aberdeen faced a substantial indebtedness in 1854. Reverend Charles Disbrow blamed "the want of navigation for the shipment of the last year's crop of cotton" for an economic depression in Aberdeen. Disbrow complained that Aberdeen had no currency in circulation. To complicate Aberdeen's depression, poor whites also suffered since the previous year's corn crop had "been almost a failure." Once Aberdeen gleaned a financial return on its cotton, Disbrow believed St. John's Parish could then liquidate its debt. Cotton production often dictated parish and diocesan budgets for the Episcopal Church in the South.<sup>47</sup>

Staple crops of the planter class marked both the geography and materialistic-visual culture of Episcopal Churches in the South. Parishioners described Christ Church in Wilton, South Carolina as located in the "midst of rice lands" occupied by many of the state's leading planters. Assistant Bishop John Johns of Virginia preached at a tobacco factory at Stony Point in 1846. The tobacco factory church used a "'twisting table' for a desk" and "packing boxes...for seats." During Johns's sojourn at the tobacco factory church, he preached during the afternoon to slaves near Stony Point. More than rice and tobacco, however, cotton defined the Episcopal Church's renaissance in the South. Bishop William Mercer Green of Mississippi captured the coalescence of cotton, slavery, and planters in the Episcopal Church by recounting two visits to Bolton's Depot in 1855:

...the cotton shed had been so prepared by temporary fixtures, as to make it quite a pleasant and comfortable place of worship...I again officiated at Bolton's

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<sup>47</sup> *Journal of Proceedings of the Thirty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: A. A. Stitt, 1859), 67; *Journal of the Twenty-Eighty Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1854), 75; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1848), 32-33; *Journal of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Natchez Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1855), 81.

Depot. The day was pleasant, and I found on my arrival, quite a large congregation of black as well as whites, comfortably seated under the cotton shed. The rude extempore seats were covered with clean cotton bagging; and a triple tier of bales at the further end formed a very good sort of gallery...

The Episcopal Church's cotton shed church in Mississippi captured how the economics of the South's planter class shaped the functioning of the Episcopal Church. Bishop Green's cotton shed church incorporated in a dramatic scene the three social pillars of the Episcopal Church's renaissance: planters, slaves, and cotton.<sup>48</sup>

Embryonic republican bureaucracies, ineffective bishops, and economic stagnation in the South created a nadir for the Protestant Episcopal Church in the three decades prior to 1820. Two trends reversed that nadir. First, Episcopalians in the South used their ecclesiastical republicanism to elect new leaders with more aggressive and strategic missionary strategies. Second, the cotton revolution empowered the South's planter class to provide new financial resources to the Episcopal Church. Commencing in the 1820s and continuing until the start of the Civil War, the confluence of new Episcopal stewardship in the South along with the cotton revolution ended the post-Revolution nadir. As planters carried cotton production and slavery to new western lands, the Episcopal Church accompanied them. Northerner Frederick Law Olmsted traveled through numerous Episcopal Counties in the antebellum South during his journeys in the 1850s. Since Episcopal republicanism had rejected conceptualizations of earthly kingdoms, Olmsted's *Cotton Kingdom* maybe should have been given an alternative title. Olmsted had in fact traversed through an expansive cotton communion. In the South's antebellum Episcopal Counties, planter class families praised both Christ and cotton.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>*Journal of the Diocesan Convention of South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1849), 52; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Lynchburg: The Virginian Office, 1846), 30-31; *Journal of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1856), 16.

<sup>49</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom* ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr. (New York: Random House, 1984).

### **CODA— WILLIAM NEWTON MERCER: A COTTON COMMUNICANT**

Dr. William Newton Mercer moved to Adams County, Mississippi during the 1820s and quickly became one of the state's leading cotton planters. The so-called "Adams County Aristocracy" had formed a county cotton society designed to respond to the collapse of cotton prices in the mid-1820s. In 1826, cotton prices dropped seven cents to \$0.12 per pound. As Mercer and other planters in Adams County gathered in July 1827, the price of cotton had continued its plunge to \$0.09 per pound. The Adams County Aristocracy of cotton planters debated at their assembly how to craft economic policies designed to increase cotton prices, and therefore their wealth. Mercer and his planter colleagues adopted nine resolutions designed to increase the demand for cotton. The second resolution proposed that plantations in Adams County pursue collective practices by agreeing to:

...use goods manufactured from cotton particularly the articles of cotton bagging, cotton blankets, and cotton clothing for our slaves, and for such articles also of our own clothing as may be deemed suitable and adopted to our climate...

Some members of the Adams County cotton society even contemplated the creation of planter-controlled factories to produce more cotton products. Mercer's active participation in the meeting reflected his ascension into Mississippi's ruling planter class. Despite a long-term



depression in prices, cotton had indeed made Mercer a very wealthy planter because land and slaves, not yearly capital accumulation, secured his place in the planter class. By 1831, Mercer owned more than 200 slaves who grew his cotton on 5,000 acres of land dispersed across five plantations.<sup>1</sup>

As one of Mississippi's wealthiest planters, Mercer decided to use his affluence to plant a new mission for the Protestant Episcopal Church. In the 1830s, Mercer expended \$20,000 in the construction of St. Mary's Church along with an additional sum of \$8,000 for an accompanying parsonage on his Laurel Hill plantation. Bishop Leonidas Polk consecrated St. Mary's Church on April 28, 1839. A "large assemblage" from Natchez and surrounding plantations attended the morning consecration services. Three Mississippi clergymen assisted Bishop Polk during the services. After the public consecration ceremony, Bishop Polk preached to Mercer's slaves. The premodern edifice of St. Mary's Church reflected a plantation community that envisioned itself as a bulwark against modernization in religion and economics. Indeed, Bishop Polk adored Mercer's church as "the most beautiful specimen of Gothic architecture." Bishop Polk heralded Mercer's construction of St. Mary's Church as a model for other Episcopalians in Mississippi. Polk expressed his conviction "the Lord... had blessed" the religious endeavors underway at Laurel Hill. On the first day of the Mississippi's state convention in May 1839, the Reverend George Weller of Natchez moved that St. Mary's Church at Laurel Hill be admitted into the

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<sup>1</sup> *The American Farmer, Containing Original Essays and Selection on Agriculture, Horticulture, Rural and Domestic Economy...* ed. John S. Skinner No. 29 Vol. 9 (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1827), 225-227; Edwin Adams Davis and William Ransom Hogan, *The Barber of Natchez* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), 215; Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 277.

diocese. The state convention approved Weller's motion. St. Mary's Church at Laurel Hill had officially joined the Diocese of Mississippi.<sup>2</sup>

After the admission of St. Mary's Church, Mercer actively participated in Episcopal Church politics. Mississippi's sixteenth annual diocesan convention proved to be a decisive moment in the spiritual life of William Newton Mercer and his St. Mary's Church at Laurel Hill. Mississippi Episcopalians entered their convention divided into two factions over the question of approving the appointment of Bishop James Otey of Tennessee as the diocese's presiding bishop. The pro-Otey faction organized an impressive legislative agenda. Dr. A. P. Merrill, a lay delegate from Natchez, managed the floor of the state convention for members of the pro-Otey faction. First, Merrill proposed Canon IX that would strengthen the most organized and oldest plantation parishes of the Natchez-Vicksburg region by requiring smaller parishes which failed to consecutively send communications to the state convention for two years to reapply for membership in the diocese. Delegates at the state convention ratified Canon IX without amendment. Pro-Otey clergymen then used the opportunity of presenting their parochial reports to underscore the urgent necessity of appointing a bishop by highlighting parishes teeming with confirmands longing for the assurance of confirmation. After success on the first day, Merrill moved the most controversial parts of the pro-Otey faction's agenda. Dr. Merrill proposed what delegates called the "Merrill Resolution" which stated the Diocese of Mississippi

...is hereby "*placed under the full Episcopal charge and authority*" of the Right Rev. James H. Otey, Bishop of Tennessee in accordance with the second section of the third Canon of the General Convention of 1838.

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<sup>2</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1839), 5, 21-22; Bishop Leighton Coleman, *A History of the American Church to the Close of the Nineteenth Century*, (New York: Edwin S. Gorham, 1906), 91.

According to the state convention's journal, the Merrill Resolution "gave rise to a warm and lengthy debate" as the anti-Otey faction voiced their opposition. Delegates voted to postpone consideration of the Merrill Resolution. Dr. Merrill then moved a series of less controversial education resolutions adopted by the state convention. For example, the Diocese of Mississippi ordered clergymen to make Sunday School a priority because in the opinion of delegates: "Sunday school as means of religious instruction is inferior only to the sacraments and rites of the Church." In addition, Dr. Merrill offered an education resolution supported by planters like Mercer:

Resolved, That the condition of the colored population in this Diocese is such as not only to render their religious instruction important...the several clergymen in charge of parishes to devote a portion of their time and talent to this interesting duty.

Delegates also adopted Merrill's slave mission resolution. Episcopal clergymen in Mississippi would now assist planters in exercising social control over the state's slave population. After two days, Merrill and the pro-Otey faction had reformed the structural and educational policies of their diocese, yet their primary goal remained undone.<sup>3</sup>

During the third day of the state convention, delegates reelected Dr. William Newton Mercer as a lay deputy to the General Convention's House of Deputies. Following General Convention elections, members of the anti-Otey faction used parliamentary procedure, especially frequent dilatory motions to adjourn and "desultory conversation" to delay a final vote on the Merrill Resolution. On the fourth and final day of the state convention, delegates returned to the Merrill Resolution. Once again, a delegate offered a motion to adjourn until 3:00 p.m., which passed. Upon reassembly at 3:00 p.m., delegates engaged in final debate on the Merrill Resolution. Under the voting rules of the Diocese of Mississippi at the time, each parish cast one

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<sup>3</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Free Trader Office, 1841), 16-20.

vote reflecting the will of the parish's clergy and lay delegates. Once the votes of the five parishes in attendance were tallied, the Merrill Resolution narrowly passed on a vote of 3-2. Bishop Otey accepted the invitation and would preside over the diocese and state convention the following year.<sup>4</sup>

As the provisional bishop for Mississippi, Bishop Otey visited Mercer's St. Mary's Church in April 1842. Otey's visitation to Laurel Hill spanned four days stretching from Thursday to Sunday. During the first three days of worship services, Reverend Daniel H. Deacon read prayers, while Bishop Otey preached, baptized, and confirmed. On Sunday, St. Mary's Church conducted two worship services to enforce racial segregation. At the morning service for whites, Bishop Otey confirmed one person and distributed the sacrament of Holy Communion to twelve attendees. Subsequent to an afternoon respite, Bishop Otey and Reverend Deacon once again gathered at the church at four o'clock in the afternoon to direct worship for the plantation community's slaves. Otey and Deacon started their biracial assemblage with prayers and then both addressed the congregation. Following their preaching, Deacon baptized eight adults and thirty-six children, while Bishop Otey baptized seventy-four children. In reflecting upon his baptism of black children, Bishop Otey observed "I humbly pray God they may be all found written in the Lamb's book of life." For Bishop Otey, Episcopal theology could shape the institution of slavery as it offered an opportunity "to ameliorate the religious condition of this portion of our fellow creatures." Bishop Otey's sojourn at St. Mary's Church embodied how the structural and geographic nature of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the South inspired an attitude of Christian paternalism toward the region's slave population. Although St. Mary's Church had primary responsibility for the slaves of William Newton

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<sup>4</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 18-19, 31.

Mercer, Reverend Deacon did on occasion provide “early morning” services to the slaves of Mercer’s neighbors, since Adams County served as one Mississippi's leading plantation counties in the state. Reverend Deacon used his location at St. Mary's Church to preach on neighboring plantations. For example, Deacon preached on the plantations of "Dr. Abercrombie" and "Mrs. Wood" in 1842.<sup>5</sup>

Bishop Otey visited St. Mary's Church during Holy Week in 1843. On Good Friday, Otey baptized a child named Louisa R. Conner. On Saturday, Otey preached to a congregation of slaves, and with Reverend Deacon, he baptized "21 children and 20 adults." Bishop Otey once again on Easter morning preached a sermon to slaves in St. Marcy's Church before administering confirmation to sixteen people. In addition, Bishop Otey offered Holy Communion to thirty communicants at St. Mary's Church. After confirming ten additional Episcopalians at St. Mary's Church in 1844, Bishop Otey commended the Episcopal planter Dr. Mercer:

The benevolent designs contemplated by Dr. Mercer, in the foundation and support of this church, seem thus far to be graciously smiled upon by our Heavenly Father, and to give encouragement to the arduous labors of the worldly brother who devotes his days to the religious instruction of the slaves on this and one or two adjoining estates. May a gracious God abundantly bless and water the souls of all concerned in this charitable work, this labor of love, and bring master and servant, pastor and people all, at last to meet in a better world.

St. Mary's Church epitomized how the planter class and the Protestant Episcopal Church in the South had a potent synergism throughout the early nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Eighteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (Nashville: W. F. Bang & Co., 1843), 10-11, 18-19; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (Jackson: The Southern Office, 1844), 25.

<sup>6</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi*, 18.

During the mid-1840s, St. Mary's Church lacked a full-time rector. In 1847, Reverend Thomas S. Savage became Rector of St. Mary's Church. Savage described his ministry as extending to three of Mercer's plantations which housed over 400 slaves. Savage conducted two services on Sunday afternoons for slaves and visited "the plantations conversing with the sick and giving such domiciliary instructions as the circumstance would permit." Savage's wife along with the "wives of the overseers" on the various plantations revived the Sunday School at St. Mary's Church.<sup>7</sup>

Mercer and Otey sustained a friendship even after the bishop concluded his supervision over the state to exclusively preside over the Diocese of Tennessee. For example, in the early 1850s Mercer contacted Bishop Otey regarding an Episcopal clergyman by the name of Reverend A. A. Muller. Bishop Otey responded to Mercer's inquiry by providing internal reports regarding accusations that charged Muller with engaging in sexual indiscretions. According to Bishop Otey, if "there be a sin for which there would in the judgment of men, be no forgiveness, Mueller was guilty of that sin." Muller "seduced the daughter" of man who hired him to offer teaching and pastoral services to his family.<sup>8</sup> In addition to maintaining a connection with his church's bishops, Mercer's position as a wealthy cotton planter and church legislator gave him the power of patronage, which other Episcopalians solicited. For example, in March 1852 five Episcopal women from Oxford, Mississippi dispatched a letter to Mercer and requested financial support for their recently organized congregation, St. Peter's Church. The women of St. Peter's Church justified their solicitation as an investment for the "sons of the church" attending the newly organized University of Mississippi in Oxford. The fundraisers from St. Peter's Church

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<sup>7</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1848), 35-36.

<sup>8</sup> Bishop James H. Otey to William Newton Mercer, 27 April 1852, William Newton Mercer Papers, Records of Ante-bellum Southern Plantations from the Revolution through the Civil War, Series H Reel 24 and Series I Part 3 Reels 1-3.

referenced the words of Bishop William Mercer Green as they argued all Episcopalians in Mississippi should support providing university students affiliated with the Protestant Episcopal Church "an opportunity of engaging in her worship, and receiving her instructions during that...period of life." Bishop Green visited Oxford in July 1853 to find the women of St. Peter's Church in "utter disappointment" due to the poor response to the "circular letters written by their own hands and sent out to various gentlemen within the Diocese," such as William Newton Mercer.<sup>9</sup>

In January 1854, Bishop William Mercer Green visited Dr. Mercer's plantations and St. Mary's Church. Bishop Green expressed admiration for Mercer's "beautiful little Church." Although St. Mary's Church had been for five years "unoccupied," Dr. Mercer and Bishop Green desired to restore regular Episcopal services at St. Mary's Church. Dr. Mercer informed Bishop Green that he would provide "after his death for the perpetual maintenance of religious worship and instruction" for slaves at St. Mary's Church. Bishop Green hoped an Episcopal clergyman would be willing to accept the rectorship of St. Mary's Church and "labor, out of view of the world, for the soul of the slave." Bishop Green still had not located a clergyman willing to accept the pulpit of St. Mary's Church by the following year. In 1856, Green attempted to visit St. Mary's Church to baptize "forty or fifty" of Mercer's slaves, but a cold rain prevented the Bishop of Mississippi from baptizing all of the slaves. Bishop Green returned to St. Mary's Church to hold services in February 1857. Bishop Green once again lauded the "beautiful architecture" of St. Mary's Church. During his visit, Bishop Green baptized seventy-two slave children. As the candidates for baptism "clustered around the chancel," Bishop Green

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<sup>9</sup> James H. Otey to William Newton Mercer, April 27, 1852 and St. Peter's Church to William Newton Mercer, March 26, 1852, in William Newton Mercer Papers, Records of Ante-bellum Southern Plantations from the Revolution through the Civil War, Series H Reel 24 and Series I Part 3 Reels 1-3; *Journal of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1854), 17-18.

celebrated as he "signed them with the holy emblem." The baptismal service moved Bishop Green and once again expressed hope to find a permanent rector for St. Mary's Church. Bishop Green did note that slaves on plantations surrounding St. Mary's Church had a lay catechist instructing their children. In 1857, Mercer directed a \$3000 donation to the Diocese of Mississippi. Bishop Green used the money to purchase forty acres of land in Jackson for the construction of a possible "female school." Bishop Green visited Mercer's plantation and baptized fifty-four black infants in 1860. Green expressed a desire to prolong his visit to Laurel Hill to preach the "riches of Christ to the very large number of slaves on these plantations."<sup>10</sup>

For Mercer, church and secular politics became intertwined in the 1840s and 1850s. As a church legislator elected multiple times by Episcopalians in Mississippi, Mercer formed a deep friendship with arguably the most famous secular legislator of the nineteenth century, Henry Clay. Clay and Mercer developed a camaraderie that included lengthy visits between their families. Dr. Mercer supported Clay in his ambitions to become President of the United States, especially during the Election of 1844. Although Clay's Whig Party lost the state of Mississippi to the Democrat James K. Polk in the presidential election of 1844, the Senator from Kentucky did carry Adams County. After the returns had been tallied, Dr. Mercer transmitted a letter to Clay to pronounce the election had caused him feelings of "disappointment, distress, and disgust." Mercer's own children "wept bitterly" at Clay's loss in the election. In addition, Mercer assured Clay that even many Democrats had been willing to "express their regret at the success

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<sup>10</sup> *Journal of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1854), 22-23; *Journal of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Natchez Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1855), 30; *Journal of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1856), 29; *Journal of the Thirty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1857), 39, 44; *Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Jackson: Mississippian Book and Job Office, 1860), 45.



of their party." As his friend wrestled with a major political defeat, Mercer extended an invitation to rest with friends:

Come then among them, my dear friend, you will find none elsewhere truer or warmer than those of Mississippi or of [New Orleans]...Your old apartment is ready for you...the family would feel mortified if you were less at home with us than your own Ashland.

Senator Clay's Episcopal friend demonstrated the strength of their friendship at a moment of personal agony. Mercer did not just offer words. In early 1845, Senator Clay learned that the debts he had accumulated during his political campaigns had been "cancelled at Lexington by some unknown and inscrutable agency." Clay suspected a group of his friends had paid his debts. In a letter to Clay, Mercer did not deny involvement but sought to convince the Senator from Kentucky that he should accept the magnanimous gift. Mercer evoked republicanism in his justification. According to Mercer, Clay should welcome the financial support because throughout history statesmen have been "rewarded by national benefactions...If Republics are ungrateful...private individuals should perform the duty neglected by the public authorities." The Election of 1844 had strengthened the Mercer-Clay friendship in profound ways. Unbeknownst to Clay and Mercer, the results of the Election of 1844 would compel the two friends to deal with death and religion in an unexpected way.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout the Election of 1844, Senator Clay had campaigned against the excesses of "manifest destiny" and a perceived Democratic hankering for a war with Mexico to secure Texas. Democrats, therefore, interpreted Polk's narrow national victory as a mandate to annex Texas and confront Mexico on the Rio Grande boundary dispute. The Polk Administration's maneuvering

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<sup>11</sup> Michael J. Dubin, *United States Presidential Elections, 1788-1860: The Official Results by County and State* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Inc., 2002), 88-89; William Newton Mercer to Henry Clay, 7 December 1844 and William Newton Mercer to Henry Clay, 22 April 1845 in *The Life, Correspondence, and Speeches of Henry Clay in Six Volumes* ed. Calvin Colton Vol. IV (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1857), 513, 527-528.

and brinkmanship ultimately resulted in a war with Mexico in 1845. Historians have often minimized the U.S. war with Mexico as unimpressive since it occurred between the more "significant" conflicts of the American Revolution and Civil War. Although it ranks as one of the forgotten wars of the United States, real Americans and Mexicans died during the two years of military conflict. Families like the Clays of Kentucky understood that every war, no matter how small, had real and tragic human costs. Senator Clay's son, Henry Clay Jr., served in the United States Army during the war with Mexico. At the Battle of Buena Vista, Henry Clay Jr. perished. In March 1847, General Zachary Taylor wrote a letter of condolence to Clay which extended a tribute to memorialize Henry Clay Jr. Taylor assured Clay that at the Battle of Buena Vista "gallantly did the sons of Kentucky, in the thickest of strife, uphold the honor of the State and of the country."<sup>12</sup>

Upon learning that Henry Clay Jr. had died in war, Dr. Mercer requested Bishop James H. Otey write to Senator Henry Clay and offer pastoral comfort to the Clay family in their time of mourning. Still distraught, Clay wrote a letter in April 1847 to Mercer in order to express gratitude to his friend for soliciting Otey's pastoral letter:

...I have also received a very friendly letter from Bishop Oty [sic], written at your [insistence]...there are some wounds so deep and excruciatingly painful, that He only can heal them, by whose inscrutable dispensations they have been inflicted. And the death of my beloved son is one of them...My poor wife bears the affliction with less than her usual fortitude...

Episcopal faith expressed in letters from both Mercer and Bishop Otey coupled with the death of his son moved Henry Clay in a life-altering way. Less than four months after Henry Clay Jr. had died on a distant battlefield in Mexico, Revered Edward F. Berkley of Lexington, Kentucky baptized Senator Clay as an Episcopalian in June 1847. Twelve days later on July 4, Clay

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<sup>12</sup> Zachary Taylor to Henry Clay, 1 March 1847 in *The Life, Correspondence, and Speeches of Henry Clay in Six Volumes* ed. Calvin Colton Vol. III (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1857), 50-51.

carried a statesman's patriotism, a newly visible Christian faith, and a father's grief to the table of Holy Communion as he participated in the Episcopal Church's sacrament in the chapel at Transylvania University in Lexington. For Episcopalians, the sacrament of Holy Communion conjured the hope of resurrection in its liturgy, which no doubt comforted Clay as he continued to mourn his son. The evidence clearly demonstrates that Mercer's personal expressions of Christian compassion along with his connections to the South's Episcopal bishops contributed on some level to Clay's decision to publically embrace the Episcopal Church. In doing so, Mercer demonstrated how the Episcopal Church's cotton communicants influenced the religiosity of the region's political leaders along with the South's plantations and local congregations.<sup>13</sup>

During the late 1850s, Mercer spent much of his time at his residence on Canal Street in New Orleans and as a result become involved in Louisiana's Episcopal politics. In the Pelican State, Mercer renewed his association with Bishop Leonidas Polk as he attended Christ Church in New Orleans. Recall, Polk had earlier served as the missionary bishop for Mississippi and in that capacity had consecrated St. Mary's Church on Mercer's Mississippi plantation. The Diocese of Louisiana had elected Polk as its bishop in the 1840s. In 1857, Christ Church elected Dr. Mercer as one its delegates to Louisiana's state convention. During the Louisiana state convention, delegates unanimously approved a resolution expressing the diocese's "cordial approbation...for the establishment of a Southern University." Following the approval resolution, Louisiana delegates elected Dr. William Newton Mercer as the diocese's lay representative on the University of the South's Board of Trustees. Christ Church in New Orleans reelected Mercer as one of its lay delegates to state convention in 1858, 1859, and 1860. The

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<sup>13</sup> Henry Clay to William Newton Mercer, 14 December 1847 in the William Newton Mercer Papers, Records of Ante-bellum Southern Plantations from the Revolution through the Civil War, Series H Reel 24 and Series I Part 3 Reels 1-3; Calvin Colton, *The Life, Correspondence, and Speeches of Henry Clay in Six Volumes* ed. Calvin Colton Vol. III (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1857), 52-53.

state convention, then, reelected Mercer to the University of the South's Board of Trustees in 1858. Louisiana's state convention also elected Dr. Mercer in both 1859 and 1860 to represent the diocese as a lay deputy in the General Convention's House of Deputies.<sup>14</sup>

Louisiana's Episcopalians elected an experienced church legislator in the form of Dr. William Newton Mercer to serve as one of their lay trustees, and in doing so the diocesan convention exemplified the fruition of their church's renaissance. Southern bishops joined the preexisting social coalition of planters and rectors that had ossified prior to American Revolution. The South's Episcopal coalition ensured that new plantations after the American Revolution would grow not just cotton but also the Protestant Episcopal Church. For the most sectional planters, the South epitomized the anti-thesis of a modernization wrought by industrial capitalism. Mercer's election as a trustee to the University of the South reflected how the post-renaissance Protestant Episcopal Church had nurtured a Christianized regionalism. Contemporaries estimated that by the 1850s, Mercer claimed over 8,000 acres in plantation lands, at least half of which he dedicated to cotton. Bishop Otey estimated that Mercer owned over 1,000 slaves prior to the Civil War. St. Mary's Church and William Newton Mercer exemplified the Episcopal renaissance that occurred after 1820. An expanding planter class dependent upon cotton and slavery needed a vibrant Protestant Episcopal Church to support its social hegemony. An examination of Episcopal geography in the South reveals that Protestant Episcopal churches emerged in communities controlled by planters and their families such as plantation districts, university towns, state capitals, and major cities of cotton commerce. Cotton

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<sup>14</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Nineteenth Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana* (New Orleans: B. M. Norman, Printer and Publisher, 1857), 7, 36-37; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twentieth Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana* (New Orleans: K. Fuhri, Printer and Publisher, 1858), 7, 19; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-First Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana* (New Orleans: B. Albertson, Printer and Publisher, 1859), 7, 15; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana* (New Orleans: Isaac T. Hinton, 1860), 10, 28.

and a new post-Revolution generation of church leadership had ginned up a revived Protestant Episcopal Church in the South.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *The Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste* ed. J. Jay Smith, Vol. VIII, (January-December 1858): 70-72.

**CHAPTER 3—  
COME TO THE WATERS: ENGENDERING EPISCOPALIANS**

"Art thou yet unwashed with baptism? Come to the waters. Repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins...infants are admitted to baptism, on the faith of those who bring them and the stipulations which are made for their Christian education. How solemn a responsibility which rests upon their parents and sponsors."

- Bishop Theodore Dehon of South Carolina

"To such a one she will prove a wife, including in herself 'all joys,' to his children, a mother who will fulfill all that the sacred name imports; to his household a mistress in whom authority will gracious tempered with love; to society and ornament and a blessing...and the testimony of her God, that 'She hath done what she could.'"

- Reverend Aldert Smedes

Philip Fendall of Virginia understood how religion crafted distinctive understandings of gender. In 1814, while attending Princeton University, Fendall wrote to his mother Mary Fendall, residing back in Virginia, to announce that he had decided to "become a parson." Fendall's decision emerged after developing a friendship with a religion student at Princeton, who he called "Saunders." According to Fendall, Saunders would be "a great acquisition to the interests of piety in the South, if he could be persuaded to remove there." Fendall told his mother that he hoped to induce Saunders to abandon his Presbyterian identity and "embrace the Episcopalian sect" to help reverse the church's "decline" in his home region.<sup>1</sup>

In January 1815, Fendall participated in "one of the most extraordinary revivals of religion" at Princeton. The Princeton revival had been sparked by a conviction amongst students that they were "radically sinful" and in need of "the aid of Grace." During the revival, Fendall experienced an epiphany that Christian masculinity promised a world in which the devout could

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Fendall to Mary Fendall, 3 January 1814, Correspondence of Philip R. Fendall, Accession 10851-a, SSCUVA.

"unite in social worship." Following his description of the revival, Fendall proclaimed to his mother: "I shall....devote my life to the Episcopalian ministry." A few months after the revival, Fendall reassured his mother that he intended to "embrace the study of theology" and further explained his academic plans:

It appears to me further, after due deliberation, that it would be most expedient for me to study the elementary parts of divinity at home, and to wind up by residing a few months with some eminent clergyman of the Episcopal sect, as to become acquainted [with] its peculiar doctrines.

Fendall's Episcopal morality soon confronted the challenge of secular notions of masculinity.

Fendall informed his mother that he would not attend the commencement ball due to "conscientious motives." Fendall feared that his fellow students would attribute his nonattendance to poverty or membership in a lower social class. To uphold his social standing and conscience, Fendall donated "the price of a ball ticket...to a subscription for erecting an establishment for instructing the poor children in religious knowledge." By making a ten dollar donation, which equated to the exact price of a ball ticket, Fendall could affirm his social class and masculinity, while still registering a Christian objection to what he perceived to be the questionable activities associated with the commencement ball. Philip Fendall's experience reflected how religiosity reshaped understandings of gender within the Episcopal Church as children matured into adulthood throughout the South.<sup>1</sup>

The Cotton Communion defined gender roles for its parishioners. Bishop William Meade of Virginia asserted that there could be doubt concerning "the division of the church into male and female...duties belonging to each" following confirmation. This chapter explores the gender roles that operated within the Episcopal Church in the South prior to the Civil War. Mary

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<sup>1</sup>Philip R. Fendal to Mary Fendall, 25 January 1815 and Phillip R. Fendall to Mary Fendall 17 June 1815, Correspondence of Philip R. Fendall, Accession 10851-a, SSCUVA.

P. Ryan defines gender as "the social and cultural process that distinguishes 'men' from 'women' in any historical moment" and that definition is applied throughout the ensuing chapter. The Episcopal Church, like other nineteenth century religious institutions, socially constructed and promoted gender roles consistent with its compendium of beliefs. The Episcopal Church's construction of gender began with an authentic moment of humanity as members of the planter class acted out of love and a veritable concern for their children by presenting their progeny for baptism and confirmation. Baptism symbolized the beginning of a life-long process of constructing gendered families. Many families in the South welcomed the family rituals of the Episcopal Church, even without becoming active members. For example, Reverend Cranmore Wallace of South Carolina surmised that for an Episcopal minister large "numbers call upon him in want, in sickness, in case of a baptism, a marriage or a death, whom he can never persuade to attend Church." As Episcopal children matured into adulthood, their church provided strict guidance on the acceptable gender roles for families who belonged to a patriarchal planter class. Chapter three will conclude by arguing that despite the patriarchal and exclusionary policies that prohibited Episcopal women in the antebellum South from occupying pulpits or vestries, the church's renaissance in the South would not have been possible without their contributions.<sup>2</sup>

### **Infants and Childhood**

Baptism marked the first experience with the Episcopal Church for most cradle-to-grave Episcopalians in the South prior to the Civil War. The General Convention in 1789 finalized its revised version of *The Book of Common Prayer* for use in the Protestant Episcopal Churches in

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<sup>2</sup> Bishop William Meade, *Pastoral to the Laity of the Episcopal Church of Virginia* (Gideon), 10, Accession: BV45R5.M418--, SSCUVA; Mary P. Ryan, *Mysteries of Sex: Tracing Men & Women through American History* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 9-11; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1857), 69-70.



the United States. Pursuant to the Protestant Episcopal Church's constitution, baptisms in the South adhered to the sacramental liturgy outlined in *The Book of Common Prayer*. After a series of prayers and a reading from the tenth chapter of the Gospel of Mark, *The Book of Common Prayer* required the following:

*Then the Minister shall take the Child into his Hands and shall say to the Godfathers and Godmothers,*

*Name this Child.*

*And then naming if after them (if they shall certify him that the Child may well endure it) he shall dip it in the Water discreetly and warily, saying*  
...I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

*Amen.*

*But if they certify the Child is weak it shall suffice to pour water upon it saying the aforesaid words.*

*Then the Minister shall say,*

We receive this Child into the Congregation of Christ's flock;\* and do sign with the sign of the Cross in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified; and to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil,; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end

*Amen.*

After baptism, Episcopal infants became combatants for the church militant. Cognizant of anti-Catholicism in the United States, the General Convention preserved in *The Book of Common Prayer* an alternative service for parents or sponsors who wished to omit the "sign of the cross" in the baptismal ritual. Although *The Book of Common Prayer* adopted in 1789 contained a service for an infant's private baptism, Episcopal clergy encouraged public baptisms. The Episcopal Church used public baptism as moment to both reinforce the shared identity of their faith community, while also strengthening the cohesiveness of the infant's family.<sup>3</sup>

Bishop Theodore Dehon of South Carolina offered a series of sermons explicating upon the Episcopal practice and theology related to baptism. Bishop Dehon rejected the arguments of other Christians that baptisms required immersion or total submersion. Bishop Dehon

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<sup>3</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies, as Revised and Proposed to the Use of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (Philadelphia: J. Debrett, 1789), 226-240.

interpreted the Bible's rendition of Christ's baptism to include sprinkling. In the view of Bishop Dehon, Christ underwent baptism as:

His holy feet stood, probably, in Jordan; and the venerable Baptist standing there with him, sprinkled its waters upon his scared form; and he came from the river, the voice of God was heard from heaven...

Episcopalians rejected the theological assertions of some evangelicals that Christ mandated full-immersion baptism. Given the rapidly growing evangelical-Protestant populations, Episcopalians in the South exerted an extraordinary effort to defend and describe their unique sacramental theology. Following an exculpation of non-immersion baptisms, Bishop Dehon concluded that realistically the "manner of applying the water of baptism, is not essential to the efficacy of the sacrament." Regardless of how water is used, the Bishop of South Carolina urged Episcopal parents to emulate the experiences of the Christ-child and hold a public baptism for their child in front of a congregation. Bishop Dehon pleaded:

Christian parent...where would you that they should make their first appearance, but in the temple of God?...Holy Mother; wouldst thou not choose that, that should be done for the little one, which, in the days of his infancy, was done for thy Lord? Behold, then, his parents, with religious fidelity, taking him to the temple...

Episcopalians believed that a public administration of baptism ensured that "benefit may accrue to the whole congregation." Consistent with the understanding of Episcopal liturgy, Bishop Dehon did suggest baptism had to be public and in the presence of a congregation. In the Episcopal service of baptism, the congregation reaffirmed its own baptismal vows and strengthened the community's collective faith.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the methods of baptism, Bishop Dehon provided Episcopalians in South Carolina with the theological meaning of the sacrament. According to Bishop Dehon,

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<sup>4</sup> Bishop Theodore Dehon, *Sermons, on the Public Means of Grace; the Fasts and Festivals of the Church; on Scripture Characters, and Various Practical Subjects* Vol. 1 (Charleston: E. Thayer, 1821), 58-106.

Episcopalians considered baptism synonymous to "what circumcision was to God's ancient people." As a result, baptism endowed infants with "a seal of the ....covenanted favor of God." The sacrament of baptism, Bishop Dehon assured, made infants "children of God." The Bishop of South Carolina used evocative imagery as he proclaimed in "the waters of baptism, we have passed through the sea" and enter the "probationary life [which] is the wilderness before us." Bishop Dehon made very clear that parents had a solemn duty to enter their children into the covenant of salvation through baptism. Bishop Dehon rejected critics who clamored for adult baptism over infant baptism. For Bishop Dehon infants brought a purity to the sacrament since "the innocence which they bring to the waters of baptism, cannot render them less acceptable to God than the most penitent sinner." Even though Episcopalians provided services for adult baptism, Bishop Dehon intimated that adults undergoing baptism carried greater sinful pollutions to the waters of salvation. Bishop Dehon pointed to scriptures from the Bible and writings by early church fathers to adduce that Christianity had always believed that "baptism is to be administered as soon after birth, as it can conveniently be done."<sup>5</sup>

Baptism rituals, of course, created stark division between Episcopalians and Baptists. As Baptists continued their crusading conquest of the South during the early nineteenth century, rectors had to continually instruct their congregations on the correctness of the Episcopal Church's baptismal ritual. Episcopal priests assisted their bishops in preaching sermons designed to explicate upon baptism as the beginning of a church member's religious lifecycle. Reverend Edward Thomas delivered a sermon on the Episcopal Church's understanding of baptism at Edisto, South Carolina in 1833. Alluding to the surging Baptist population in the South, Thomas sought to assure Episcopalians by stating that "with the exception of one Denomination only, the Christian world is united in maintaining that Infants are proper subjects of Baptism." Thomas

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<sup>5</sup> Dehon, *Sermons on the Public Means of Grace*, 58-106.

cited numerous passages from the Bible to buttress the Episcopal practice of infant baptism. In particular, Thomas elevated the story of Lydia told in the Book of Acts. According to the Bible, after Lydia adopted Christianity "she was baptized & her household." Thomas underscored for South Carolina's Episcopalians that the Bible implied in the term "household" that persons of all ages, including infants, would have been baptized. Additionally, Thomas referenced the words of Christ that Christians should become "as little children" to enter the "kingdom of heaven." Reverend Thomas also noted that Episcopalians differed from Baptists on the mode of baptism. Episcopalians practiced "sprinkling" or "pouring" of water. Thomas insisted that Episcopalians should not subscribe to the Baptist view of baptism that "to make the rite of any validity, the whole body must be immersed under water." Thomas pointed once again to the Book of Acts. Reading the story of St. Peter at Pentecost, Thomas reminded Episcopalians baptisms occurred in the city of Jerusalem. The baptized, Thomas proclaimed, did not go "out of [Jerusalem] in order to seek some river's bank." In addition, Thomas asked how such a great multitude could have been baptized by immersion in one day. Thomas remained in the Book of Acts as he pointed to Paul's baptism. Thomas's reading of the text suggested that Paul did not leave his home for baptism. Rather, after being healed from his blindness, Ananias baptized him inside the house. For Episcopalians in the South it became an essential theological task to acquit their mode of baptism from their prosecutorial Baptist neighbors. South Carolina's Edward Thomas had used his sermon at Edisto to affirm the Bible's sanction for infant baptism using sprinkling or pouring.<sup>6</sup>

Despite their economic and political power, planter-parishioners could not shield their loved ones from death. Episcopal parents in the South wanted their rectors to provide their

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<sup>6</sup> Edward Thomas, Untitled Sermon Begins with Galatians 3:27, 16 March 1833, Thomas Family Papers, Accession 5183, SCL.

young children with the assurance of God's tender embrace. South Carolina's Reverend Edward Thomas often received requests from parents to baptize sick infants. For example, Robert Jenkins and his wife requested Thomas baptize their frail and enervated infant. Thomas administered a private baptism for the five day old child on April 2, 1827. Robert Jenkins's baby perished two days after its baptism. Six months later on November 3, Thomas baptized four day old Joseph, the son of John Jenkins and his wife. Joseph Jenkins died on November 4 at the age of five days. Baptizing infants reflected one the most genuine moments of humanity as concerned parents in the South motivated by love of children alone turned to the Episcopal Church for reassurance that if their offspring died, the deceased children would be able to cross over Jordan and secure permanent rest on the eternal shores of Canaan.

For infants who matured into children and teenagers, the Episcopal Church imposed additional obligations upon parents. Reverend Edward Thomas reminded his parishioners in South Carolina that baptism marked the beginning of their parental duties. He sermonized to parents that:

When your children are baptized into Christ, from that moment they have put on Christ. From that moment they have become dedicated to the service of their Saviour, & pledged to a life of faith

Until confirmation, parents accepted the onus of ensuring that their children "lead godly & Christian lives." Thomas elaborated upon these duties in a sermon delivered at Edingsville, South Carolina in 1828 on the subject of childhood piety. For Thomas, Episcopal parents had a theological imperative to promote religiosity amongst their children. Thomas proclaimed that all "Parents are constituted by the God of nature guardians of their children." Episcopal parents, Thomas continued, could fulfill their religious duties to God by presenting a Christian example in their daily lives and implementing household devotional practices. One devotion

recommended by Thomas centered upon creating an awareness in children that "they have earthly parents to whom they are responsible so also they have a heavenly Parent, to whom they must one day give an account." In addition, Thomas recommended parents instruct their children on the "spiritual exercise of prayer" which would encourage children to view God "as always present with them." For Thomas and other Episcopal clergymen, habitual prayer by children both promised to expand a child's religious vocabulary while concurrently making them "servants of God."<sup>7</sup>

In an attempt to clarify parental obligations for maturing children, Bishop Nathaniel Bowen of South Carolina composed a sermon entitled "On the Advantages of Early Piety." Bishop Bowen's sermon used the imagery of warfare and militarism to capture the need for the religious instruction for children. From Bishop Bowen's perspective, the Episcopal Church and parents had an obligation to clothe their children in "the whole armor of God." As Bowen surmised, children confronted a future with ever-increasing "temptations, which at every state of their matured year they must encounter." To battle such temptations, Bowen promised youth that the armor offered by the Episcopal Church included "the shield of faith, the breastplate of righteousness and the sword of the Spirit." Bishop Bowen suggested that children had to choose sides in a world enthralled in a spiritual war. The young could join either the forces of "piety and virtue" or "impiety and vice." Bishop Bowen warned that in this spiritual warfare the young had to make a choice because "there is no middle, neutral state in which...the world will permit them in quiet innocence to abide." For Bowen, churchmen and churchwomen had to ensure that Episcopal children selected the right side of the spiritual war therefore fulfilling their baptismal vows and demonstrating an "obedience of the Gospel." In the end, Bishop Bowen even

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<sup>7</sup> Edward Thomas, Untitled Sermon Begins with Deuteronomy 6:6-7, 5 July 1828, Thomas Family Papers, Accession 5183, SCL.

encouraged a humorous use of guilt by telling children "be religious, that your parents be not miserable." Parish rectors also placed the accountability for instructing children upon parents. For example, the Rector of Grace Church in Camden, South Carolina declared without caveat that the success of the parish's Sunday School depended upon the "attention from parents."<sup>8</sup>

Proper parental religious instruction planted the seeds of Episcopal faith that would be harvested at confirmation. *The Book of Common Prayer* adopted by the General Convention in 1789 also included the "The Order of Confirmation." Bishops had to be present for confirmation in the Protestant Episcopal Church. Confirmation started with a preface read by the presiding bishop, then, he would ask two questions of confirmands:

Do ye here in the Presence of God, and this Congregation, profess your Belief in all the Articles of the Christian Faith as contained in the Apostles Creed, wherein ye were to be instructed by the promise made for you at your Baptism?...  
Do ye now in our own Persons, promise to live in this Faith and in obedience to God's holy Will and Commandments?

Following successful responses to the confirmation questions, each confirmand remained in a kneeling position as the presiding bishop placed his hand upon the head of each saying: "Defend, O Lord this thy Child...with thy heavenly grace, he may continue thine forever and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more until he comes unto thy everlasting kingdom." The Protestant Episcopal Church's service concluded with a series of prayers and a collect. The absence of bishops prior to the American Revolution had impeded the regular celebration of confirmation. After the American Revolution, confirmation assumed a preeminent role in an Episcopalian's life cycle. Confirmation symbolized the culmination of maturation as the long-ago baptized infant transitioned into a gendered adulthood.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Bishop Nathaniel Bowen, *Sermons on Christian Doctrines and Duties* Vol. 2 (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1842), 337-350, Accession: 252 B67s v.2, Rare Books, SCL; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1859), 57-58.

<sup>9</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments*, 257-260.

For Episcopalians, the rite of confirmation demarcated the spiritual progression of children. In 1822, Bishop Bowen reminded confirmands at St. Michael's Church in Charleston, South Carolina of the premodern nature of the ritual since it originated as an "apostolic institution." In confirmation, Bowen assured that Episcopal youth declared themselves "candidates for immortality." Bishop Bowen averred that the rite of confirmation signaled an understanding by confirmands that "the paths of sinful pleasure lead to crimes...shame...remorse...which impair the health- whelm the hearts of parents with anguish, and lead to an untimely death."<sup>10</sup> As a moment of spiritual maturation, confirmation also enjoined Episcopalians in the South to celebrate. Bishop Dehon of South Carolina suggested much is gained in a conformation that teaches a "youthful mind what God hath forbidden as evil" and what God "has revealed as true." Confirmation offered young Episcopalians a "light by which they may discern the character tendency of their desires." According to Bishop Dehon, such discernment should cause congregations to celebrate, because for a confirmand the ritual "assures him that eternal life is attainable by him and guarantees the attainment of it to his faithful pursuits."<sup>11</sup>

In 1857, Bishop James H. Otey summoned the Diocese of Tennessee to demonstrate a greater seriousness regarding the rite of confirmation. Bishop Otey expressed horror that Tennesseans treated confirmation as a "solemn mockery" and a ceremony with "little worth." A befuddled Otey recounted how "Young people are found abstaining from the Lord's Supper immediately after their Confirmation, as if wholly unconscious of any inconsistency between their profession and practice." Bishop Otey placed the blame squarely on "Parental neglect and

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<sup>10</sup> Nathaniel Bowen, *The Duty of Fulfilling all Righteousness: A Sermon, Preparatory to Confirmation: To Which Are Annexed, An Address* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1822), 21-29, Accession: 252 B67 d, Rare Books, SCL.

<sup>11</sup> Bishop Theodore Dehon, "Note Twenty-Seventh," in *Letters to an Only Daughter, on Confirmation: Being A Manual for the Youth of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (Philadelphia: J. Whetham, 1839), 149-152.



Ministerial unfaithfulness." Adult Episcopalians had an obligation to ensure their dependents received the instruction necessary for confirmation. Cognizant of his location in the South, Bishop Otey reminded Tennesseans that household dependents included both children and slaves. The Episcopal Church aspired to extend religious services to all those under the patriarchal mastery of the planter class. For Episcopalians, baptism marked the beginning of a process not the end. Bishop Otey commanded baptismal sponsors to uphold their vows to God. Although Bishop Otey acknowledged that every baptized child reached confirmation at different stages, the Episcopal Church recommended the age of fourteen. Following confirmation, teenage Episcopalians in the South embarked upon their gendered adulthood.<sup>12</sup>

### **Southern Men and the Crisis of Episcopal Masculinity**

Prior to the Civil War, Episcopalians worried that manhood and common prayers seemed incompatible in the South. Rectors in the South chronicled the imbalanced sex ratios in their congregations. For example, Reverend J. H. Wingfield of Portsmouth Parish observed in horror that over 83% of communicants at Trinity Church were women in 1855. Wingfield advised Virginia's state convention that he took some encouragement in the limited progress he had induced by improving the "spiritual state" of the "male portion" of his parishioners.<sup>13</sup> Reverend Hugh Roy Scott celebrated a Lenten revival at St. Paul's Church in King George County, Virginia because fourteen of the nineteen persons added to the communion were "young men." In 1858, Bishop Meade warned the Diocese of Virginia of a gender crisis in their church. Meade

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<sup>12</sup> Bishop James H. Otey, *Preparation of Candidates for Confirmation Set Forth in the Third Charge To the Clergy of the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: Bang, Walker & Co., Book & Job Printers, 1857), 3-14.

<sup>13</sup> *Journal of the Sixtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: Elliot & Nye, Book and Job Printers, 1855), 80.

estimated that men accounted for only 20-25% of membership in all Christian denominations.

According to Meade,

Against so dreadful an evil as the irreligion of the men of our land, young and old, it seemed needful that some special and mighty dispensation of the Spirit should take place. Ministers have long reasoned and warned in vain; parents have entreated and prayed in vain; wives have mourned and wept in vain; the evil has still gone on...

Bishop Meade prayed that a new religious awakening could reverse the stagnation of Christianity amongst men in the South. The Episcopal Church's cultural values did not seem to conform to the region's popular constructions of masculinity. Bishop Meade had noticed what Barbara Welter describes as the "feminization of religion" in the United States from 1800 to 1860. According to Welter, in the early national period the process of "giving over of religion to women, in its content and in its membership, provided a repository for...female values." Historians of American religion have demonstrated that women often joined Protestant denominations in the early nineteenth century at remarkably higher rates than men. Donald Mathews estimated that ratio of women to men in southern churches stood at 65:35—or just below two females for every one male. Some historians consider Mathews's estimate to be conservative, even proposing that the church membership ratio could have been as high as four women to every one male. The imbalance between men and women also existed in the North. Episcopalians in the South, therefore, reflected the gendered national membership patterns. In *Ambivalent Churchmen and Evangelical Churchwomen*, Richard Rankin's survey of records from four parishes from the Diocese of North Carolina revealed a communicant ratio of 4.7 females for every one male in 1840. Bishops and rectors in the South were correct in their

assessments that women clearly outnumbered men as members the Protestant Episcopal Church by the 1850s.<sup>14</sup>

In the early nineteenth century, the national leadership of the Protestant Episcopal Church unleashed a campaign to advertise their ecclesial community as synonymous with American masculinity. Bishop George Burgess of Maine encapsulated the effort in his sermon "Manliness in Religion." According to Bishop Burgess, Episcopal manliness required "strong" conviction. For Burgess, true men had to be decisive and either reject Christianity as totally false or embrace the faith as an absolute truth with zealously. Episcopalians loathed uncommitted men with "weak" and ambivalent doubting, or an inconsistent attachment to their church. The Episcopal hierarchy wanted to encourage men to be fully devoted to their faith. Bishop Burgess argued that Christ "calls us now to be strong, and show ourselves men...to awaken every nerve to its utmost energy and endurance." Episcopal masculinity entailed "hearty energy, industry, and perseverance" whatever the temptations or challenges.<sup>15</sup>

Bishop Burgess articulated an understanding of Christianity in which only strong men could be faithful Episcopalians. As the Bishop of Maine warned the acceptance of Christianity required a "manly spirit" because the faithful had to "shrink from no duty and no sacrifice which

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<sup>14</sup> *Journal of the Sixty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: Chas. H. Wynne, 1860), 130-131; *Journal of the Sixty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: Whig Book and Job Office, 1858), 28-29. For analysis of conflicts between southern masculinity and evangelicalism in the nineteenth century, see Ted Ownby, *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 12-15. Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion: 1800-1860," in *Clio's Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives on the History of Women* ed. Mary Hartman and Lois W. Banner (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 137, 151; Donald G. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 47-48; George C. Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 13; Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 76-83, 257-258; Richard Rankin, *Ambivalent Churchmen and Evangelical Churchwomen: The Religion of the Episcopal Elite in North Carolina, 1800-1860* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1993), 53; *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America* ed. Rosemary Skinner Keller and Rosemary Radford Ruether (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006). 272.

<sup>15</sup> Bishop George Burgess, "Manliness in Religion," in *Sermons on the Christian Life* (Philadelphia: Herman Hooker, 1854), 105-119.

it may require." An individual Christian, Bishop Burgess maintained, had to withstand the allure of the world, the flesh, and "the great tempter." Such an onslaught of evil could not be resisted by the feeble. For Bishop Burgess the greatest exemplars of Episcopal masculinity could be found in the earliest centuries of the church. Martyrs demonstrated the resolute spirit of manliness so prized by the Bishop of Maine:

Carry with you, as Christians, the same resolute and open manliness which all must every where honor and which, not a few, in their earthly affairs do indeed cultivate. In the early times of the church, many came forward with eagerness to suffer the pains and obtain the crown of martyrdom. They saw that some must fall for the cause of their religion and of God...it was the spirit which we so much admire in every soldier or citizen who steadily and bravely takes his place at the post of danger, when his country demands his service. It is the same spirit in which every one of us who has the heart of a man would act in defence of his own family. Let us carry the same spirit into all religious duty..."

Bishop Burgess conjectured that Episcopal men should be willing to follow the example set forth by the church's martyrs and Christ himself. Episcopalians hoped men would appreciate that their church required a robust masculinity because a communicant had to be ready to die in service to the faith and others.<sup>16</sup>

Reverend Alexander H. Vinton of Philadelphia expanded upon the definition of Episcopal masculinity. Vinton declared the "Word of God" served as the rule for true manhood. Vinton expended remarkable energy in attacking the sexuality of young men. He delivered a fierce jeremiad, warning young men that after they exited the safety of their church on Sunday mornings, they would "meet with some meretricious tempter" in the world. The arousing tempter, Vinton bemoaned, manifested itself as "the lust of the flesh incarnated and adorned." Vinton reminded his congregation that the "wicked one" aspired to lure every young man into the "chambers of pollution." Sexual temptations did not constitute the only threat to Episcopal

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<sup>16</sup> Burgess, "Manliness in Religion," 105-119.

masculinity. For Vinton, Episcopal masculinity required that a man avoid irreligious talk, alcohol, along with sexual immorality. According to Vinton, an Episcopal man:

...turns a deaf ear to the charmer; he refuses the intoxicating cup, he conquers all the lusts of the flesh... his life of energy...is reinforced by conscientiousness and daily prayer and the Word of God. I see him, in a word, a Christian man.

Reverend Vinton concurred that the Episcopal Church had a responsibility to preach to young men as they wrestled with "strong passions and appetites" in their transition to adulthood. Rather than earthly pleasures, Vinton beseeched every young man to envision the day in which "he meets his ascended Lord [and] he feels a hand of blessing on his head."<sup>17</sup>

Bishop Meade grounded his appeal to Virginia's men in the language of patriarchy. The Bishop of Virginia worried that religious leaders had for too long dwelled "on the great privileges which Christianity has conferred upon woman." From Meade's perspective, as a consequence of the elevation of women, men had come to regard "religion, as chiefly...the province of woman." Bishop Meade desired to reverse such a trend by encouraging a more comprehensive understanding of Episcopal masculinity. According to Bishop Meade, God had ordained an order by "assigning all public offices, civil and religious, to the stronger, the hardier, the bolder sex" of men. Worldly pursuits would not impede Episcopal masculinity. Bishop Meade proclaimed:

As to all those excuses of men, that they must provide for their families, must fight the battles of their country, and engage in pursuits unfriendly to piety, God answers them by requiring this as the first duty from all, and declaring that the neglect of it will be punished in every instance with his everlasting displeasure. Moreover, he has given us in Scripture instances of truest piety in all the relations of life; in the soldier, the seafaring man, the physician, the merchant, the laborer, the beggar, and many others. Our Saviour almost embraced the whole of them in his little band of Apostles...

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<sup>17</sup> Alexander H. Vinton, "The Strength and the Weakness of Youth," in *The Union Pulpit: A Collection of Sermons By Ministers of Different Denominations* (Washington: William T. Smithson, 1860), 215-225.

Christ, the Apostles, and countless characters in the Bible provided men in the South with examples of how to reconcile masculinity and faith. Bishop Meade asserted that men had an obligation to be promoters of the Episcopal Church not just as clergymen, but as laymen occupied in their secular activities. For Bishop Meade, the religious duties of men formulated the core of patriarchal families in the South. Consistent with nineteenth century constructions of patriarchy, Bishop Meade claimed that the husband "is the head of the wife in all things." In parenting, Bishop Meade called upon fathers to be godly patriarchs:

But I am now inquiring into God's will as to the duty and influence of fathers I must do it honestly. God hath given to man, in his persons, voice, and countenance, a commanding influence, which is necessary to one part of a true education. I mean the nurture, training, or discipline of children... The neglect on the part of fathers to exert this commanding influence is recorded in dark characters on the pages of God's own book. The history of the two sons of Eli and of as many of David's stands on the sacred record as a warning against the neglect of fathers to use the authority which God has given them.

Bishop Meade called upon fathers to pay particular attention to their sons. The Bishop of Virginia maintained that fathers should bequeath to their sons an understanding and appreciation of Episcopal masculinity. Although mothers might be religious, Bishop Meade counseled fathers that their sons may be tempted to "make light of [their mother's] religion; but where is the son who will despise the religion of an holy and loving father."<sup>18</sup>

Clergymen sometimes failed to uphold the stringent morality of Episcopal masculinity. In 1852, Reverend Franklin G. Smith confessed to Bishop James Otey of Tennessee that he had "indulged in dalliance with Miss Mary E. Walker." The indiscretion took on more scandalous tones since Walker had been one of Smith's students at the Columbia Female Institute. Smith admitted that he had lied about his relationship with Walker because he had, in his words, "an earnest devotion to his wife." Bishop Otey suspended Smith for one year pending further

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<sup>18</sup> Meade, *Pastoral to the Laity*, 13-16.

"evidence of godly repentance for his sin." Even for ordained clergy, Episcopal masculinity remained in perilous danger from a range of societal and personal temptations.<sup>19</sup>

Sin lurked everywhere as it waited to derail Episcopal masculinity. Bishop James H. Otey of Tennessee suggested that the church had to elevate Episcopal masculinity in the South to counteract the social nature of many profane male interactions. According to Bishop Otey, "Man is a social animal...yielding his own evil impulses to the mass; or by blindly following the lead of some fellow worm." To convey his message, Bishop Otey utilized the imagery of infectious diseases:

Men, therefore, who are morally diseased, are as justly accountable for the moral corruption with which they taint the social atmosphere- by their language, their conduct, or their writings- as responsible for the contagion which they communicate to other hearts...as the physically diseased, who with fiendish malignity, seek to spread their own loathsomeness through the community.

The Episcopal Church had to shape definitions of masculinity, Bishop Otey exhorted, by inoculating men from the pandemic infection of sin before they succumbed to a life which made them "a barren and blasted branch of the social tree." For Bishop Otey, "the brief period which connects youth and manhood" determined the "coming harvest" for each individual man. To that end, Bishop Otey implored Episcopalians to inculcate their own definition of masculinity at an early age to produce ripened and fruitful disciples of Christ.<sup>20</sup>

Southern Episcopalians confronted their region's popular conceptualizations of secular masculinity in the early nineteenth century that relied upon a variety of activities such as drinking alcohol, playing cards, swearing, and dueling. The sinfulness of secular masculinity appeared particularly acute on the South's cotton frontier. In the late 1820s, Episcopalians

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<sup>19</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: The South-Western Monthly Office, 1852), 10-12.

<sup>20</sup> James H. Otey, "Individual Moral Influence," in *The Union Pulpit: A Collection of Sermons By Ministers of Different Denominations* (Washington: William T. Smithson, 1860), 109-119.

worried that the residents of Mississippi and Louisiana had a propensity for "dueling, gambling, horse-racing, profaneness, intemperance, and Sabbath-breaking." Episcopalians feared that on the South's western frontier the sins of masculinity had "incorporated themselves with the fashionable and approved customs of Society." Episcopal clergymen understood their perilous goal necessitated attacking the accepted secular "manly" activities in the South, while simultaneously making Episcopal masculinity an acceptable alternative.<sup>21</sup>

In 1823, Bishop Nathaniel Bowen of South Carolina published a sermon entitled *Dueling: Under Any Circumstances, the Extent of Folly: A Sermon*. The sermon had first been delivered at St. Michael's Church in Charleston in 1807. Bishop Bowen decided to republish it due to "recent circumstances" which called for "some testimony against a practice by which it is here." Using the scriptural text of Psalm 49:13, Bishop Bowen employed the refrain of "folly" to describe the practice of dueling. For Bishop Bowen, Episcopal masculinity demanded men honor their familial responsibility. He provided Episcopalians with an argument to counter dueling by elevating patriarchal masculinity as a substitute for fighting:

Then bid him look around him, and behold children, a wife, and perhaps a widowed mother, whom he is about to deprive of father, husband, son, preparing to proclaim him, murderer, wanton, cruel, willful, deliberate murderer! If this be ineffectual, bid him hear the cries of his own disconsolate widow, and his orphan children, laboring helpless and in misery though the world. Tell him you hear the piercing shrieks of his distracted mother, and the expiring groans of his fond and aged father, sinking in sorrow to the grave.

Dueling threatened the gendered roles for Episcopal men inside families as sons, husbands, and fathers. Bishop Bowen cited Alexander Hamilton as a duelist who had questioned the manliness of duels since he found the activity "irreconcilable with the obligations of a *Christian*, as of a *citizen*, a *husband*, and a *father*." Bishop Bowen assured Episcopalians in South Carolina that those who prevented duels should expect "heaven will prepare for you, the reward of him, who

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<sup>21</sup> *Episcopal Watchman* 3, no. 29, (October 1829): 232.



saves an immortal soul from death." Bishop Bowen's sermon aspired to define "honor" as upholding the values of Episcopal masculinity in the context of family, rather than engaging in a duel.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to dueling, Episcopal clergymen addressed the propensity of men in the South to consume alcoholic beverages. Many Episcopal parishes in the South actively supported the temperance movement in an effort to strengthen families. Hungar's Parish in Virginia sponsored a temperance society. Episcopalians in Hungar's Parish believed that its seventy-five member temperance society promised "usefulness...to *families* and *individuals*." In 1834, Trinity Church in Norfolk County, Virginia reported to the state convention that a parish temperance society existed with two hundred members. Ephram Adams argued in the mid-nineteenth century that the "cause of Temperance is prosperous" among Episcopalians in Lancaster County, Virginia. St. Thomas's Church in Virginia supported a temperance society in the parish with approximately three hundred members in 1834. In 1834, Reverend Charles C. Taliaferro of Cumberland Parish in Lunenburg County reported to Virginia's state convention that "cause of temperance also finds supporters from our communion." Reverend E. C. McGuire confidently affirmed that the temperance cause had "many friends" in St. George's Church, Virginia. Virginia's Episcopalians in Richmond and Westmoreland Counties celebrated the "flourishing" of the "cause of temperance." In 1836, the congregation of Christ Church in Winchester, Virginia provided support to the "Temperance cause." Likewise, William Duval served as the Episcopal Church's missionary to the armory in Richmond, Virginia. Duval celebrated that a

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<sup>22</sup> Nathaniel Bowen, *Dueling, Under any Circumstances, the Extreme of Folly: A Sermon* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1823), 3-27, Rare Books, Accession: s.c. p394.8 B67du, Rare Books, SCL. For examinations of dueling in the context of gender and class in the antebellum South consult: Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 350-351; Jack K. Williams, *Dueling in the Old South: Vignettes of Social History* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), especially chapter three.

thriving temperance society had produced results in the mid-1840s. Duval announced to Virginia's state convention that "some, who a short time since, were apparently confirmed drunkards, are now regular attendants upon public worship."<sup>23</sup> Despite his early successes in southern parishes, Reverend George Lemmon, the Rector of Hamilton and Leeds's Parish, underscored the challenges that awaited temperance societies in a secular culture of masculinity that practiced social drinking. Both of Lemmon's parishes had temperance societies in operation. The Hamilton Parish Temperance Society "received a considerable accession of numbers" in 1835. Lemmon attributed the numerical fluctuations in the Hamilton Parish Temperance Society to the adoption of a "total abstinence" pledge, which prohibited "all intoxicating liquors, as common drinks." Conversely, the Leeds's Parish Temperance Society offered members a choice as it maintained the "old and new pledge." Episcopalians, like Lemmon, appreciated that temperance had to be "moderate and judicious" in the South to succeed. The Rector of St. George's Church in Virginia noted that the parish's temperance society suffered due to the "ultraism" of the American Temperance Society in the North. Temperance activism's limited successes within Episcopal parishes reflected the reality that reformers confronted an unenviable task of curtailing popular conceptualizations of manhood in the South, which included social drinking.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1831), 18; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1834), 24-34; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1835), 29-41; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: James C. Walker, 1836), 33; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Lynchburg: The Virginian Office, 1846), 72-73.

<sup>24</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: James C. Walker, 1836), 29, 35. Scholars have recently commenced extensive examinations of temperance in the antebellum South. For example see: Ian R. Tyrrell, "Drink and Temperance in the Antebellum South," *The Journal of Southern History* 48 no. 4 accessed on JSTOR (November 1982), 485-510; Joe L. Coker, *Liquor in the Land of the Lost Cause: Southern White Evangelicals and the Prohibition Movement* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 13-36; W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 187-222.

Bishops in the South also on occasion preached on the cause of temperance. In 1835, Bishop William Meade delivered a sermon to the Diocese of Virginia's state convention based upon the text of Proverbs 20:1: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Meade began his sermon by blaming alcohol for three great societal problems: "injurious" health conditions, crime, and the disgracing of religion. To remedy the scourge of alcohol, Bishop Meade heralded the mission of the American Temperance Society. In an attempt to rally Virginia men, Bishop Meade used militaristic language to describe the endeavors of the American Temperance Society. Episcopalians in Virginia who joined the American Temperance Society would assist in a victorious military campaign:

The minds of men have been awakened to the full conviction that [drunkenness] was an enemy with whom no terms could be made...whom a war, and endless war of extermination must be waged...its very existence being certain destruction to thousands of the best men in the land. In such a contest is the American Temperance Society engaged, and it is under vows the most solemn to God and man never to lay down its weapons until victory is achieved. In such a cause the appeal may be confidently made to the God of battle...Great victories are continually announced. The marches of an Alexander, a Caesar, a Bonaparte were not more rapid, nor their conquests more objects of wonder...

Bishop Meade had enjoined Episcopalians to join the armies already in battle against the "raging monster" of alcohol. According to Bishop Meade, the spiritual war against drunkenness promised to bring peace to millions.<sup>25</sup>

Bishop Meade included an appeal to fathers in his temperance sermon, since Episcopal masculinity in the South defined manhood largely through the prism of patriarchal families. Although Bishop Meade recognized that many men stored alcohol in their homes for "hospitality" reasons, such as when they entertained neighbors and friends, he summoned fathers to consider the greater welfare of their households. In particular, Meade expressed concern

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<sup>25</sup> Bishop William Meade, *Sermon by the Right Reverend William Meade, D.D. Assistant Bishop of Virginia Preached before the Convention in Staunton, May 1834, and Published by Request of the Same.* (Richmond: Office of the Christian Sentinel, 1835), 3, 13-15.

regarding the influence of alcohol upon the prosperousness of the South's impending men—  
young sons:

But are there not fathers, tender and loving fathers, who bitterly complain, that in spite of all their remonstrances and notwithstanding their own example of moderation they behold their sons growing up as drunkards around them? In their own houses, at their own tables, out of their own bottles they are drinking to excess, and nothing but ruin and wretchedness stare them in the face. And does it never enter into the mind of the father who distills it, of the father who sells it, that he is lending his sanction to the use of that, whose use so easily runs into abuse? Does he never among all the plans prepared for the salvation of his sons, think of removing the fatal cause from his house? Can he not relinquish the poor gratification it yields him, lest, not a weak brother be offended, but a dear child be ruined forever?

O, how many thousands of the youth of our land who been brought to beggary and wretchedness, would, if they must speak out all the horrid truth, in bitterness exclaim, our parents have been the chief authors of our undoing!

Bishop Meade implored fathers to elevate the spiritual well-being of their sons over alcohol-centered fraternization with friends. In both the military imagery and appeal to fatherhood, Bishop Meade attempted to Christianize the South's definition of masculinity. For Bishop Meade, patriarchal temperance epitomized true manhood, rather than drinking copious amounts of alcohol with friends and family.<sup>26</sup>

Episcopalians in the South understood that popular definitions of manhood relied upon other sins too. Bishop Meade, for instance, sermonized against young men who attended theaters and dances in a pamphlet entitled *Baptismal Vows and Worldly Amusements*. On theaters, Bishop Meade quoted a resolution from the House of Bishops which had warned against the "licentious tendency" of "theatrical entertainments." After reciting a litany of Christian writings against theaters, Bishop Meade used his own personal analysis for the question of dancing. According to Bishop Meade, dancing promoted "forwardness instead of modesty" among young people. Despite acknowledging that both sexes danced, Bishop Meade

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<sup>26</sup> Meade, *Sermon By the Right Reverend William Meade*, 16-17.

addressed himself to "young men." Dancing encouraged young men to use "exciting music" to "mingle" with young women "to a late hour in the night." Young men engaged in dance, Bishop Meade continued, succumbed to "idle words," "high excitement," and "being light-minded." Furthermore, dances provoked young people to engage in "improper dressing and exposure of the person." Bishop Meade depicted dances as a lurid world replete with carnal temptations. As a remedy, Bishop Meade encouraged young men to accept an Episcopal masculinity defined by an apostolic call to be "sober-minded." From the perspective of Bishop Meade, there could be no doubt that Christianity could not sanction dancing. He rejected the claim from some young men "that they have been as pious in a ball-room or theatre as at the table of the Lord." Instead, the Bishop of Virginia called upon young men to embrace Episcopal masculinity to guarantee entry into the "great temple above, where the sons of God shall shout for joy, and every member of their glorified bodies be made to take some part in the heavenly worship."<sup>27</sup>

Young and devout Episcopal men especially wrestled with a social separation from the men of the South who adhered to a more secular understanding of masculinity prior to the Civil War. In 1854, Robert W. Barnwell of South Carolina wrote a letter to his father describing the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria. According to Barnwell, religiosity in the town had reached "a very low ebb." Barnwell described a community replete with "young men" living in "great danger." For example, Barnwell observed that "there must have been 50 young men drunk about the town yesterday—as bad as Charlestown." The faculty and student body of the Episcopal seminary practiced temperance as they upheld their understanding of Christian morality. Episcopal piety clashed with the town's other young men, especially those connected with the federal armory at Harper's Ferry. Since the Protestant Episcopal Church in the South

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<sup>27</sup> William Meade, *Baptismal Vows and Worldly Amusements* (New York: Protestant Episcopal Society For the Promotion of Evangelical Knowledge, 1855), 12-40, Call no. BV812 .M4, VHS.

had both a distinctive theological and class identity, many churchmen became isolated from more popular conceptualizations of masculinity. Many churchmen longed for fraternity and an opportunity to make their Episcopal masculinity socially acceptable to their region.<sup>28</sup> Bishop William Meade worried that the absence of sufficient clergy role models as moral examples threatened Episcopal masculinity by compelling young men in the South to look elsewhere for guidance on manhood. Meade acknowledged that in the South, young men sought honor in "Gold and military glory" rather than a devout Christian life. Episcopal clergymen considered wealth and militarism to be "perishing things" that threatened both the "soul and body." Bishop Meade hoped that young men would see the "honor of the ministry" as a more acceptable expression of masculinity. To assist his efforts, Bishop Meade called upon parents in Virginia to commit "every man child" to being laborers for the "Lord of the harvest." Since the Episcopal Church did not ordain women to serve as ministers, Episcopal masculinity had a special role in attempting to reduce the South's clergy shortage during the early nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup>

Alongside moral prohibitions, Episcopal clergymen in the South attempted to define fatherhood as both a religious and masculine role. To achieve their goal, many Episcopal clergymen in the South degraded women in order to elevate fatherhood to a virulent masculine patriarchy. For example, Bishop Meade asserted a woman "is too weak for discipline without the ever ready help of a man." Bishop Meade added that only men could "govern" children. Episcopal sons in the South confronted added religious pressure as they made decisions as adults. Upon learning of his son's marriage engagement, William H. Barnwell wrote a letter reminding Robert that he regarded "marriage as an ordinance of God." Writing from Laurel Bay,

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<sup>28</sup> Robert W. Barnwell to William H. Barnwell, 23 June 1851, Barnwell Family Papers, 1824-1898. (1250.00) SCHS.

<sup>29</sup> *Journal of the Fifty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Washington: JNO. T. Towers, 1852), 17-20.

South Carolina, William Barnwell explained to his son that he deserved congratulations on his engagement since "the parties are both pious and must be presumed to have acted in the fear of God." William Barnwell instructed his son to "present mine and your Mamma[']s best respects to the young lady," thus promising their blessing along with assistance in the marriage. If Robert Barnwell had married a woman who did not share his parent's faith, undoubtedly William Barnwell would have written a very different letter. Religiosity created an additional series of expectations that defined the relationships between Episcopal fathers and sons throughout the South.<sup>30</sup>

Episcopal clergymen in the South expressed an apprehensiveness over their masculinity as it related to fatherhood. Ministry in the South required Episcopal clergymen to travel to distant rural parishes or to conduct missionary efforts apart from their families. Reverend William H. Barnwell articulated many anxieties regarding his ability to be both an effective clergyman and father in a letter to his wife Catherine in 1833. As a new missionary in Winnsboro, South Carolina, Barnwell recounted in his letter preaching a sermon to a congregation on "the wages of sin" and "eternal life" using Romans 6:23. Despite the "deepest attention" by the congregation, Barnwell confided to his wife: "God grant that the words have not fallen to the ground...Pray for me dearest wife, in this my first missionary attempt...for my weakness is great & my temptations many." As Reverend Barnwell labored in Winnsboro, Catherine and his children remained located in Beaufort, South Carolina. Barnwell's separation from his family undoubtedly contributed to the stress of his missionary endeavors. "Be sure to kiss Rob & Teddy for me," Barnwell wrote to Catherine. Barnwell worried that his children might: "forget me before I return...Neither of them love their 'Pa' as much as they might, though

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<sup>30</sup> William H. Barnwell to Robert W. Barnwell, 15 March 1858, Barnwell Family Papers, 1824-1898. (1250.00) SCHS.

perhaps more than he deserves." The calling to be a rector at times conflicted with the South's popular understanding of fatherhood.<sup>31</sup>

Three years later, Reverend Barnwell continued to worry over his the competing roles of clergyman and father. Working in Columbia, South Carolina, Barnwell attended services at a college chapel. Barnwell witnessed the behavior of the students and noted that "the young men behaved quite well" during Sunday services. As he observed the young college-aged men in Columbia, Barnwell thought of the character of his own sons. He penned an epistle to Catherine once again:

I hope you are keeping the boys in good order. I feel this duty the more when I see so many young men here removed from their Parental control— If they had not been taught obedience at home they are [soon?] to get into difficulties & give trouble here. Kiss them & little Catherine.

As religious obligations separated Barnwell from his family, he continued to question his effectiveness as a patriarchal father. Of course some of Barnwell's solitudes regarding his efficacy as a father must have abated when his son Robert wrote him a letter that including the following announcement

I wish to have a talk with you first, but I do feel as if I am called to the work of the Ministry & pray that my feeling may not deceive me. I have determined therefore for the present month not to speak of it or even think too much- but with prayer for decision direction & strength leaving it to him who ordainth all...Pray for me my dear Papa...

Despite the long distances, William Barnwell had bequeathed to his son Robert the essence of Episcopal masculinity. At least with one child, William Barnwell could take confidence that he had succeeded as a pious and patriarchal father.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>William H. Barnwell to Catherine Barnwell, 13 November 1833, Barnwell Family Papers, 1824-1898. (1250.00) SCHS. Missionary Joseph Obear in Charleston South Carolina echoed Barnwell's concerns over fatherhood as he wrote: "I wish I could know how you & sonny are getting on...You must kiss him for me & not let him forget me." Joseph Obear to Julia Obear, 17 February 1849, Obear Family Papers, MSS 10069, SCL.



Episcopal masculinity created complicated relationships between fathers and sons in the South. In 1855, C. R. Thomson died in St. Matthew's Parish in South Carolina. Thomson had been a friend of Episcopal Reverend Benjamin Johnson, the Rector of St. Jude's Church. Johnson returned to St. Matthew's Parish to deal with the "melancholy bereavement" of Thomson's family. Under Johnson's pastoral care, two of Thomson's sons "professed conversion and were by His renewing Spirit, 'baptized for the dead.'" Thomson's adult sons, both of whom had their own families, had not embraced Episcopal masculinity during their father's lifetime. Prompted by their father's death, Thomson's sons joined the Episcopal Church. Thomson's sons would assume the mantle of Episcopal patriarchy in their own families as a tribute to their deceased patriarchal father.<sup>33</sup>

Once young men departed their parents' abode, the Episcopal Church assumed greater responsibilities for disseminating religious instruction. Episcopalians in the South targeted military and educational institutions in their effort to promote their understanding of Christian masculinity prior to fatherhood. Reverend William N. Pendleton accepted an invitation to serve in Latimer Parish because he had an "interest in the young men at the Virginia Military Institute." Pendleton preached on the campus of the institute twice a week with an attendance of approximately twenty. In 1857, Pendleton credited most of the parish's thirty confirmations to the "young men" who resided in Lexington as cadets at the Virginia Military Institute. Two years later Pendleton recorded "gratifying evidence of religious interest...among the young men" of his parish.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>William H. Barnwell to Catherine Barnwell, 22 February 1836, Barnwell family papers, 1824-1898. (1250.00) SCHS.

<sup>33</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1856), 59-60.

<sup>34</sup> *Journal of the Fifty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: C. H. Wynne, 1854), 86-87; *Journal of the Sixty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in*

Military institutions functioned as only one fragment of a comprehensive strategy, because universities in the South became the most active frontlines in the Episcopal Church's war for masculinity.<sup>35</sup> The Diocese of Virginia stationed a missionary at the University of Virginia in the early 1830s. Episcopal missionary Nicholas H. Cobbs reported how the pious men at the University of Virginia had formed a "band of brothers" even though they claimed different denominational affiliations. Cobbs believed that in all of his years of preaching, the faculty and students at the University of Virginia had proved to be one of the most "orderly and attentive congregations." In 1838, the Episcopal Church counted twelve communicants among the student population of the University of Virginia, and that number increased four year later to thirty communicants. Bishop William Meade confirmed eleven students at the University of Virginia in 1854. Meade detected a "deep feeling on the all-important subject of religion" during his visit to the university. Reverend William D. Hanson served as the Episcopal Church's missionary at the University of Virginia during the mid-1850s. Hanson supported the ecumenical nature of worship at the university. Every Sunday afternoon, students voluntarily gathered for "the Students' General Prayer Meeting" which included "members from all the Christian denominations harmoniously and voluntarily assembled." Hanson observed that in 1855, the religious mission at the University of Virginia also conducted Sunday School along with visitations for "destitute...families" and slaves in the neighboring mountains. In 1858, Bishop Meade participated in an "interesting confirmation" event in Charlottesville. Meade especially celebrated the confirmation of eleven male students of the University of Virginia.

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Virginia (Richmond: The Whig Book and Job Office, 1857), 114; *Journal of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: Chas. H. Wynne, 1859), 98-99.

<sup>35</sup> Historians recently have taken an interest in how educational facilities in the pre-Civil War South served as institutions of gender construction: Robert F. Pace, *Halls of Honor: College Men in the Old South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011); Christie Anne Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South* (New York: New York University Press, 1994).

Bishop Meade urged the Diocese of Virginia to "rejoice the more over this work of grace, because of the unusually large proportion of men, and especially young men." Meade hoped that the University of Virginia would become a rich source of "faith preachers, as well as Christian scholars and statesmen." For Episcopalians, the University of Virginia served as a vanguard in their war to define masculinity.<sup>36</sup>

Some Episcopal clergymen assumed academic offices in their efforts to influence young men enrolled in the South's institutions of higher learning. In the late 1840s, Bishop John Johns accepted an invitation by the Board of Visitors to become President of the College of William and Mary. Prior to accepting, Bishop Johns received permission from Virginia's state convention in 1849. Bishop Johns told Episcopalians in Virginia that his management of the college enabled him to protect the "general spirit and deportment of the young gentlemen" attending the school. Bishop Johns hoped that during his presidency, the parents could send their sons to William and Mary with little fear that the college would "endanger their principles." According to Bishop Johns, during his presidency parents could expect for "their sons an education based on the principles of sound science and Christian morality." Bishop Johns announced to the state convention that the Board of Visitors had only desired a temporary president, thus his term ended in 1854. Simultaneously holding two executive positions proved draining. Bishop Johns

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<sup>36</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1835), 41; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: B. R. Wren, 1838), 38-39; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: The Office of the Southern Churchman, 1842), 41-42; *Journal of the Fifty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: C. H. Wynne, 1854), 56-57; *Journal of the Sixtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: Elliot & Nye, Book and Job Printers, 1855), 54-55; *Journal of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: Chas. H. Wynne, 1859), 21-22, 53-54.

expressed relief that due to his retirement from the College of William and Mary, he would resume a "more active" role in the Diocese of Virginia.<sup>37</sup>

Episcopalians in Mississippi also targeted university towns as a method of attracting more men to their church. Bishop James H. Otey visited Oxford in June 1848. During Otey's visit to Oxford, he read prayers, baptized three children, and preached in the town's Presbyterian Church. Bishop Otey pleaded with Mississippi's state convention to support the employment of a missionary in Oxford because it served as a "close neighborhood of the University of Mississippi, which has recently commenced operations, and to which the young from the various parts of the State may be expected to resort." In 1850, Bishop William Mercer Green journeyed to Oxford. Bishop Green informed Mississippi's state convention that Oxford had "several individuals and families" desirous of an Episcopal Church. Bishop Green praised the University of Mississippi's chancellor, Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, as an ally to the Episcopal Church in its efforts to erect a church in the college town. The University of Mississippi impressed Bishop Green because its founders shared his goal of ensuring students "worship God in such place and in such way on the Sabbath day, as either his own preference or the will of his parents might select." From Green's perspective, the Episcopal Church and the University of Mississippi's administration had a mutual objective of aiding parents in providing religious guidance to their sons. During Bishop Green's visit to Oxford he used the Presbyterian Church to render worship services to the Episcopal faithful. To justify sufficient support for sending a clergyman to

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<sup>37</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Lynchburg: Blackford, Townley, & Co., 1849), 19-26; *Journal of the Fifty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 20-23; *Journal of the Fifty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Philadelphia: T.K. and P.G. Collins, Printers, 1853), 18-22; *Journal of the Fifty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 27-28.

Lafayette County, Bishop Green proposed creating a missionary circuit that included both Oxford and Pontotoc.<sup>38</sup>

Bishop Green revisited Oxford in May 1851 because he deemed the town essential to the future of the Diocese of Mississippi. On May 12, twenty to thirty "friends of the church" gathered at the courthouse to formally organize a congregation. Professor John Millington from the University of Mississippi presided over the meeting. The Oxford congregation constituted itself as "St. Peter's Church" and then proceeded to elect a vestry along with churchwardens. Bishop Green pressed the Diocese of Mississippi to support the newly created St. Peter's Church because:

...this place is the University of the State...There are now between one and two hundred students in the various Departments, and the number is increasing. Among them are to be found some of the sons of the Church, baptized at her altar and trained in their boyhood in her Evangelical principles. To take due care of such, to preserve them from the temptations of a College life...

Bishop Green considered an established church in Oxford essential to the proper formation of Episcopal masculinity. St. Peter's Church would function, Bishop Green argued, like a "nursing mother" for her sons as they transitioned into adulthood. In 1853, Chauncey Colton reported that the "Parish and Students" sustained monthly services in Oxford. The Vestry of St. Peter's Church hired Thomas B. Lawson to preach once a month in 1854. Throughout the early 1850s, St. Peter's Church raised \$2000 for a church, but wanted more money for a larger church to "accommodate our friends who on commencement occasions, visit this seat of learning."

Lawson pleaded with Mississippi's state convention to provide support for St. Peter's Church so

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<sup>38</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1849), 9-12; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Natchez Courier Book and Job Office, 1851), 15-16.

the diocese could uphold the principles of Episcopal masculinity. Lawson summarized the plight of St. Peter's Church to the state convention:

Hundreds of young men are here receiving a collegiate education, many of whom will make their mark in the world. Oxford, is therefore, an important point, and needs the aid of the church to bring before these youth the beauty and order of primitive Christianity.

College towns became strategic battle grounds for Episcopal masculinity that would ensure the vitality of the church for future generations. Episcopal rectors and bishops wanted to ensure that they molded the South's young men as they transitioned from youth to adulthood. Bishop Green returned to St. Peter's Church again in December 1854 to confirm four people. Reverend-Professor Frederick A. P. Barnard assisted Bishop Green in the worship services. Professor Barnard exercised some spiritual responsibility for St. Peter's Church, but Bishop Green nevertheless underscored that he remained only a deacon and devoted a considerable amount of time to the University of Mississippi. By the end of 1854, St. Peter's Church had increased its building funds to \$3000. Although Reverend Lawson continued to serve St. Peter's Church as an ordained presbyter, Barnard would be responsible for the daily operations of the parish. Professor Barnard supervised Episcopal services twice a month in Oxford's Presbyterian Church. Barnard echoed the sentiments of Bishop Green and Reverend Lawson regarding the importance of St. Peter's Church not only to the Diocese of Mississippi, but also the "whole Southwest." Professor Barnard believed that the "young men" attending the University of Mississippi would "exert...a powerful influence over public opinion" in the future. Episcopalians had to reach the young men attending the University of Mississippi to ensure that the church's doctrines would shape the South's future.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Natchez Courier Book and Job Office, 1851), 25-26; *Journal of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Natchez

In 1855, Bishop Green elevated Barnard to the priesthood. Bishop Green confirmed students from the University of Mississippi attending St. Peter's Church in that same year. Barnard announced to Mississippi's state convention that St. Peter's Church had purchased a lot near Oxford's public square and anticipated the completion of a church building prior to the end of 1857. In June 1858, Bishop Green confirmed four students attending the University of Mississippi during his visit to Oxford. Green called the students the "first fruits" of the influence of St. Peter's Church in the state's premier college town. Bishop Green believed that since the Rector of St. Peter's Church also served as the Chancellor (President) of the University of Mississippi, parents could rest assured that the "the unavoidable evils of College life" for young men would be reduced in Oxford. By November 1859, St. Peter's Church neared completion. St. Peter's Church celebrated the first service in its new building on Easter Sunday 1860, and Bishop Green confirmed four students in the nearly completed building on April 13. Reverend Barnard argued that St. Peter's Church would shape the University of Mississippi's students who would soon "take a leading part in the affairs of the State, both civil and religious." Barnard's observation demonstrated the political dimension to the Episcopal mind in the South as it strived to delineate a religious masculinity.<sup>40</sup>

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Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1853), 73-74; *Journal of the Twenty-Eight Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1854), 17-18, 71, 79; *Journal of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Natchez Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1855), 22, 80.

<sup>40</sup> *Journal of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1856), 21-22, 79; *Journal of the Thirty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1857), 60; *Journal of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1859), 30, 56; *Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Jackson: Mississippian Book and Job Office, 1860), 32, 68.

## Southern Women and the Episcopal Church's Gender Roles

Constructions of patriarchal masculinity compelled Episcopalians in the South to define roles for women in opposition to men.<sup>41</sup> Episcopal clergy in the South often blamed moral declension on the failure of southern women to adhere to acceptable gender roles. Bishop Meade of Virginia encouraged women to guard against the tendency of society to make them "toys" or "playthings" through immodest dress. Bishop Meade acknowledged the piety of women in the Diocese of Virginia, but reminded them to:

Turn away with disgust from impure books which men write, wherewith to corrupt the modesty of your sex. Refuse to enter with them into those places where oftentimes the more abandoned of both sexes seek to amuse by low wit, by falsehood, and blasphemy. Shrink from the immodest dance with those whom you should make to honor and respect female delicacy too much even to propose it.

Unmarried Episcopal women, clergymen proclaimed, had a calling to prevent and reduce the menace of sinfulness from seeping into the South's secular culture of masculinity. Episcopal notions of masculinity and femininity were defined in relation to each other in the South.<sup>42</sup>

The Rector of St. Mary's School in Raleigh, North Carolina also connected the conduct of women with the broader morality of society. Reverend Aldert Smedes published his sermon entitled "*She Hath Done What She Could,*" or *The Duty and Responsibility of Woman* in 1851. Smedes warned that young women spent too much time in "dress, and vanity or gossip, or worse than all, consumed in perusal of works of fiction, generally...of a corrupt and debasing character." *The Duty and Responsibility of Woman* outlined the three gender roles that the

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<sup>41</sup> Patriarchy's centrality to the experience of southern women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been well documented: Anne Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Joan Cashin, *A Family Venture: Men and Women in the Southern Frontier* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Laura F. Edwards, "Law, Domestic Violence, and Limits of Patriarchal Authority in the Antebellum South," in *Gender and the Southern Body Politics* ed. Nancy Bercau (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), 63-93.

<sup>42</sup> Meade, *Pastoral to the Laity*, 13-14, 17-18.



Episcopal Church in the South expected its female members to perform. First, Smedes maintained the ultimate goal of the church for most women centered upon preparing them to be "Christian Mothers." The Episcopal mother had an obligation to "train her sons and daughters in those ways of wisdom and paths of peace, which terminate in the land of everlasting life." According to Smedes, women could start their journey to motherhood at an early age. Episcopalians in the South expected the oldest daughters of mothers "overburthened with the cares of her household" to assist. A faithful "Christian daughter" should assist by "supplying her mother's place" and fulfilling the "domestic offices, which only a woman's hand can execute." Such a perspective defined women through reproduction and child care, even when they personally had no children. Second, on their journey to motherhood, Smedes reminded readers that women had to also be wives. *The Duty and Responsibility of Woman* accepted the patriarchal definitions of marriage that existed in the nineteenth century by citing St. Peter's call for wives to "be in subjection to your own husbands." After marriage, Smedes warned wives that their husbands would control their entire "destiny" after marriage. Episcopalians trusted that devout women would marry devout husbands. Sometimes people with different faith positions married, and in those instance Smedes added another duty to the "Christian wife" because she had to "become the minister of her husband's salvation." Third, Reverend Smedes encouraged women to serve the Episcopal Church. Daughters of the Episcopal Church had to perform "pious labors" which would "render efficient service to her Divine Master." Although Smedes did not use the term, his sermon described the roles and expectations of a shadow vestrywoman. *The Duty and Responsibility of Woman* reminded readers that parish rectors needed their shadow vestries. Smedes asked "if the Pastor cannot look to the young women of his charge, for their devoted assistance in the care of the lambs of his flock, for whom else can he hope for such aid?"

Episcopal clergy argued that women during their teenage years were "just ripening into womanhood." After confirmation, the Episcopal Church supported women in three gender roles deemed necessary for the church's renaissance. *The Duty and Responsibility of Woman* had made clear that in addition to upholding moral delicacy, the Episcopal Church in the South expected women to execute at least three gendered roles: wife, mother, and shadow vestrywoman.<sup>43</sup>

First, the Episcopal Church in the South encouraged women to enter Christian marriages and assume "wifely duties." For many Episcopal clergymen, marriage acted as a shield against the moral corruption of women. Bishop Meade of Virginia warned women in the South: "It is matter of lamentation that the love of dress, of fashionable parties, of light reading and idle conversation has increased among those who have professed to renounce all the pomps and vanities of this wicked world." Many Episcopal clergymen in the South had proposed marriage as a solution to the perceived crisis of piety among women in the South. Bishop Meade argued that "after marriage and becoming mothers," impious women would "exhibit a marked improvement" in their character and spirituality. To illustrate the contrast, Meade recounted the death of his wife Thomasina Meade in June 1836. As Thomasina's death approached, she concentrated upon her faith and family. According to Bishop Meade, Thomasina saved for last her farewell to him as she cleared the room of other family members. Bishop Meade and Thomasina "pressed" their faces against each other and she summoned words that simultaneously expressed her love and theological piety as she "spoke of their former happiness" and their resurrection "hope of meeting again." For Bishop Meade, Thomasina's piety at the

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<sup>43</sup>Aldert Smedes, *"She Hath Done What She Could," or the Duty and Responsibility of Woman; a Sermon, Preached in the Chapel of St. Mary's School, by the Rector, and Printed for the Pupils at Their Request* (Raleigh: Seaton Gales, 1851) in Documenting the American South. University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, added 2001, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/smedesa/smedesa.html>; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: W. F. Bang & Co., Printers, 1847), 13.

most serious moment of death served as a sharp contrast to what he deemed the thoughtless and unchristian-like behaviors of young unmarried women. The Bishop of Virginia wanted all young women to emulate Thomasia's example of maturing into a devout Christian wife concerned primarily with faith and family. Episcopalians taught that Christian wives had to submit to patriarchal rule. Wives must, Bishop Meade asserted, "learn in silence at home of her own husband" by making an "appeal to the husband to be well instructed in the word."<sup>44</sup>

Second, Episcopalians in the South defined women through the role of motherhood. In particular, Episcopalians in the South used the Biblical motif of "mothers in Israel" to herald their construction of motherhood as a religious duty. Reverend Joseph B. Walker of Beaufort, South Carolina expressed "deep affliction" for the loss of "exemplary and useful members" in St. Helena's Parish. Walker described the devotion of one woman as being a "mother in Israel." Bishop William Mercer Green of Mississippi designated Margaret Smith of Washington as "a venerable Mother in Israel" for her "humble devotion to God." In Tennessee, Mary H. Alston died on the Festival of the Epiphany in 1849. Bishop James H. Otey attempted to use the liturgical calendar for joy as he described Alston's death on Epiphany as the "favored hour, when called to behold the brighter glories of a Saviour's face in Paradise." After Alston's death, Bishop Otey characterized her mother as a "mother in Israel." Alston's mother had raised her to be a "exemplary in the discharge of every Christian and social duty." Bishop Otey noted that as a "mother in Israel" Alston's mother would wait with patience "to rejoin the children who have preceded her." Reverend Benjamin M. Miller of Christ Church in Jefferson County, Mississippi mourned when "mother in Israel" died. Bishop Green called Margaret Wilson of Early Grove a "Mother In Israel." In 1847, Bishop Meade traveled to Campbell County to administer the rite of

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<sup>44</sup> Bishop William Meade, *Recollections of Two Beloved Wives*, 4-6, 24-28, 32-33, 66-71, VHS, Rare Books, CT 275 M4655 M4 C.2; Meade, *Pastoral to the Laity*, 13-14.

confirmation for four decedents of the deceased "Mrs. Withers." Bishop Meade magnified Mrs. Withers as a "venerable old Mother in Israel." In Bishop Meade's estimation the instruction provided by Mrs. Withers "were in some measure instrumental in leading the hearts of her decedants (sic)." Cynthia Lynn Lyerly found a similar usage of "mother in Israel" among the South's early Methodists. According to Lyerly, Methodists intended the term to be a "metaphorical" adjective used to describe women who exerted spiritual leadership that allowed them to "transcend home and family." Catherine A. Berkus also concludes that by using the term "mothers in Israel," evangelical Protestants allowed women to avoid total domestication by carrying religion into the "public sphere." Lyerly and Berkus may indeed be correct, but any application of the term "motherhood," even in an allegorical capacity, still defined women through reproductive capabilities and domestic roles prescribed by the church's patriarchs.<sup>45</sup>

Some Episcopalians in the South as part of their dedication to celebrating motherhood as a desirous gender role for women, attempted to reignite the regular observance of "the churching of women" ritual. Studies of the ritual have traced its origins to medieval customs and practices within Judaism. The Church of England had bequeathed the ceremony to its decedent, the Episcopal Church. In 1848, Bishop Christopher E. Gadsden of South Carolina worried, that his diocese had neglected "the venerable custom." According to Bishop Gadsden, the ritual dated back to "Hebrew times" and still had relevance in the nineteenth century. The Episcopal

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<sup>45</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1854), 52; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Virginia* (Lynchburg: The Virginian Office, 1848), 11; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Columbia: Mitchell & Rainey, 1850), 15; *Journal of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1856), 27; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Natchez Courier Book and Job Office, 1851), 47; *Journal of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1859), 32; Cynthia Lynn Lyerly, *Methodism and the Southern Mind, 1770-1810* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 96-97; Catherine A. Berkus, *Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740-1845* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 152-154.

Church's *Book of Common Prayer* adopted in 1789 included a service for the "thanksgiving of women after childbirth." The Episcopal Church's prayer of thanksgiving began by expressing gratitude that: "...God...has been graciously pleased to preserve this woman thy servant though the great pain and peril of Child-birth..." Bishop Gadsden concluded his commentary on the churching of women with a declaration that "no pious female will consent to leave it undone." Although women may have construed the churching ritual with empowering connotations, male church leaders undoubtedly used the ritual to once again define women through reproduction and childcare.<sup>46</sup>

Bishop William Meade of Virginia outlined the responsibilities for Episcopal motherhood in the South in a publication entitled *Letters to a Mother on the Birth of a Child*. According to Bishop Meade, the religious instruction of children "devolves chiefly on the mother." Consistent with Episcopal theology, Bishop Meade began his discussion with the parental obligation to bring their children forward for baptism. Bishop Meade reminded mothers that the Episcopal Church required that parents seeking the baptism of their infants had to possess a "good conscience." The Episcopal Church desired to underscore that baptismal vows did not just affect the child, but rather parents entered into a covenant with God related to parental requirements. After an infant's baptism, Bishop Meade reasoned that mothers had an evangelical mission, "to sow the seed of God's word in [a child's] heart, by which we are born again." Inside the home, Episcopal clergy in the South defined the motherly nurture of children as simple "godly

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<sup>46</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1848), 20-21; *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments*, 33; Donald S. Armentrout, and Robert Boak Slocum, *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church: A User-Friendly Reference for Episcopalians* (New York: Church Publishing Inc., 2000), 102; David Cressy, "Purification, Thanksgiving and the Churching of Women in Post-Reformation England," *Past & Present* JSTOR no. 141 (November 1993): 106-146; Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 63-64; Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 85-88. John K. Nelson suggests some gentry women retained "churching" in colonial Virginia. Nelson, *A Blessed Company: Parishes, Parsons, and Parishioners in Anglican Virginia, 1690-1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 258-259.

discipline." As children matured, Bishop Meade demanded that mothers "take their children to the house where sermons are preached; and ministers should preach so that the little ones may easily understand them and thus be made wise unto salvation." By taking such steps for the religious instruction of their children, Episcopal clergy presumed mothers would enable their children to more easily comprehend the "whole catechism" necessary for confirmation.

Patriarchal constructions of masculinity, sometimes, placed limitations upon the constructions of Episcopal motherhood in the South. For example, Bishop Meade asserted that a "[w]oman, though all her soul may approve it, is often too weak for discipline without the every ready help of a man."<sup>47</sup>

Many southern churchwomen embraced a third religious role as participants in what might be called the shadow vestry. Even though some church leaders in the South, like Bishop Meade, described women as "powerless...by comparison to man" in fulfilling leadership occupations in the Episcopal Church, women carved out avenues to guide their churches. Virtually every parish in the South had a shadow vestry. Despite the constant constraints imposed by the male-dominated church hierarchy, the role of shadow vestrywomen provided Episcopal churchwomen with their greatest institutional power, especially when compared to the more traditional identities of "mothers" and "wives." The term shadow vestrywoman is inspired from two sources. First, in parliamentary forms of government, opposition parties often form "shadow governments." Although shadow governments have no official power—hence the adjective shadow—they do still influence the ruling party by debating the predominate issues, offering alternative proposals, and even sometimes supporting the ruling government's legislation. Shadow vestries, then, lacked official power, but used their oppositional status to

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<sup>47</sup> Bishop William Meade, *Letters to a Mother on the Birth of a Child, in which are set Forth the Feelings Most Proper on that Occasion- the Private Dedication- the Public Baptism- and Future Training of the Child- with an Appendix* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1849), 1, 6-17, 29-31, 36-49— Rare Books, BV4529 .M41, VHS.

affect the governance of parishes throughout the South. Second, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's concept of a "deputy husband" provided interpretative guidance and inspiration for the concept of shadow vestrywoman. Ulrich, of course, deals with an entirely different region and time period, but her analysis reminds historians that many women refused to be defined by a patriarchal culture as "servile or helpless." For Ulrich, a rigid patriarchal ideology often competed with the fluidities of social realities. Shadow vestries then encompassed both the limitations of gender roles because their existence reflected the exclusion of women from church offices, while also demonstrating that southern women often used the malleability of everyday-lived experience to assist in the governing of their parishes. Shadow vestries ensured the Episcopal Church's survival after the American Revolution. Indeed, without the ceaseless efforts of the shadow vestries in the South, the Episcopal renaissance would not have happened, and the cotton communion would never have germinated. Episcopal women clearly wanted to participate in the governance of their local churches. Unyielding pressure from Episcopal churchwomen necessitated that some parishes make gender restrictions explicit in their articles of association. For example, the Church of the Advent in Nashville, Tennessee organized its self with the following conditions:

1. That all persons without distinction of sex or age who are registered Communicants of the Parish shall be entitled to a vote on Parochial affairs.
2. That only male Communicants shall be qualified to act as Vestrymen.

Episcopal women at the Church of the Advent could elect their parish vestry, but were excluded from serving on the very same vestry. During a visitation to Somerville, Bishop Otey indicated good prospects for the formation of a congregation. Otey noted that in Somerville the "communicants are female, and of course can make no direct efforts towards the organization of

a congregation." Such attitudes served as the catalyst that stiffened the resolve of many southern women to defy patriarchal church policies and unify under the banner of shadow vestries.<sup>48</sup>

Despite their decision to exclude women from the Episcopal Church's power structure, men recognized the invaluable contributions of shadow vestrywomen in the South to their church's renaissance after the American Revolution. Reverend Peter J. Shand called the death of Catharine Fitzsimons "a severe loss" for Trinity Church in South Carolina. Fitzsimons had "been distinguished by her zeal and benevolent deeds" for Trinity Church in Columbia. Reverend George Woodbridge praised the devoted involvement of the Shadow Vestry of Christ Church in Richmond. Woodbridge's report to Virginia's state convention included the following line: "The Rector cannot but express his grateful acknowledgments to the ladies of his congregation for their active and unwearied exertions in doing good." Bishops and clergy in the South harbored a strong affinity for shadow vestrywomen. Bishop Johns of Virginia remembered the deceased Shadow Vestrywoman Coles during a visit to her home in 1848. Shadow Vestrywoman Coles had lived a life of "exemplary piety" while opening her home to traveling Episcopal clergy and bishops. Johns entered her bedroom and pondered "The glorious fellowship to which she has passed and pray that her numerous decedents...may drink of the same spirit." Shadow vestrywomen, like Coles, guaranteed through their labor a "heavenly inheritance."<sup>49</sup> Shadow vestrywomen often served as the core of Episcopal churches in the South. Reverend John

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<sup>48</sup> Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 36-39, 48-50; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: Bang, Walker, & Co., 1858), 68. Joan R. Gunderson uncovered that women provided a long underappreciated contribution to Episcopal parishes in frontier Minnesota. Gunderson, "The Local Parish as a Female Institution: The Experience of All Saints Episcopal Church in Frontier Minnesota," *JSTOR Church History* Vol. 55, no. 3 (September 1986): 307-322.

<sup>49</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: Bang, Walker & Co., 1858), 68; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Columbia: James G. Griffith & Co., Herald Office, 1856), 18-19; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: B. R. Wren, 1837), 31; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Lynchburg: Blackford, Townley, & Co., 1849), 11-21.



Grammer deplored in 1836 the fact that three parishioners had been removed from his flock "all female heads of families, and for the convenience of two of whom, the new church was specially intended."<sup>50</sup>

The Bible furnished a character that gave Episcopalians an apostolic depiction of shadow vestrywomen. The Book of Acts described Dorcas as a female disciple in Joppa who attained remarkable popularity. Joppa's citizens so admired Dorcas that they summoned St. Peter to resurrect her from death. In 1859, the Episcopal Church consecrated Bishop Alexander Gregg as the first bishop of Texas. Following a tour of his new see, Bishop Gregg heralded the work of shadow vestrywomen throughout the Lone Star State. For example, St. Andrew's Church in Seguin had been without a rector for over two years prior to the bishop's arrival. Bishop Gregg reported that to his amazement the Episcopal community in Seguin had persevered with an empty pulpit and continued to demonstrate "remarkable vigor and activity" as a result of an unnamed shadow vestrywoman who had assumed a leadership role in the parish. Additionally, at Christ Church in Nacogdoches the shadow vestry welcomed the parish's new full-time rector by providing a "fine surplice." Texas's shadow vestries also staffed at least 53% of the diocese's Sunday School teaching jobs in 1860. As their state initially experienced a clergy shortage and weak diocesan governance, shadow vestrywomen had filled the void and ensured the survival of numerous Episcopal parishes all across the state of Texas. Bishop Gregg turned to the Bible to characterize Texas's shadow vestrywomen in his diocese as "Dorcases." Shadow vestrywomen in the South embraced the characterization. For example, the Shadow Vestry of Christ Church in Isle of Wright County, Virginia identified themselves with Dorcas. In 1836, Reverend Thomas Smith asserted to the state convention that the "ladies have formed a Dorcas Society, consisting

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<sup>50</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: James C. Walker, 1836), 32; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1831), 27.

at present, of thirty-one members, which promises much aid to the other benevolent efforts made in the Parish." Also in Virginia, Reverend William G. Jackson announced that women in Hungar's Parish had organized a "Dorcas Society."<sup>51</sup>

Like the apostolic Dorcas, shadow vestrywomen in the South assembled congregations and planned construction projects for new church buildings in between their communion's cotton fields. The Diocese of Mississippi had very active shadow vestrywomen committed to building new churches. Bishop William Mercer Green credited two shadow vestrywomen with organizing an Episcopal congregation in Osyka. Shadow Vestrywoman Jane Dalton of Aberdeen also won acclaim from Bishop William Mercer Green. Dalton had commanded the effort to erect a church in the town. Bishop Green encouraged other women to follow the example of Shadow Vestrywoman Dalton's contributions to the Aberdeen church:

...this beautiful House of God claims for its founder no name renowned for wealth or influence, but that of an humble and devoted daughter of the Church...May her noble zeal and her well-rewarded labors inspire others to imitate her example.

Shadow Vestrywoman Dalton had worked for the Episcopal Church even as she confronted a bodily disease that ultimately took her life. Shadow vestrywomen in Pike County, Mississippi pledged to "do all in their power towards providing themselves with the ministrations of the Church." Shadow Vestrywoman Gilmore of Copiah County conferred "a valuable amount of property" to the Protestant Episcopal Church. Shadow Vestrywoman Gilmore desired the land be used to erect a church in the town of Gallatin. If no church could be sustained, Gilmore authorized the Diocese of Mississippi to use the land in some other beneficial way. The Shadow Vestry of Grace Church in Canton provided furnishings for its congregation to meet in a rented

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<sup>51</sup> *Journal of the Eleventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas* (1860), 13; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: James C. Walker, 1836), 28-29; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: B. R. Wren, 1838), 34.

room of "the old Methodist Church." Shadow Vestrywoman Margret L. Johnson of Madison County, Mississippi launched an effort, along with her neighbors, to erect a church in her neighborhood. Bishop Green described Johnson's proposed church as "one of the most beautiful structures of the Church kind to be found in any of our Southern and Western Dioceses."<sup>52</sup>

The Dioceses of Texas and Tennessee relied upon shadow vestrywomen as the Episcopal Church expanded across both states. Shadow Vestrywoman Henderson helped erect a "gothic church" in Marshall, Texas. According to Reverend John Owen, Shadow Vestrywoman Henderson had "done much for the church in Eastern Texas." Two shadow vestrywomen at Sommerville, Tennessee raised \$1300 to erect a church edifice in 1853. The Shadow Vestry of St. Luke's Parish in Jackson, Tennessee amassed \$800 for the construction of a new church. Likewise, the Shadow Vestry of St. John's Church in Knoxville gathered the requisite funds to erect and furnish a chapel.<sup>53</sup>

Even the older Dioceses of Virginia and South Carolina turned to shadow vestrywomen to construct new churches in their old parishes. The Shadow Vestry of Trinity Church in Portsmouth, Virginia contributed 84.7% of the dollars collected during a construction fundraising campaign for their parish. The "laudable efforts" of Trinity Church's shadow vestrywomen enabled the erection of a house for the rector and galleries for the church. Wealthy

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<sup>52</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Natchez: Courier Book and Job Office, 1852), 25-26; *Journal of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 38; *Journal of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1858), 39; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Annual Convention, of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi*, 32; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1848), 15.

<sup>53</sup> *Journal of the Tenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas* (San Antonio: The Herald Office, 1859), 26; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: Cameron & Fall, 1845), 16; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: J. Roberts, 1853), 49.

shadow vestrywomen in the South also provided financial resources for the construction of churches in rural parts of their dioceses. In October 1843, Assistant Bishop John Johns traveled to Mercer's Bottom in western Virginia to consecrate a new chapel near the Ohio River. Bishop Johns dedicated the new Episcopal building as "Bruce Chapel." According to Bishop Johns the vestry and minister used the name to show "gratitude for the liberal assistance received from Miss and Mrs. Bruce of Halifax." Bishop Johns acknowledged that both shadow vestrywomen had also contributed to other congregations seeking to build "houses of worship." A shadow vestrywoman funded the erection of Christ Church in Matthews County, Virginia. Christ Church's shadow vestrywoman founder died before the completion of the structure. At the consecration service, Virginia's Assistant Bishop Johns celebrated the shadow vestrywoman as he remarked that

Her modest grave near the door of the church needs no sculptured marble to record her work of faith and labor of love. The church itself is her memorial, and whilst it stands, those there who enjoy the privileges of the gospel cannot forget to call her blessed.

Many Episcopal churches in the early nineteenth century South would never have come into existence had shadow vestrywomen in the South not supplied the necessary leadership. In May 1860, Julia Hawes of Rock Springs, South Carolina collected more than \$150 for the construction of a chapel near her residence. Hawes anticipated raising the remaining funds necessary in as little as one year. Shadow Vestrywomen in Lexington, South Carolina organized a congregation that worshipped out of the courthouse. Reverend Richard S. Seely credited "Mrs. Reed, Mrs. Simmons, and...Miss Simmons, and Mrs. Dr. Caughman" with serving as the impetus for the establishment of a permanent church in the Lexington District. In 1850, another

group of shadow vestrywomen from South Carolina contributed \$20 for "the erection of a new church at St. Helenaville."<sup>54</sup>

Absent a nearby parish, sometimes Episcopal women who resided in the rural and isolated parts of the South served as the shadow vestry for home churches. Mrs. Thornton of Virginia "had turned her home into a church" and invited neighbors and family to attend services when Episcopal clergymen visited. Assistant Bishop William Meade of Virginia visited the elderly Mrs. Thornton's home church in 1833. Thornton desired to "partake of the Holy Supper" before her death. After visiting with Shadow Vestrywoman Thornton, Assistant Bishop Meade realized she had never experienced the rite of confirmation. So in the presence of her neighborhood congregation, Meade confirmed Shadow Vestrywoman Thornton in the home church she had constructed on her own. Then, Thornton along with the congregation of her home church celebrated the sacrament of Holy Communion. Assistant Bishop Meade learned that Mrs. Thornton had died five days after he had departed her home church. Much to the joy of Meade, Thornton died a confirmed communicant in the Episcopal Church. Virginia's Assistant Bishop celebrated the piety of Thornton as an example of "an old and venerable mother in Israel." Mississippi also had shadow vestrywomen who oversaw home churches. After Bishop Green arrived in Columbus, Shadow Vestrywoman Slaughter sent notice to her neighborhood to gather at her "mansion" for worship services. Bishop Green preached to a "sizable congregation" and baptized an infant at Slaughter's home. Attendees at Slaughter's home church agreed to raise

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<sup>54</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: B. R. Wren, 1841), 36-37; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: The Sou. Churchman Office, 1843), 12-19; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: The Office of the Southern Literary Messenger, 1844), 13-25; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventy-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1860), 49-50; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1857), 66; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1850), 46.

\$300 to hire a part-time rector. Shadow vestrywomen, thus, carved out roles inside both parish churches and in home churches.<sup>55</sup>

Home churches provided Episcopal women with unique leadership opportunities. Shadow Vestrywoman Eggleston supervised the congregation in Tchula, Mississippi. Although Episcopalians shared a log meetinghouse with the village's Methodists and Presbyterians for some worship services, Eggleston opened her home for supplemental services and congregational meetings. For instance, Tchula's Episcopalians convened in Shadow Vestrywoman's Eggleston's home to elect a regular vestry in April 1851. In 1852, Bishop Green confirmed three people "in the parlor" of Eggleston's home church. Some shadow vestrywomen in the South included wives of politicians. Virginia's former First Lady Preston resided near Christiansburg. The Preston family's residence rested "on the summit of the Alleghany Mountains, and in one of the most beautiful and fertile places" in Virginia. Bishop William Meade visited Virginia's former First Lady and worshiped in her home church. Meade administered the sacrament of Holy Communion to Preston "with some of her relatives." According to Bishop Meade, Preston had been confirmed in the Episcopal Church and remained loyal, even though Christiansburg lacked an active church. The Diocese of Tennessee also supported home churches. For example, Bishop Otey preached at the home church of Shadow Vestrywoman Williams on Whitsunday 1859.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1834), 8-15; *Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Jackson: Mississippian Book and Job Office, 1860), 44; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 17-18.

<sup>56</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 23; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 23; *Journal of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 21-32; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: A. A. Stitt, 1859), 32.

Alongside their construction of new churches and organization of home churches, shadow vestrywomen executed renovations of existing Episcopal properties in the South. The Shadow Vestry of Cumberland Parish in Virginia amassed the funds necessary to paint and erect a gallery in their church. Elizabeth City Parish's shadow vestry aided the purchase of a belfry and lecture room. The Shadow Vestry of Elizabeth River Parish in Virginia accumulated \$6927 of the \$8010.54 needed for church repairs. A shadow vestrywoman of Trinity Church in Tipton County, Tennessee added a vestry room to the church building. The Shadow Vestry of St. Paul's Church in Summerville, South Carolina marshaled parishioners to furnish a new church in 1857. Shadow vestrywomen supplied the Communion Table, chairs for the chancel, and carpet. In addition, one shadow vestrywoman from St. Paul's Church donated a "handsome chair, denominated the Bishop's chair" for the chancel. A shadow vestrywoman from Charleston presented the church with a surplice to replace the "old and tattered one." At Monumental Church, shadow vestrywomen secured most of the \$1000.00 needed for church repairs in their parish. The Shadow Vestry of Christ Church in Nashville collected \$600 to make repairs to their church in 1860. The Shadow Vestry of Prince Frederick's Parish procured "new hangings" for their church. Episcopalians in Columbus, Mississippi turned to their shadow vestry to solicit the \$400 needed to repair their church building. The Rector of St. Paul's Church praised his shadow vestry as "always ready to promote every good and worthy object." In 1848, the Shadow Vestry of St. Paul's Church raised funds to purchase a church bell. The Shadow Vestry of Newport Parish in Isle of Wright County, Virginia collected \$602 for the purchase of carpets and lamps for their church. In Lexington Parish, shadow vestrywomen contributed to the repair and painting of the Episcopal Church at New Glasgow. Shadow Vestrywoman Louisa Maddux of Bristol Parish bestowed \$500 toward the erection of a tower and a bell at Grace Church. Maddux had

been one of Bristol Parish's "young communicants, cut off in early in life." The Shadow Vestry of Trinity Church in Edgefield, South Carolina bundled together \$160.00 in 1858 and 1859 for church repairs. Shadow Vestrywoman Hayne provided St. Paul's Church in Pendleton, South Carolina a chandelier in 1856. Shadow vestrywomen in the South, then, prided themselves in possessing a dexterous ability to enhance their parish's existing properties with repairs and renovations.<sup>57</sup>

Shadow vestrywomen worked to expand and improve the property holdings of their parishes. The Shadow Vestry of Christ Church in Smithfield, Virginia played a leading role in the acquisition of a rectory. In 1859, the Shadow Vestry of St. Paul's Church in Columbus, Mississippi gathered \$150.00 to furnish their parish's rectory. The Shadow Vestry of Grace Church in Okolona, Mississippi purchased two acres of land for a parsonage adjoining the church lot. Shadow vestrywomen belonging to St. Paul's Church in Pendleton, South Carolina raised and expended \$1,100 for the purchase of a parsonage. The Shadow Vestry of St. Matthew's Parish in Wheeling, Virginia purchased a \$3,500 parsonage in the mid-1850s and an added \$800.00 for improvements to their parsonage purchase. Trinity Church's shadow vestry in

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<sup>57</sup> *Journal of the Fifty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Philadelphia: T.K. and P.G. Collins, Printers, 1853), 51; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: The Office of the Southern Literary Messenger, 1844), 48; *Journal of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 85-87; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee*, 40; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Lynchburg: Blackford, Townley, & Co., 1849), 59; *Journal of the Sixty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 85. *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Virginia* (Lynchburg: The Virginian Office, 1847), 66-67; *Journal of the Sixty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 105; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Ninth Annual convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1858), 53; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Memphis: Wm. F. Hutton & Co., 1860), 41; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1853), 50; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 50; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (Jackson: The Southron Office, 1844), 29-30; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi*, 32; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 22.



Berkley County, Virginia steered the parish's effort to erect a parsonage. Property acquisitions alongside new construction and renovations became the purview of the South's shadow vestries when elected vestrymen proved unable to complete the obligatory work.<sup>58</sup>

Buildings and property needed to be filled with sacred rituals, and shadow vestrywomen in the South funded the instruments necessary for the Episcopal Church's worship too. The Shadow Vestry of St. Andrew's Church presented a "gown and surplice" as a gift to their parish. A shadow vestrywoman from Christ Church in San Augustine, Texas equipped Reverend John Owen with a surplice. In 1843, the Shadow Vestry of the St. Augustine Missionary Station connected with the Diocese of South Carolina "presented to the Vestry and Wardens" a "bell weighing upwards of 400 lbs" along with a silver communion set "consisting of a tankard, 2 cups, a paten, and a plate for receiving the Alms." St. Thaddeus's Church in Aiken, South Carolina acquired a pair of cups for Holy Communion due to the exertions of shadow vestrywomen. A shadow vestrywoman belonging to the Church of the Advent in Mississippi donated to her congregation a "richly bound quarto Prayer Book for the desk." Purchasing *The Book of Common Prayer* demonstrated that shadow vestries in the South envisioned that they had a responsibility to guard the liturgical orthodoxies of their church.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *Journal of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1859), 50, 58-59; *Journal of the Sixtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: Elliot & Nye, Book and Job Printers, 1855), 82; *Journal of the Sixty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: The Whig Book and Job Office, 1856), 91-92, 121; *Journal of the Fifty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Baltimore: Joseph Robinson, 1850), 63-64; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1854), 37.

<sup>59</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Memphis: Wm. F. Hutton & Co., 1860), 47; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1831), 27; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1843), 58-59; *Journal of the Eleventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas* (1860), 281; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1846), 42-43; *Journal of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Natchez Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1853), 72-73.

Organs also proved to be common purchase approved by shadow vestries in the South. The Shadow Vestry of St. Martin's Parish in Virginia compiled \$350 to purchase an organ for the "Fork Church." In 1839, the shadow vestrywomen of St. Mark's Parish in Clarendon initiated a funding campaign to purchase an organ for their church. Shadow vestrywomen at St. Paul's Church in Pendleton, South Carolina raised \$300.00 for the procurement of an organ. A shadow vestrywoman belonging to St. Andrew's Church in Jackson, Mississippi generated \$600 and used the proceeds to bargain for a "finely toned organ." The Shadow Vestry of St. John's Church Knoxville contributed funds to obtain an organ and a silver communion set. The Rector of Burton Parish in Virginia credited the "spirited and perserving(sic) exertions of one lady in the congregation" for the church's purchase of an organ.<sup>60</sup>

Shadow vestrywomen in the South deployed their organizational strength to intervene and balanced parish budgets when the regular vestries demonstrated reckless or incompetent fiscal management. Christ Church in Greenville, South Carolina assumed a debt of \$2,700 to construct a parsonage for their rector. Although the men who controlled the Vestry of Christ Church spent the money to build the parsonage, they did not offset their expenditures with adequate revenue. Instead, the Shadow Vestry of Christ Church stepped into the leadership void and paid off the parsonage debt in 1842. Christ Church's vestrymen had engaged in deficit spending, while shadow vestrywomen successfully labored to restore fiscal discipline to the parish's budget. In 1839, Reverend Alexander W. Marshall reported that the shadow vestrywomen of St. David's Parish in Cheraw, South Carolina demonstrated "much zeal in

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<sup>60</sup> *Journal of the Sixty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: The Whig Book and Job Office, 1856), 88-89; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1835), 40; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee*, 16; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1849), 33-34; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Courier Book and Job Office, 1850), 49-50.

raising funds...for the benefit of the Church." The Shadow Vestry of Cumberland Parish in Virginia raised \$500.00 to liquidate the debt incurred by plastering their church. Shadow vestries in Abingdon and Ware Parishes thorough "active exertions" alleviated the church's debt from the rectory. The shadow vestrywomen used their surplus funds to make "valuable improvements to the property of the church." The Shadow Vestry of Immanuel Church in Lagrange, Tennessee procured \$180.00 to discharge old parish debts and to erect a fence around the church. In 1834, the Shadow Vestry of Trinity Church in Virginia collected \$500 to indemnify their church's debt. Shadow vestrywomen at St. Paul's Church labored to remunerate the construction debts incurred by the parish as it added a lecture room in 1860. The Shadow Vestry of Christ Church in Vicksburg, Mississippi used their sewing society to sponsor a fair which produced \$1250 to amortize the parish's debt. By 1847, the Shadow Vestry of Christ Church had not eliminated the deficit, but they had "greatly reduced" the parish's debt. The Rector of St. Paul's Church in Lynchburg, Virginia confessed how the church's shadow vestry compensated for the budgetary failures of the regular vestry. In 1845, the Shadow Vestry of St. Paul's Church administered a parish fair which provided for the "liquidation of a debt between 7 and 800 dollars, owing by the vestry." Shadow vestrywomen at St. Paul's Church had closed a budget deficit coined by their regular vestry. The Shadow Vestry of St. Paul's Church raised funds to liquidate their parish's debt. In less the eighteen months, shadow vestrywomen paid off the debt of St. Paul's Church totaling \$1,300.00. In 1858, shadow vestrywomen in Knoxville secured \$85 for the church's treasury to keep their parish's budget balanced. Shadow vestries in the South, therefore, frequently cleaned up the financial messes created by the regular vestries as they completed the hard work of balancing parish budgets, generating revenue, and eliminating deficits.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>*Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1832), 31-32; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the*

Shadow vestries in the South often used sewing societies as a revenue generating mechanism for their budget policies. Episcopal women in the Dioceses of Virginia and South Carolina transformed their sewing abilities into appropriations power. The Rector of Christ and Grace Churches in Greenville County credited the shadow vestrywomen from both parishes with enabling a large contribution to missions. The Shadow Vestries of Christ and Grace Churches demonstrated "energy and good works" in organizing a sewing society in the parish which provided the necessary financial resources for sundry expenditures. The Shadow Vestry of St. John's Chapel at Charleston Neck created a sewing society to provide financial resources to their chapel. A sewing society managed by shadow vestrywomen benefited Christ Church in Richmond, Virginia. The Shadow Vestry of Christ Church in Winchester, Virginia formalized a Sewing Society to support funding missions. Shadow vestrywomen of Hamilton Parish in Virginia raised funds for the "repairs and improvements" in their church. Shadow vestrywomen in Hamilton Parish used a sewing society which accrued funds for various religious purposes. The Shadow Vestry of Hampton Parish in Yorktown, Virginia concocted a sewing society that encompassed "almost all of the ladies" of the church. Shadow vestrywomen wanted the proceeds of their sewing society to be spent on "benevolent and religious purposes." Lexington Parish's

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*Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: B. R. Wren, 1839), 30; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1834), 27; *Journal of the Sixty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 101; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1831), 26; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Lynchburg: The Virginian Office, 1846), 77-78; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee*, 80; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Clergy and laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: W. F. Bang & Co., Book and Job Printers, 1855), 39; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Columbia: James G. Griffith & Co., Herald Office, 1856), 46; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: Bang, Walker & Co., 1857), 39; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi*, 25-27; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Jackson: Thomas Palmer, Printer, 1847), 34.

shadow vestrywomen in Amherst County, Virginia created "sewing societies" and raised \$400 for the purchase of a parsonage.<sup>62</sup>

Sewing revenue moved west as evidenced by the shadow vestrywomen in the Diocese of Mississippi, who utilized the budgetary stratagem to needle revenue for their own parishes. The Shadow Vestry of St. Paul's Church in Woodville raised funds for chancel chairs and carpet for the aisle. A year later the Shadow Vestry of St. Paul's Church used a sewing society to earn \$75.00 for additional furniture to be placed in their church. Shadow vestrywomen in Columbus used their sewing society to provide financial resources to the Rector of St. Paul's Church. As Episcopalians in Aberdeen labored to build a permanent church, shadow vestrywomen worked to secure a temporary facility. The Shadow Vestry of St. John's Church in Aberdeen used their sewing society to procure the necessary \$140 to repair the basement of the Masonic Hall to be used for divine worship. The Shadow Vestry of Calvary Church in Holmes County, Mississippi created a sewing society to support a variety of projects in their parish. In 1856, shadow vestrywomen lumped together \$100 of sewing capital to paint and furnish Calvary Church.

Along with sewing, shadow vestrywomen in Virginia organized church fairs to replenish their parish treasuries. The Shadow Vestry of Henrico Parish assembled more than \$900 at a church fair in the spring of 1833. The revenue raised by the Henrico Parish's shadow

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<sup>62</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Clergy and laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: W. F. Bang & Co., Book and Job Printers, 1855), 23; *Journal of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 23. *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: B. R. Wren, 1841), 11-12; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Convention of the Diocese of Mississippi* (Nashville: W. F. Bang & Co., 1843), 22; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Annual Convention, of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi*, 33; *Journal of the Sixty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: The Whig Book and Job Office, 1856), 87; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 55; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: James C. Walker, 1836), 28; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1831), 19; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: The Sou. Churchman Office, 1843), 42; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Virginia* (Lynchburg: The Virginian Office, 1847), 65; *Journal of the Sixty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 69-70.

vestrywomen accomplished the erection of a \$800 tower and the purchase of \$100 church bell. The Shadow Vestry of Christ Church in Richmond also used a church fair to manufacture \$800 for the construction of a "Lecture and Sunday School room." The Shadow Vestry of Bloomfield Parish coordinated a church fair, and then expended the proceeds from the fair "to plaster the church and purchase stoves." The plaster and stoves enhanced the "comfort" of the Bloomfield Parish's church. The Shadow Vestry of Elizabeth City Parish raised \$350 from by organizing a fair. The proceeds from the church fair went toward parish "improvements" in the mid-1840s. The Shadow Vestry of Grace Church engineered a festival in 1860 to pay off their parish's debt.<sup>63</sup>

Women in the Diocese of Mississippi also planned church fairs designed to generate revenue. The Shadow Vestry of St. James's Church in Port Gibson used a parish fair to raise \$350 for the purchase of church lot. In the late 1830s, the Shadow Vestry of Trinity Church in Natchez held a parish fair to materialize funds for various church appropriations. Shadow vestrywomen in Natchez accumulated \$2400 in revenue fair proceeds. Trinity Church appropriated the fair proceeds as follows: \$1100 for the purchase of a parsonage, \$500 to the Diocese of Mississippi, and \$100 for the Natchez Orphan Asylum. Early in its existence, parishioners at St. Andrew's Church in Jackson worshiped in a private home. The Shadow Vestry of St. Andrew's Church organized a fair and concert which raised \$500 to help construct a formal church building. Likewise, the Shadow Vestry of the Grand Gulf Missionary Station in

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<sup>63</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1835), 32, 39; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: Wm. McFarland, 1845), 54; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: B. R. Wren, 1841), 33; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Mississippi* (Natchez: Samuel H.B. Black, 1838), 4-5; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi*, 30; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Memphis: Wm. F. Sutton & Co., 1860), 49; *Journal of the Proceedings of the 50th Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1839), 27-28.

Mississippi collected assorted articles to sell at a parish fair to generate funds for the erection of a church building.

Managing budgets and construction blueprints did not account for the only exertions of shadow vestrywomen, because they also engaged in missionary endeavors. The Shadow Vestry of St. James's Parish in Virginia established a Parish Benevolent Society, which met monthly and devoted itself to the "social re-union among the members." Shadow vestrywomen in St. James's Parish aspired to affect a "religious improvement" in their community through their labors. The Shadow Vestry of St. Helena's Parish raised 50% of their church's financial contribution to missionary projects. Hungar Parish's shadow vestrywomen began training young girls to succeed them in their work for the Episcopal Church. A group of "little girls" in Hungar Parish consociated themselves into a society designed to aid "missionaries." By 1856, Hungar Parish's young girls had solicited \$50.00 for the missionaries. The Shadow Vestry of St. John's Church at Knoxville initiated a missionary society to sponsor church ventures in eastern Tennessee.<sup>64</sup>

Shadow vestrywomen in the South prioritized education in their missionary exertions. Two shadow vestrywomen working with Brandon and Grace Churches in Virginia supplied the funds for two parochial schools. The same shadow vestrywomen also worked in their schools until a teacher could be secured. Shadow Vestrywoman Ann H. Hampton of DeKalb donated half of her profits from working in a local school to support an Episcopal missionary. The Shadow Vestry of Henrico Parish established a Sunday School of twenty students. Reverend Henry Elwell of St. David's Church reported that an unidentified shadow vestrywoman

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<sup>64</sup> *Journal of the Sixty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 63-64; *Journal of the Sixty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: The Whig Book and Job Office, 1856), 105-106; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1847), 43; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee*, 47; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville; J. Roberts & Co., 1854), 39.

administered a school serving "between twenty and thirty poor white children." Elwell assisted frequently assisted his shadow vestrywomen in disseminating "religious instruction" to their parish's poor white children. A single shadow vestrywoman in Amelia County, Virginia organized their parish's Sunday School of twenty students in 1852. Reverend Peter J. Shand communicated to South Carolina's convention that the shadow vestrywomen at Trinity Church had raised in 1839 the revenues required for the erection of a "commodious Sunday-School Room...near the Church." The Shadow Vestry of Trinity Church in Columbia, South Carolina designed a parochial school for their parish. Shadow vestrywomen at Trinity Church managed the "patronage" and finances of the parochial school. Reverend Shand credited the Trinity Church's shadow vestrywomen with ensuring the parochial school made "successful progress." Shadow Vestrywoman Olivia Dunbar of Mississippi bequeathed \$50,000 of her estate to the Episcopal Church to erect and sustain a "Female School" in her parish. Bishop Green emblazoned Shadow Vestrywoman Dunbar as a "true 'Mother in Israel.'" <sup>65</sup>

The popularity of religious education among shadow vestrywomen conveyed that in their opinion elected vestries in their parishes had been deficient in investing the necessary resources. Mrs. McElheran functioned as a member of the Shadow Vestry of St. Helena's Parish in South Carolina. Shadow Vestrywoman McElheran taught Sunday School for the white children in the parish. She then used white children to assist in teaching Sunday School to the black children in her parish. The Shadow Vestry of Christ Church Parish in Lancaster collected \$40.00 for the Virginia Theological Seminary. Some modernizing shadow vestrywomen in the South even

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<sup>65</sup> *Journal of the Sixty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 149-150; *Journal of the Proceedings of the 50th Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 38-39; *Journal of the Sixty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 112-115; *Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 34; *Journal of the Fifty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Philadelphia: T.K. and P.G. Collins, Printers, 1853), 40; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 66-67; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Ninth Annual convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 70-71.



deployed the tools of market capitalism as part of their efforts to fund educational projects for the Episcopal Church. As a shadow vestrywoman, Elizabeth Sophia Jones of Prince William County, Virginia won accolades as a "most sincere follower of Christ." Bishop Meade received from her multiple shares of Virginia State Bank stock and a few shares of "Virginia State Stock." Shadow Vestrywoman Jones earmarked some of the shares to benefit the Virginia Theological Seminary. Parishioners attending Trinity Church in Matthews County, Virginia believed that shadow vestrywomen deserved credit because "chiefly by their exertions the Sunday School has been kept going." Christ Church in Norfolk, Virginia also benefited from the generous donations of its shadow vestrywomen. Susan Boudoin bequeathed \$500 to the parish's "Education Society" upon her death. Parishioners considered Shadow Vestrywoman Boudoin to have died in "the triumphs of faith." In addition, an unidentified shadow vestrywoman in Virginia donated a lot for the construction of a lecture or Sunday School room. Bishop William Meade estimated the property donated by the shadow vestrywoman had value of \$3000. Shadow vestrywomen in Richmond, Virginia employed J. S. Swift as a missionary for Charlottesville. As a college-town missionary supported by shadow vestrywomen, Swift honored his benefactors by cultivating both prayer meetings and a temperance society with more than sixty members. Sophia Carter of Prince William County left \$10,000 upon her death to the "Female Charity School" affiliated with St. George's Church in Fredericksburg, Virginia. The Shadow Vestry of St. Paul's Church in Lynchburg raised seventy-five dollars for their parish's Education Society. Likewise, the Shadow Vestry of St. Andrew's Parish had organized an education society. According to the Rector of St. George's Church, the support of the Education Society by shadow vestrywomen evidenced in his words "the prosperity of our beloved Zion." Sometimes limited funds compelled shadow vestrywomen to make hard budgetary choices that undermined their educational goals.

For example, shadow vestrywomen in Dale and Raleigh Parishes took funds directed toward their Education Society and instead appropriated the monies for the construction of an Episcopal Church in Powhatan County, Virginia. Although Reverend John Grammer Jr. of St. Andrew's Parish complained of "coldness" in his flock, he celebrated the Shadow Vestry of St. Thomas's Church in Virginia, which had secured the funds for one scholarship to the Virginia Theological Seminary.<sup>66</sup> Shadow vestrywomen, at times, had to solicit official action by a church's ruling vestry to aid their educational initiatives. In 1821, the shadow vestrywomen at St. Michael's Church in Charleston petitioned the church's ruling vestry to make available "Seats for poor Children belonging to the Sunday School." St. Michael's shadow vestrywomen expressed a willingness to pay the ruling vestry for the pew property. The Vestry of St. Michael's Church adopted a resolution providing Pew C and Pew D in the South Gallery of the church. Furthermore, the Vestry of St. Michael's Church commended the shadow vestry for its "laudable design" and ordered that "no Rent or Assessment what[so]ever be charged" for the free pews provided to the Sunday School children.<sup>67</sup>

Building new churches, repairs to existing parishes, budgeting, revenue collecting, and educational projects could not obscure that most shadow vestrywomen belonged to the planter

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<sup>66</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Lynchburg: The Virginian Office, 1846), 67; *Journal of the Fifty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 19; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1844), 51-52; *Journal of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 106; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: James C. Walker, 1836), 27-28; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1832), 33-34; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1833), 26; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1834), 28; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: B. R. Wren, 1841), 31; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1831), 21-22.

<sup>67</sup> St. Michael's Church Records, 1751-1983, Vestry Minutes, 29 July 1821, Accession: 0320.00, SCHS.

class.<sup>68</sup> The South's class structure created a unique function for shadow vestrywomen in the region. Shadow vestries throughout the South aided the Episcopal Church in providing religious instruction to the region's slave population. Bishop William Mercer Green of Mississippi encountered many shadow vestrywomen committed to extending the church's influence to their slaves during his travels. Shadow Vestrywoman Wilson of Marshall County served as the baptismal sponsor for thirteen of her slaves, all of whom Bishop Green baptized in July 1853. An unidentified shadow vestrywoman from Louisiana crossed the Mississippi River to have four adult slaves baptized at services being conducted by Bishop Green of Mississippi. Shadow Vestrywoman Freeland welcomed Bishop Green to her Mississippi plantation in 1858 to baptize her child along with eleven of her slaves. Freeland announced plans to erect a plantation chapel on her property. In 1859, Bishop Green confirmed thirty-four of Freeland's slaves. Bishop Green praised the "zealous Pastor" who catechized the slaves on Freeland's plantation in 1860. Reverend Frederick W. Damus had catechized the slaves on Freeland's plantation to recite appropriate religious answers "in one voice." Shadow Vestrywoman Freeland, by her own initiative, had built a successful plantation mission with an appointed rector.<sup>69</sup> Shadow Vestrywoman Charlotte Griffith managed a plantation eight miles outside of Natchez. Bishop Green magnified Griffith for "faithfully instructing her servants, and training them for admission into the Church." On a visit to Griffith's plantation, Green baptized eighteen adults and

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<sup>68</sup> Planter-class women have been the subject of some debate regarding the nature of their relationship to the region's prevailing cultures of slavery and patriarchy. For example, see Joan E. Cashin, *A Family Venture: Men and Women on the Southern Frontier* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 4-6; Catherine Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress: Women's World in the Old South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982).

<sup>69</sup> *Journal of the Twenty-Eight Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 16-18, 26; *Journal of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 45; *Journal of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 41; *Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 3, 41.

confirmed nineteen.<sup>70</sup> Shadow Vestrywoman Griffith employed her own children in providing religious instruction for their family's slaves. In 1860, Bishop Green lauded Shadow Vestrywoman Griffith's leadership which had prepared thirteen slaves for baptism and twelve slaves for confirmation. According to Bishop Green, Griffith's stewardship had created a plantation household over which "the spirit of Grace must delight to hover."<sup>71</sup>

Shadow vestrywomen in other dioceses joined their Mississippi colleagues in serving Christ and class. A shadow vestrywoman affiliated with Trinity Church in Edgefield, South Carolina supported the religious mission to slaves. Shadow Vestrywoman Brooks operated a plantation a few miles from Cambridge. Using her own funds, Shadow Vestrywoman Brooks built "neat Church edifice of brick" on her plantation. Reverend Edmund E. Bellinger of Trinity Church held divine services at his shadow vestrywoman's plantation church multiple times in 1855. In Upper St. John's Parish, Shadow Vestrywoman Porcher offered daily religious instruction to slaves on her family's plantation. Shadow Vestrywoman Procher's efforts no doubt enabled Bishop Thomas Davis to confirm three slaves on her plantation in 1855. A year later, the Porcher plantation had erected "a commodious chapel...for the use of the slaves." Slave missions yielded the confirmation of twenty-six slaves on the Porcher plantation in 1856.<sup>72</sup>

The South's distinctive class structure made shadow vestrywomen unique from their northern counterparts. Economic realities guaranteed that slavery defined many of the activities of shadow vestrywomen. For example, the Shadow Vestry of St. Peter's Church in Charleston South Carolina organized a "daily school for colored children." The shadow vestry's school had

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<sup>70</sup> *Journal of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 47.

<sup>71</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1855), 45; *Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 45.

<sup>72</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 28-29, 51; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 18-19.

an average daily attendance of approximately forty to fifty students. Shadow vestrywomen provided instruction that was "exclusively of a religious character." Shadow vestrywomen of St. Peter's Church in Charleston, South Carolina assisted with "St. Peter's Colored Sunday School." Of the Sunday School's ten teachers, seven were women. The shadow vestrywomen serving as teachers provided oral instruction using the Bible, *The Book of Common Prayer*, and other published catechisms. St. Peter's Sunday School had a peak enrollment of 150, though average attendance ranged from forty to sixty students. Mrs. Webb, the wife of B. C. Webb, assisted her husband in his slave missions on plantations in Prince William's Parish, South Carolina. In 1839, Webb catechized and taught Sunday School for approximately 150 children at one of her husband's slave missions.<sup>73</sup> Reverend Joseph B. Seabrook credited the shadow vestry of South Carolina's St. Luke's Church with assisting the parish's slave missions. According to Seabrook, "the Chapel, which by the aid of the Miss Pinckneys, I caused to be built for the accommodation of the blacks." The Shadow Vestry of St. James's Parish on James Island in South Carolina began an effort to provide religious instruction to their young slaves in 1846. Reverend Stiles Mellichamp saluted his shadow vestrywomen as exemplars to other women in the South, as he wrote: "O that every mistress felt her responsibility in this plain call of duty."<sup>74</sup>

Even shadow vestrywomen in Virginia served the distinctive class structure of the South. Many shadow vestrywomen served as plantation mistresses. In the mid-1840s, one plantation mistress in Charles County, Virginia instructed her slaves in the "duties and doctrines of Christianity." The Charles County plantation mistress also solicited the services of the Rector of

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<sup>73</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1845), 30; *Journal of the Proceedings of the 50th Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 28-30; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventy-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 54-55.

<sup>74</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1851), 45; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1846), 39-40.

Westover Parish. Reverend William T. Leavell baptized forty of the plantation mistress's slave children. Although Leavell claimed the parents of the slave children requested the Episcopal Church's Holy Sacrament, the plantation mistress served as the sponsor for the forty slave children during the baptismal service.<sup>75</sup>

Men in the Episcopal Church extolled shadow vestrywomen in the South the most when their labors supported the Cotton Communion's class structure. Reverend Henry Sansom credited a shadow vestrywoman with the success of the Chapel of the Cross's slave mission in Madison County, Mississippi. Sansom captured in one passage the intersection of social class, racism, gender, and sectionalism as he praised an unidentified shadow vestrywoman:

If others of our devoted "Marys" would "go and do likewise," labor, in faith that they have souls to save, and that the system of the Church is all that they require to bring them from darkness to light, it would be long, ere we should witness the most glorious change come over the entire South, and the degraded sons of Ham, as with us, they are children of our Father so would they become one with us in a common Redeemer.

Sansom interjected a new Biblical characterization into the discourse concerning shadow vestrywomen by appealing to a racial exegesis regarding the "curse of Ham." Sansom clearly envisioned that shadow vestrywomen contributed to a racial and regional identity. For Sansom, shadow vestrywomen, because of their large numbers, had the organizational capabilities needed to ensure slaves would be taught a religious message that corroborated the planter class's paternalistic hegemony. In doing so, Sansom validated that the Episcopal Church's renaissance

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<sup>75</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: Wm. McFarland, 1845), 60-61.

in the cotton communion of planters would not have happened without the zealous service of the region's shadow vestrywomen to both Christ and class.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> *Journal of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Natchez Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1855), 88. On the origins of the "Curse of Ham," see Winthrop Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 17-20.

### **CODA— SHADOW VESTRYWOMAN ELIZA MAGRUDER**

Eliza Magruder ascertained how to be a shadow vestrywoman during her teenage years while living on her family's Locust Plantation near Washington, Mississippi. Magruder's Uncle Joseph Dunbar and Aunt Olivia Dunbar embodied the fusion of the planter class with the Protestant Episcopal Church. Magruder grew up as a cotton communicant learning the prescribed gender roles of her class in the antebellum South. Magruder's diary records numerous cotton transactions, such as her observations on the sale of forty bales in the early 1850s. In the course of Magruder's sojourn at Locust Plantation, she matured into an Episcopal woman who became an active shadow vestrywoman. In May 1846, Magruder and her family hosted Bishop James H. Otey as he performed an official visitation to the Natchez-region. On Friday May 15, Magruder traveled to Trinity Church in Natchez to hear Bishop Otey preach and ordain a candidate for clergy orders. Magruder expressed disappointment that upon her arrival the services had changed, and instead she listened to a "fine sermon" from Reverend John Fish which somewhat "compensated" for her missing Bishop Otey. Shadow Vestrywoman Magruder knew that Bishop Otey's visit to Natchez included services of confirmation, ordinations, marriage, and baptism. As a devout Episcopalian, Magruder desired to witness some of her church's most solemn rituals and ceremonies. Indeed, Shadow Vestrywoman Magruder undoubtedly discerned from her network of parish contacts that Bishop Otey's visit to the Natchez-region in 1846 had included the



baptism of four children, marriage of one couple, confirmation of seven people, and the installation of the newly ordained Reverend William Giles as the Rector of Trinity Church. A decade later, Shadow Vestrywoman Magruder attended multiple services in March 1856 when Bishop William Mercer Green performed an official visitation to Christ Church. Magruder commended the Bishop of Mississippi for delivering two "fine" sermons, one from Romans 7:21-25 and the other based upon Acts 2:41. After two days of worship, Bishop Green visited Shadow Vestrywoman Magruder and her family at the Locust Plantation. Magruder's experiences revealed that shadow vestrywomen in the South, like the regular vestry, had direct access to their diocese's bishop. Aunt Olivia acquainted Eliza Magruder with the practice of shadow vestrywoman providing dietary provisions for their parish rector. On May 25, 1850, Magruder noted in her diary that "Aunt Olivia sent a ¼ of a roast of lamb to [Reverend] Mr. Miller."<sup>1</sup> Shadow vestrywomen, such as Magruder, valued their proximity to the Episcopal Church's rectors and bishops.

Eliza Magruder maintained an active religious life outside of Sunday worship. Shadow Vestrywoman Magruder supplemented her attendance at divine services by engaging in intensive reading to enhance her theological knowledge. For example, unable to attend church due to illness in December 1854, Magruder read "two sermons, and a Chap[ter] in the New Testament." In February 1857, Magruder and her Aunt Olivia read a "sermon of Bishop Otey's." Shadow Vestrywoman Magruder attended many non-worship gatherings centered upon parish business at her church. For example, Magruder approved of the regular Vestry of Christ Church when they issued an appeal to the congregation to "come up to their duty in regard to their Rector's salary."

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<sup>1</sup> Eliza Magruder, *Diary: 1846-1857* Vols. 1-2, Plantation Records Microfiche of Manuscript in Louisiana State University, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, 1 January 1846- 25 May 1850; *Journal of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1856), 27.

Parishioners had fallen behind in their assessments and financial obligations, which resulted in the Vestry of Christ Church warning that the "communion between pastor and People will be severed" unless the parish honored its salary commitments. In April and May 1855, Magruder accompanied her Aunt Olivia to church to conduct shadow vestry business. Shadow Vestrywoman Magruder assessed repairs to the church and rectory. Additionally, shadow vestrywomen attended a meeting of the regular vestry. Shadow Vestrywoman Magruder took note in her diary when Reverend Benjamin Miller called a meeting of the regular vestry to debate whether to repair the existing Christ Church or to build a new structure. Such opportunities provided Eliza Magruder experience and insight into the workings of shadow vestries in the Protestant Episcopal Church.

On Sundays, Magruder labored to treat the Episcopal Church's divine service with solemnity and reverence. Training to be a mature shadow vestrywoman often conflicted with Magruder's youthful proclivities. For example, on one Sunday "during a long prayer" one of Magruder's cousins "took a little nap" causing the young shadow vestrywoman to laugh. Magruder deplored her own laughter as "behaving badly," for it contradicted the deportment expected of a mature shadow vestrywoman in the Episcopal Church. Indeed later that year, Magruder praised Reverend Miller for admonishing "persons misbehaving in church." Magruder also extolled Reverend Miller for delivering a "good sermon principally to Parents and children." Shadow Vestrywoman Magruder appreciated the process of achieving spiritual maturity in the Episcopal Church began with baptism, religious instruction, and confirmation. Shadow vestrywomen, like Magruder, took her church's Holy Communion very seriously. Magruder remarked in her diary on December 6, 1849 that her church "had communion the first time for three months." On another occasion, although Magruder had expressed excitement concerning

Bishop Green's visit to her parish in February 1857, she declined to partake of Holy Communion. Magruder explained in her journal that: "I was suffering so much with sick headache, that I could not give that attention to the services that I wished to do." Shadow vestrywomen treated the sacraments with reverence since they epitomized their church's most ancient and hallowed rituals. As a shadow vestrywoman, Magruder gleaned from her Aunt Olivia that shadow vestrywomen assisted rectors with sacraments. Magruder recorded that "Aunt Olivia sent the sacramental elements" to church, since they would be unable to attend due to an unexpected spring snow storm on April 12, 1857. Magruder later learned that Reverend Miller used the elements provided by her Aunt Olivia for a congregation of twenty.<sup>2</sup>

Eliza Magruder also demonstrated that the South's class hierarchy controlled her service as a shadow vestrywoman. Shadow Vestrywoman Magruder understood that Episcopal Church services could be moments to contemplate the planter class's paternalistic ethic. On October 8, 1854 Magruder recorded in her diary that during church services Reverend Benjamin M. Miller addressed the congregation and reported that a "negro man came to complain to him of the Overseer who he said had whipped him unjustly." Magruder documented that on March 2, 1856 Bishop Green confirmed "four ladies of colour." Magruder added commentary that reflected the unease that existed within the planter class as she prayed the four confirmed women "may be sincere in their profession." Episcopalians of the planter class worried that slaves did not totally accept the paternalistic gospel propounded in their religious instruction. Eliza Magruder held that slaves had to accept paternalism as an unquestionable religious creed in order for planter class families to maintain their exploitive hegemony. After confirming the four slave women discussed in Magruder's diary, Bishop Green presided over worship for a "still larger assembly" of slaves in the afternoon. Bishop Green returned to the Natchez-region in February 1857 and

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<sup>2</sup> Eliza Magruder, *Diary: 1846-1857*, 1 August 1854 – 30 September 1857.

conducted worship services for slaves, during which he confirmed five. Shadow Vestrywoman Magruder and her family invited Bishop Green to stay the night at the Locust Plantation after he completed an exhausting day of preaching to a congregation of slaves.<sup>3</sup>

The Episcopal Church's liturgical calendar and paternalism intersected in Magruder's community during Advent and Christmas. Magruder described in her journal how in December planters went "to Natchez to buy the darkyes [sic] Christmas presents." As Magruder knew, planters gave slaves a "holiday" during the Christmas season. Holidays also could be ripe with rumors of slave conspiracies against the planter class. On Christmas Eve 1856, Magruder received a report of a called meeting at Church Hill related to slaves. Magruder wrote in her diary: "I fear there is mischief brewing." Christmas time presented a dialectic in which planter class families wrestled with paternalism and fear.<sup>4</sup>

For women belonging to the planter class in Mississippi, the year 1857 had been marked by unrest. Magruder recorded in her diary an episode in 1857 involving "two runaways from Claiborne" who had been captured on her family's plantation. Planter class families turned to refresher lessons on paternalism in the wake of such instances of runaways and insubordination. In July 1857, Shadow Vestrywoman Magruder's training culminated as she commenced a Sunday School for slaves near the Locust Plantation. On July 26, Magruder celebrated that her plantation Sunday School had been "well attended." Annica, a slave with whom Magruder had developed a special relationship, attended her Sunday School. Magruder's closeness with Annica resulted frequent diary notations. Magruder cataloged occasions when she and her Aunt Olivia "whipt" Annica. Despite punishment, Magruder developed a special concern for Annica. As Elizabeth Fox-Genovese argues, the "intimacy of mistress and slave encouraged conflict as well

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<sup>3</sup> Eliza Magruder, *Diary: 1846-1857*, 1 August 1854 – 30 September 1857; *Journal of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 27.

<sup>4</sup> Eliza Magruder, *Diary: 1846-1857*, 15-25 December 1856.

as affection." Magruder and her Aunt Olivia used punishment to enforce their understandings of the "lines of class and race." Annica's participation in Magruder's Sunday School reflected how the Episcopal Church's slave missions served the planter class's goal of inculcating paternalism. Magruder's plantation Sunday School demonstrated that after confirmation she had accepted the gendered and class-based role of shadow vestrywoman. Like her colleagues all across the South, Shadow Vestrywoman Magruder provided invaluable patronage to both the Protestant Episcopal Church and the planter class.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," *Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740-1870* ed. John B. Boles (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990), 116-117; Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 77-78; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 140.

## CHAPTER 4: PARISHES OF PATERNALISM

The blood of slaves cries unto God from the ground and it calls loudly for vengeance on its adversaries...

- Peter Randolph, 1855

Who are the good servants set forth in the Bible, as examples to other servants?...Ziba

-*A Catechism to be Used by the Teachers in the Religious Instruction of Persons of Colour*, 1835

Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul's steward, and said to him, "I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops, so that your master's grandson may be provided for..." Then Ziba said to the king, "Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do..."

-2 Samuel 9:9-11

Peter Randolph along with some eighty other slaves endured the peculiar institution on a Virginia plantation located near the James River. Randolph's master emancipated his slaves upon his death. Freed in 1847, Randolph traveled north and eventually settled in Boston. By the late 1840s, Massachusetts had emerged as a center of abolitionism. Randolph joined the movement as he turned his pen into a sword for the antislavery cause. In 1855, Randolph published his *Sketches of a Slave Life or Illustrations of the Peculiar Institution*. Randolph deplored the contradictions of Episcopalians in the South who attempted to serve both Christ and class:

THE auctioneer is crying the slave to the highest bidder...See the slaveholder, who just bought the image of God, come to his victim, and take possession of him. Poor Emanuel must go away from his wife, never to see her again. All the ties of love are severed; the declaration of the Almighty, which said, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder," is unheeded, and he must leave all to follow his *Christian* master,--a member of the Episcopal Church,--a partaker, from time to time, of the Lord's sacrament! Such men mock religion and insult God. O that God would rend the heavens, and appear unto these heartless men! <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Randolph, *Sketches of a Slave Life or Illustrations of the Peculiar Institution* (Boston: Published for the Author, 1855), 3, 5-9.

Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and the non-religious, of course, all joined Episcopalians in applying "the chattel principle" to their fellow human beings. Randolph's decision to highlight Episcopalians and their sacramental theology in his illustration, nonetheless, demonstrated the common perception of the church's close affiliation with the planter class in the cotton communion.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter explores the architecture of the Episcopal Church's activities with the South's slaves. The Episcopal Church in the South aided its planter proprietors by lending its spiritual resources to the reinforcement of the labor exploitation at the core of the region's antebellum class structure. Beginning in the 1820s, the Episcopal Church's renaissance included an aggressive missionary operation constructed to provide paternalistic piety to the planter class's slaves. To conclude, this chapter will examine the theology of paternalism that emanated from the Episcopal Church's slave missions. The Episcopal Church's renaissance after 1820 depended upon slave missions to solidify the hegemony of its planter class members, and therefore its own reinvigorated vitality.

### **Organizing Slave Missions**

Bishops in the South guided their dioceses in establishing slave missions as part of the Episcopal Church's renaissance. Reverend William Meade demonstrated a commitment to slave missions prior to his elevation to the bishopric of Virginia. In 1813, Meade collected and republished a series of sermons from Thomas Bacon of Maryland. Meade added a preface to the volume in which he called upon Episcopalians in the South to convert their slaves to Christianity:

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Johnson, "Introduction: The Future Store," in *The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas* ed. Walter Johnson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 1-28; Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 19-29.

The Editor of this volume offers it to all Masters and Mistresses in our Southern States, with the anxious wish and devout prayer, that it may provide a blessing to them and their household...It was the first intention of the Editor to have prefixed an introduction of some length, and in it to have urged the great importance of affording religious instruction to our slaves, by some, out of those many and powerful considerations, which ought to compel us to this duty...but a perusal of the volume itself, particularly of the sermons addressed to masters, satisfied him it was quite needless..."

Meade, of course, referred to what he perceived to be the quality of Bacon's sermons. One sermon in the volume reminded planters and slaveholders that slaves "are God's own property." According to Bacon, slaves had been entrusted to planters by their "heavenly master." Bacon's sermons suggested that Episcopal planters had a paternalistic obligation to religiously "improve" their slaves by Christianizing them.<sup>2</sup>

In 1834, Bishop William Meade published a *Pastoral Letter...on the Duty of Affording Religious Instruction to those in Bondage*. Cognizant of the emergent abolitionist movement in the North, Bishop Meade considered slave missions a response to opponents of slavery. Bishop Meade warned planters that failure to provide religious instruction only legitimized the accusations of abolitionists:

Equally clear is it to my mind, that a most solemn obligation rests on the owners of slaves to instruct them, or cause them to be instructed...Surely God could not have tolerated even for a moment [slavery], except it might be thus made subservient to good. Could we think otherwise, and adopt the belief to render them the service for which we, plead is impracticable, then must we also of necessity embrace the doctrine of the most extravagant abolitionists, and conclude that the relation of master and slave was, under all circumstances for a moment absolutely unlawful and ought at all hazards to be immediately annihilated, because incompatible with God's first and dearest wish toward mankind, their instruction in heavenly wisdom.

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<sup>2</sup> Reverend William Meade, *Sermons Addressed to Masters and Servants, and Published in the Year 1743, by the Rev. Thomas Bacon, Minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland. Now Republished with Other Tracts and Dialogues on the Same Subject, and Recommended to all Masters and Mistresses to be Used in their Families* (Winchester, Va.: John Heiskell, Printer, 1813), iii-vi, 19-20, LVA: Call no. E443 .B13.



According to Bishop Meade, the Episcopal Church's religious instruction to slaves would insulate the peculiar institution from religious attacks by abolitionists. In essence, Bishop Meade proposed to redefine slavery as a Christianizing institution, thus making it an ordained system of God. In case reasoning did not work, Bishop Meade admonished planters that a failure to instruct their slaves jeopardized their own salvation. Bishop Meade berated planters and small slaveholders, writing:

Every owner of slaves has an account to render to God for his treatment of [his slaves]. O! how fearful will be his account, who knowingly and willfully, will permit them to go down from his fields, and from his very dwelling into the bottomless pit, without making a solitary effort to save them?

From Bishop Meade's perspective, Episcopal clergy and laity in the South had a moral obligation to provide religious instruction to the region's slaves. Bishop Nathaniel Bowen of South Carolina joined Meade in arguing that religious instruction of slaves improved the spiritual welfare of "both the master and the servant."<sup>3</sup>

Bishop William Mercer Green summoned clergymen in the Diocese of Mississippi to avoid neglecting "opportunities" to provide religious instruction to the state's slave population. In 1854, Bishop Green praised the planter class's willingness to coordinate with the Episcopal Church. Green reported to Mississippi's state convention that he had observed that an "increasing desire is manifested in the planters to do what in them lies for the amelioration of the condition of the slave, and for giving a higher elevation or tone to their character." Bishop Green conjectured that the Episcopal Church and planter class could work together to make slaves "more obedient and trustworthy in all the duties of [their] station." Two years later, Bishop

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<sup>3</sup> William Meade, *Pastoral Letter of the Right Rev. William Meade, Assistant Bishop of Virginia, to the Ministers, Members and Friends, of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia, on the Duty of Affording Religious Instruction to those in Bondage*, (Alexandria: The Gazette Office, 1834), 15, 22, Rare Books, Accession BX 5937 M3 b no. 1, VHS; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1842), 18. Historians have underscored the connection between slave missions in the South and the rise of abolitionism in the North. Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 152-161.

Green's participation in the confirmation of twenty-fives slaves at the Chapel of the Cross afforded him with real evidence of the growing commitment to slave missions. Bishop Green celebrated the Chapel of the Cross as a success in the South's effort to provide religious instruction to the region's slaves. Green theorized that the Chapel of the Cross should "disarm all opposition" to the religious instruction of slaves. According to Bishop Green, planters stood willing to testify that the religious instruction provided by the Episcopal Church had yielded an "honesty and diligence" in the work of their slaves. Reverend Henry Sansom organized religious services for slaves at the Chapel of the Cross in Madison County, Mississippi. At first, Sansom considered the religious instruction of slaves to be like "casting the seed upon a rock." Eventually, Sansom witnessed success at the Chapel of the Cross. Sansom even took pride that slaves attended his services from "adjoining plantations, many of whose owners belong to other religious bodies." In Sansom's opinion, slaves favored the Episcopal Church's services, when compared to other denominations, because it provided them with "more of the Bible." For delegates at Mississippi's state convention, Sansom depicted emotional scenes at the Chapel of the Cross where slaves approached him with "streaming tears" to ask for "the way to Zion." Bishop Green returned to the Chapel of the Cross in 1857 and came away impressed with the devotion of the slaves who attended. Bishop Green castigated white Episcopalians because the "loud and distinct manner in which these slaves make the responses and the heartiness with which they sing both the chant and the metre tunes, may well put to shame many a congregation in our land." Of course, Bishop Green's extolment proved hollow because it rested upon racist assumptions regarding the "intelligence" of slaves versus white congregations.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Journal of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1858), 48; *Journal of the Twenty-Eight Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1854), 33; *Journal of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*

In 1847, Bishop Christopher E. Gadsden used his annual address to South Carolina's state convention to explicate upon the unique relationship between social class and Christ. Bishop Gadsden reflected upon his participation in the consecration of Christ's Chapel in Prince William's Parish. Prince William's Parish dedicated the chapel for the use of slaves. Bishop Gadsden pondered the efficacy of creating exclusivity "of only one class of persons; of separating the 'castes' in public worship." Rich and poor, Gadsden argued, should "meet together" in church. Bishop Gadsden reminded delegates that their Trinitarian God functioned as "the Maker and Redeemer...and the Sanctifier of the true believer without respect of color, or station, or condition." The Diocese of South Carolina, Bishop Gadsden pleaded, must create public worship where "master and servant...unite." Using the Bible for racial constructions, Gadsden surmised that the church's liturgy served all South Carolinians whether they were decedents of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Bishop Gadsden contended that all social classes benefited from the Episcopal Church's liturgy, therefore segregated services had no practical purpose. He declared to delegates that the "experiment to separate rich and the poor whites has not been successful," and neither would the division of master and slave. Bishop Gadsden should not be considered a social leveler, but rather he believed that if parishes had a singular worship service for all social classes, planters and clergy could more easily exert control over slaves.<sup>5</sup>

Bishops transported the Episcopal Church's commitment to slave missions into the southwest. Prior to taking charge of the Diocese of Texas, Bishop Alexander Gregg served as

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(Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1856), 31; *Journal of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Natchez Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1855), 87; *Journal of the Thirty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1857), 40.

<sup>5</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1847), 24-26.

the Rector of St. David's Parish in Cheraw, South Carolina. During his tenure at St. David's Parish, Gregg oversaw "alterations" to the church's gallery which created a "more regular attendance" of slaves. Reverend Gregg carried his early missionary work with slaves to the state of Texas. Episcopalians elected Gregg as the Bishop of Texas in 1859. Bishop Gregg summoned his new diocese to follow the example of the Protestant Episcopal Church's southeastern dioceses and begin religious missions to the state's slaves. Bishop Gregg described the Episcopal Church's slave missions as both a "trust and responsibility." On Gregg's first tour of Texas in 1859, he pointed to Brazoria County as an example of fertile mission territory since it had an estimated slave population of 6,000. Gregg added the county's reliance upon slave labor had been forecasted to "be greatly increased." According to Bishop Gregg, Brazoria County reflected the growing slave populations of "Southern and South-eastern Texas" in need of religious instruction.<sup>6</sup>

Episcopal planters demanded that their church respond to the religious concerns of their plantations. For example, Reverend Charles C. Pinckney reported on the desires of planters near the North Santee: "The care of [slaves] has hitherto been committed chiefly to the Methodists; but our planters would, of course, prefer the instructions of our own Church, where they can be obtained." Planters and Episcopal priests expressed concern about evangelical influence with slaves. In 1855, Reverend P. G. Jenkins, a deacon, served as a missionary at Bluffton, South Carolina. Jenkins ministered on twelve plantations teaching children and conducting divine services. Although Jenkins catechized 260 children on plantations near Bluffton, he mourned that the adult slaves "[are] with few exceptions, members of the Baptist Society."<sup>7</sup> In 1834,

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<sup>6</sup> *Journal of the Diocesan Convention of South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1849), 38; *Journal of the Eleventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas* (1860), 18.

<sup>7</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1857), 57.

Reverend Charles C. Taliaferro communicated that the planters and slaveholders of Cumberland Parish in Virginia "feel the duty of providing for [their slaves] spiritual welfare so great, that they contemplate building a Church expressly for them." Taliaferro called the proposed building "The Africa Chappel (sic)." Taliaferro believed that his missionary labors among "the sons of Africa" had been productive since twelve regular attendees of his Bible class professed conversion and sought membership in a church. Bishops in the South recognized the copious demands for slave missions during the cotton communion's renaissance. In 1842, Assistant Bishop John Johns used his episcopal address to Virginia's state convention to summon delegates to missionary action for slaves. Bishop Johns had been emotionally moved by performing confirmation for eleven slaves. Furthermore, Bishop Johns conveyed to the state convention that the "owners of slaves have manifested a strong solicitude" toward religious instruction. Planters and small slaveholders, Johns assured, evidenced a readiness to embrace a plan for the religious instruction devised by the Diocese of Virginia. Reverend P. F. Berkeley of Amelia County captured how the planter class's religious identity justified the Episcopal Church's slave missions. Berkeley summarized that he sensed:

...now more is being felt and done in regard to their religious instruction than at any previous time; and he is persuaded that much more favorable results would be seen after a time if the servants of our households were brought under the instruction, and as a general thing exclusively under the instruction of the church to which their masters are attached.

Berkeley argued that slaves should share the Episcopal religion of the planter class who owned them. Traveling Episcopal clergyman often assisted planters on their journeys through other states in the South. Since the planter class transcended diocesan boundaries, so too did

Episcopal slave missions. On a fundraising tour, Reverend Charles T. Quintard of Tennessee stopped at the plantation of James J. Alston in North Carolina to baptize sixty-one slaves.<sup>8</sup>

Slave missions reflected the most vivid manifestation of the social alliance between the Episcopal Church and the South's planter class. In 1843, Bishop William Meade appointed Henry W. Temple as a missionary to slaves near Essex, Virginia. Temple reported that one planter donated a house for the religious instruction of his slaves. Aside from the committed planter, Temple postulated that the Essex Mission included many "masters" and "owners" desirous of the Episcopal Church's religious services. The Essex Mission even encompassed slave owners who were "not professors of religion," but still desired the services of the Episcopal Church. Temple prayed that "the seed of divine truth, thus sown many bring forth unto eternal life." In evaluating slave missions, Episcopalians lauded both large attendance and the successful inculcation of social tranquility. Reverend Joseph R. Jones of Kingston Parish preached to "large and attentive" congregations as he alternated "on several of the plantations" in Matthews County, Virginia. Reverend Mark Chevers of St. John's Church in Hampton, Virginia speculated that congregations of slaves "'found peace' in believing in Jesus Christ." Prince George's Parish deployed a lay reader and catechist to "Mrs. S. C. Ward's plantation, where the slaves from the adjoining plantations are glad to be present and seem to be much interested in the services."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 46; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1834), 30; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1835), 38-39; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: The Sou. Churchman Office, 1843), 19; *Journal of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: Chas. H. Wynne, 1859), 56; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Columbia: James G. Griffith & Co., Herald Office, 1856), 47.

<sup>9</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: The Sou. Churchman Office, 1843), 50; *Journal of the Sixty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: Whig Book and Job Office, 1858), 92; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the*

The planter class retained the ultimate authority over the slave missions coordinated by the Episcopal Church. Missionaries to slaves in St. Bartholomew's Parish, South Carolina demonstrated the hegemony exercised by the planter class. St. Bartholomew's Parish conducted worship services at Chepee Church and on C. Clifford's Plantation. Missionaries announced that slave owners gave "permission" for slaves residing on neighboring plantations to attend services at both mission stations. Reverend J. W. Taylor served as the missionary for the slaves around Bluffton in 1857 and 1858. Taylor tabulated that he had catechized 250-300 children.

Missionaries, like Taylor, celebrated affirmation offered by the planter class for their work.

Taylor informed South Carolina's state convention

I was recently quite gratified in meeting a gentleman who owned one of the plantations that was under my care: he informed me that the children were very anxious, when he went among them, to repeat hymns, etc., which I had learned them...

Taylor hoped the planter's testimony would affirm for the Diocese of South Carolina that slave missions had born "fruit." Successes in slave missions prompted church politicians to craft legislation to govern rapidly expanding congregations of slaves. During Mississippi's state convention in 1847, delegate Edward Turner of Trinity Church in Natchez offered a resolution to provide lay delegates for "Any parish constituted especially for the benefit of slaves." Under the resolution, lay delegates from slave congregations would be appointed by the church's rector and approved by the Bishop of Mississippi. Delegates voted to postpone the debate on the resolution. Turner had served as Mayor of Natchez, Attorney General of Mississippi, Speaker of the Mississippi State House of Representatives, and Chief Justice of the Mississippi Supreme

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*Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1834), 33; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1856), 57-58. The Diocese of Georgia also administered and supported slave missions. Henry Thompson Malone, *The Episcopal Church in Georgia, 1733-1957* (Atlanta: The Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Atlanta, 1960), 80-96.

Court. Turner's legislative maneuvering, thus, embodied the nexus between political leadership in church and state.<sup>10</sup>

The Episcopal Church's slave missions aided a broader goal of minimizing class conflict in the South. Episcopal rectors, therefore, often lumped poor whites and slaves together in missions due to their social proximity as the laboring classes of the South. Reverend William McGuire, the Rector of Cople Parish, amalgamated his labor with slaves and the "poor population" as a similar missionary effort of the Episcopal Church. According to McGuire, he preached once a month to slaves and also to the poor. McGuire used Pope's Creek Baptist Church for his missionary efforts amongst the poor. Albert Muller peached Sunday afternoons to the slaves working at the Cumberland Iron Works in Stewart County, Tennessee. The proprietor of the iron works solicited the services of the Episcopal Church for ministrations to its workers and erected a chapel in a shady grove on the banks of the Cumberland River. Bishop James H. Otey peached to the "laborers" at the Cumberland Iron Work in 1839. The Diocese of Virginia deployed a rector in Chesterfield County to conduct missionary services on Sunday afternoons to the "laborers" at "the Coal Pits." Reverend A. B. Tizzard noted that slaves along with free persons comprised the labor force. The Coal Pits Mission demonstrated that the Episcopal Church in the South created shared missionary operations for laboring poor whites and slaves. Tizzard, perhaps to the delight of the local coal magnates, implemented a "better observance of the Sabbath" along with an improvement in the moral conditions of workers. Although immediate results manifested themselves at the Coal Pits, Reverend Tizzard voiced concerns

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<sup>10</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventy-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1860), 44; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1858), 71-72; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Jackson: Thomas Palmer, Printer, 1847), 21; D. Clayton James, *Antebellum Natchez* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), 95-97.



regarding the "transitory character of the people at the Pits." Since ephemeral laborers came and went, Tizzard could not evaluate the long-term effectiveness of his missionary gambits. Tizzard hoped the "annual dispersion of these laborers" would extend the reach of the Episcopal Church to their home communities. Tizzard reinforced his consciousness of the class structure in operation as he hoped that his work with the Coal Pit's laborers would "instruct alike the poor and the ignorant the rich and the learned." Like slave missions, the Coal Pit Mission represented an opportunity for an Episcopal Church populated by planter class elites in the South to extend their religious values to the region's laboring classes of slaves and poor whites.<sup>11</sup>

Slave missions in the Episcopal Church operated on varying schedules. Some parishes only provided services for slaves on one day during a month. For example, the Church of the Messiah in Gonzalez, Texas conducted services for slaves only once a month. A planter-vestryman in St. Andrew's Parish asked his rector to preach once a month to slaves "at his house." In 1838, Reverend J. Horace Morrison began preaching once a month to the slaves in affiliated with Trinity Church in Shepherdstown, Virginia. Reverend Morrison believed that slaves in attendance listened with "eagerness" to the proclamation of the Gospel. Other parishes implemented services for slaves every Sunday afternoon. T. Grayson Dashell of Westmoreland County, Virginia conducted Sunday afternoon services for a large congregation of slaves "in the open woods." Dashell contemplated eventually erecting a building for his slave congregants. Reverend John Owen of Christ Church provided Sunday afternoon services to slaves residing near Nacogdoches, Texas prior to the Civil War. From December 1853 through January 1854,

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<sup>11</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Virginia* (Lynchburg: The Virginian Office, 1848), 59; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: S. Nye & Co. Republican Banner Office, 1839), 9; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1840), 10; *Journal of the Fifty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Washington: JNO. T. Towers, 1852), 47; *Journal of the Fifty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: C. H. Wynne, 1854), 65.

Bishop Otey presided over a "missionary congregation" at Memphis. Bishop Otey preached to slaves on most Sunday afternoons when he resided in Memphis. St. Martin's Parish conducted Sunday afternoon services for slaves with an attendance ranging from 50 to 100 persons. Reverend William Fagg conducted Sunday afternoon Episcopal services for slaves in Marshall County, Mississippi. Likewise, William C. Crane of St. Paul's Church in Woodville, Mississippi allotted his Sunday afternoons to "the interesting duty of visiting the plantations of his parishioners." Reverend Mark L. Chevers conducted Sunday night services for slaves associated with Centurion Church in Virginia. In 1841, Reverend Chevers reported a "large" congregation of black Episcopalians attended his Sunday night services in Elizabeth City Parish. A visit to Natchez prompted Bishop James H. Otey to encourage the Diocese of Mississippi to initiate religious instruction for slaves in their parishes. At Natchez, Bishop Otey had preached to a "large number" of slaves in the basement of Trinity Church. Bishop Otey had learned that the Rector of Trinity Church devoted Sunday afternoons to teaching slaves the "way of salvation."<sup>12</sup> Reverend John H. Cornish observed that slaves attending evening services at Church of the Messiah in South Carolina demonstrated "a great anxiety...for the teaching of the word, and the

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<sup>12</sup> *Journal of the Sixty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 72; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: B. R. Wren, 1839), 30-31; *Journal of the Sixty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: The Whig Book and Job Office, 1856), 119-120; *Journal of the Eleventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas* (1860), 31; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville; J. Roberts & Co., 1854), 15; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1849), 33-34; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1835), 31-32. *Journal of the Tenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas* (San Antonio: The Herald Office, 1859), 26; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (Nashville: W.F. Bang & Co., 1843), 15-16, 22-23; *Journal of the Fifty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Baltimore: Joseph Robinson, 1850), 81; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: B. R. Wren, 1841), 30.

outpouring of the Holy Spirit." Local conditions, a rector's schedule, and the desire of planters all determined the precise calendar for slave missions.<sup>13</sup>

For Episcopalians, slave missions exhibited an architectural component as parishes constructed galleries. Bishop Thomas Brownell visited Christ Church in Jefferson County, Mississippi in December 1829. Brownell noted that building had "spacious galleries for the accommodation of [the planter class's] slaves." In the late 1830s, Missionary Bishop Leonidas Polk visited Christ Church to administer confirmation and celebrated "a very large assemblage of slaves in attendance" for the services. A few years later, Christ Church in Jefferson County baptized more black infants than white infants. To address surging slave attendance, Christ Church added additional "side galleries" to their church for slaves in the late 1840s. In 1839, Reverend Charles P. Elliot mentioned to South Carolina's state convention that St. Mark's Parish had erected two "side galleries for the accommodation of the colored people." Christ Church in the Diocese of South Carolina appropriated a few pews for the use of slaves belonging to its members in 1847. Christ Church's slave pews replaced the old arrangement which confined black Episcopalians to "a few benches in the isles" which had only allowed for a "limited number" to attend divine worship.<sup>14</sup>

To supplement their church's segregated galleries, Episcopalians in the South erected plantation chapels to support their slave missions. Some southern Episcopal churches preferred

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<sup>13</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1843), 64.

<sup>14</sup> *Episcopal Watchman* 3, no. 48, (February 1830): 381-382; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1839), 20-21; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Free Trader Office, 1841), 12; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Annual Convention, of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi*, 28; *Journal of the Proceedings of the 50th Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina...* (Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1839), 30; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1848), 38; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in South Carolina*, 37.

that services for slaves be held on plantations. St. John's Church in Maury County, Tennessee opted to hold evening and Wednesday services for slaves "at the plantations" except during the cold winter months, when slaves would be permitted to worship inside the parish's church building.<sup>15</sup> Plantation chapels became a cornerstone of the Episcopal Church's missionary project for slaves. Episcopalians in South Carolina completed a chapel for slaves on J. L. Nowell's Point Hope Plantation in 1855. In 1859, a planter belonging to Emmanuel Church in Powhatan County, Virginia constructed "a neat and spacious chapel" on his plantation. One Episcopal planter in Prince George County, Virginia erected a plantation chapel in 1858 for his parish's ministry to slaves. Planter John E. Turner opened an Episcopal chapel on his plantation near Okolona, Mississippi. Bishops in the South encouraged the planters in their dioceses to build plantation chapels. After the 1820s, planters in large numbers situated chapels on their cotton fiefdoms so they could solicit the Episcopal Church's slave missions.<sup>16</sup>

Plantation chapels defined the parish responsibilities of Episcopal clergymen in the South. Reverend Aristides S. Smith expended a number of hours a week providing religious services for the slaves of Prince George County, Virginia. Smith credited the support of the planter class for his missionary labors amongst slaves. Two planters in Prince George County had constructed a shared chapel for their "contiguous" plantations. In addition, Smith soon realized that planters in Prince George County were "willing to pay liberally for this extra service for the benefit of their slaves." Dr. Abram B. Hooe erected a chapel for the religious instruction of slaves in St. Paul's Parish Virginia. Reverend Hugh Roy Scott used the chapel for worship,

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<sup>15</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-First Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Columbia: Mitchell & Rainey, 1849), 29.

<sup>16</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 56-57; *Journal of the Sixty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 101-102. *Journal of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 90; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Natchez Courier Book and Job Office, 1851), 43-44.

while he also conducted religious instruction on the parish's plantations and farms where slaves resided. Beginning in 1843, Episcopalians in Cumberland County, Virginia committed their parish to slave missions. Parishioners included a gallery for slaves in their church. In addition, two planters in Cumberland County assembled "at their joint expense, a neat and commodious chapel, near the dividing line of their plantations." Due to the county's plantation chapels, Reverend William H. Kinckle celebrated that the Episcopal Church had a "prospect of doing good among both bond and free in this parish."<sup>17</sup>

Plantation chapels served as the nucleus for the Protestant Episcopal Church's slave missions. James Chisholm commenced his work as the missionary for the Albemarle Slave Mission in 1841. The Albemarle Mission consisted of multiple plantation chapels. Chisholm held meetings at two plantation chapels every Sunday. The Albemarle Mission had four plantations under its charge in 1842. Reverend J. V. Welch at Grahamville, South Carolina reported that James Bolan and John E. Fripp both built chapels for slaves near Grahamville. Welch called the erection of chapels a "labor of love" for the planter class. Reverend Willard Presbury of Claiborne, Mississippi preached to slaves in his parish on Sunday evenings. Presbury used both the Church of the Epiphany and a "log Chapel" on a plantation in his parish. Bishop Green frequently addressed slaves at plantation chapels, such as the cotton cathedral located on the property of Duncan Hubbard. In 1859, a planter in Emmanuel Church in

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<sup>17</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: The Office of the Southern Literary Messenger, 1844), 50-51; *Journal of the Sixty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: The Whig Book and Job Office, 1858), 88; *Journal of the Sixty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: Chas. H. Wynne, 1860), 130-131; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: The Sou. Churchman Office, 1843), 43. Blake Touchstone suggests that Episcopal planters "constructed most of these plantation chapels." Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," *Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740-1870* ed. John B. Boles (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990), 118.

Powhatan County, Virginia constructed "a neat and spacious chapel" on his plantation.

Plantation chapels, then, became a core of the Episcopal Church's missionary project for slaves.<sup>18</sup>

The Episcopal Church's reliance upon plantation chapels provided an architectural monument to its relationship with the planter class. In December 1836, Bishop William Meade of Virginia visited the plantation of George Harrison in Prince George County. George Harrison and his brother owned neighboring plantations. The Harrison brothers built a small church between their two plantations designed for the religious instruction of their slaves. After completing the chapel, Harrison and his brother labored to "procure the services of a faithful preacher of the gospel" for their slaves. Bishop Meade spent an hour ministering to Harrison's slaves during his visit. Bishop Meade reflected on his visitation by expressing hope that the slaves belonging to the Harrison brothers would provide the "fullest proof that the religion of Christ, properly taught and truly received and be productive of nothing but good." According to Bishop Meade, slaves would demonstrate that truth by exhibiting "humility, obedience, and fidelity" to their owners. The Episcopal Church and the planter class had developed a symbiotic relationship evidenced by the plantation chapels that dotted the South's landscape.<sup>19</sup>

Planters often networked their chapels to form missionary circuits. For example, in the 1830s, Reverend James Stuart Hanckel of St. Andrew's Parish in South Carolina held a separate Sunday afternoon service for various black congregations on the plantations under his charge. During the week, Hanckel also dedicated one weekday afternoon to "the instruction of the

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<sup>18</sup> *Journal of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 90-91; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: B. R. Wren, 1841), 29; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: The Office of the Southern Churchman, 1842), 42; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventy-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 67; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 39; *Journal of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1859), 34.

<sup>19</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: B. R. Wren, 1837), 10-11.

colored children." As Hanckel traversed plantations in St. Andrew's Parish he harbored concerns regarding the Episcopal Church's slave mission. Hanckel questioned who "among catechumens who are seeking Jesus?" Hanckel observed that "several" planters in St. Andrew's Parish provided personal assistance to his missionary undertakings for their slaves. Two chapels for slaves had resulted in the formation of a black majority at St. Andrew's Church by 1848. St. Andrew's Church had twenty-one white communicants who were outnumbered by the parish's thirty-one black communicants. Reverend Hanckel's ministry to black Episcopalians also extended to South Carolina's prisons. Hanckel recalled to his state convention that he had baptized a black convict in the Charleston Jail just prior to his execution. In 1850, Reverend Hanckel cheered the news that a third chapel for slaves in St. Andrew's Parish neared completion. A third plantation chapel ensured slaves would "be within a mile, and the most remote not more than two or three from a place of public worship and instruction."<sup>20</sup> Virginia's Episcopal planters also linked their plantation chapels. In 1845, Assistant Bishop John Johns consecrated Grace Chapel near the James River in Virginia. Bishop Johns considered the James River to be the epicenter of the Episcopal Church's slave missions in Virginia. Grace Chapel associated with the eight plantation chapels for slaves along the James River. According to Bishop Johns, the lack of missionaries constituted the greatest impediment to the religious instruction of slaves. Bishop Johns deduced that the Diocese of Virginia needed more men willing to "itinerate from plantation to plantation, under approval of the proprietors." Johns

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<sup>20</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miler & Browne, 1844), 47; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 34; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 37; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1850), 41.

hoped the Episcopal Church would find "Evangelists" willing to work with slaves attached to the sundry churches on the James River.<sup>21</sup>

Galleries and plantation chapels sometimes could not be located, so Episcopalians utilized other places to conduct slave missions. Martin Ewing assembled both his family and slaves in the "parlor" of his home for a worship service presided over by the Bishop of Mississippi. Bishop Green also appointed a lay reader to work with the slaves on Ewing's plantation. According to Bishop Green the lay reader not only read the full service of the Episcopal Church, but served as superintendent of a Sunday School on the plantation.<sup>22</sup> In March 1854, Bishop Green preached in the Methodist-owned Oakland Church near Bovina. Due to the large attendance and slaves "unable to find room," Bishop Green announced an impromptu afternoon worship opportunity for slaves, and despite short notice it turned out be a "crowded" service. Since the sacred ceremonies at the Methodist Church for slaves had been unplanned, Bishop Green used an "impassioned style" without notes. Homes and evangelical churches filled the void for Episcopal parishes lacking sufficient chapels or galleries for slave missions.<sup>23</sup>

Episcopalians studiously chronicled attendance at their slave missions. Biracial parishes thrived in Virginia. Wickliffe Parish of Clarke County announced to its state convention that parish churches were "well attended by the colored as well as the white congregations." Reverend Robert T. Howard of Georgetown, South Carolina estimated that 50 to 60 slaves attended Sunday afternoon services. In 1838, Reverend J. Horace Morrison began preaching once a month to the slaves affiliated with Trinity Church in Shepherdstown, Virginia. Morrison

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<sup>21</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Lynchburg: The Virginian Office, 1846), 21-22.

<sup>22</sup> *Journal of the Twenty-Eight Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 24; *Journal of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 25-26.

<sup>23</sup> *Journal of the Twenty-Eight Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 25.



generalized that slaves in attendance listened with "eagerness" to the proclamation of the Gospel. In Virginia, slaves comprised a large percentage of congregants in Boyden Parish. The Rector of Boyden Parish, James McElroy, reported an average attendance of 109 slaves for worship, with some attendees traveling up to ten miles to participate in the Episcopal services. St. Martin's Parish conducted Sunday afternoon services for slaves with an attendance ranging from 50 to 100 persons.<sup>24</sup> Reverend Edward Phillips in South Carolina offered a distinct service in the afternoon "including a psalm, or hymn, the Lord's prayer, and some suitable Collects from the Prayer Book" followed by a "plain" sermon. As part of the Episcopal Church's mission to slaves, Phillips held worship services on the property of two plantations. Phillips prayed for the parish's other planters that "other proprietors will lend their approving aid to the regular and systematic instruction by the ministry of the Church to the people entrusted to their care." Phillips signaled to the state convention that he needed assistance because the slaves in his parish numbered "several thousands." Reverend Phillips hoped "neighboring plantations would unite to defray the trifling pecuniary cost." To expand his slave missions, Phillips instituted an afternoon service for slaves in Louisville, South Carolina near his residence. In 1841, Reverend Mark Chevers advised the state convention that a "large" congregation of black Episcopalians attended his Sunday night services in Elizabeth City Parish. Reverend Olcott Bulkley boasted that his parish supported a "well attended" monthly service for slaves in Fluvanna County, Virginia. The Episcopal Church also organized the Richland District Mission, which had been organized for the slaves owned by the Wade family. Reverend C. Bruce Walker divulged that in 1860, nearly 100 slaves attended

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<sup>24</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: James C. Walker, 1836), 33; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: B. R. Wren, 1839), 30-31; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Lynchburg: The Virginian Office, 1846), 66; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1835), 31-32; *Journal of the Twenty-Eight Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 25.

services at the Richland District Mission. Strong attendance validated to Episcopalians at least that their slave missions had the blessing of their God.<sup>25</sup>

Slave missions, whether in galleries or plantation chapels, relied upon the Episcopal Church's distinctive liturgy. The Episcopal Church's slave missions became encumbered by the inherent racist ideologies that permeated the nineteenth century United States. Reverend Norman H. Cobbs of Russell Parish, Virginia held the racist assumption that all slaves were "ignorant." As a parish rector, Cobbs began a second Sunday service for slaves. Cobbs expressed utter shock at his black congregation's ability to learn the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and other components of the church's liturgy. Indeed, Cobbs confessed that "he never duly appreciated the value and importance of forms of prayers, till he began his feeble labours" with his parish's slaves. Christ Church in Nashville implemented a weekly worship service for slaves affiliated with the congregation in 1839. Reverend J. Thomas Wheat reported that the slaves in attendance loved the Episcopal Church's liturgy and "responsive parts" rather than the extemporaneous services of evangelical Protestants. John A. Harrison of St. John's Church in Ashwood, Tennessee dedicated thirty minutes prior to the Sunday evening service to instruct slaves in his parish. Harrison recounted to the Tennessee state convention that slaves under his spiritual care enjoyed the Episcopal Church liturgy including the Confession, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 57; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: B. R. Wren, 1841), 30; *Journal of the Fifty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Philadelphia: T.K. and P.G. Collins, 1853), 47; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 53; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 39; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 45; *Journal of the Seventy-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 65.

<sup>26</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1834), 24-25; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: S. Nye & Co.,

Reverend William H. Mitchell of Christ Church in Northampton County, Virginia also underscored the centrality of Episcopal liturgy to missionary work amongst slaves. Mitchell explained that in his own pastoral experience, the Episcopal Church's liturgy served as valuable tool for evangelism. According to Mitchell, in 1834:

During the summer and spring, a large number of the black population attend a lecture in this Church, on every-other Sunday afternoon. They are taught to unite in the response of our Liturgy, and appear to feel its Evangelical power, by the earnestness and solemnity with which they utter devout aspirations.

For Episcopalians in the South, "Canaan's Language" could be located in *The Book of Common Prayer*. Episcopalians used the liturgical calendar in their mission to the South's slaves.

Reverend Charles Mann described the Lenten enterprises of Gloucester County's Episcopalians to Virginia's state convention. According to Mann, Episcopalians in Gloucester County embraced every "opportunity...of preaching to the colored people, and during Lent, divine service was regularly performed on each Friday, at Ware church." Bishop William Mercer Green of Mississippi celebrated on Whitsunday 1850, because he confirmed a plantation mistress and slave at the same time. Emotions overwhelmed the Bishop of Mississippi as he observed "the faithful servant and the young mistress kneeling side by side" during the confirmation service.<sup>27</sup>

The Episcopal Church's liturgy governed slave missions in Tennessee too. Bishop Otey preached to a "large number" of slaves at Trinity Church in Tipton County. Bishop Otey described the slaves as "devout in their deportment" as they "professed their faith in Christ." Bishop Otey suggested similar slave missions would likewise yield "favorable results." By

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Republican Banner Office, 1840), 17; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: W. F. Bang & Co., Printers, 1847), 22.

<sup>27</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1835), 36-37; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: B. R. Wren, 1838), 35; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 11; Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 3-27.

1858, Trinity Church's religious instruction of slaves had such an attendance that parishioners expressed the need to either enlarge their current building or erect a new church. In March 1859, Bishop Otey revisited Trinity Church and recorded the following liturgical meditation:

This was the negroes' Sunday, as it is termed, when the Rector of this parish preaches to the black people exclusively. He read a portion of the morning prayer, including the Creed, Epistle, and Gospel: on this last he commented and them baptized two adults. I then discoursed on 1 Cor. xv. 1-12, and confirmed eight persons...

After the service at Trinity Church, Bishop Otey confirmed a free black man in private. John A. Harrison of St. John's Church in Ashwood dedicated thirty minutes prior to the Sunday evening service to instruct slaves in his parish. Harrison disseminated his liturgical experiences with slaves to Tennessee's state convention, by affirming that slaves under his spiritual care enjoyed the Episcopal Church liturgy including the Confession, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed. In 1848, Bishop James H. Otey visited St. John's Church and confirmed ten slaves, who all had been instructed in the church's teachings and liturgy. Reverend E. H. Cressey traveled to plantations throughout Maury County on Sunday and Wednesday evenings provide religious services for slaves in 1849. The liturgical worship contained in *The Book of Common Prayer*, perhaps more than preaching, defined the Episcopal Church's slave missions.<sup>28</sup>

Episcopalians utilized the sacred mysteries of their sacraments and rituals during their labors with slaves. Joseph Seabrook argued that as part of his missionary efforts he urged "the importance of baptism of their children upon the parents of the children on the different

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<sup>28</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee*, 18-20; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: A. A. Stitt, 1859), 26-30; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee*, 22; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-First Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Columbia: Mitchell & Rainey, 1849), 17, 29; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: The South-Western Monthly Office, 1852), 30.

plantations to which my labor extends." In 1845, a lay-catechist began working on J. J. Moore's plantations near Clarendon, South Carolina, and his employment enabled the Reverend Charles P. Elliot to baptize fifty-eight children on the plantation during a visit. Bishop William Meade traveled to Morgantown, Virginia where he baptized a number of slaves in 1842. Bishop Meade described the slaves he washed in the sacramental waters as the "property of a kind Christian master, who feels for their souls as well as provides for their bodies." Bishop Meade desiderated that the Morgantown slaveholder would inspire other planters to "follow his example" and extend the Episcopal Church's sacrament to their slaves. Some Episcopal clergy owned slaves themselves. For example, Reverend Edward Thomas baptized five of his own slaves on April 24, 1839 at the rectory. Those baptized included: Hannah—age 10, Mary—age 7, Tom—age 5, Daphne—age 6, and Diana—age 3. In some parishes black baptisms outpaced white baptisms. For instance, Trinity Church in Clarksville, Tennessee baptized more black children than white children in the year 1845.<sup>29</sup>

After baptism and the appropriate religious instruction, missionaries would offer slaves the rite of confirmation. In the South, Episcopal Churches with large slave populations frequently claimed a black majority in confirmations. In 1842, Bishop Nathaniel Bowen promoted to South Carolina's state convention that black Episcopalians accounted for 68% of the confirmations in the diocese during the preceding year. One Episcopal woman reported that Bishop Christopher Gadsden had visited Edisto, South Carolina for confirmation in 1848. She

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<sup>29</sup>*Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1853), 56-57; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1846), 44-45; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: The Office of the Southern Churchman, 1842), 11; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: Cameron & Fall, 1845), 13.

did not attend due to poor road conditions, but added that the confirmation ceremony consisted of only two "whites and forty negroes."<sup>30</sup>

Baptized and confirmed, slaves occasionally received invitations to the Episcopal Church's table of grace. As part of the Episcopal Church's missionary initiatives, slaves did partake of Holy Communion. Reverend Thomas C. Dupont of Grahamville, South Carolina documented that in 1839 he added five black communicants compared to only four white communicants. In 1859, black communicants outnumbered white communicants at the Episcopal chapel in Ravenscroft, Tennessee. St. John's Church on John's Island claimed a black majority at the Lord's Table with 330 slave communicants, and only fifty-seven white communicants during certain years in antebellum South Carolina. Reverend Edward Thomas assumed control of the parish on Edisto Island in South Carolina in 1827. During his first year, Thomas learned that his congregation consisted of a number of black communicants, both slave and free. On Whitsunday 1827, Thomas recorded in his journal the administration of Holy Communion to seventeen white communicants and five black communicants. On July 15, Thomas conducted services for thirty black parishioners. Following public worship, Thomas inscribed the names of eleven black communicants in his journal:

Stephen-	belonging to Capt <sup>n</sup> B. Bailey
Theresa-	his wife, a free woman
Cretin-	belonging to Capt <sup>n</sup> B. Bailey
Cyrus	} belonging to Mr. Edward Bailey
Mary	
Tom	
Pompey	} belonging to Mr. Charles Bailey
Dinah	
Rose-	belonging to Mr. John Hanahan
William Simmons-	a free man
Dido-	his wife belonging to Mr. T. Bailey

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<sup>30</sup> Ann (Jenkins) to Martha Cornish, 16 November 1848, Cornish Papers, Accession: 11141, SCL.

On August 26, Reverend Thomas "held service again for the Blacks on the Island," which attracted a congregation of approximately fifty, including three communicants. High numbers of black communicants were not just limited to Deep South parishes. For example, in 1844, black Episcopalians accounted for 73% of the communicants in Bruton Parish, Virginia.<sup>31</sup>

Reverend Charles E. Leverett's slave mission demonstrated the centrality of Holy Communion to the endeavor. In 1842, Leverett articulated to his state convention that Episcopalians in Edisto, South Carolina managed a Sunday School with 125-150 black children. Leverett also conducted an afternoon service for "adult blacks." Additionally, Leverett also visited the plantation of a parishioner and confessed a willingness "to visit other plantations for similar duties." A year later, Leverett disclosed that more planters in his parish had manifested an "anxiety" regarding the "spiritual welfare" of their slaves. Wealthy planters in Leverett's parish aspired to hire an additional minister to focus on inculcating religion amongst their slaves. By 1844, Leverett with the assistance of a visiting clergyman conducted services on seventeen plantations in his parish. The seventeen plantations along with a church gallery capable of holding 200 slaves resulted in the addition of forty communicants that same year. By 1845, Leverett celebrated that his work amongst slaves at Edisto had enlarged the church by 120 communicants. Rectors, like Leverett, appealed to sacramental language to encourage other Episcopalians to coalesce behind their church's slave missions. Leverett pleaded with South Carolina's state convention to send missionary help because he warned slaves were "dying for want of the bread of life." The Episcopal Church's sacrament of Holy Communion provided a dramatic and visible demonstration of the South's religious paternalism. In providing spiritual

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<sup>31</sup> Edward Thomas, *Private Journal of Edward Thomas, 1827-1836*, Accession 5183, SCL; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: The Southern Literary Messenger, 1844), 48.

bread to feed the souls of slaves, planters and Episcopal clergy expected the enslaved to perform their reciprocal obligation of "good and faithful service."<sup>32</sup>

The Episcopal Church's Sunday School societies allowed black children and adults to receive religious education beyond public worship. In the late 1820s, Trinity Church in Natchez created a biracial "Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Society." In 1828, Trinity Church's Sunday School recorded the attendance of thirty-four white and twenty black students. The Rector of Trinity Church emphasized that his Sunday School's success had been made possible by the "excellent female members of his congregation." Henrico Parish in Virginia organized a Sunday school for black children. In 1852, Henrico Parish's Sunday School had fifty black students who received oral instruction from "1 male and 7 female teachers." Superintendent William H. Richardson credited the Shadow Vestry of Henrico Parish for the Sunday School's prosperity. Richardson exhorted other Virginia parishes to create Sunday Schools for slaves because religious instruction would "effect a most happy change in the character and habits of servants." In 1856, Henrico Parish organized a new Sunday School for slaves that commenced with an attendance of "60 to 65," and grew to a total of 250 students a year later. Henrico Parish's Sunday School for slaves had 300 students and fourteen teachers in 1858. Trinity Church in Buchanan, Virginia organized a Sunday School for slaves which taught the Episcopal Church's "Liturgy and Jones' catechisms."<sup>33</sup> Trinity Church in Staunton, Virginia created its first Sunday School for slaves in 1841. During the first year, sixty-two slaves attended the Sunday

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<sup>32</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: The Office of the Southern Literary Messenger, 1844), 47; *Journal of the Proceedings of the thirty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee*, 68; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1845), 39-40, 49.

<sup>33</sup> *Journal of the Fifty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 62-63; *Journal of the Sixty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: The Whig Book and Job Office, 1857), 110-113; *Journal of the Sixty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 104-106; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Lynchburg: The Virginian Office, 1848), 67.



School, with an average Sunday attendance of forty-five. Trinity Church celebrated that thirty slaves attending their Sunday School had "learned the general confession, the Lord's prayer, the creed and the ten commandments, besides hymns and passages of Scriptures." One slave attending the Trinity Church's Sunday School mastered the entirety of the Episcopal Church's catechisms.<sup>34</sup> The Episcopal Church's Sunday Schools exclusively allocated for slaves were not just assemblages designed to recite Bible stories, rather missionaries instructed scholars in the liturgies of Christianity and paternalism.

Parishes in the Dioceses of Mississippi and Tennessee joined their eastern brethren in organizing Sunday Schools for slaves. In the early 1850s, St. John's Church in Knoxville opened a Sunday School for slaves, and by 1852 it claimed an attendance of 50-60 slave children. Reverend Thomas W. Humes described St. John's Sunday School for slaves as "prospering" in 1855. In 1860, the Sunday School for slaves at Knoxville had sixty students with seven teachers. Reverend T. S. W. Mott of St. Paul's Church in Columbus, Mississippi implemented a strategic plan for the slaves in his parish. For Sunday Schools confederated with slave missions, Mott required members of the planter class to "become teachers on their own plantations." Mott credited the plan with "success" in increasing the number of slaves in the parish's Sunday School program. In 1860, Bishop Green once more pleaded with the Diocese of Mississippi to undertake missionary work, especially Sunday School ministries, amongst their state's slaves. According to Bishop Green the "catechizing the young and the servants" epitomized an essential component of a rector's "parochial work."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: B. R. Wren, 1841), 36.

<sup>35</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: The South-Western Monthly Office, 1852), 30; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Clarksville: C. O. Paxon, 1851), 26; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Clergy and laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of*

Reverend Paul Trapier of Calvary Church in Charleston captured the logistical problems that many rectors experienced in managing Sunday Schools for the South's slaves. Calvary Church served as an Episcopal Church for slaves and a few free blacks. In 1850, Trapier managed the church's Sunday School with slaves belonging to 130 different owners. A year later, the number of slave owners jumped to 240. Calvary Church's sizable mission field caused Trapier to lament that as a rector:

...he can come so little in contact, pastorally, with his people, owing to the peculiar nature of [the slaves'] employment in the week and on Sunday. He fain would urge upon owners the obligation of so arranging their domestic affairs as to afford to their servants more opportunities for attendance in the Lord's house and on the Lord's day. He can seldom see them during the week, unless they are sick...

The peculiar institution undermined the traditional models of pastoral care. Trapier called for the South's planters and small slaveholders to grant Episcopal clergymen greater pastoral "liberty." In 1855, Trapier blamed the "worldliness of some owners" for the "backsliding" of black Episcopalians affiliated with Calvary Church. Despite Trapier's concerns, Calvary Church's Sunday School attendance totaled an impressive 2,485 in 1855.<sup>36</sup>

Along with bishops and clergy, church legislators at state conventions in the South embraced the cause of religious instruction for slaves. Lay and clerical delegates at South Carolina's state convention in 1849 passed a resolution that ordered the Secretary of the Diocese

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*Tennessee* (Nashville: W. F. Bang & Co., Book and Job Printers, 1855), 41; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: Bang, Walker, & Co., Book and Job Printers, 1858), 80; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Memphis: Wm. F. Sutton & Co., 1860), 54-55; *Journal of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 75; *Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Jackson: Mississippian Book and Job Office, 1860), 41.

<sup>36</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 53-54; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1851), 46-47; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 72-73; Robert F. Durden, "The Establishment of Calvary Protestant Episcopal Church for Negroes in Charleston," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 65 (April 1964): 63-84.

to send a circular letter "requesting information as to the methods pursued by [parish clergy] in the religious instruction of the colored population." Delegates at South Carolina's state convention wanted a report that analyzed the responses to be prepared for their next state convention. In 1843, Secretary Cranmore Wallace created an abstract of the replies to the state convention's circular and submitted his report to South Carolina's church legislators. The Wallace Report, paralleling the format of the state convention's circular letter, contained thematic sections. Section one addressed the "mode of holding Divine Service" for slaves. South Carolina's clergymen reported while a few slaves could read from *The Book of Common Prayer*, most often rectors read the congregation's liturgical response "clause by clause and repeated by the people after him." The Wallace Report also suggested that many respondents conducted divine service for slaves Sunday afternoons on plantations. A few clergymen, the Wallace Report advised, pursued divine services on days other than Sundays. Non-Sunday divine services for slaves occurred "by candle-light or at sunset after the labors of the day are over." Section one of the Wallace Report concluded with a common advisement from Episcopal clergymen from all across South Carolina:

In all cases, it has been found advisable to sing three or [more] times, as these people are peculiarly susceptible to the influence of music. The psalms and hymns, it is believed, being associated with music, and often sung by them, have more influence over their minds than prayers, lessons or sermons.

The Wallace Report failed, due to racial bias, to acknowledge that slaves appropriated music for their own cultural purposes. W.E.B. Du Bois and other historians have emphasized the centrality of music to slave religion. For Du Bois, slave music had been "adapted, changed, and intensified" from its origins in the "African forests" to become the "one true expression of a

people." Slavery's ideological constructions of race blinded white Episcopalians writing the Wallace Report to the true ways in which slaves interpreted their own sacred music.<sup>37</sup>

Sections three and four of the Wallace Report analyzed strategies for preaching and scripture selection. Many Episcopal clergymen in South Carolina testified to Secretary Wallace that they preached sermons on "the same great subjects...insisted on in white congregations." Slaves received, however, additional homilies related to paternalism. The Wallace Report opined that South Carolina's rectors crafted specific sermons on the "peculiar duties" of slaves "to their owners, fellow-servants and families." Some of South Carolina's rectors, who preached to slaves on Sunday afternoons, used the "same text" delivered to "the whites...but employing plainer language and illustrations." The Wallace Report chronicled that many missionaries expressed their greatest issue was "to prevent drowsiness" in slaves listening to their sermons. Clergymen recommended breaking up sermons for slaves by "asking questions, or by singing a hymn." The Wallace Report also cited a deceased South Carolina clergyman who refused to allow slaves to sit during the duration of his sermon as an exegetical methodology designed to promote "lively attention."<sup>38</sup>

The Wallace Report included sections five, six, seven, eight, and nine to provide sundry recommendations concerning religious education and the sacraments. In discussing the sacraments, clergy contributors to the Wallace Report resorted to their most explicit racism as they declared that in their opinion "there is a duplicity in the African character." The Wallace Report, therefore, recommended the use of a "probation" system for adults seeking to participate

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<sup>37</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1842), 31; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1843), 36-42; W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folks* (New York: Pocket Books, 2005), 183-189; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 243-265; John B. Boles, *Black Southerners, 1619-1869* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), 145-151.

<sup>38</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina.*, 31; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 36-42.

in the Episcopal Church's sacraments. Clergymen imposed a probation lasting six to twelve months. During sacramental probation for slaves, clergymen would investigate the "moral character" of slaves by making inquiries of masters, overseers, and other slaves. If a slave became a communicant, South Carolina's Episcopal clergyman aspired to monitor their faithfulness and discipleship. The Wallace Report informed South Carolina's state convention that clergymen appointed lay "leaders" or "supervisors" from amongst the post-probation communicants to be the rector's eyes during his absence from a plantation. According to the Wallace Report, the slave lay leaders promoted both the mission of the Episcopal Church and the planter class. Lay leaders had to be:

men of sobriety, judgment, faithfulness, and piety. If they can read, they are found useful in preparing the children for being catechized by the minister. In some cases, with the consent of the owner, they have been allowed to hold prayer meetings, in which they are strictly forbidden to exhort, or to use any other prayers than those contained in the Prayer Book. The allowance of these meeting has, in some places been necessary, in order to avoid the dangerous practice of allowing negroes to preach. If they have not some indulgences of this kind, in the absence of the minister, they will wander away to hear the wild harangues and antinomian and disorganizing doctrines of preacher or their own color...

Slave lay leaders appointed by the Episcopal Church assisted clergy in protecting the sacraments and religious education. The planter class supported slave lay leaders for hegemonic reasons. Planters hypothesized that slave lay leaders would undermine demand for slave preachers who might use their pulpits and sermons for the subversive purposes of liberty. The Wallace Report concluded with an exhortation for Episcopalians to increase their efforts amongst South Carolina's slaves or risk ceding souls to the state's evangelical-Protestant denominations.<sup>39</sup>

In the 1840s and 1850s, Episcopalians in the Diocese of Virginia also created special committees to study their slave missions to determine best practices. Virginia's state convention

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<sup>39</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 36-42.

created a Committee on the Religious Instruction of Servants in 1840. Delegates asked committee members to report on the "best means" of conducting slave missions in Virginia. Bishop Richard Channing Moore and Bishop William Meade co-chaired the committee. The Diocese of Virginia's Committee on the Religious Instruction of Servants underscored the necessity of the church forming a partnership with the planter class. According to the committee's report:

There must be sufficient number of large plantations contiguous to each other to give employment to a zealous Minister; there must be a willingness and ability on the part of the owners to support such a Minister in addition to the pastor of the Congregation and an agreement as to the times and season to be appropriated to each plantation...

The Committee on the Religious Instruction of Servants studied the methodologies used in the "whole Southern section" of the nation. Clergy shortages along with "a very moderate compensation" for missionaries focused upon slaves appeared to be the greatest hindrances to slave missions. Bishop Meade and his committee colleagues warned "masters and mistresses" that they had "share in this duty" to "supply the deficiency of Ministerial care by such personal attentions as they may have it in their power to bestow." The Committee on the Religious Instruction of Servants, maintained that "country ministers" had to be willing "either in churches, or the plantations, appropriate the afternoon or evening of the Sabbath" for services for slaves. Virginia's Committee on the Religious Instruction of Servants made several recommendations involving the strategies employed by missionaries. In particular, committee members proclaimed they had collected evidence of "how easily" the Episcopal Church's "liturgy maybe be learned" by slaves. Rather than simply preaching or sermonizing, Virginia's Committee on the Religious Instruction of Servants contended that the "confession, Lord's prayer, the anthems,

creed," litanies, and other services located in *The Book of Common Prayer* promised to yield the greatest success for the Episcopal Church's work amongst their state's slaves.<sup>40</sup>

Virginia's Committee on the Religious Instruction of Servants also encouraged planters and small slaveholders to incorporate slaves into their daily "family worship." Bishop Meade and committee members suggested that Episcopal paternalism in the form of family worship might require sacrifice. Scheduling family worship for slaves might cause planters an "interruption of temporal business" or even "some loss of earthly profit." Committee members argued in their report that earthly sacrifice caused by religious instruction of slaves, would allow slave owners to be better prepared for the judgment of heaven. The Diocese of Virginia called upon planters and slave owners to act "out of love to [their slaves'] immortal souls," rather than profit. Virginia's Committee on the Religious Instruction of Servants recognized the family worship for planters often occurred in the morning when slaves were engaged in "different duties, either in the field or in the house." The committee recommended to Virginia's state convention that planters and small slaveholders set aside thirty minutes before or after their slaves' first meal of the day to "be spent in reading and explaining God's word and offering up suitable prayers." Delegates at Virginia's state convention in 1841 extended the work of the Committee on the Religious Instruction of Servants by asking it to issue an additional report on "the propriety and desirableness, of the formation of a society" to execute the diocese's agenda for slave missions.<sup>41</sup>

In addition, Virginia's Committee on the Religious Instruction of Servants recommended amending Canon IX to address the question of "the election of Vestries of Colored

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<sup>40</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: B. R. Wren, 1841), 11-15.

<sup>41</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: B. R. Wren, 1841), 11-15; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: The Office of the Southern Churchman, 1842), 32.

Congregations." Delegates proposed to empower local white congregations in managing congregations composed of black Episcopalians. According to the proposed amendment, if a black congregation existed in a town or city, the white congregations within the city limits could either "discharge the functions of a Vestry for the colored congregation or, if they think best, may elect for them a Vestry of their own body or congregation." Committee members made a distinction for rural black congregations residing on or near plantations. For a black congregation operating in the country, the Canon IX amendment prescribed that the white country parish vestry "shall be the Vestry for the colored congregation." Although the amendment envisioned black vestries in towns and cities, black vestrymen would always be chosen by white vestries. The amendment, therefore, hoped to create puppet vestries that would hold very little actual power and be controlled by the white vestries who elected them. In both town and country parishes, the committee aspired to ensure that white vestries would maintain and exercise hegemony over black congregations. The proposed amendment restricted rural parishes in an effort to accommodate the planter class who would not tolerate any black power structures, even puppet vestries, within their own Episcopal Church. Delegates to Virginia's state convention in 1859 transferred the proposed amendment to another committee for additional study.<sup>42</sup> Virginia's state convention in 1859, meanwhile, drafted two resolutions regarding slaves in the diocese. First, delegates desired to study creating and "establishing missionary duty" for clergymen in the Diocese of Virginia. Second, delegates wanted to approve a resolution calling upon "the Rector and Vestry of each Parish throughout his Diocese be requested to take up collections....to provide suitable places of public worship for slaves

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<sup>42</sup> *Journal of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 36-37.



within their respective precincts." Delegates referred both resolutions to the newly created "Committee on Colored Churches" for additional examination.<sup>43</sup>

Bishop John Johns chaired the Committee on Colored Churches and issued its report to Virginia's state convention in 1860. The Johns Report estimated based upon its investigation that only 8,000 to 9,000 slaves lived under the influence of the Protestant Episcopal Church. The Johns Report further averred that attending an Episcopal service did not equal ministry. Instead, committee members estimated only 272 slaves availed themselves of the ministries of the Episcopal Church in Virginia. The Johns Report concluded that the number had to be interpreted as an abject failure of the Episcopal Church in Virginia because the census had estimated the commonwealth's slave population to be near 500,000.<sup>44</sup>

The Johns Report professed that Episcopalians in Virginia had a unique failing, because Methodists and Baptists had proved successful in their evangelization of the commonwealth's slave population. The committee excluded the distinctive Episcopal liturgy, lack of accommodations, or inadequate preaching as the causes of the diocese's failure. The Johns Report even contemplated that Episcopal Church's infrequent use of "immersion" baptism. According to committee members, they initially hypothesized that immersion baptism had a "peculiar fascination" for slaves. After studying the possibility, committee members concluded that baptism served as an insufficient answer since: "Methodists, who do not practice immersion, have a very large number of servants in their communion." The Johns Report reached the following finding regarding the Episcopal Church's failures:

The inquiry in which we are engaged will not be truly answered till we find something of interest and value which the colored people enjoy among both Baptists and Methodists, but which is not adequately afforded them in their

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<sup>43</sup> *Journal of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 36-38.

<sup>44</sup> *Journal of the Sixty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 46-47, 63-70.

Church relations with us, and this we believe to be *the blessed privileges of Christian fellowship*.

Committee members argued that white and black Episcopalians had to "worship in the same house and partake at the same administration" of sacraments. According to the Johns Report, separate services of Holy Communion had been a sacrament with "the head" but not "with the members of the body." In the opinion of the committee, slaves had a "craving for Christian fellowship." The Johns Report made four recommendations to increase the perception of Episcopal fellowship for slaves. First, committee members recommended the creation of black congregations of Episcopalians to inspire a consciousness of community. Second, the Johns Report advised parishes to erect places for black Episcopalians to worship. Third, the committee endorsed the appointment of slave lay assistants to help with "the affairs of the congregation, with a special reference to the admission, supervision and discipline of Church members." Fourth, the Johns Report demanded that clergymen involved in slaves missions had to belong to the Diocese of Virginia or have a special dispensation from the state's bishop. Virginia's state convention in 1860 accepted the findings of the Johns Report. Virginia's slave missions had been somewhat limited that year. In 1860, Bishop John Johns reported that he had preached in "congregations of colored persons assembled in the Baptist and Methodist African Churches." Johns decried that the Diocese of Virginia had "no such congregations" and he could find no "satisfactory excuse." The Civil War intervened before Virginia's state convention could fully implement the Johns Report and reform its slave missions.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Journal of the Sixty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 46-47, 63-70.

## **The Episcopal Church's Slave Missions: Nine Examples**

After organization, slave missions had to evolve and grow over time to receive uninterrupted patronage from the Episcopal Church. To illustrate the growth of slave missions during the Cotton Communion's renaissance, nine different stations will be briefly analyzed. The nine missions evaluated include: St. John's Parish Mission, Prince William's Parish Mission, the Claremont Mission, the Wateree Mission, Christ Church Mission, All Saints' Parish Mission, St. Helena's Parish Mission, the Yazoo-Issaquena Counties Mission, and the Hurricane Mission.

### **1. St. John's Parish Mission**

Beginning in the late 1830s, Episcopalians in South Carolina organized the St. John's Parish Mission. The Reverend Thomas John Young of Colleton, South Carolina intimated in 1839 that black communicants gave him "hope" since they filled the recently completed galleries in St. John's Church. By 1847, Young familiarized the state convention with the news that St. John's Church had reinvigorated its desire to provide for "the religious instruction of their slaves." Parishioners had established a class for daily religious instruction. St. John's Parish also had a black majority. In 1849, St. John's Parish had 401 black communicants, with only fifty-five white communicants. Reverend Charles H. Hall of the St. John's Parish Mission demonstrated how many rectors took seriously the spiritual care of black communicants. Hall celebrated private services of Holy Communion for "an old slave at Mr. Simmon's plantation and once to a dying slave at Mr. J. M. Jenkins's plantation...also once to a dying slave at Mr. Hugh Wilson's plantation." Just over a month after his consecration, Bishop Thomas F. Davis of South Carolina arrived in St. John's Parish for a confirmation service. On November 27, Bishop Davis

confirmed fourteen white Episcopalians during the morning service. Bishop Davis along with Reverend Hall then held a separate worship service for slaves. During the afternoon service, Bishop Davis confirmed 121 black Episcopalians. The confirmation service for slaves on St. John's Island "forcibly struck" Bishop Davis as a mission of "usefulness." Bishop Davis's confirmation of slaves illustrated to him that the church's class-based missions had harvested sacred fruit.<sup>46</sup>

## 2. The Prince William's Parish Mission

South Carolina's Prince William's Parish organized its own slave mission by the early 1840s. Reverend Benjamin C. Webb served as one of Prince William's Parish early missionaries to slaves. Webb resided on a plantation, but traveled to various locations ranging from six to seven miles away to hold divine service. Reverend Webb reported that some of the adults who attended his services had been previously baptized by evangelical denominations, especially "Presbyterians and Methodists." Reverend Webb proposed to the Episcopal Church "that a liturgy be adapted to our colored people...to enable them to worship with 'the understanding and the spirit.'" In 1844, Webb's mission claimed 126 communicants, who had celebrated the sacrament of Holy Communion ten times during the preceding year. Prince William's Parish decided to construct "a large Church...for the accommodation of the people of color" in the mid-1840s. Eight plantations employed Webb in 1844 to oversee slave missions. Reverend Webb welcomed the demand for his talents, but still registered a warning to the state convention on the

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<sup>46</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the 50th Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1839), 23-24; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Eight Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 36-37; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 38-39; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1854), 21, 41.

need to construct churches independent of plantations to adjust for the removal of the planters and their families. During 1845 and early 1846, Webb advised the state convention that the Prince William's Parish Mission teetered on the brink of "destruction." Black communicants at the mission had declined to ninety-nine. Planters in Prince William's Parish earmarked financial contributions to support "ministrations on the plantations." Reverend Charles E. Leverett became Rector of Prince William's Parish in 1846. Leverett hailed his parish's commitment to the religious instruction of slaves, since he believed that the Episcopal Church's idiosyncratic theology could outcompete evangelicals in securing the "attachment of its members- be they bond or free." The Vestry of Prince William's Parish hired Reverend Stephen Elliot as an assistant minister to focus solely on the religious instruction of slaves. Elliot documented that his charge included some 2,000 slaves. Elliot also performed missionary duties on a plantation with the permission of the Vestry of St. Bartholomew's Parish. In 1846, Reverend Webb continued his efforts on nine plantations and added a service "on the plantation of the Rev. Mr. Potter." Reverend Webb heralded the growing approval of the planter class for the Prince William's Parish mission. Although more planters had disclosed their yearning for missions on their plantations, Webb wearily divulged to the state convention that he had noticed a concomitant resistance of slaves to conversion. Webb argued that the Episcopal Church had a hard time competing with evangelical and slave-led religious organizations. As Webb surmised: "I fear opposition on the part of slaves from religious prejudice is on the increase...[slaves]...prefer other churches, or attach themselves to a religious organization among themselves, called 'the Society.'" The Prince William's Parish Mission included the two plantations of the Honorable Robert W. Barnwell. Webb abandoned the Barnwell plantations due to illness in 1852. A year later, two plantations withdrew from the Prince William's Parish

Mission. In 1854, Bishop Thomas Davis of South traveled to the Prince William's Parish Mission and confirmed fifty-three black Episcopalians. Reverend Webb's death left the Prince William's Parish mission in disarray. Reverend Charles E. Leverett memorialized that after Webb's death a few plantations ordered a "suspension" of the Episcopal Church's religious services provided through the Prince William Parish Mission.<sup>47</sup>

### 3. The Claremont Mission

In 1846, Reverend Augustus L. Converse conveyed to the state convention that his congregation at Claremont had organized "The Church Society for the Advancement of Christianity among the Slaves in the Parish of Claremont." In its first year of existence, Claremont's Church Society counted subscriptions totaling \$230. According to Converse, his parishioners posited that they had a "solemn responsibility in behalf of this body of Christ's poor—their own slaves and dependents." Claremont's Church Society explained they had a mandate from Christ to preach to "every creature," which included slaves. The Church of Claremont informed the state convention that their parish would not be providing financial contributions to other diocesan efforts, but instead directing all financial resources to their new Church Society to offer religion to their slaves. By 1846, the Church at Claremont had a black majority in communicants, with sixty blacks and forty-two whites. Reverend Converse conveyed optimism

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<sup>47</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the 50th Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in South Carolina*, 28-30; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 58; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1845), 47-48; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in South Carolina*, 38-39, 55; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 57; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 46, 61; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 54; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1855), 22; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 62-63.

that more Episcopalians would accept slave missions. Converse insisted that planters had to "acknowledge that *our slaves* are comprehended in the 'express words of our Saviour Christ:' 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to *every creature*.'" In 1848, Reverend Converse explained how in his opinion the Episcopal Church provided a paternalistic service for the South's slave society:

I hold it to be incontrovertible truth, as agreeable to reason as it is conformable to Scripture, that every slave has a claim upon us Christians, not only for sufficient food and raiment for the body, but for Christian instruction and training, and for the spiritual life-giving, life-sustaining ordinances of Christ's Church, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. And though I may be peculiar in the impression, I do entertain it, that we really have no more right to own a single slave, beyond what we can personally or by proxy, impart religious instruction to—life and nourishment for the soul—than we have to own one that we can neither feed or clothe.

Converse had clearly articulated his position that Episcopal planters had an obligation under paternalism to not only provide clothes and food, but also religion to slaves. After only three years of operation, the Claremont Mission had thirty-five white communicants, with one hundred black communicants.<sup>48</sup>

#### 4. Wateree Mission

In 1842, Reverend William Dehon commenced a mission to slaves on the Wateree in South Carolina. Reverend Dehon advised South Carolina's state convention that he could not estimate the exact number of communicants during his first year or the prospects of the mission. Dehon noted that the absence of an Episcopal mission had resulted in many slaves attending Baptist and Methodist worship services. Regardless of evangelical competition, Dehon

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<sup>48</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1846), 35-36; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Forty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in South Carolina*, 45; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 33.

announced he would hold regular Sunday services and "on every Friday and Wednesday evening on two plantations." Reverend Dehon asserted that during his tenure on the Wateree, he used "the catechism published by Bishop Ives" more so than any other for the instruction of slave children. Although slaves near the Wateree represented Dehon's primary mission, he hoped to also organize "a white congregation...and a Vestry." A year later, Reverend Dehon vacated the mission on the Wateree for a new missionary station. During a brief tenure at the Wateree Mission, Reverend Jedediah Huntington reported that the mission had baptized twenty-eight slaves while caring for at least 100 communicants residing on three plantations. Huntington had apparently spent most of his time on John Clarkson's plantation. According to Huntington, the slaves on Clarkson's plantation had "been taught to chant all the canticles of the morning and evening prayer of the Church." Beginning in 1845, Reverend John Fell inaugurated his labors at the Wateree Mission. Fell preached and catechized slaves on the plantations of William Clarkson and John Clarkson. On John Clarkson's plantation, Fell discovered with pleasure that many slave children already "sung several of the chants." Fell's missionary efforts also demonstrated that Episcopal clergymen held services for slaves on important dates on the liturgical calendar. For example, Reverend Fell visited William Clarkson's Highland plantation on Ash Wednesday, when he baptized four children. In the late 1840s, Fell voiced what he perceived to be the two greatest challenges to Episcopal Church's slave missions. First, Fell argued that slaves maintained a "strong attachment to other religious denominations." Evangelical Protestants had established a bulwark in the slave community, long before Episcopalians had entered the field. Second, Fell complained that many plantations lacked chapels for the effective religious instruction of slaves.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 53; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Fourth Annual Convention, of the Protestant Episcopal*



## 5. Christ Church Mission

Reverend John B. Gallagher had been rector of Christ Church in Wilton, South Carolina less than a year before he commenced preaching an afternoon service for slaves and supervising religious instruction "during the week on several of the plantations." Gallagher's successor, Reverend C. Bruce Walker, continued the Christ Church Mission for local slaves. Reverend Walker administered services Sunday afternoons and evenings. Walker's Sunday night services occurred "upon plantations which are too distant for the negroes to attend the Church." In 1846, Christ Church had a black majority with 140 black communicants and only twenty-two white communicants. The Christ Church Mission for slaves encountered problems in the early 1840s, and as a result Methodist missionaries filled the void until 1849. During that year, Reverend Edward T. Walker resumed Episcopal slave missions for Christ Church. By the early 1850s, Reverend Edward T. Walker had revived weekly services on six plantations affiliated with the Christ Church Mission.<sup>50</sup>

## 6. All Saints' Parish Mission

The All Saints' Parish Mission launched in the 1830s, but achieved its greatest success in the 1840s. In one year alone, Reverend Alexander Glennie of Waccamaw conducted 120 divine services for slaves connected to All Saints' Parish, while supervising "the religious instruction of

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*Church, in South Carolina, 65; Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1845), 38; Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, 46.*

<sup>50</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, 50-51; Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in South Carolina, 41; Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Eight Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, 47; Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in South Carolina, 55; Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, 59.*

the negroes on 10 plantations." In the early 1840s, All Saints' Parish renovated the "Lower Church" to add "six new pews, and sittings for 120 negroes." Glennie promoted to South Carolina's state convention in 1843 that during the preceding year he had conducted 122 worship services on plantations for slaves in All Saints' Parish. The same year, Glennie celebrated the presence of 130 black communicants in All Saints' Parish. The All Saints' Parish Mission constructed a chapel with capacity for two-hundred persons on a local plantation in 1849. The Rector of the All Saints' Parish Mission conducted 167 plantation services and administered Holy Communion on his parishes five times in that same year. Five years later, Reverend Glennie had pastoral responsibilities for fifteen plantations. On the fifteen plantations, Glennie catechized 381 slave children. In April 1854, Bishop Thomas Davis of South Carolina visited the All Saints' Parish Mission, which promoted him to praise both the planter class and Glennie. Bishop Davis commended the "faithful labors, both of the pastor and owners, in imparting religious instruction to these slaves." For Bishop Davis, the religious instruction of slaves reflected the South's regional distinctiveness. "The Southern mind," Davis asserted, had a special calling in spreading the gospel to slaves. Bishop Davis theorized in his laudatory comments that slave missions would "apply not only to the parish of All Saints', but to the whole Southern country, where like efforts are made." In 1858, the All Saints' Parish Mission encompassed nineteen plantations and 236 black communicants. Glennie tabulated that he had supervised 614 divine services on the nineteen plantations in the parish from May 1857 to June 1858. All Saints' Parish managed thirteen plantation chapels in 1859. Planters provided Reverend Glennie with two assistants for the parish's religious efforts for slaves in the 1850s. One plantation estate funded the services of an assistant to provide services on five plantations. Another unidentified planter hired the lay catechist D. D. Rosa to be a missionary to his slaves.

On the eve of the Civil War, the All Saints' Parish Mission had 257 black communicants residing on at least eighteen plantations.<sup>51</sup>

### 7. St. Helena's Parish Slave Mission

St. Helena's Parish christened its slave mission in the 1840s. The Rector of St. Helena Church in Beaufort, South Carolina praised the gallery construction at his church in 1842. Reverend Joseph R. Walker believed that the sixty-foot long gallery would "accommodate a large number" of the parish's black Episcopalians. A year later, Walker reported that on Sundays, the galleries for slaves were "pretty well filled" each service. Walker offered his opinion that the "responsive portions" of worship services gave slaves in his parish "great delight." Reverend Walker also disclosed that the "Superintendent of the colored Sunday School" wished for South Carolina's state convention to know that every Sunday from June to December classes met from 9:00-10:30 a.m. "without...a single intermission." In 1843, Reverend Walker expressed frustrations with the outcomes produced by the Episcopal Church's slave missions. Walker suggested that slaves had to be integrated into white congregations in the South:

Whilst the obligation of the master to afford religious instructions to his slaves is by Christians generally admitted to be clear...It seems to me that our efforts have hitherto been too isolated...we have not brought our servants under the power of association in worship and Church-membership with their masters...It seems to me, therefore, that whilst separate schools and separate lectures cannot be dispensed with, we shall not witness effects which we desire to see them produce

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<sup>51</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the 50th Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 32-33; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 42-43; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 52; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 39-40; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 23-24; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Ninth Annual convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 54; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1859), 63-64.

until ample accommodations are provided for our servants in our Churches, and they are connected with the white congregation by a common pastoral superintendence, and common sacramental privileges.

Social control prompted Walker's call for church integration. Walker believed that ending religious segregation would allow the Episcopal Church to exert greater control over slaves. In 1844, Walker announced to South Carolina's state convention that St. Helena Church had completed its construction projects. Walker added that congregants had not undertaken the expansions for themselves, but rather to "meet an obligation...to *make suitable and sufficient accommodations for their slaves* in God's house." In 1846, Walker appeared to report the use of lay assistants, possibly slave assistants, for his Sunday night services for slaves in St. Helena's Parish. That same year, the parish contributed \$1,130 for slave missions. St. Helena's Assistant Rector, Richardson Graham, chronicled traveling twenty-five to thirty-five miles to various plantations in the parish to catechize and preach to slaves. By 1849, Graham had undertaken religious missionary work on seventeen plantations in the St. Helena's Parish. Graham preached every weeknight by rotating between all seventeen plantations. Graham also endeavored to support the hegemony of the parish's planter class by the implementation of a restrictive attendance policy:

The people from the neighboring plantations are, *at my request*, prohibited from attending; my experience teaches me, that to encourage negroes to attend divine service, *at night off their own plantations*, would be productive of much evil to both master and servant.

Graham's attendance policy reflected the concern of many Episcopal clergymen who did not want their religious services to be blamed for inciting slave runaways or worse rebellions. The St. Helena's Parish mission, and other stations at other locales all across the South, had to conform to the economic interests of the ruling planter class. Reverend Walker described the religious opportunity for slaves in St. Helena Parish as including thirty-six gallery pews. In

addition to gallery pews, Walker divulged that the parish had erected a "commodious house 55 by 28 feet...for the use of slaves and free people of color." St. Helena Parish called the building for black Episcopalians "Grace Chapel." In 1858, St. Helena Parish also employed Reverend Edward T. Walker as a missionary. Reverend Edward T. Walker had charge of St. Stephen's Chapel which had a congregation "composed of masters and servants." A year later, Walker apprised his state convention that St. Stephen's Chapel had an attendance ranging from 80-200 at each worship service.<sup>52</sup>

#### 8. The Yazoo and Issaquena Counties Mission

Episcopalians in Mississippi's Yazoo and Issaquena counties organized a slave mission in the early 1850s. Bishop William Mercer Green welcomed news from a Yazoo County planter that he intended to erect a chapel for the "benefit of his slaves." Bishop William Mercer Green visited George Yerger's plantation on the Yazoo River in March 1851. Yerger had constructed a "rustic Church with bell and tower and chancel" for the use of his slaves. William F. Scott served as the Episcopal Church's lay reader at Yerger's plantation chapel. Bishop Green baptized one and confirmed three during his services, which included a "full house of blacks together with the whites of the family." Bishop Green articulated the Episcopal Church's embracement of paternalism by extolling that "[it] was a beautiful sight thus to see the master worshiping in the midst of his slaves." The Episcopal Church in the South affirmed that planters had a

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<sup>52</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 39; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 60-62; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 57; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 30-31; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 51; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 55-56; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 74; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 83.

"responsibility for [their slaves] spiritual welfare." Reverend Meyer Lewin shared Bishop Green's perspective on Episcopal paternalism during his work at the Yazoo and Issaquena Counties Mission. After baptizing eleven slaves, Lewin praised Yerger as a paternalistic planter who understood "the duty he owes to those are dependent upon him for their spiritual as well as their temporal food." Bishop Green confirmed eight slaves inside Yerger's plantation chapel in 1854.<sup>53</sup>

Reverend Norman W. Camp of Trinity Church in Yazoo City used the liturgical calendar in his missionary work amongst slaves. On Good Friday 1848, Reverend Camp traveled eight miles outside of Yazoo City to George Yeager's plantation in Issaquena County, where he proceeded to baptize one adult and eighteen children. Camp organized the Church of the Crucifixion in Issaquena County as a church predominately designed to proselytize to the county's slaves. Charles Snyder served as Senior Warden of the Church of the Crucifixion in the absence of a rector, and provided religious instruction to slaves in the vicinity. Snyder lived on Yeager's plantation to more easily provide religious services to slaves. Slaves under Snyder's care erected a "log church" on the grounds of Yeager's plantation. Trinity Church's Reverend William Parker Scott baptized six slaves on the plantations of Martin W. Ewing and George S. Yerger in 1852. Scott used the Church of the Crucifixion for the baptism of slaves on Yerger's plantation. In 1855, Bishop Green confirmed six of Yerger's slaves on a visitation to the plantation chapel. Bishop Green journeyed to James Stewart's plantation seven miles outside of Yazoo City in 1858. Stewart's overseer told Bishop Green that slaves receiving Episcopal religious instruction had been "faithful in the performance of their daily labor" and a demonstrated a "desire to learn and perform their duty to their Master in Heaven." Nothing

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<sup>53</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 19-20, 42-43; *Journal of the Twenty-Eight Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 23.

better dramatized for Bishop Green the paternalism of slave missions than his visit to Yerger's plantation in 1860. George S. Yerger had died shortly before Green's arrival. Bishop Green recorded his interactions with the plantation's slaves:

...instead of the cheerful services in which he was accustomed to join so heartily with his servants, there was heard the sobbing of those loving dependents as they followed the hearse which bore away the remains of him whom they regarded more as a father than as a master.

From Bishop Green's perspective, Episcopal services had transformed the deceased planter into a paternalistic-father figure. The Yazoo and Issaquena Counties' Mission demonstrated how slave missions followed the planter class into the cotton frontiers of the old southwest.<sup>54</sup>

### 9. The Hurricane Mission

The Hurricane Mission deserves special mention since it evidenced how slaves resisted the efforts to use religion as a tool of social control. Bishop William Mercer Green visited the plantation estates of Edmund C. Laughlin and Joseph E. Davis during the Christmas Season of 1852. Bishop Green preached to the slaves on baptism during his visit to the plantations and proceeded to baptize twenty-eight slaves. A little over a year later, Bishop Green returned to the Hurricane Plantation of Joseph E. Davis on Good Friday. Prior to Bishop Green's arrival at the Hurricane, Joseph E. Davis's younger brother had emerged as a rising star in southern politics. Democrat Jefferson Davis represented Mississippi in the United States from 1847 to 1851, and at the time of Bishop Green's visit to the Hurricane Jefferson Davis had accepted the nomination of Franklin Pierce to serve in his cabinet as the nation's Secretary of War. Joseph E. Davis not only

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<sup>54</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1848), 30-31, 38; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Natchez: Courier Book and Job Office, 1852), 82-83; *Journal of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 26; *Journal of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 48; *Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 48.

provided his brother with plantation lands, but advised him. Long before Jefferson Davis became a confirmed Episcopalian, the Episcopal Church had a connection to him through his brother. Joseph Davis had reserved a room at the Hurricane for the religious instruction of slaves. Bishop Green preached to a large congregation of slaves and confirmed four of Davis's slaves on Saturday. In 1855, Bishop Green baptized one adult and confirmed two at the Hurricane Plantation. Bishop Green returned to the Hurricane in 1857, and delivered a sermon to Joseph E. Davis's family, neighbors and slaves. After preaching, Bishop Green confirmed four. Joseph E. Davis informed Bishop Green and the plantation's missionary that he would soon erect a plantation chapel. The Episcopal Church, however, incited resistance at the Hurricane. According to Bishop Green, two or three slave preachers on Davis's plantation had proclaimed "profane teachings" that impeded the work of the Episcopal Church. The religious resistance on Davis's plantation to the Episcopal Church peaked when as many as four or five self-appointed slave preachers assumed full clerical authority and administered the sacraments without ordination or the consent of the Bishop of Mississippi. Bishop Green revisited the Hurricane in April 1859 and deemed the religious upheaval to be in remission. More than the unauthorized slave preachers, Bishop Green harbored a more immediate anxiety at the time over the swelling Mississippi River, which he feared would break its banks during his worship services. Bishop Green confirmed five slaves at the Hurricane in 1859. Bishop Green's optimism proved premature. Reverend Frederick W. Damus announced to Mississippi's state convention that he had ceased working at the Hurricane Mission. Damus reported that "five or six" slave preachers had been allowed to "counteract" his efforts. On at least one plantation, slave preachers had routed the planter class's determination to ensconce an Episcopal Church slave mission designed to reinforce class hegemony. The unnamed slave preachers on the Hurricane Plantation



reminded planters along with Episcopal clergymen that religion had the potential to be refined into a divinely-inspired ideology of liberation, leveling justice, and earthly salvation.<sup>55</sup>

### **The Theology of Episcopal Paternalism**

Unlike the aberration of the Hurricane Mission, Episcopalians administering most slave missions aimed to inculcate a Christian paternalism to minimize class antagonisms between planters and slaves.<sup>56</sup> Bishop Nathaniel Bowen responded to a demand from the Diocese of South Carolina's state convention by publishing a series of religious lessons in a document entitled *A Pastoral Letter on the Religious Instruction of the Slaves* in 1835. Bowen's *Pastoral Letter* taught paternalism and had been designed for the use of both planters and local parishes. In particular, Bishop Bowen appended a table of scripture readings he found particularly useful for instructing slaves. Bishop Bowen's table had three divisions: Old Testament, New Testament, and "Passages relating especially to servants." Table 4.1 lists all of the verses cited in Bishop Bowen's "Passages relating especially to servants." Bishop Bowen's selections from the New Testament served his goal of a class-based exegesis, which insinuated that slaves had a Biblical mandate to obey their masters. The verses in *A Pastoral Letter* all served to transform

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<sup>55</sup>*Journal of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Natchez Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1853), 16-17; *Journal of the Twenty-Eight Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 26-27; *Journal of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 29; *Journal of the Thirty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 87-88; *Journal of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 46; *Journal of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 41; *Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 76; Lynda Lasswell Crist, "Jefferson Davis," in *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History* ed. David Stephen Heidler, Jeanne T. Heidler, and David J. Coles (New York: W. W. Norton & Col, 2002), 564-572.

<sup>56</sup> Planters and clergymen worked together to craft paternalism as both an ideology that "Christianized" slavery and minimized class-based resistance. Charles F. Irons, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity: White and Black Evangelicals in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 87-96; Donald G. Matthews, *Religion in the Old South*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1979), 245; Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), 4-7.

the South's planter class into agents of God's plan of salvation. Episcopal paternalism connoted that obedient slaves entitled themselves to a heavenly reward.<sup>57</sup>

In 1837, Bishop Bowen along with three other clergymen from the Diocese of South Carolina published *A Catechism to be Used by the Teachers in the Religious Instruction of Persons of Colour*. Lesson III asked slaves to explain the identity of Jesus Christ. *A Catechism...in the Religious Instructions of Persons of Colour* encouraged slaves to describe Christ as the Son of God who "took upon him the form of a servant; and was made of the likeness of men." Episcopalians in South Carolina hoped to cultivate the image of a shared servant identity between Jesus Christ and the South's slaves. Consistent with the planter class's ideology of paternalism, *A Catechism...in the Religious Instruction of Persons of Colour* implied that slavery functioned as a Christian institution. Lesson V aided the planter class by giving the South's social hierarchy religious sanction by teaching the following:

Have all people the same things in this world?

No; some people have much gold and riches and some are very poor; because it is the will of God that it should be so. 1 Sam. ii. 7.

Ought poor people to complain and be angry because they are poor?

No; they should be contented with what God gives; diligent in their work, and submissive to those whom has placed above them. Prov. xxviii 6...

Episcopal clergymen assisted the planter class's hegemony by promulgating religious lessons designed to encourage contentment and submissiveness. For Episcopalians in the South, slave missions that emanated paternalistic teachings evidenced a shared motivation to elevate both Christ and class.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Nathaniel Bowen, *A Pastoral Letter on the Religious Instruction of the Slaves of Members to the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of South Carolina* (Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1835), 4-30, Accession: 326 B67 P, Rare Books, SCL; David Hein and Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr., *The Episcopalians* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 77.

<sup>58</sup> Nathaniel Bowen, *A Catechism to be Used in the Religious Instruction of Persons of Colour: To Which Are Appended, Easy Instructions for Coloured Persons, Your or Adult, Who Are Not Yet Baptized....* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1837), 14-16, Accession: 283.3 P94c, Rare Books, SCL.

*A Catechism to be Used by the Teachers in the Religious Instruction of Persons of Colour* offered some of its most explicit teachings for slaves in Lesson XIV. In Lesson XIV, catechists asked slaves to identify their "governors," to which they would have been expected to reply: "Those whom my master sets over men,- as the overseer and driver." Lesson XIV delved into detailed specifics by instructing slaves that the Bible forbade any "Grumbling and objecting" directed toward their masters. Episcopalians in the South also attempted to elevate Christian masters. South Carolina's Episcopalians envisaged that slaves with a Christian master would "love, and serve, and pray for him more than ever." Lesson XIV also demonstrated what made Episcopal catechisms unique from many evangelicals when it asked slaves to identify their spiritual pastors. *A Catechism to be Used by the Teachers in the Religious Instruction of Persons of Colour* expected slaves to answer: "The Bishop and other Ministers of the Church." Baptists and other evangelical churches in the South without bishops would not have concurred with that response from slaves. To conclude, Lesson XIV used Episcopal paternalism as a means to undermine resistance to the planter class by divining hegemony in St. Paul's epistle to Philemon:

May you ever run away?

No. Onesimus ran away; but as soon as he became a Christian, he was willing to go back to his master Philemon.

Is it right, then, to harbour a runaway?

No. St. Paul sent back Onesimus with a letter to his master, Philemon...

Why should Christian slaves behave well?

To shew that religion makes them better servants.

Will God take notice of your good behaviour to your master?

Yes...

South Carolina's Episcopal leadership also published extensive lessons for slaves on the Bible's

**Table 4.1 Bishop Nathaniel Bowen's Bible Verses of Paternalism:  
Selected for Slaves, 1835**

<b>Matthew 18:23-35</b>
<b>Matthew 24:45-51</b>
<b>Matthew 25:14-30</b>
<b>Luke 12:42-48</b>
<b>1 Corinthians 7: 20-22</b>
<b>Ephesians 6: 5-8</b>
<b>Colossians 3:22-25</b>
<b>1 Timothy 6:1-2</b>
<b>Titus 2:9-10</b>
<b>1 Peter 2:18-25</b>

commandments against stealing and murder. In fact, Lesson XIV insinuated that a slave stealing from his or her master constituted a more egregious sin than theft from a stranger since planters "trusted" them. Lesson XIV encouraged slaves to emulate Bible characters who acted like Christian slaves. According to *A Catechism to be Used by the Teachers in the Religious Instruction of Persons of Colour* slaves had the "faithful" examples of Joseph (Genesis 34:9), Ziba (2 Samuel 9:9), Abraham's servants (Genesis 24:46), Naaman's servants (2 Kings 5:3), the Centurion's servants (Luke 7:8), and Onesimus.<sup>59</sup>

In 1830, Reverend Edward Thomas delivered a sermon specially tailored to reinforce paternalism for slaves in Edisto, South Carolina. Thomas used Philippians 4:11 to preach on the need for all Christians, but slaves in particular, "to be content." In the sermon, Thomas presented three interrelated contentions. First, Thomas reminded slaves that God had ordained all. As a result, slaves had to accept that "it is God who puts us in the state in which we live." Christians, according to Thomas, should see acceptance of their social class as the crucible of faith since, "the Almighty will watch over all faithful servants, & by means of their sufferings on earth will make them more fit for the glory prepared for them in heaven." Second, Thomas reminded slaves that death served as the great equalizer for society. According to Thomas, death could level the South's social hierarchy, thus granting slaves equality:

When we are on our death-bed, of what consequence will it be, whether we have much or whether we have little; whether we are masters or whether we are slaves; whether we have had trouble, or whether we have been at ease...

Due to the brevity of life, Thomas encouraged slaves in his congregation, "be contented with poverty & misery in this world...since death will soon come, & then we can carry nothing with us." Third, Thomas assured slaves that their contentment and suffering on earth would yield "happiness in heaven." Christ had made "do difference between one man & another." Thomas

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<sup>59</sup> Bowen, *A Catechism*, 61-66.

reminded the slaves at Edisto that Christ had invited them into his kingdom by saying "Come unto me all ye that labour, & are heavy laden, & I will give your rest." In the end, Thomas reminded slaves that to achieve Christ's promises of eternal rest from their earthly labors they had "to be content" in their current state.<sup>60</sup>

To assist in the dissemination of paternalism, Bishop Meade published *Sermons, Dialogues and Narratives for Servants* in 1836. Bishop Meade encouraged slaves to accept their ranking on the South's social hierarchy. According to Bishop Meade:

...consider the example of your Saviour Jesus Christ, as doing honor to your condition in life...He knows whether it is best for you to be rich or poor, high or low, and he will do for you what is best; what is best for your happiness in time and in eternity. Trust in him, and indeed be thankful that he chooses for his creatures the condition which best suits each of them. If you were permitted to choose for yourself, you would most probably make a bad choice.

In *Sermons, Dialogues and Narratives for Servants*, Bishop Meade clearly implied that Christ had ordained the inequities of social class. The Bishop of Virginia envisioned a paternalistic Christ who had assigned slaves to their social class. Episcopalians in the South, therefore, argued that servants should not question or rebel against the ruling class, because their subjugation had been ordained by their Trinitarian God.<sup>61</sup>

Christian teachings on marriage provided Episcopalians with one of their greatest challenges in preaching paternalism. In 1857, the state convention of the Diocese of South Carolina voted to create the Committee on Slave Marriages to "prepare a Report" on the subject before the next state convention. In the preamble to the resolution, South Carolina's state convention affirmed that slave marriages had resulted in "serious difficulties" and "perplexing

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<sup>60</sup> Edward Thomas, Untitled Sermon Begins with Philippians 4:11, 25 September 1830, Thomas Family Papers, Accession 5183, SCL. For the politics of death in slave societies: Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 1-12.

<sup>61</sup> Bishop William Meade, *Sermons, Dialogues and Narratives for Servants to be Read to Them in Families* (Richmond: Office of the Southern Churchman, 1836), 26-37, Rare Books, Accession—BX 5937.M3 S33 1836, VHS.

questions." South Carolina's Committee on Slave Marriages failed to comply with the deadline for issuing its report to the state convention. Delegates reauthorized the Committee on Slave Marriages and reduced its membership to five. In 1859, the reformed Committee on Slave Marriages produced a detailed report to the state convention under the name of its chairman, C. G. Memminger. The Memminger Report of 1859 utilized a series of New Testament scriptures to support its conclusions. The Gospels seemed clear in prohibiting divorce and condemning adultery. Committee members cited Matthew 5:32, 19:1-10; Mark 10:1-12; and Luke 16:18 all of which, in the opinion of the committee, explicated upon a sacrosanct doctrine that neither "husband nor wife can undertake a new obligation." The Memminger Report found 1 Corinthians 7:1-16 to be the most applicable passage in the Bible to the question of slave marriages. In the Corinthians verses, Saint Paul stated his opinion that if an unbeliever ended a marriage with a believer, the Christian did not remain "under bondage." The Committee on Slave Marriages surmised: "The remark of the Apostle, nevertheless, opens to our view a distinction between the party who abandons, and the innocent sufferer who is abandoned... It draws a line between the voluntary agent, and the involuntary subject of the separation..." Since slavery constrained marriages, the terms "involuntary" versus "voluntary" would be the core of the intellectual reasoning for the Memminger Report.<sup>62</sup> Committee members reminded Episcopalians that as a "divine institution" marriage had to be applied "with the same force [for] the master and the slave." A planter or small slaveholder had to "preserve inviolate the marriage tie between his slaves." The Memminger Report demanded that Episcopal (and other Christian) slaveholders avoid the separation of slaves "united in marriage." As the committee wrote:

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<sup>62</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1857), 39; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1858), 19; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1859), 30-35.

...the power over the slave, which is conferred upon the master by the law of the land should be exercised by every Christian in conformity with the law of God; and therefore every Christian master should so regulate the sale or disposal of a married slave, as not to infringe the Divine injunction forbidding the separation of husband and wife.

Members of the Committee on Slave Marriages had made clear in their opinion God's law on marriage superseded the South's chattel principle. Many planters permitted slave marriages as part of their effort to cultivate the ideology of paternalism, thus impeding slave marriages (or even remarriages) threatened the stability of the system.<sup>63</sup>

The Memminger Report also demanded that slaves who had their marriages dissolved by a "involuntary and final separation" be granted the Episcopal Church's "sympathy and consideration." Committee members alleged that the "human agency" responsible for dissolving slave marriages would be guilty of violating God's commands. Any slave owner who knowingly separated a slave marriage would incur "all the consequences of his act, and must answer for it to the Final judge." Planters and small slaveholders who destroyed slave marriages had be deemed guilty of violating the Episcopal Church's understanding of marriage. The Committee on Slave Marriages acknowledged that while the state of South Carolina did not sanction divorce, the separation of living spouses in slave marriages called for some form of church remedy. The Memminger Report concluded by inferring that slaves who had an "involuntary separation" from a marriage could undergo a "second marriage." Committee members concluded that the refusal to permit a second marriage for slaves might result in "much evil and hardship." The Memminger Report recommended that the Diocese of South Carolina grant rectors discretion in determining the eligibility of slaves for second marriages. Prior to performing a second

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<sup>63</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 30-35; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 462-481; Emily West, *Chains of Love: Slave Couples in Antebellum South Carolina* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 72-73. For more on the struggles and resiliency of slave marriages, see Henry G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1920* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).



marriage, Episcopal ministers had to evaluate a slave's distance from their first spouse, time of separation from the first spouse, and probability of the reunion of the spouses in question. The Diocese of South Carolina postponed a vote on the recommendations set forth in the Memminger Report until the subsequent state convention. In 1860, South Carolina's delegates placed the Memminger Report on the calendar. During debate, Reverend Thomas S. Arthur offered a substitute amendment to replace the Memminger Report with the following language:

*Resolved*, That as the relation of master and servant, as well as that of husband and wife, is of Divine appointment...there can be no necessary conflict the conduct of a Christian master and the rights and obligations arising out of the relationship of married slaves.

*Resolved*, That the evil of separating husband and wife arises not necessarily from the institution of domestic slavery, but like all other evils...is the result of the fallen condition of man, and that, in point of fact, the evil, so far from being peculiar to the institution has been mitigated and restrained by the authority of the Christian master...

The Arthur Amendment attempted to substitute an unapologetic assentation of the planter class's hegemony in place of the Memminger Report. As part of the South's defense of slavery, the Arthur Amendment articulated the position that slavery and marriage were equal institutions in the view of God. Delegates at South Carolina's state convention decided that slave marriages had become too divisive as a topic of debate. South Carolina's state convention voted to table the Arthur Amendment. Then, delegates agreed to also table the Memminger Report, thus avoiding any votes on the question of slave marriages.<sup>64</sup>

Reverend Thomas T. Castleman of Trinity Church in Staunton, Virginia produced an assortment of sermons designed to nurture a paternalistic ethic in his state. In a sermon entitled

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<sup>64</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 30-35; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventy-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 39. Evangelical Protestants also confronted challenging theological questions regarding slave marriages in a society predicated upon an internal slave trade. Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 183-186.

"Servants Should Obey Their Masters," Castleman supplemented scripture with anecdotes he believed would speak to the experiences of the slaves who heard his sermons. For instance, Castleman related the following personal story:

I knew an old woman once, who though she always did what her mistress told her, yet she always did it with a sour face and a grumbling tongue... Now this old woman did not obey her mistress in the way the Lord commands. He says obey in all things with singleness of heart, as the servants of Christ. The meaning is, that you must obey cheerfully; with a willing mind, and out of love to Christ. Such an obedience as this God will greatly value. God looks at your hearts...

Castleman by using the example of a relatable "old woman," attempted to redefine obedience to mean not just action, but also attitude.<sup>65</sup> Castleman also composed another sermon entitled "God's Eye Always On Us." The sermon aspired to underscore the omnipresence of God for slaves. An always watching God, Episcopal clergymen presumed, would deter slaves from conspiring to resist or even foment rebellion. Episcopal clergymen, like Castleman, hoped to dissuade slaves from rebellion by suggesting that doing so could jeopardize their eternal life in heaven. Castleman used Hagar's utterance "Thou God seest me" in Genesis 16:13. Hagar's prominence in the sermon had not been by accident. Castleman hoped to make Hagar relatable since the Bible referred to her as a servant or slave. According to Genesis, Sarah mistreated Hagar. In response, Hagar ran away to escape her bondage and mistreatment. Castleman reminded slaves that God witnessed Hagar's escape and dispatched an angel to order her back to her mistress. Castleman warned slaves who might contemplate escaping that "if God could see [Hagar] in the deep and dark wilderness, he can see you even in the darkness of midnight." Slaves had to be made aware, Castleman guaranteed, that the "eye of God is always upon you—that he sees every sin you commit, and that he will one day punish you for them."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Thomas T. Castleman, *Plain Sermons For Servants* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1851), 35-47, Accession: BX5937.C37P51851, SSCUVA.

<sup>66</sup> Castleman, *Plain Sermons For Servants*, 318-329.

Castleman's paternalistic pontifications clearly attempted to produce a reverse-world consciousness designed to minimize class conflict in the South. Reverend Castleman's most explicit exertion intended to redirect attention from earthly hegemony to visions of heavenly equality in a sermon entitled "The Faithful Christian Shall Wear A Crown." In the hegemonic homily, Castleman summoned slaves to accept Christianity because after death:

You shall go from poverty to riches-from labour to rest-from sorrow to happiness-from death to life...There are many things in the Bible you cannot understand. But every thing will be made plain and clear to you then. You are servants here. But God tells us, you shall be made kings and priests there.

Christianity pledged to abolish exploitive class systems, like slavery, but only after death.

Castleman added an anecdote involving Reverend George Whitfield, which related to Christian obligations to labor. According to Castleman, Whitefield had preached that while on earth Christians must "do the work that had been appointed him" until God "should think fit to call him home." Castleman used George Whitefield to reassure slaves that a life of tireless, unceasing labor for their earthly masters would yield a crown from their Heavenly Master. The Episcopal Church's slave missions, then, promised a Christian salvation that would culminate in an egalitarian other-world New Jerusalem. Episcopal missionaries throughout the South reminded slaves that to enter the celestial gates of freedom, they had to first satisfy their paternalistic obligations and endure the horrific anguishes of slavery wrought by earthly planters.<sup>67</sup>

Assessing the effectiveness of the Episcopal Church's slave missions is a perilous task fraught with many unknowns. Given that slaves missions had been designed, supported, not to mention executed by the South's ruling class, scholars cannot ignore or dismiss the coercive class relationship between planters and slaves that existed in the South's parishes of paternalism.

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<sup>67</sup> Castleman, *Plain Sermons For Servants*, 425-438.

Slave baptisms, confirmations, and participation in Holy Communion may have evidenced a genuine attraction among slaves to the Episcopal Church's rituals, but the underlying exploitation of the peculiar institution prevents any definitive conclusions. Historians of slavery have identified examples of slaves using pseudo-conversions as a strategy of survival and resistance. Undoubtedly, the Episcopal Church's slave missions counted many pseudo-converted slaves in their reporting. Even acknowledging the preceding uncertainties, most scholars estimate that the Episcopal Church claimed the adherence of 35,000 black Episcopalians in the antebellum South. Ample evidence also exists demonstrating that some black men and women in post-emancipation societies freely joined the global Anglican Communion, even when given the option of more evangelical, fundamentalist, and Pentecostal denominations. For example, the British authorities in Barbados had refused to engage in slave missions early in the colony's history. On the eve of emancipation in 1824, Barbados unleashed the Church of England to conduct missions directed by Bishop William Hart Coleridge. The missions proved successful, because according to George Gmelch and Sharon Bohn Gmelch, "Anglicanism soon became the dominant of religion of black Barbadians." Anglicanism in Barbados would be challenged by the arrival of fundamentalist along with Pentecostal denominations originating in North America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Spirited challenges notwithstanding, Anglicanism retained the largest share of adherents of any denomination in Barbados with 33% in 1990. As Travis Glasson surmises in his study of Anglicanism in the Atlantic World, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel "brought thousands of free and enslaved black people into the Church of England to some degree." Furthermore, Glasson rightly suggests that in a historiography dominated by evangelical Protestants it "is worth considering why some black people adopted Anglicanism even as most did not." Black Episcopal Churches existed in the antebellum North

too, most notably St. Philip's Church in New York City. Craig D. Townshend's examination of St. Philip's Church prompted him to conclude that St. Philip's Church remained "competitive" with black Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches in New York City. Townshend's research demonstrates that St. Philip's Church claimed parochial responsibility for approximately 200 communicants and "700 souls." Furthermore, Townshend affirms that the "people of St. Philip's prized their Episcopal worship and show no evidence of tinkering with it to add evangelical elements or impulses." Black Episcopalians outside of the South clearly cherished and selected their church's distinctive Anglican liturgy over other religious options. Rather than accepting the overgeneralization that Anglicanism automatically "fell on such stony ground in the slave quarters," surely sufficient evidence exists that some black Episcopalians in the antebellum South did genuinely embrace the Episcopal Church by disregarding the planter class's corrupting efforts to hollow and reduce Anglican liturgy to a simplistic tool of social control. Black Episcopalians could cast aside the hegemonic homilies and view in the solemn Anglican liturgy the manifestation of a gospel replete with words of solidarity more relevant for their social class than the planters. Indeed, black Episcopalians in the antebellum South likely

glimpsed more clearly than the planter class that their church's common prayers and sacramental rituals worshiped a Christ who suffered for the suffering while inviting the "heavy laden" to "come to the holy Communion of the Body and Blood" for liberation.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> David L. Holmes, *A Brief History of the Episcopal Church* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993), 79; *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America* ed. Rosemary Skinner Keller and Rosemary Radford Ruether (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 272; Daniel L. Fountain, *Slavery, Civil War, and Salvation: African American Slaves and Christianity: 1830-1870* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), 79-80; George Gmelch and Sharon Bohn Gmelch, *The Parish Behind God's Back: The Changing Culture of Rural Barbados* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1993), 143-159 ; Travis Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 8, 33-35; Craig D. Townsend, *Faith in their Own Color: Black Episcopalians in Antebellum New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 87, 164; Frey and Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*, 82-88. Quotations in the last sentence are from: *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies as Revised and Proposed to the Use of the Protestant Episcopal Church...* (Philadelphia: J. Debrett, 1789), 51-54 .

### **CODA: BISHOP JOHN PAYNE—THE SOUTH'S OTHER BISHOP**

John and Anna Payne arrived in western Africa in 1837 to commence their missionary vocations for the Protestant Episcopal Church. Reverend John Payne had been a rector in the Diocese of Virginia before beginning his career in Liberia and western Africa. Upon arrival, Payne celebrated his encounter with missionaries already stationed in western Africa. Payne wrote that the health of Episcopal missionaries "proved...most conclusively that ministers of the gospel can live as well as slave traders in Africa." The Cape Palmas Mission of the Episcopal Church became intertwined with the efforts of the American Colonization Society to send free blacks "back" to Africa. Indeed, Episcopalians classified the recipients of their missionary offerings in to two groups: "colonists" and "natives." During the first year, John Payne attempted to establish an Episcopal outpost at the town of Wassa eight miles inland from Cape Palmas.<sup>1</sup>

John and Anna Payne returned to the United States in 1841 due to Anna's poor health. On the trip home, John Payne fundraised for the mission throughout Maryland and Virginia. After returning to the Cape Palmas Mission, John Payne supervised the "Cavalla and Graway station." Racism and paternalism often informed Episcopal missionaries as they described the inhabitants of western Africa as "heathens" in need of "spiritual benefit" and education. Reverend Payne even expressed his belief that there existed an innate "deceitfulness of the African character."

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<sup>1</sup> John Payne to John A. Vaughn, 6 July 1837, John Payne Papers, RG72, AEC; *The Spirit of Missions* Vol. 3, no. 9 (August 1838): 260-261.

Missionaries, including Payne, mocked the existing religious practice as superstitious creations of "the Devil." In 1843, Payne's station had fifteen Episcopal communicants and a worship attendance of 200. Reverend Payne described Cavalla as a "large town." Episcopalians erected a "mission house" for worship that cost forty-dollars in Cavalla. As an Episcopalian, Payne actively used *The Book of Common Prayer* in his missionary endeavors. The Episcopal sacraments of baptism and communion became benchmarks for success in the Cape Palmas Mission. After six years of missionary labor, Payne reflected the Cape Palmas Mission had six stations that interacted with a population of 20,000. Missionaries had added thirty people to the Episcopal Church, and "half were natives." Success propelled Reverend Payne to plan the construction of the "Church of the Epiphany" at Cavalla in 1849. After deliberations, Payne suggested the Church of the Epiphany be constructed as a stone building so it would be "permanent" and would cost approximately \$2000 to erect.<sup>1</sup>

From the very beginning, Anna Payne worked alongside her husband in missionary work as she immediately organized a schooling enterprise. Anna Payne persisted in her educational ministry to the children affiliated with the Cavalla and Graway station throughout her sojourn in Africa. She also began a "sewing school" for women in the town. Anna Payne joined other American women engaged in foreign missions at Cape Palmas. In addition, Payne strived to translate books such as *Child's Scripture Questions* and *Life of Christ* so they could be used in the Cape Palmas Mission. Payne and her colleagues had transplanted across the Atlantic their work as shadow vestrywomen to a missionary outpost lacking stable vestries. Anna Payne died

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<sup>1</sup> *The Spirit of Missions* Vol. 8, no. 8 (August 1843): 274, 278-279; John Payne to P. P. Irving, 1 January 1849, John Payne Papers, RG 72, AEC.



in 1858 "in the midst of those whom she had been training in the knowledge and practice of [the Episcopal Church's] holy religion."<sup>2</sup>

The Episcopal Church's missionaries had to navigate the politics of western Africa. Conflicts often emerged between the "colonists" and "natives." Episcopalians often found themselves in the middle since both groups were targeted by the church's missionaries. In 1843, the "Council of the Grebo" implemented a policy of resistance that raised prices on colonists and attempted to impede the Cape Palmas Mission. According to John Payne, the Grebo raised the price of their produce by 50% and "passed laws, that all native children...should be taken from the Americans until their prices were paid." The child law passed by the Council of the Grebo would have constrained the efforts of the Episcopal Church to provide "native children" with religious instruction. Furthermore, the Council of the Grebo prohibited "other tribes" from selling to Americans until colonists complied with their demands. As rumors of a war swirled throughout the Cape Palmas Mission, Reverend Payne delivered a sermon at Mount Vaughn based upon the passage from Exodus 14:13: "fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." For Payne, the Lord's salvation manifested itself in naval vessels from the United States. The United States Navy became involved in the political crisis that engulfed the Cape Palmas Mission, as Commodore Matthew Perry arrived off the coast of western Africa in November with three vessels. Perry had traveled to western Africa, in part, to enact punishment for the massacre committed against a United States schooner, the *Mary Carver*, near the shores of Africa. Not only had had lives been lost on the *Mary Carver*, but attackers had destroyed \$18,000 in commercial goods. The United States government desired to demonstrate its

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<sup>2</sup> *The Spirit of Missions* Vol. 8, no. 8 (August 1843): 278-279; Anna Payne to P.P. Irving, 30 June 1854 and Anna Payne to P.P. Irving, 22 July 1854, John Payne Papers, RG 72, AEC; Bishop John Payne, "Report For The Years 1856, 1857, 1858 of the Rt. Rev. John Payne, D.D., Missionary Bishop to Africa," in *Journal of the Proceedings of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America...in the Year of Our Lord, 1859* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1860), 341.

willingness to protect the nation's commercial interests at sea. Perry and the sailors under his command convened a meeting with the occupants of the Cape Palmas Mission. Colonists along with missionaries credited the presence of the United States Navy as the catalyst that compelled the Grebo to retreat and avoid additional escalation of the conflict. The Episcopal Church communicated its gratitude to Commodore Perry. In response, Perry expressed his abiding admiration by describing the occupants of the Cape Palmas Mission as engaged in a "noble cause" on a "baneful coast." Tensions eventually eased, but the episode revealed the political challenges that confronted the Cape Palmas Mission.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the late 1830s and the entirety of the 1840s, the Cape Palmas Mission became more financially stable as it received support from Episcopalians in the United States, including from many in the South. In 1836, Reverend C. W. Andrews reported to Virginia's state convention that he had resigned as Assistant Minister of Frederick Parish to become the General Agent of the Virginia Colonization Society. During his first few months, Andrews raised \$3500 to support colonization. Reverend Andrews announced to Virginia's Episcopalians that he believed "Missionary feeling in behalf of Africa, may be enlisted in this, and perhaps, most of the Southern States." The Shadow Vestry of Falls Church partnered with Methodist women in Fairfax County, Virginia in 1836 to raise funds for the Mission at Cape Palmas. The Episcopal and Methodist women of Fairfax County raised over \$100 during their fundraising campaign. In 1854, St. Peter's Church in Columbia, Tennessee started a collection for the "education of one or two children in the African Mission." Bishop James H. Otey of Tennessee ordered vestries and rectors to collect an offering for the American Colonization Society in 1847.

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<sup>3</sup> John Payne to John A. Vaughn, 10 January 1843 and John Payne to Pierre Irving, 11 January 1844, John Payne Papers, RG 72, AEC; Commodore Matthew Perry to Pierre P. Irving, 22 October 1844, John Payne Papers, RG 72, AEC; Leo J. Daugherty, *The Marine Corps and the State Department: Enduring Partners in United States Foreign Policy, 1798-2007* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2009), 29-30.

Bishop Otey considered the transference of free blacks to western Africa one of the highest "charitable" forms of benevolence for the church. Episcopal politicians in Virginia lent support to the colonization agenda. Assistant Bishop William Meade preached the funeral sermon for Aylett Hawes in Rappahannock County in 1833. Hawes had served in the United States House of Representatives from 1811 to 1817. Assistant Bishop Meade celebrated the late Representative Hawes's "benevolence" as a "testimony to the truth and excellence of christianity (sic)." In particular, Meade noted how Representative Hawes had "made generous provision for more than a hundred slaves, whom he has directed to be colonized in Africa." Episcopalians in the South paraded success stories from the Cape Palmas Mission in their campaign to rally support. For example, Reverend Edmund Henning traveled from the Cape Palmas Mission to Virginia in 1848 so that Bishop William Meade could admit him to the priesthood. Henning brought with him "an African." Students at the Virginia Theological Seminary catechized the African, and Bishop Meade administered the rite of confirmation to the unnamed person from the Cape Palmas Mission. Such encounters stimulated Episcopalians to persist in their support for the Cape Palmas Mission.<sup>4</sup>

As the Cape Palmas Mission continued to expand, the vast distance of the Atlantic Ocean required an episcopal presence to govern the church's efforts. The House of Bishops at the General Convention of 1850 nominated John Payne for consecration as the "Bishop of Cape Palmas and Western Africa." The Diocese of Virginia took pride in its affiliation with the

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<sup>4</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: James C. Walker, 1836), 37; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: B. R. Wren, 1837), 26; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville; J. Roberts & Co., 1854), 40-41; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: W. F. Bang & Co., Printers, 1847), 15; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1834), 11-12; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Virginia* (Lynchburg: The Virginian Office, 1848), 12-15.

Episcopal Church's mission in Liberia. Bishops Meade and Johns of Virginia participated in the consecration service in Alexandria's Christ Church of fellow Virginian, John Payne, as the Episcopal Church's missionary bishop of Cape Palmas and "parts adjacent" on July 11, 1851. Bishop Meade heralded with pride that Bishop Payne had been an alumnus of the Virginia Theological Seminary. Episcopalians throughout the South celebrated the elevation of Bishop Payne. Bishop William Mercer Green of Mississippi considered the appointment of Bishop Payne a historical moment for the Episcopal Church. In 1853, Bishop Mercer encouraged the Diocese of Mississippi to supply financial offerings for the Episcopal Church's Liberia Mission and its newly minted bishop. Bishop Payne had dispatched a request to Bishop Green seeking more financial resources. Bishop Green postulated to the Diocese of Mississippi that efforts in Liberia would enable the Gospel to spread all across Africa.<sup>5</sup>

Bishop Payne used his new authority to solidify the Episcopal Church's position by organizing new parishes and congregations. In January 1851, St. Mark's Church in Cape Palmas organized itself by electing a vestry and churchwardens. The Bishop of Cape Palmas and West Africa urged the creation of a station at Monrovia. Upon their arrival in the 1830s, Episcopalians had deemed Monrovia "unhealthy." Two decades later, Bishop Payne gauged the city to be "improved." In addition, Bishop Payne signaled that Methodists and Presbyterians had established a foothold in Liberia's capital city. Bishop Payne beseeched the Episcopal Church to build a "mission house" and to appoint a rector in Monrovia.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Journal of the Fifty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Washington: JNO. T. Towers, 1852), 20-21; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Natchez Courier Book and Job Office, 1851), 12-14; *Journal of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Natchez Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1853), 26.

<sup>6</sup> Proceedings of the Congregation of St. Mark's Church Cape Palmas, 22 January 1851, Liberian Mission Papers, AEC; John Payne to Pierre P. Irving, 28 June 1851, John Payne Papers, RG 72, AEC.

In the 1850s, Bishop Payne also had to manage Liberia's Episcopalians who understandably aspired for a church that recognized their national and racial equality. At a Christmas Convocation, "the Episcopal Church in Liberia," called upon "the American Church to place Ecclesiastical arrangements on a new and thoroughly National basis in our Republic at the earliest possible period." Liberians wanted American Episcopalians to respect their republic by making their church "coextensive" with the new nation. Reverend Eli W. Stokes presented the greatest challenge to Bishop Payne prior to the Civil War. Reverend Stokes, a black Episcopalian, transferred to western Africa from the Diocese of Rhode Island in 1849. Episcopalians in Monrovia invited Stokes to serve as their "missionary rector" in 1850. Bishop Payne disliked Stokes as early as 1850 describing him as engaging in insubordination and being "wholly ineffective" in preaching. Eventually Stokes's congregation held a meeting to declare that he did not "meet the approbation to the Episcopal congregation at Cape Palmas." Slavery and racism informed the conflict between Stokes and Payne. Bishop Payne concluded that the legacies of slavery in the United States had made Stokes feel constantly "oppressed" by white Episcopalians who attempted to exercise leadership. A relationship haunted by the legacies of slavery induced Payne to embrace his "convictions as to the improbability of getting any suitably qualified colored agency directly from the United States." Instead, Bishop Payne recommended training colonists who "grow up as freemen, and become attached to their country" for ordination, rather than former slaves from the United States. According to Payne, colonists in Africa had better perceptions of white Episcopalians at the Cape Palmas Mission due to their separation from the "the land of their bondage." From Payne's perspective, reconciliation could not be achieved with Stokes due to his experiences in the United States. Stokes had attempted to "establish *an independent church*" in Monrovia without authorization from the Episcopal

Church. Stokes took letters from citizens of Monrovia to England seeking to "have himself appointed Bishop of the Independent Church of Liberia." In addition, Stokes made multiple trips to England soliciting funds. On one trip to England, Stokes carried a letter from President Joseph J. Roberts of Liberia. Reverend Stokes argued in England that the people of his "republic ardently desired" his elevation to the episcopacy. The Independent Church created by Stokes had a congregation of fifty and operated out of a schoolhouse loaned to him from the Methodists in Monrovia. Reverend Stokes officially "disclaimed all connection with the Cape Palmas Mission" as part of his effort.<sup>7</sup>

Bishop Payne journeyed to Monrovia to counsel Episcopalians in the city and advise them on the church's canon laws regarding episcopal authority. Payne reminded congregants that to be orthodox Episcopalians they had to submit themselves to the canonically consecrated bishopric based at Cape Palmas. After making clear the authority he derived from the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, Bishop Payne appointed Reverend Alexander Crummell as the new Rector of Trinity Church in Monrovia. Reverend Crummell discovered a vibrant congregation of Monroviaans at Trinity Church. According to Crummell, even during "rainy season," he noticed only a "slight diminution" in worship attendance. Trinity Church also had made arrangements to acquire sacramental equipment including a communion service and "'Baptism Bowl.'" Following Bishop Payne's reorganization and Crummell's leadership, Trinity Church averaged a worship attendance of sixty-five with twenty-five communicants. Reverend Stokes continued his missionary efforts, including

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<sup>7</sup> John Payne to Pierre P. Irving, 4 June 1850; John Payne to Pierre P. Irving, 28 March 1850; John Payne to Pierre P. Irving, 17 February 1851; John Payne to Pierre P. Irving, 28 June 1851; John Payne to Pierre P. Irving, 10 April 1854; John Payne to Pierre P. Irving, 18 April 1854, John Payne Papers, RG 72, AEC; John Payne, "Report of the Protestant Episcopal Mission in West Africa," *Journal of the Proceedings of Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America...in the Year of Our Lord 1856* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1857), 286-292; Janet Duitsman Cornelius, *Slave Missions and the Black Church in the Antebellum South* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 163-165.

working briefly for the Presbyterian Church. In 1859, Bishop Payne's eight years of leadership had produced in the Episcopal Church's west Africa missionary stations 175 "colonists" and 143 "Natives" as communicants. Bishop Payne estimated that the Episcopal missions connected with over 100,000 people.<sup>8</sup>

From its inception until the Civil War, the Episcopal Church's Cape Palmas Mission served as a de facto southern diocese. Although John and Anna Payne along with their fellow Episcopal missionaries possessed a genuine desire to spread their faith in the challenging and rapidly changing political environment of western Africa, the South's slave-based economic structure had boarded the ships that had carried missionaries across the Atlantic Ocean. Bishop Payne's connection to the colonization movement of the United States assisted the planter class that resided back in his home Diocese of Virginia.<sup>9</sup> Nineteenth century abolitionists made lucid arguments that the colonization movement served the South's economic interests. Colonizers had concocted a scheme to gradually reduce the number of slaves in the United States. Abolitionists scoffed that as the slave population ticked down demand would exceed supply, and therefore slave prices would dramatically increase as a result of colonization. As William Jay mocked, colonizers proposed "abolishing slavery by increasing the demand for slaves" in the South. An increase in slave prices wrought by colonization would have profound economic consequences for the South, most notably the ruling planter class would have seen an escalation in their net wealth while making the domestic slave market substantially more lucrative. Jay

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<sup>8</sup> Alexander Crummell to Pierre P. Irving, June 1855; Alexander Crummell to [?], 28 March 1854; Alexander Crummell to Pierre P. Irving, May 1856, Liberian Mission Papers, RG 72, AEC; Meeting Minutes, 12 May 1856, Liberian Mission Papers, RG 72, AEC; Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Alexander Crummell: A Study of Civilization and Discontent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 90-96; Bishop John Payne, "Report for the Years 1856, 1857, 1858, of the Rt. Rev. John Payne, D.D., Missionary Bishop of Africa," in *Journal of the Proceedings of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America...in the Year of Our Lord, 1859* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1860), 341-346.

<sup>9</sup> On the connection between the South and Liberia, see Marie Tyler-McGraw, *An African Republic: Black & White Virginians in the Making of Liberia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

explained that Maryland and Virginia supported colonization because as exporters of slaves to the Deep South, the two states made their slave trading monopoly more remunerative. Other abolitionists echoed Jay's critique of the colonization movement. One abolitionist estimated the colonization had made slave prices in Alabama jump to \$1200-1500, while slaves in other parts of the world would cost only \$300-350. Abolitionists maintained that colonization would incentivize the rapacious "slave-breeders" throughout the South to reap profits from the increased demand. In colonization, the United States constructed a creative way to reanimate the Atlantic Ocean as a device for profiting off of the pricing of slaves by exporting, rather than importing, humans.<sup>10</sup>

Cape Palmas remained entangled in the economics of the planter class's South. Cutting through the moralistic language of colonization's supporters demonstrates why many Episcopalians from the South, especially in Virginia and Tennessee, engaged in an active role in their church's missionary undertakings across the Atlantic. Prior to the Civil War, western Africa became another Episcopal mission field that reinforced the planter class's hegemony. A proud Virginian, John Payne exercised episcopal sovereignty over a missionary diocese that had intricate connections and economic linkages with the South. As a Virginian who supervised an ecclesial area so thoroughly tied to the South's distinctive economic structure, Bishop Payne must be classified as one of the Episcopal Church's southern bishops.

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<sup>10</sup> William Jay, *An Inquiry into the Character and Tendency of the American Colonization, and American Anti-Slavery Societies* (New York: R. G. Williams, 1837), 92-95; *Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention* (London: British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1841), 495-498. A counterargument to the interpretation of this dissertation can be found in Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 5.



## CHAPTER 5— THE ORTHODOXIES OF RENAISSANCE

...And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David,) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS...

-The Christmas Story According to Thomas Jefferson, *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth* 1:4-2:1

*Resolved*, The secession of the States...and the formation by them of a new Government called the Confederate States of America, renders it necessary and expedient that the Dioceses within those States should form among themselves an independent organization.

- Resolution Adopted at the Protestant Episcopal Church's Montgomery Convention in 1861

Cloudiness and rain added to the dreariness experienced by the assembly of mourners gathered to witness Thomas Jefferson's burial on July 5, 1826. As one of the South's leading planter-politicians, Jefferson's public service had been long and distinguished. Biographers have allowed Thomas Jefferson's work on the Declaration of Independence and the Louisiana Purchase to often overshadow his aspiration to reshape the religiosity of his new republic. Jefferson had commanded the charge for passage of Virginia's Act Concerning Religious Freedom, and he would go on to compose the now famous letter to the Danbury Baptists articulating his views on the existence of a "wall of separation between church and state." Jefferson reconciled his religious politics of republicanism with his membership in the Episcopal Church. The Church of England's Albemarle County parish elected Jefferson to its vestry in 1767. Following Jefferson's relocation to Monticello, St. Anne's Parish elected him to serve as a vestryman in 1772. Even into the nineteenth century, Jefferson continued to provide financial

support to the Episcopal Church and he developed a friendship with Episcopal Reverend Frederick Hatch in his later years. Reverend Hatch had been selected as the Rector of St. Anne's Parish in 1820. Bishop William Meade of Virginia credited Hatch with the erection of an Episcopal Church in Charlottesville. Prior to the construction of an Episcopal Church in Charlottesville, parishioners had shared the courthouse with other Christian denominations. Bishop Meade reported that "Jefferson used to bring his seat with him on horseback from Monticello, it being some light machinery which folded up, and carried under his arm, and unfolded served for a chair on the floor of the court-house." Jefferson proved willing to abandon his folding chair pew as he generously supported Reverend Hatch's effort to erect a permanent Episcopal Church in the college town of Charlottesville.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Jefferson's affiliation with the Episcopal Church, however, did not translate into unquestioning adherence. Jefferson wrestled with Christian orthodoxy while serving as President of the United States and in retirement. In a letter to William Short, Jefferson lamented the "ultra-Christian sects" who had in his opinion perverted the teachings of Jesus Christ. For Jefferson, Christianity had descended into "heresies of bigotry and fanaticism" which he hoped to euthanize by extracting the authentic teachings offered by Jesus of Nazareth. The Planter of Monticello blamed the "biographers" of Jesus for burying their subject's moral teachings beneath miraculous "rubbish." Jesus's moral teachings, Jefferson contended, could be separated from the "dross" included in the Gospels just "as the diamond from the dunghill." According to Jefferson, the true Jesus of Nazareth had been obscured by Gospels, which incorporated "things

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<sup>1</sup> George Tucker, *The Life of Thomas Jefferson, Third President of the United States with parts of His Correspondence Never Before Published, and Notices of His Opinions on Questions of Civil Government, National Policy, and Constitutional Law* Vol. II (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, & Blanchard, 1837), 496-497; Bishop William Meade, *Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia* Vol. II (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1857), 48-56; Steven H. Hochman, "Thomas Jefferson," in *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South* ed. Samuel S. Hill, Charles H. Lippy, and Charles Reagan Wilson (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2005), 401-403.

impossible...superstitions, fanaticism, and fabrications." Jefferson characterized Jesus as a man who "had to walk on the perilous confines of religion and reason," a description no doubt the former president would have applied to himself too. Since Jefferson considered himself to be a true Christian living by the moral precepts of Christ, he assumed a responsibility to liberate the historical Jesus of Nazareth from the "pseudo-followers." Jefferson edited and reorganized the Christian Gospels in a new religious text entitled *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*, which would be published long after the former president's death. Vestryman Emeritus Jefferson expunged from the traditional Gospels miracles, healings, mysteries, and the core of Christian orthodoxy- resurrections. *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth* ended with the ninth verse of its sixty-fourth chapter which read: "There laid they Jesus: and rolled a great stone to the door on the sepulcher, and departed." According to *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*, burial ended the religious truths that could be discerned in Jesus of Nazareth. Eternal rest would also conclude the teachings of Jefferson.<sup>2</sup>

On "a day of darkness and rain," Jefferson's burial symbolized the passing of the Episcopal Church's revolutionary generation in the South, and the dawning of a new epoch. Out of death came life. Over Jefferson's Monticello grave, Reverend Frederick Hatch read the service of burial from *The Book of Common Prayer*, which included the following passage:

...Then while the Earth shall be cast upon the Body by some standing by, the Minister shall say,  
...we therefore commit *his* Body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust: looking for the general Resurrection in the last Day...the Earth and the Sea shall give up their Dead; and the corruptible Bodies of those who sleep in him shall be changed and made like unto his own glorious Body...

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas Jefferson to William Short, 31 October 1819 and Thomas Jefferson to William Short, 4 August 1820 in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson...* Volume XV, ed. Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907), 219-224, 257-264; Thomas Jefferson, *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth: Extracted Textually from the Gospels Together with a Comparison of His Doctrines and Those of Others* (St. Louis: N.D. Thompson Publishing Co., 1902), 168.

Vestryman Emeritus Jefferson's vision of a planter class committed to nationalist politics and a deistic Episcopal Church died with him. Beginning in the 1820s, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the South experienced rebirth by celebrating the mysteries of faith and the politics of southern republicanism. Lacy K. Ford Jr. and other historians have pointed to the divergent views between North and South on their shared revolutionary heritage of republicanism. Episcopal politicians in the South embraced southern republicanism, or what Ford labels a "pro-slavery republicanism," to advocate for a nation in which the enslavement of blacks in their view helped secure liberty, freedom, independence, and equality for whites. Southern republicanism, therefore, gave the slaveholding-planter class an ideology they could invoke to justify the legitimacy of their rule, while also minimizing class conflict among whites belonging to the region's lower social classes. Southern republicanism undoubtedly inspired at various times the politics of sectionalism and southern nationalism, but it did not always equate with those agendas. The term southern republicanism is used in the following chapter rather than "sectionalism" or "southern nationalism" for three reasons. First, southern republicanism reflects that many southerners prior to secession viewed themselves as proud Americans, despite understanding their nationalism through the prism of their regionalism. Second, utilization of southern republicanism recognizes that Northerners also engaged in sectionalist politics prior to the Civil War. Third, and most significantly, southern republicanism is the preferred term here because as a political orthodoxy it had creed-like qualities in its possession of defined doctrines and rather than the more nebulous tenets of section and nation. The South's cotton communicants rejected the nadir embodied in Jeffersonian moderation, and instead desired a religious community supportive of the planter class by promoting zealous clergyman and hardline church politicians. Following Jefferson's burial, Episcopal planters in the Cotton

Communion expected rigid adherence to the region's orthodoxies of Christianity and southern republicanism.<sup>3</sup>

### **Orthodoxies in Theology**

Episcopalians in the South explained Christian orthodoxy through their liturgical worship. Rectors in the South reasoned that the Episcopal Church's theology required "public worship." Episcopalians needed to gather to meditate upon their frailties and ask for God's assistance. Theological reasons necessitated public worship. According to Revered Edward Thomas, Episcopalians assembled for a communal confession. Thomas described Episcopal public worship as a time for a congregation to reflect upon the "instances in which we have provoked the divine anger" and then to "supplicate for pardon, through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ." Public worship in an Episcopal Church, Thomas argued to his congregation, "is necessary for us to do so in order to maintain our communion with the church." Episcopalians understood that worship enabled the public "Breaking of Bread" and prayers, which generated "spiritual growth" for baptized Christians. The rituals and liturgy of the Episcopal Church served as "channels" of grace for a congregation. Thomas concluded that "only by attendance on the Sanctuary, that we can hold communion with the Church in the acts of prayer & praise."

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<sup>3</sup> Tucker, *The Life of Thomas Jefferson*, 495-497; John S. C. Abbott, *Lives of the Presidents of the United States of America From Washington to the Present Time* (Boston: B.B. Russell & Co., 1867), 145; *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and Other Rites and Ceremonies, as Revised and Proposed to the Use of the Protestant Episcopal Church...* (Philadelphia: J. Debrett, 1789), 285; Lacy K. Ford Jr., *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 350-373; Mitchell Snay, *The Gospel of Disunion: Religion and Separatism in the Antebellum South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1-15; William James Cooper, *Liberty and Slavery: Southern Politics to 1860* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2000), 3-46. For debates on the accuracy of the terms sectionalism and southern nationalism prior to the Civil War see John McCardell, *The Idea of a Southern Nation: Southern Nationalist and Southern Nationalism, 1830-1860* (New York: Norton, 1979); Anne Sara Rubin, *A Shattered Nation: The Rise and Fall of the Confederacy, 1861-1868* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 2-3, 250; George C. Rable, *The Confederate Republic: A Revolution Against Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 2-5; William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), vii-x.

Public worship had a social function in the South as well. Episcopalians maintained that their public worship services promoted the "peace & happiness of society." Bishops in the South deemed liturgical worship so critical to the maintenance of orthodoxy that they licensed "lay-readers" to compensate for clergy shortages. Bishop Christopher Gadsden of South Carolina bluntly stated that it "is an evil to have a Church closed for a single Sunday." Bishop Gadsden, therefore, commended any parishes bereft of ordained clergy who employed lay-readers to unite congregations with the Episcopal Church's liturgy in public worship.<sup>4</sup>

For Episcopalians, public worship operated around the "sacred seasons" of the liturgical calendar. Advent opened the liturgical calendar for Episcopalians. During Advent 1839, Reverend Edward Thomas delivered a sermon at Edisto, South Carolina which elucidated how the liturgical calendar shaped worship in the Episcopal Church. Thomas reminded his congregation:

We are now in that Season of the year which the Church has set apart for our annual meditation upon the coming of the Lord. By learning what Duties result from his Coming down to Earth, & setting our hearts to the faithful performance of them we may obtain the blessed privilege of joining his company in his Ascent to Heaven when after his Second Coming he will go...

Using Luke 3: 4-5, Thomas expounded upon the textual metaphors. The "valleys" that need to be filled and the "mountains & hills" to be brought low represented the hearts of people.

Finally, despite being captive to a slave-based hierarchal society, Thomas could not escape the leveling possibilities of advent. Thomas proclaimed because of the coming of Christ "the Gospel was preached to the poor as well as to the rich, to other nations as well as the Jews... [all]

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<sup>4</sup> Edward Thomas, "The Duty of Public Worship Enforced," June 1826, Thomas Family Papers, Accession 5183, SCL; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Diocesan Convention of South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1844), 38.

partition walls were broken down, all exclusive privileges ceased to exist."<sup>5</sup> Such leveling utterances revealed the degree to which the dual aspirations of southern Episcopalians for Christ and class hegemony had the potential to be contradictory. Fortunately for Episcopal planters, Advent 1839 passed just as countless others would without any southerners turning Christ against their social power.

Following Advent and Christmas, Episcopalians in the South entered into Epiphany. Bishop Thomas Dehon of South Carolina urged Episcopalians to fixate their meditations upon the star that steered the Magi to Christ in an Epiphany sermon. Episcopalians construed the star as illuminating the divinity of Christ. For in the words of Bishop Dehon: "While he is wrapped in waddling bands on earth, the heavens declare his glory...He sleeps in a manger; but a star, as a diadem of divinity, is suspended over his head...It led the wise men to seek and honour him as a king." For Episcopalians, the star of the epiphany "announced the birth of the Saviour to all nations." Dehon's epiphany star functioned as a "conductor" that guided ancient wise men to find Jesus, and in his opinion it would continue to pilot his own modern generation to Christ too.<sup>6</sup>

Lent and Holy Week followed the Episcopal Church's season of Epiphany. Southern Episcopalians demonstrated a remarkable commitment to the elevation of the season of Lent and Holy Week. St. Luke's Church in Jackson, Tennessee practiced morning prayer during the Lenten Season every Wednesday and Friday. St. Paul's Church in Columbus, Mississippi had a robust Lenten schedule as the parish administered services on Ash Wednesday, every Wednesday and Friday during Lent, Good Friday, along with every day in "Passion-week."

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<sup>5</sup> Edward Thomas, Untitled Sermon Begins with Luke 3:4-5, 7 December 1839, Thomas Family Papers, Accession 5183, SCL.

<sup>6</sup> Theodore Dehon, *Sermons on the Public Means of Grace and the Fast and Festivals of the Church; on Scripture Characters and Various Practical Subjects* Vol. II (Charleston: E. Thayer, 1821), 328-329.

Trinity Church in Yazoo City, Mississippi implemented special services on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday during the late 1840s. Trinity Church in Clarksville, Tennessee also conducted additional services during the Lenten season. William C. Crane of Mississippi argued that Lenten services "deepened the tone of religious feeling" among Episcopalians. Trinity Church in Portsmouth, Virginia added most of its communicants throughout the year during the "solemn season of Lent, when the public services were much more frequent, and well attended."<sup>7</sup>

Lenten meditations yielded to Holy Week. The Diocese of South Carolina distributed circular letters that proffered recommendations for the proper observation of Palm Sunday, Maundy-Thursday, and Good Friday during Holy Week. In April 1844, South Carolina Episcopalians circulated one of the circular letters which admonished parishes against the temptations of profane activities during Holy Week. Reverend Paul Trapier warned any Episcopalian who participated in balls, races, and other forms of private entertainment that they would be "crucifying the Son of God afresh...and sacrificing...your character as Christians and Churchmen." *The Book of Common Prayer* expected Episcopalians to spend each day of Holy Week in contemplation, prayer, and worship. Reverend Robert Smith and Henry Purcell of South Carolina published a book of hymns in 1792, which included selections for the liturgical calendar. For example, "Hymn V" focused upon Good Friday as it proclaimed "Thou Sun as darkest Night be black! / their Maker Jesus dies! / Behold fast streaming from the Tree/ his all

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<sup>7</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention, of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Columbia: James C. Griffith & Co., 1856), 52; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Eighteenth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: W. F. Bang & Co., 1846), 18; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (Nashville: W. F. Bang & Co. Printers, 1843), 25; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1849), 31; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1840), 10; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: The Office of the Southern Churchman, 1842), 37.



atoning Blood!" Good Friday possessed distinctive liturgical meaning for Episcopalians in the South. Bishop Dehon of South Carolina contrasted the "glorious light" of Advent and Epiphany with the "darkness of the skies" that defined Good Friday. The Bishop of South Carolina reminded Episcopalians that Good Friday taught that "His blood is the purchase of our redemption." Dehon maintained that the "mystery of the cross" epitomized the most remarkable "part of the economy of God." Good Friday brought Episcopalians in the South to "the foot of the cross" to "contemplate its truth, magnitude, and import." Bishop Dehon reasoned that although the events of Good Friday elicited emotions of "sadness and regret," Episcopalians should also see in Good Friday the "immeasurability of the love of God." Good Friday's darkness transitioned to the joy of Easter morning. For Episcopalians in the South, Easter celebrated how Christ's resurrection promised a "resurrection of the dead." Bishop Dehon called Easter a time for Episcopalians to overcome their anxieties and embrace the "consolations and joys" of a "future resurrection."<sup>8</sup>

After Holy Week, Episcopalians turned their attention to Whitsunday and Trinity Sunday. Both days on the liturgical calendar celebrated Christianity's understanding of the Holy Spirit. In a Trinity Sunday sermon, Bishop Nathaniel Bowen of South Carolina deduced that "the Holy Ghost is, by its secret silent process, unseen, unheard, *the sanctifier of the faithful*, from whose inspiration and aid *all holy desires, all good counsels and all just works do proceed*." Whitsunday and Trinity Sunday proved to be key days on the liturgical calendar for expanding Episcopal congregations in the South. For example, William N. Pendleton of Latimer Parish reported to Virginia's state convention in 1856 that "on Whitsunday our hearts were gladdened

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Trapier and Christopher Gadsden, *Pastoral Counsel Affectionately Tendered To The Congregation of St. Michael's Church* (Charleston: Office of the Gospel Messenger, 1844), Box 3/ 0320.03 (T) 01 (c) 01, SCHS; Dehon, *Sermons on the Public Means of Grace*, 432-433, 437-438, 456, 463-464; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Diocesan Convention of South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1845), 26.

by the spectacle of more than twenty young men together at the chance, bending the knee for the first time to receive the memorials of our blessed Lord's dying love." Finally, Episcopalians in the South interspersed on the liturgical calendar feasts and festivals which elevated Christian theology and rituals. St. Andrew's Church in Jackson Mississippi held services "on All the Saints' days and other Festivals." St. Luke's Church in Jackson, Tennessee also administered divine service on "the Saints' Days, and the higher Festivals of the Church." Public worship defined by the liturgical calendar, then, formed the basis of Episcopal orthodoxy.<sup>9</sup>

All throughout the liturgical year, Episcopalians in the South celebrated their sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion. Commitment to sacraments could be clearly seen in southern parishes lacking ordained clergy. Grace Church's vacant pulpit compelled the parish to pray "that [God] would send us Pastor to dwell in our midst, and to break to us the bread of life." Episcopalians used their church's liturgical calendar to mark their consumption of the sacraments. In 1847, Christ's Church in Jefferson County, Mississippi celebrated the "dying love...in the blessed sacrament of his body and blood" on the second Sunday of Advent and the "day of Holy Nativity." Episcopalians in Tipton County, Tennessee observed Holy Communion on Trinity Sunday along with the tenth and eighteenth Sundays after Trinity. Bishop William Meade worried about proper reverence for Holy Communion due to the length of the Episcopal Church's services. In 1857, Bishop Meade warned clergy in city churches that "communicants withdraw, as soon as they have partaken without the use of the concluding prayer." Non-communicants, Bishop Meade bemoaned, exited the church during communion "to spend their

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<sup>9</sup> Nathaniel Bowen, *Sermons on Christian Doctrines and Duties* Vol. II (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1842), 15; *Journal of the Sixty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: The Whig Book and Job Office, 1856), 117; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Courier Book and Job Office, 1850), 50; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention, of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee*, 52.

time in the church-yard in an improper manner." Bishop Meade encouraged Episcopal clergymen not to shorten their sermons to accommodate, but rather seek to increase a respect for the solemnness of their church's sacrament. Bishop Meade believed that sermons lasting only fifteen or twenty minutes used too much "generalizing and condensing." The Bishop of Virginia encouraged his clergymen to increase the length of sermons, without becoming "tedious" to protect the sanctity of Holy Communion.<sup>10</sup>

Liturgical worship ensured that the Episcopal Church retained its identity as a "middle way," which could be traced all the way back to Queen Elizabeth I. Episcopalians in the South positioned themselves as a "middle way" as they competed against Catholics and evangelical Protestants in their region. Shared meetinghouses often impeded the establishment of Episcopal congregations in evangelical dominated communities. Episcopalians in Grand Gulf, Mississippi resided in a town that included "Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, Campbellites." In 1837, the Methodists and Campbellites held morning 11:00 a.m. services which compelled Episcopalians to schedule their worship for 3:00 p.m. Episcopalians learned that later services were "not agreeable to many" and attendance suffered until an alternative location could be secured in Grand Gulf. In March 1859, a Methodist minister denied Bishop James H. Otey of Tennessee the use of his church for a service of confirmation. According to Otey, the evangelical Methodists considered the rite of confirmation to be an "erroneous and heretical practice." Evangelicals also challenged Episcopalians in their missionary labors amongst the South's slaves. Reverend Robert T. Howard expressed dismay that the slaves in Prince George's

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<sup>10</sup> *Journal of the Fifty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: C. H. Wynne, 1854), 74; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (Jackson: Thomas Palmer, 1847), 33; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: Nye & Co. Printers, 1837), 22; *Journal of the Sixty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: The Whig Book and Job Office, 1857), 33.

Parish, South Carolina had a "prepossession in favor of the Methodists and Baptists."<sup>11</sup> In 1839, Episcopalians in Fairfax County, Virginia complained that the opening of a Methodist Sunday School had "diminished" the attendance at their parish's Sunday School. William N. Ward complained that serving as Rector of Farnham Parish proved difficult because most families were "in communion with other denominations." Episcopalians in Noxubee County, Mississippi resided in a county dominated by Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians. W. J. Lynd claimed that many citizens of Noxubee County were "strongly prejudiced" against the Episcopal Church.<sup>12</sup> Immigration to the South during the 1840s and 1850s made the South even more pluralistic with more Protestant and non-Christian competition. Louis C. Newman worked as an itinerant missionary for the Diocese of Virginia. Newman's labors forced almost entirely on "German, Irish, and Jewish" families. Missionaries in South Carolina's Lexington District confronted not only Methodists, but also a successful Lutheran Church.<sup>13</sup>

Episcopalians in the South celebrated the conversion of evangelical Protestants to their church. Reverend C. A. Foster reported to Mississippi's state convention in 1839 that a father and daughter near Holly Springs who belonged to the "Methodists society...have returned to us." In 1847, "a portion" of the Methodist congregation near Hebron, South Carolina sent Reverend Charles P. Elliot a letter expressing their desire to "separate" from the Methodist Church and "unite" with the Episcopal Church. Elliot began providing Hebron's separatist

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<sup>11</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Mississippi* (New York: The Protestant Episcopal Press, 1837), 8; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: A. A. Stitt, 1859), 30; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1843), 53; David Hein and Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr., *The Episcopalians* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 6-9.

<sup>12</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: B. R. Wren, 1839), 30; *Journal of the Fifty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Baltimore: Joseph Robinson, 1850), 87; *Journal of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Natchez Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1853), 74.

<sup>13</sup> *Journal of the Sixty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 120; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South-Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1857), 66.

Methodists with Episcopal services pending their admission into the Diocese of South Carolina. In a region rife with anti-Episcopalian prejudice, St. Luke's Parish in South Carolina heralded the addition of a communicant who had previously belonged to the Baptist Church. Leighton Parish in Virginia celebrated the addition of a former Methodist to their congregation in 1853. Evangelical Protestants who joined the middle way of the Episcopal Church in the South earned acclaim from their new community of faith.<sup>14</sup>

Episcopalians in the South did not just define themselves against evangelical Protestants, but in certain dioceses they battled Catholic neighbors in an effort to maintain what they envisioned as the middle way. Trinity Church in Mississippi descried how the "Romish Church" had converted Natchez into "one of their strongholds....which will enable them to spread their power over the whole State." As a strategic counter offensive, Episcopalians belonging to Trinity Church employed Bishop William Mercer Green as their parish's rector to "guard his people from the danger" they perceived to exist in the Catholic Church. Episcopalians in Pass Christian worried about the "small Romish chapel" in the community. Bishop Green described Biloxi as town where "Protestants are few" and a large population were adhering to the "Romish faith" in 1852. Episcopalians belonging to the Church of the Redeemer in Biloxi requested their rector begin offering a service in French as an effort to convert Catholics in the region in 1860. Bishop Green also described Shieldsborough as a town with few Protestants, but dominated by "French Romanists." The Rector of Trinity Church in Edgefield, South Carolina expressed frustration with the prevalence of the false doctrines of "Romanists and Universalists." Like

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<sup>14</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1839), 21; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1848), 50; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1854), 54; *Journal of the Fifty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Philadelphia: T.K. and P.G. Collins, Printers, 1853), 45.

with Protestant evangelicals, Episcopalians celebrated the conversion of Catholics to the Episcopal Church. For example, St. Thomas's Church in Orange County, Virginia emphasized to the state convention that one of the parish's new communicants included a former Catholic in 1844.<sup>15</sup>

Since the South had evangelical Protestants and devout Catholics, Episcopalians in the region embraced the orthodoxy of their middle way identity. Bishop James Hervey Otey of Tennessee proclaimed that the Episcopal Church stood as "the witness and keeper, from the insidious approaches of Romanism on the one hand and the arrogant assumption of Ultra-protestantism on the other." Bishop William Mercer Green warned Episcopalians in Mississippi against succumbing to "the seductive wiles of Romanism...or the leveling, popularity-seeking devices of a diseased Protestantism." Instead, Bishop Green insisted that Episcopalians must reside on the "safe and happy middle ground." For Bishop Green and other Episcopalians in the South "the faith and practice of the Prayer-book" encapsulated their church's middle way and entailed the "epitome of the Bible." In 1850, Bishop Gadsden called upon the Diocese of South Carolina to avoid "ultraism and agitation" in theology. Gadsden confessed some Episcopalians believed the greatest danger to the church lurked with "Romanism and superstition," while others feared a Protestant "Puritanism and fanaticism" the most. Since Episcopalians occupied the

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<sup>15</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi*, 46-49; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Natchez Courier Book and Job Office, 1852), 13; *Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Jackson: Mississippian Book and Job Office, 1860), 72; *Journal of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1856), 13; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1859), 65; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: The Office of the Southern Literary Messenger, 1844), 54.

middle, Bishop Gadsden underscored both the necessity and challenges of preserving "union" when challenged by the two extremes.<sup>16</sup>

In the 1830s and 1840s, Episcopalians in the South learned that the middle way could be a perilous and factious position. In the 1830s, John Keble unleashed the Oxford Movement (or Tractarianism) after delivering an impassioned sermon on what he called Britain's "national apostasy." Other Church of England clergymen, such as John Henry Newman and Edward Pusey, joined Keble. Activists in the Oxford Movement published tracts which encouraged the Church of the England, and its descendant the Episcopal Church, to return to traditions of the apostolic church, which focused more on baptismal regeneration rather than the evangelical "change of heart" model that had come to dominate many parishes. Tractarianism, then, tended to embrace a "high church" worship focused upon sacraments along with liturgy, while the more evangelical wing of the Church of England emphasized preaching and low church forms of worship. Oxford Movement tracts reached the United States in the late 1830s. Episcopalians in the South did not speak with one voice during the crisis. For example, the Dioceses of Tennessee and Mississippi tended to be more "high church," while the Dioceses of Virginia and South Carolina gravitated toward the "low church" camp. Bishop James H. Otey of Tennessee condemned the evangelical and low church wing in the 1840s and 1850s. During the Episcopal Church's General Convention in 1847, an organization called the Evangelical Association had organized itself to halt "corruptions" in the Episcopal Church. Bishop Otey described the group as "the most dangerous to our peace...in the history of the Church in this country." Bishop Otey pledged to use his authority to prevent the Evangelical Association from having the ability "to

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<sup>16</sup> James Hervey Otey, *Trust in God, The Foundation of The Christian Minister's Success: A Sermon* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1850), 39, Accession: 252.1/Ot2t- MDAH ; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi*, 19; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1850), 29.

send its publications" without his consent to churches or laity in the Diocese of Mississippi. As an "irresponsible association," the Evangelical Association threatened Mississippi's "apostolic Church," according to Bishop Otey's warning. Two years later, Bishop Otey praised the Diocese of Tennessee for avoiding the "agitations" that plagued the Episcopal Church over "doctrine and discipline." The Bishop of Tennessee insinuated that the church had far more agreement on the "means of grace" than differences.<sup>17</sup>

The conversion of Episcopal clergymen in the South to Catholicism also granted evangelical critics ammunition against high church theology. Pierre Connelly resigned the Rectorship of Trinity Church in Natchez, Mississippi to further study the "doctrine, discipline, and worship" of the Catholic Church in 1835. In a letter to Bishop James H. Otey of Tennessee explaining his resignation, Connelly attacked the politics of evangelical religion, especially the nascent abolitionist movement. Connelly asserted that Protestantism in the United States had descended into "rank puritanical fanaticism." From Connelly's perspective, evangelical politics threatened the planter class values that defined the South:

Yet this is what men call 'Evangelical Religion.' And such as been its influence in these United States; and influence in its tendency subversive of ever thing free in government... Look at this moment in the north, at the political, as well as theological course of these religionists... In the religious tests which they propose to the country to act, if not legislate upon; in the proscription and persecution, which already are begun in the limitation of the rights of property...

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<sup>17</sup> Robert Pritchard, *A History of the Episcopal Church* (Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing, 1999), 140-145. David Hein and Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr. *The Episcopalians* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 70-72; Diana Hochstedt Butler, *Standing Against the Whirlwind: Evangelical Episcopalians in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 61-168; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1848), 10-11; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-First Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Columbia: Mitchell & Rainey Printers, 1849), 11-12. Richard Rankin argues that in the Diocese of North Carolina the social constructions of gender drove the high church/low church divide and therefore created "domestic tensions" alongside the ecclesial ones. More research will have to be conducted to determine if the same gendered pattern to theological debates extended to other dioceses. Rankin, *Ambivalent Churchmen and Evangelical Churchwomen: The Religion of the Episcopal Elite in North Carolina, 1800-1860* (Charleston: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 70-73, 78-83, 100-103, 117-120, 176-178.



Connelly called abolitionists "unholy and revolutionary" in their attacks upon the South's slave based class system. In Connelly's opinion, the Catholic Church would better secure the South's social hierarchy. The Episcopal Church seemed too evangelical for some Southerners like Connelly. The most famous Episcopal defection in the South occurred in the 1850s when Bishop Levi Stillman of North Carolina joined the Catholic Church. Episcopalians at the General Convention of 1853 deposed the apostate Bishop Sillman.<sup>18</sup>

After such defections, high church Episcopalians in the South had to forfend their orthodoxy against accusations of crypto-Catholicism. In 1853, Bishop Otey sought to reassure the Diocese of Tennessee that their church did not risk becoming "Romanized." According to Bishop Otey those Episcopalians in the South who had "apostatized" to the Catholic Church had never truly been authentic members of the Episcopal Church. Otey reassured the Diocese of Tennessee that he detected no "deformities of Popery" in the state. Bishop Otey called the deposition of Bishop Stillman one of the "most painful" acts he had witnessed. Bishop Otey sought to prove his Protestant bona fides to the Diocese of Tennessee by demonstrating his willingness to halt the excesses of high church theology. In 1857, Bishop Otey had been summoned to consecrate St. Andrew's Church in the rural neighborhood of Riverside. Upon inspecting St. Andrew's Church, Otey

...on entering the church saw under the chancel window an altar which might properly be called *high*; occupying a large space with the three steps siring to its base- with five crosses painted on its front- a moveable cross on a super-altar raised on the principal alter and a cross in the window above, all besides all this two large candle sticks, of turned wood, placed there not for the purposes of giving light in the house, but avowedly to enlighten...by the mysterious power of symbolism...

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<sup>18</sup> Pierre Connelly, *A Letter to the Right Reverend Dr. Otey, Bishop of Tennessee, on the Resignation of the Rectorship of Trinity Church Natchez* (1835), 12-13, 15-16, Accession: 283/C76L- MDAH.

Bishop Otey warned that such symbolism in "the public mind" had been associated with the "corruptions in the teachings of Romanism." Bishop Otey ordered changes to the sanctuary prior to consecration, which angered some parishioners. Bishop Otey refused to consecrate St. Andrew's Church until he had assurance the interior would be altered. The next day, members of St. Andrew's Church provided him with the necessary assurances and he consecrated the building.<sup>19</sup>

Bishop William Meade of Virginia supported the more evangelical wing of the Episcopal Church. Meade worried that the high church movement had a tendency to sympathize with the Catholic Church and its ritualism. The Bishop of Virginia protested that proponents of high church theology encouraged the prejudice of evangelical Protestants in the South, who described Episcopalians as a group that already had too great an "affinity for the Church of Rome." Assistant Bishop John Johns of Virginia shared Bishop Meade's advocacy against the high church movement. High churchmen vexed Johns because in his opinion they risked transforming the sacraments into "a mystery which overawes investigation." For more evangelical Episcopalians, the high church wing threatened to turn people away from the "direct personal acceptance of Christ," and instead required people to seek salvation in the "hands of a priestly order." Bishop Johns urged Virginians to remain committed to "evangelical truth and simplicity."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: J. Roberts, 1853), 7-9; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: J. Roberts & Co., 1854), 13; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: Bang, Walker & Co. Book and Job Printers, 1858), 36-41.

<sup>20</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Alexandria: The Office of the Southern Churchman, 1842), 9-10; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: The Office of the Southern Literary Messenger, 1844), 24.

Bishop William Meade of Virginia warned in *The True Churchman* against Episcopal communion with Catholics. *The True Churchman* proceeded from the premise that "there can be no communion, as church or as individual, in religious ordinances" between the Episcopal Church and the "Church of Rome." Bishop Meade summoned the Episcopal Church to be "consistent Protestant churchmen," and therefore uphold the theological heritage of the Reformation. The Oxford Movement troubled Bishop Meade because he deemed it a legitimate threat to introduce Catholic doctrines into his church. *The True Churchman* harkened back to the traditions of the Church of England to caution:

Our mother Church for a long time publicly prayed against the wiles and artifices of Rome; and although we wish not that prayer restored, yet if we do not watch and pray continually, and adopt all proper means of defense, we shall suffer from that foe, whether going about as a roaring lion, or in the garb of an angel of light.

For Bishop Meade, the Oxford Movement epitomized a stealth effort to undermine the Protestant nature of the Episcopal Church. Even as late as 1860, Bishop Meade warned that "Tractarianism, though exposed and dishonored, still lives and is working evil."<sup>21</sup>

Evangelicals in the South utilized the discord in the Episcopal Church for their own strategic advantages as they attempted to weaken their longtime nemesis. Evangelical Protestants especially blasted the way in which apostolic succession connected the Episcopal Church to Rome. Reverend Samuel W. Speer, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Natchez, Mississippi, published *Three Discourses on the True Church of Christ* which attacked Bishop James H. Otey's support of apostolic succession. According to Speer, apostolic succession offended the core American values of republicanism. In evangelical minds, apostolic succession promised to create a "dictation of religion" which would result in a church with "no

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<sup>21</sup> William Meade, *The True Churchman: Address of the Right Reverend William Meade* (New York: Protestant Episcopal Society for the Promotion of Evangelical Knowledge, 1852), 20-21, Rare Books, Call No.: BX5937.M3 T83 1851, VHS; *Journal of the Sixty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: Chas. H. Wynne, 1860), 28.

liberty." For Speer, the Protestant Episcopal Church risked creating bishops who governed by "Spiritual despotism." High church bishops threatened the "right of thinking" for laity and clergy. Speer polemicized that high church theology promoted "exclusiveness and intolerance." *Three Discourses* posited that "true doctrine" served as the "only essential succession necessary" for a true church. Speer made clear that the social class informed theological debates in the South. Speer asked

Does their Aristocratic system carry the gospel to the poor cottages of the wilderness and destitute regions? Do they imitate the Apostles they profess to succeed? If they did perhaps there would be less infidelity.

Leveling evangelicals claimed that the high church theology of apostolic succession seemed reflective of the planter class's elitist tendencies. Theological disputations, then, reflected the social stratification of religion in the South.<sup>22</sup>

Bishop James H. Otey responded to Speer's barrage by countering that Episcopalians had to embrace the model of ministry used by the "Apostolic Church." Bishop Otey published his views on the apostolic church in *The Unity of the Church*. Bishop Otey retorted that people could more easily "trace the Episcopal succession through hundreds of years, [than] it is for any living man to trace his descent to his great grandfather." In particular, the Protestant Episcopal Church connected itself to apostolic succession because Archbishop of Canterbury John Moore consecrated Bishop William White of Pennsylvania. *The Unity of the Church* hammered Methodist critics for describing apostolic succession as a corruption of the Catholic Church. Methodists made their complaint on the basis that for Episcopalians to claim apostolic succession they had to validate their linkage to the apostles back through the "corruption" of the Catholic Church. Bishop Otey called such assertions from Methodists hypocritical given their

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<sup>22</sup> Reverend Samuel W. Speer, *Three Discourses on the True Church of Christ and the Apostolic Succession in Answer to the Discourse of the Right Rev. James Hervey Otey, D. D. Bishop of Tennessee...* (Natchez: Baldwin & Risk, 1843), 35-38, 54-55, Accession: 252.07/S34t- MDAH.

own unique history. The Bishop of Tennessee bemused that Methodists too must be tainted by corruption since the denomination's founder John Wesley had been ordained by the Church of England. Bishop Otey asked "does not the communion of Mr. Wesley with the Church of England destroy, because of its corruptions, his authority to ordain also?" Methodists shared a parentage with the Church of England, and therefore would be afflicted with the same alleged corruptions they charged to the Episcopal Church. Bishop Otey counterattacked Methodist critics by rhetorically asking "what then is the worth of Mr. Wesley's ordination" since he belonged to the Church of England with its connections to Rome? *The Unity of the Church* posited that Protestant evangelicals were "destitute of an *essential feature*...that is a *ministry, deriving authority to act in the appointments of religion from the Apostles.*" Bishop Otey conceded that evangelical organizations, despite their apostolic deficiencies, had the "all the force and obligation" upon their members as the Episcopal Church exercised upon its parishes.<sup>23</sup>

Bishop William Mercer Green of Mississippi published a sermon on apostolic succession entitled *The Divine Origin and Unbroken Transmission of Ministerial Authority* in 1852. Bishop Green cautioned that Episcopalians did not believe apostolic succession involved "miraculous powers." Rather, Episcopalians understood apostolic succession to be the "right and power...to govern and perpetuate the Church." According to Green, "the Bishops of the Christian Church have in all subsequent time, even to the present day, humbly but firmly claimed to be the successors of the Apostles." Bishop Green used the so-called "Great Commission" in Matthew 28: 18-20 as the basis for his sermon. Episcopalians alleged that Christ had "handed down in unbroken succession" the commission from the events depicted in Matthew to the nineteenth century. Bishop Green then constructed a comparison between the Episcopal Church and the

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<sup>23</sup> James Harvey Otey, *The Unity of the Church: The Ministry: The Apostolic Succession: Three Discourses* (Vicksburg: D. Tilton Bigelow, 1852), 61-62, 69, 71, Accession: 252.03/Ot2u- MDAH.

United States government. The Bishop of Mississippi critiqued opponents of apostolic succession for their conflation of "authority" and "qualification." As Bishop Green surmised:

There may be many individuals in our Republic qualified to fill the duties of Chief Magistrate, yet no one is entitled to claim that office, or exercise its functions, save him upon whom the constitution of the country has conferred it... Many a man in our midst may possess the knowledge and piety and eloquence and zeal which form the chief qualification for usefulness in the ministry; yet all these excellent qualities... cannot, of themselves, make any one of them a minister of God

Just as the Constitution of the United States conferred power upon the nation's president, apostolic succession conferred power upon the Episcopal Church's bishops. Many individuals may have been qualified to serve as bishops, but only those consecrated in the line of apostolic succession had true authority.<sup>24</sup>

Mississippi's Methodists responded to Bishop Green's sermon. In 1853, Richard Abby published *Letters on Apostolic Succession Addressed to Bishop Green of Mississippi*. Letter eleven started by telling Bishop Green that his "High Church notion of succession is at direct variance with the teachings of Christ and his Apostles." Abby rejoined that in his evangelical mind the "truth of the *ministry*" is determined by "*doctrine*" rather than "episcopal ordinations." Abby expressed a ferocious anger that Episcopalians called "the Methodist Church... the *daughter* and that the Episcopal Church is the *mother*." According to Abby, Church of England and the Episcopal Church should not be seen as synonymous. Abby, therefore, concluded when Episcopalians came into existence in 1785 they "found the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian Churches already here, where they had been preaching the gospel a generation or two." Abby concluded that if Episcopalians wanted to claim a religious parentage, they should consider themselves the "foster 'mother' of many abominable heresies and corruptions." Evangelicals

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<sup>24</sup> William M. Green, *The Divine Origin of Unbroken Transmission of Ministerial Authority: A Sermon* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1852), 15, 18-19, Accession: 252.1/G82d- MDAH.

predated Episcopalians, therefore, Abby pondered how could the child exist prior to the parent? Abby jabbed Bishop Green by asking him to identify which Episcopal Church claimed to be the mother of Methodism. Abby wrote to Bishop Green: "I would in plain English, say, that there are in your church, two churches,- the High Church and the Low Church." Bishop Green appeared to be in the high church wing, which Abby described as utterly "popish in its tendencies." Abby pronounced that Bishop Green's mother church now looked "towards the Vatican of Rome," while the supposedly Methodist daughter remained fixated on the "cross of Christ."<sup>25</sup>

Abby saved some of his most caustic venom for the concluding letter which summarized his thoughts on the "fable of succession." The Methodist mocked the numerical inferiority of the Episcopal Church. Abby underscored the success of the evangelical denominations to Bishop Green as he observed: "You want the other churches... You want these three and half millions to join your one hundred thousand." Abby warned Bishop Green that embracing apostolic succession threatened the Episcopal Church's middle way:

It is a fixed and well settled fact, that the world regards you as the INTERMEDIATE CHURCH, between Protestantism and Romanism. This is the place you occupy. Your position is such that your face is toward Rome. You are the hope of Popery in this country.

Abby concluded by urging Bishop Green to abandon his high church doctrine of apostolic succession and return to the cause of "evangelical piety."<sup>26</sup> Abby's letters reveal that the renaissance in the cotton communion required rigorous theological debate as the Episcopal Church battled against Protestant evangelicals and Catholics in their region. Episcopalians remained divided over the exact definition of the "middle," and their deliberation prompted

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<sup>25</sup> Richard Abby, *Letters on Apostolic Succession, Addressed to Bishop Green of Mississippi* (Louisville: Morton & Griswold, 1853), 102, 106, 143-145, Accession: 816.3/Ab1L- MDAH.

<sup>26</sup> Abby, *Letters on Apostolic Succession*, 188, 191-192.

greater theological orthodoxy and intellectual refinement. Amazingly a church fractured over deep-seated theological divisions did not succumb to the temptation of schism, but rather gained strength from the diversity of opinions. Political orthodoxies, however, provided the necessary catalyst for shattering the Episcopal Church into two sectional branches.

### **Orthodoxy in Politics**

Political ideologies existed alongside theology in the South's Episcopal minds. Many of the South's secular politicians also participated in the internal Episcopal Church's politics serving as delegates to state conventions or even representing their state in the national House of Deputies. Even during the nadir, Episcopal politicians began formulating political orthodoxies that reflected the economic and social interests of the planter class. Episcopal-politician Jacob Read served South Carolina as a legislator in both church and state. Read had embraced the cause of republicanism as he represented South Carolina in the Congress established under the Articles of Confederation. Voters elected Jacob Read to South Carolina's state House of Representatives in 1782 and returned him to the chamber until 1794. Read's colleagues in the South Carolina House of Representative elected him to serve as Speaker in 1789 and kept him that office until 1794. While serving in the South Carolina House of Representatives, the Diocese of South Carolina elected Read to represent the state as lay deputy in the Episcopal Church's House of Deputies. The Diocese of South Carolina elected Senator Read to serve as a lay deputy for the state in the House of Deputies in 1785. Read's success in state and church legislative politics assisted him in securing election to the United States Senate in 1794. Senator Read occupied one of South Carolina's seats in the United States from 1785 to 1801. Although Senator Read lost his reelection bid in 1800, his political career did not end. St. Michael's



Church in Charleston elected Read to serve as one of its lay delegates to various diocesan conventions from the 1780s to the early 1800s.<sup>27</sup>

Senator Read demonstrated an early understanding of regional identity in his politics. As a member of the Federalist Party, Senator Read provided the crucial vote needed to ratify the Jay Treaty in 1795. The South's planter class had opposed the Jay Treaty since it failed to create a mechanism for compensation for slaves emancipated by the British during the American Revolution. Support for the Jay Treaty undermined Senator Read's popularity back in South Carolina, as evidenced by official condemnations from his former colleagues in the state legislature and "popular protests" in Charleston. Despite Senator Read's deviation on the Jay Treaty, he remained a guardian of slavery. Religion informed some of Read's most active writings on slavery. Lacy K. Ford considers Jacob Read to be an example of the "skepticism" that pervaded Episcopal and "unchurched" planters on the subject of evangelical efforts to provide religious instruction to slaves in the early nineteenth century. Senator Read dispatched a letter to South Carolina's governor in 1800 to provide a warning concerning the slave missions conducted by Methodists. Jacob Read continued to express those trepidations through the early nineteenth century.<sup>28</sup>

The Diocese of Virginia also produced Episcopal politicians to serve the new republic. John Page, owner of the Rosewell Plantation in Gloucester County, epitomized the intersection of social class and religion for Episcopal politicians from Virginia. Page represented Virginia's

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<sup>27</sup> Maeva Marcus and James R. Perry, *The Documentary History of the Supreme Court of the United States, 1789-1800. Vol. 1, Part. 2: Commentaries on Appointments and Proceedings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 718; Frederick Dalcho, *An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, From the First Settlement of the Province, to the War of the Revolution; with Notice of the present State of the Church in Each Parish and Some Account of the Early Civil History of Carolina...* (Charleston: E. Thayer, 1820), 466, 513-514, 519-520, 537.

<sup>28</sup> Rachel N. Klein, *The Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1760-1808* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 218-220; Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 166.

seventh and twelfth congressional districts from 1789 to 1797 in the United States House of Representatives. The First Congress of the United States confronted a religious challenge to the planter class who Page served. The Quaker-led "Pennsylvania Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery" had sent Congress a petition, which in part proclaimed:

From a persuasion that equal liberty was originally the portion, and is still the birth-right of all men...your memorialists conceive themselves bound to use all justifiable endeavors to loosen the bands of slavery, and promote a general enjoyment of the blessings of freedom. Under these impressions, they earnestly entreat your serious attention to the subject of slavery; that you will be pleased to countenance the restoration of liberty to those unhappy men...

The Pennsylvania Abolition Society affixed Benjamin Franklin's signature to their petition in an attempt to add gravitas and respect for their cause in Congress. Representative Page delivered a speech during the debate reflecting his own desire to protect slavery. Page advised that Congress should consider the Quaker petition, because no danger existed for the planter class. Page justified his recommendation by reminding the North, Congress could not "exercise any unconstitutional authority" to abolish slavery, therefore consideration of the Quaker petitions would be innocuous for the South. From Page's perspective, the Constitution of the United States served as the greatest safeguard for slavery, and by extension the South's planter class. Representative Page added a twist to his argument by suggesting to members of the House of Representatives from the South that considering the Quaker petition could help planters in maintaining their hegemony over slaves. According to Page, failure to consider the Quaker petition would lead slaves to conclude that Congress had "shut their ears against the voice of humanity...and if any thing could induce [a slave] to rebel, it must be a stroke like this." For Page, a perfunctory consideration of the Quaker petition would minimize the threat of slave insurrections. In 1802, Virginians rewarded Page's devotion to his region's political orthodoxies

by electing him as the commonwealth's governor. Governor Page's political career incarnated the intersection of class, politics, and the Episcopal Church in the South prior to the Civil War.<sup>29</sup>

Three Episcopal politicians from the South who served in the United States House of Representatives during the early nineteenth century embodied the constant presence of southern republicanism in politics. Born on Horse Shoe Plantation in St. Bartholomew's Parish, William Lowndes became a leading figure in state and church politics. In 1810, South Carolina's fourth congressional district elected Lowndes to the United States House of Representatives.

Beginning in 1813, Lowndes represented South Carolina's second congressional district until 1822. In Congress, Lowndes secured the prestigious chairmanship of the Committee on Ways and Means. Lowndes served with his fellow Episcopalians Thomas Nelson and Aylett Hawes. After serving in the War of 1812, Thomas Nelson became a member of the United States House of Representatives. Nelson assumed the seat of deceased Congressman Thomas Golson in 1816. Voters in Virginia sent Culpepper County native Aylett Hawes to the House of Representatives for the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth Congresses.<sup>30</sup>

As Episcopal politicians, Lowndes, Nelson, and Hawes remained attentive to the regional economic needs of the planter class even during the post-War of 1812 "era of good feelings." Supposed nationalism only served as mirage that obfuscated southern republicanism's omnipresence. For example, as Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Lowndes ushered a new tariff bill through Congress in 1816. On the passage vote, Lowndes and Hawes voted for

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<sup>29</sup> Bishop William Meade, *Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia* Vol. 1 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1861), 329; *The Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States; with An Appendix Containing Important State Papers and Public Documents and All the Laws of a Public Nature with a Copious Index* Vol. 1 ed. Joseph Gales (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1834), 1239-1240, 1245-1246.

<sup>30</sup> Andrew R. Dodge and Betty K. Koed, *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-2005* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2005), 621, 1218, 1649; Harriet H. Ravenel, *The Life and Times of William Lowndes of South Carolina, 1782-1822* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1901), 2; Dalcho, *An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 510; Meade, *Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia*, 489; *A Biographical Congressional Directory: with an Outline History of the National Congress, 1774-1911* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), 712.

the tariff, while Nelson voted no. The votes of Lowndes and Hawes along with other yea votes from the South might imply that southern republicanism had been replaced by nationalism in a supposed "era of good feelings." In reality, regional class-interests guided the nation's politics from the adoption of the Constitution until the Civil War. In fact, the Tariff of 1816 appeared favorable to the planter class's economic vision by protecting domestic cotton, while not hindering southern imports. Episcopal politicians like Hawes and Lowndes were rational actors; they made a calculation that supporting a limited tariff with favorable provisions for cotton, would not be injurious to the region's ruling planter class or slavery. Although Hawes left the House of Representatives in 1817, Nelson and Lowndes remained in the chamber through 1819 just as southern republicanism surged during the beginning of the Missouri Crisis. One of Nelson's last votes in Congress included voting no on the Tallmadge Amendment to admit Missouri under a plan for gradual emancipation in the state. Representative Lowndes died en route to Europe on board the *Moss*. Passengers decided to bury Lowndes's body at sea, but not before an individual on the *Moss* "read over his remains the funeral service of the Episcopal Church."<sup>31</sup>

The Missouri Crisis and the rapid growth of market capitalism in the North compelled Episcopal politicians to become more vocal in defending their section. Railroads, in particular, provided a visual catalyst for an increasing southern republicanism in the politics of church and

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<sup>31</sup> Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1845* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 74-76; *The Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States; with an Appendix, Containing Important State Papers and Public Documents, and all the Laws of a Public Nature; with a Copious Index: Fourteenth Congress- First Session* (Washington: Gales and Seaton: 1854), 1351-1352; *The Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States; with an Appendix, Containing Important State Papers and Public Documents, and all the Laws of a Public Nature; with a Copious Index: Fifteenth Congress- Second Session* (Washington: Gales and Seaton: 1855), 1213-1216; Ravenel, *The Life and Times of William Lowndes*, 233. Episcopalian and Virginia Representative Burwell Bassett of Virginia also joined other Southern members of Congress in voting no on the Tallmadge Amendment. Bassett had inherited the Eltham Plantation in New Kent County, Virginia from his father. As a planter, Bassett became involved in Virginia's secular and church politics. Bassett encapsulated how the planter class, Episcopal Church, and sectional politics intersected prior to the Civil War.

state. Iron rails and steam-powered locomotives epitomized economic modernization. Southerners comprehended how factories, banks, and the other trappings of industrial capitalism traveled along the railroads. Railroads, of course, aided Episcopal clergymen and bishops in traveling across their rural diocese in the South. For example, after the introduction of railroads Bishop Otey could leave Chattanooga in the morning by rail and reach Nashville at night.<sup>32</sup> Railroads, however, threatened the structure of the Episcopal Church in the South. Episcopalians in the South took notice of the railroads invading their cotton communion. William H. Kinckle believed that Campbell County would emerge as a new mission center as a result of the social changes wrought by the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. John T. Porter advised Virginia's state convention that the "completion of the York River Railroad will probably bring other friends of the church" into his New Kent County parish. In 1859, John T. Points established an Episcopal missionary station in Ashland, Virginia a "village on the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railroad." Bishop Otey visited Loudon a town where the "Rail Road from Dalton to Knoxville crosses the Tennessee river," and while there he commandeered "Rail Road Hotel" to hold worship services. In addition, Bishop Otey expected that the possible "extension of the Railroad to Brownsville" would inspire the town to "develop the resources of the surrounding country" and thus require a greater Episcopal presence. John H. Cornish called the region "along the S.C. Rail Road, and the Savannah River" an inviting location for future Episcopal missionary labor. Bishop William Mercer Green pointed to Okolona as a potential future church site since he expected the Mobile and Ohio Railroad to pass through the village. Reverend Robert F. Clute of Grace Church estimated that the Mobile and Ohio Railroad would reach Okolona in October 1859. Episcopalians in Hinds County, Mississippi began making plans in the late 1850s to erect

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<sup>32</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: W. W. Bang & Co., 1855), 13.

a church at Terrell's Depot "along the Railroad." In 1858, Bishop Green described the "growing town of Corinth" as a location needing a greater Episcopal presence since it now contained "the crossing of the Memphis and Charleston, and Mobile and Ohio Railroads." In 1860, Bishop Green pointed to Meridian as another possible railroad boom town. According to Green, the Southern Railroad planned to meet the Mobile and Ohio Railroad in Meridian. Episcopalians in Mississippi City, Mississippi expected an increased congregation when the "Ship Island Railroad shall have been constructed."<sup>33</sup> Railroads conveyed other trappings of capitalism to the South. In Virginia, St. Mark's Parish in Culpepper County had to begin services at the Germanna Woolen Factory. Bishop Thomas Davis of South Carolina argued that the Episcopal Church needed to plan to establish a church near the Graniteville Factory which already had Baptists and Methodist congregations. In the 1850s, proprietors of the Porcelain Factory in South Carolina reported to Bishop Davis that they were "determined to have only an Episcopal Church" for the facility. Episcopalians in the South understood that if economic modernization continued unabated, their cotton communion of plantation-oriented churches would transform into a communion of railroad depots and factory towns. Modernizing railroads and capitalist institutions threatened to undermine the stability of the premodern communion of cotton lords and bishops.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Journal of the Fifty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, 64-65; *Journal of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: Chas. H. Wynne, 1859), 84-85, 103-104; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee*, 15; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee*, 21-22; *Journal of the proceedings of the Seventieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 60; *Journal of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1854), 15; *Journal of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1858), 41-43; *Journal of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1859), 58; *Journal of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 35-36, 73.

<sup>34</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Lynchburg: Blackford, Townley, & Co., 1849), 64; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant*

Starting in the 1830s and continuing until the 1850s, the planter class encouraged southern republicanism in both church and state politics to counter threats to their economic hegemony in the South. Episcopal politicians, in particular, became more virulent in their southern republicanism. A caveat is necessary, however, since not every Episcopal politician espoused southern separatism. Some Episcopal politicians in the South professed sympathies with a nationalistic republicanism. For example, Texas elected Elisha M. Pease to serve as the state's governor in 1853 and 1855. Pease rejected secession, embraced nationalism over southern republicanism, and later joined the Republican Party during Reconstruction in Texas. Christ Church in Austin elected Governor Pease to represent the parish at the Diocese of Texas's state conventions prior to the Civil War. Episcopal politicians who supported non-sectionalist policies could not halt their fellow communicants in their increasing militant southern republicanism, and they became a heretical exception rather than the rule. After the 1830s, non-sectionalized nationalism among the South's Episcopal politicians proved to be a dissenting ideology because a distinctive southern republicanism had been established as the region's political orthodoxy for understanding the meaning of nationalism since it promoted the planter class's agenda.<sup>35</sup>

John Peter Richardson of South Carolina captured the increasing southern republicanism of politicians connected to the Episcopal Church during the mid-nineteenth century. Richardson

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*Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1855), 27; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Eight Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 25-26; Scott Reynolds Nelson, *Iron Confederacies: Southern Railways, Klan Violence, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 11-26; Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 22-29; Joseph P. Reidy, *From Slavery to Agrarian Capitalism in the Cotton Plantation South: Central Georgia, 1800-1880* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 103-105; H. David Stone Jr., *Vital Rails: The Charleston and Savannah Railroad and the Civil War in Coastal South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 1-6.

<sup>35</sup> *Journal of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas* (Houston: The Telegraph Power Press Book Office, 1858), 6; *Journal of the Eleventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas* (1860), 6. Texas had other Episcopal politicians in the mid-nineteenth century. For example, James H. Raymond won multiple statewide elections to serve as the Treasurer of Texas. Raymond's activities in the Episcopal Church included representing Christ Church in Austin at state conventions and serving as the University of the South's Texas Treasurer.

began his career as a non-sectional, nationalistic Democrat who had served in the United States House of Representatives from 1836 to 1839. In 1840, Richardson became Governor of South Carolina. Despite non-sectional sympathies in the infancy of his political career, Richardson participated in the sectionalist Nashville Convention of 1850. As Richardson transitioned from an American nationalist into a southern secessionist, he solicited the services of the Episcopal Church on his plantation. By 1860, Richardson owned 8,754 acres of land and 194 slaves. Planter class values overwhelmed the non-sectional republicanism evidenced in Richardson's early public service. The former non-sectional, nationalistic Democrat signed South Carolina's ordinance of secession in 1860, thus affirming his conversion to southern republicanism. The Episcopal Church provided the religious support to Richardson as he succeeded as both a planter and politician in South Carolina. In 1857, Bishop Thomas Davis of South Carolina visited Richardson's plantation to provide worship and catechization for the former governor's slaves. Reverend J. V. Welch organized slave missions on Governor Richardson's plantation along with eighteen additional plantations near Clarendon. Bishop Davis revisited Richardson's plantation in 1859 and described the former governor's slaves as having a "deep interest" in the church's religious instruction. Other politicians in the Palmetto State solicited the Episcopal Church's services. Bishop Davis preached to a "large congregation" of slaves on one of former Governor Allston's plantation. Bishops in the South recognized how social class and regional politics served as the defining characteristic of parishioners in their dioceses.<sup>36</sup>

John A. Quitman's political activism in Mississippi included offices in both the Episcopal Church and state. Quitman relocated to Mississippi because he had learned that in Alabama and

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<sup>36</sup>James Henry Hammond and Carol K. Rothrock Bleser, *Secret and Sacred: The Diaries of James Henry Hammond, a Southern Slaveholder* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 326; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Eight Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 20, 70; *Journal of the proceedings of the Seventieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 22-23.



Mississippi "trade is brisk; their cotton commands cash." Upon arriving in Mississippi in 1821, Quitman quickly secured himself as a cotton planter. Episcopal paternalism defined Quitman's relationship with his slaves. Quitman vowed that paternalism more than profitability drove his attachment to slavery. In 1842, Quitman wrote to his brother: "Cotton is now too low to be profitable." Quitman rationalized his paternalism by affirming a profit-deficit whereby his expenses exceeded more than the labor of his slaves produced. As a result, Quitman maintained that by keeping his slaves during unprofitable times, he had separated himself from the rapacious capitalist money-dealers:

But I can not bear to part with those [slaves] who are so faithful and so attached to me; they are of my household, and I will never barter them away. So I must endure the toil and anxiety, and the impertinent smirk of the money-dealers, and the ostentatious pretensions of rich parvenu, a few years longer. If there be any set that I heartily despise it is those who plume themselves upon their riches...

Planter class values, in Quitman's opinion, differed from the morality of capitalists. In addition to building a plantation fiefdom, John A. Quitman and his wife became active in the Episcopal Church. Quitman served as a member of the Vestry of Trinity Church in Natchez, while his wife became an active shadow vestrywoman.<sup>37</sup>

As an individual committed to the planter class's economic values, Quitman became involved in state politics during the 1830s. In 1830, Quitman supported the election of fellow Democrat and Episcopalian Robert H. Adams to represent Mississippi in the United States Senate. Voters in Adams County rewarded Quitman's activism by electing him to the state Senate, and his senatorial colleagues elevated him to the presidency of Mississippi's state Senate

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<sup>37</sup> John A. Quitman to F. R. Bakus February 28, 1821; John A. Quitman to J. F. H. Claiborne; January 8, 1830; John A. Quitman to his brother, January 16, 1842; all quoted in *Life and Correspondence of John A. Quitman, Major-General, U.S.A., and Governor of the State of Mississippi* ed. J.F.H. Claiborne Vol. 1 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1860), 59-60, 102-104, 191; *Journal of the Twenty-Seventh of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Natchez Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1853), 90. For a biography seeking to explain the rationality of Quitman's radicalization, see Robert E. May, *John A. Quitman: Old South Crusader* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985).

in 1835. As President of the State Senate, Quitman ascended to governorship when Governor Runnels resigned in December 1835. Quitman served a term of only thirty-five days before his successor took the oath of office. After leaving Mississippi's governorship, Quitman became an active proponent of United States expansionism in Texas, Mexico, and Cuba. Democrats in Mississippi nominated Quitman to run for governor in 1849, and he won. Meanwhile, Trinity Church in Natchez elected Governor Quitman to represent the parish in Mississippi's state convention in 1850. In 1855, Quitman returned to elective politics after a hiatus as he ran as the Democratic candidate for the United States House of Representatives in Mississippi's fifth congressional district. Quitman defeated Giles Hillyer (who also happened to be an Episcopal politician). In the United States House of Representatives, Quitman retained his passionate defense of slavery and the planter class. Representative Quitman told Congress that slavery provided moral, military, and economic prosperity not just to the South, but the entire nation. In an 1856 speech, Quitman turned religious attacks upon slavery against the North's factory capitalists:

I would wish also to embrace in our deprecation the "shocking and unchristian" practice of immuring in the unhealthy and fetid prison rooms of a factory, for eleven hours of the day, white children of both sexes, and of tender age, thereby, destroying the health and elasticity of their bodies, and blunting and stupefying their intellects by the constant employment of watching the interminable whirling of the spinning-jenny. I protest, Mr. Speaker, against this House establishing any code of morals for the county; but if we are to have one, let it be general.

The Episcopal-planter had deemed what Southerners had called the "wage slavery" of factory capitalism to be an affront to Christian values. Quitman's career demonstrated how the politicians of the planter class often served as active members in the Episcopal Church. <sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *Life and Correspondence of John A. Quitman, Major-General, U.S.A., and Governor of the State of Mississippi* ed. J. F. H. Claiborne Vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1860), 298-300; Dunbar Rowland, *Official and Statistical Register of the State of Mississippi* (Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1917), 290-293; John A. Quitman, "Powers of the Government with Regard to the Territories," in *Appendix to the Congressional Globe*

One of Quitman's successors as Governor of Mississippi continued the tradition of Episcopal politics. William McWillie epitomized the intersection of class, religion, and region. McWillie arrived in Mississippi in 1845, and quickly established a plantation in Madison County that he called Kirkwood. Bishop James H. Otey visited and preached at McWillie's plantation in 1848. McWillie and his son Adam became involved in church politics as lay delegates representing St. Phillip's Church. McWillie campaigned as a Democrat for Congress in Mississippi's third district and defeated his Whig opponent in 1849. Two years later, McWillie lost reelection. In 1857, the Democratic Party of Mississippi nominated McWillie to run for governor. McWillie trounced the American Party nominee Edward Yerger, as he prevailed by a landslide margin. As a planter, Governor McWillie used his tenure as the state's chief executive to vocalize the Cotton Communion's political orthodoxy of southern republicanism. Governor McWillie used his farewell address to excite the fears of Mississippians as he predicted that abolitionists and Republicans would seize power in Washington, thereby crafting legislation designed to destroy "Southern property." To attract non-planters to his cause, Governor McWillie turned to racism and allusions to capitalism in the North. Abolitionists, Governor McWillie warned, had "no objection to enslaving the white man." Mississippi's outgoing

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*Containing Speeches, Important State Papers, Laws, Etc., of the Third Session, Thirty-Fourth Congress.* ed. John C. Rives (Washington: John C. Rives, 1857), 118-120; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Courier Book and Job Office, 1850), 4. As Democrats searched for a southern candidate for vice president to provide regional balance to their ticket, they contemplated John A. Quitman in 1856. Quitman received the most votes for vice-president on the first ballot at the Democratic National Convention in 1856. Quitman ultimately lost the vice-presidential nomination to Senator Rufus King of Alabama. After losing the vice-presidency, Mississippi's fifth congressional district reelected Quitman to the United States House of Representatives in 1857. He died in 1859. For Hillyer's activism in the Diocese of Mississippi see *Journal of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 4; *Journal of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 4.

Episcopal governor had provided an ideological predicate necessary for a secessionist movement designed to safeguard the properties of the planter class.<sup>39</sup>

Tennessee elected Episcopal politicians who embraced southern republicanism and secession too. William H. Sneed began his political career in the Tennessee State Senate representing Williamson County from 1843 to 1845, before he moved to Knoxville. Tennessee's second congressional district elected Sneed to the United States House of Representatives in 1854 as a member of the American Party. Representative Sneed began his career as a defender of non-sectional republicanism, but over time embraced the secessionism of southern republicanism. For example, the sectionalist Southern Commercial Convention held in Knoxville in 1857 chose Sneed as its vice-president. Sneed's advocacy for southern republicanism eventually animated him to openly campaign for secession. After secession, Sneed claimed a seat in the Confederate Congress. Alongside secular offices, St. John's Church in Knoxville elected Sneed as a lay delegate to Tennessee's Episcopal state convention. Even in East Tennessee with all of its proclivities to prioritize the national union over southern republicanism, the Episcopal Church produced elected officials who adhered to the region's political orthodoxies.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Rowland, *Official and Statistical Register of the State of Mississippi*, 305-306; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi*, 13-14; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi*, 5; *Journal of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: Daily Courier Book and Job Office, 1859), 4; McWillie's farewell speech excerpts quoted in David Williamson, *The Third Battalion Mississippi Infantry and the 45th Mississippi Regiment: A Civil War History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2004), 7.

<sup>40</sup> *A Biographical Congressional Directory with an Outline of the National Congress, 1774-1911* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), 1011; W. Todd Groce, *Mountain Rebels: East Tennessee Confederates 1860-1870* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 13; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Annual Convention, of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Clarksville: C. O. Faxon, 1851), 4; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: Bang, Walker, & Co., 1857), 6.

The Election of 1856 demonstrated how the Cotton Communion had come to increasingly value political orthodoxy more than theological orthodoxy. In 1856, the Republican National Convention nominated John C. Frémont to carry the party's banner in its first presidential election. Frémont's adversaries turned to questions concerning his religious identity which they designed to exacerbate American prejudices, especially a virulent anti-immigrant nativism. As the son of a French immigrant, political opponents accused Frémont of being a secret Catholic. Republican operatives recognized the lethal nature of the insinuation in an increasingly evangelical-Protestant nation and they mounted a counter offensive that involved Episcopalians in the South. Frémont had been born and raised in South Carolina by his mother, who became an active member of St. Philip's Church in Charleston. Since Frémont's father had died early in his childhood, Frémont's mother shaped her son's religious development. Republicans published a flier entitled "Col. Fremont: Not A Roman Catholic," which included a statement from Reverend John Barnwell Campbell of Charleston. As the Rector of St. Philip's Church, Campbell provided affirmation that his church's records validated Frémont's confirmation as an Episcopalian. Campbell, however, also sought to affirm his own political orthodoxy by adding: "With the political views of Mr. Fremont: I do not coincide." Southern Episcopalians would not vote for a baptized and confirmed son of their church, because he had deviated from the region's political orthodoxy. Frémont's political heresies included opposition to the expansion of slavery in the western territories and advocacy of the federal government promoting industrial capitalism. Frémont's decision to join the Republican capitalists of the North reflected a rejection of the affluent planter class, who had flaunted their slave-created wealth while he and his mother struggled to escape poverty in antebellum Charleston. Molded by his childhood, Frémont decided to trust capital as the basis for economic opportunity, rather

than the slaves and land of his native region. Given Frémont's politics, the South would abandon a Charleston-born Episcopalian who had been confirmed by the Bishop of South Carolina, and instead cast a majority of their ballots for the Presbyterian from Pennsylvania- Democrat James Buchanan. Not even a shared religious identity could convince the planter class to trust a former resident of their region with the power of the presidency. Political orthodoxies superseded theological commonality for many voters in the Cotton Communion during the 1850s.<sup>41</sup>

The Episcopal Church in the South followed the example of its lay membership as it commenced its own enterprise designed to cater to southern republicanism, and therefore exhibit the denomination's support for the region's political orthodoxy in the 1850s. Bishops from the South's dioceses gathered at the Episcopal Church's General Convention in 1856. Bishop Leonidas Polk of Louisiana along with Bishop Stephen Elliot of Georgia ignited the effort to rally their fellow bishops from the South to endorse the cause of a sectional university. Bishops Polk and Elliot delineated how sectional politics, religion, and social class collided in their mission to create the University of the South by writing:

Labor is performed among us by a caste, and there is, in consequence, a large body of men, who can devote themselves to the elegancies of literature...The world is trying hard to persuade us that a slaveholding people cannot be a people of high moral and intellectual culture.

The proponents of the University of the South maintained that they sought to continue an ancient intellectual tradition of slaveholding societies. Southern Bishops pointed to rich literary traditions of "the Hebrews, a slaveholding people by the direct permission of God" and "Rome...a slaveholding power of the intensest (sic) sternness." Bishops Polk and Elliot also

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<sup>41</sup> "Col. Fremont Not A Catholic," Frémont Campaign Literature, 1856, Original at Princeton University, Digitized 26 January 2009. *Life, Explorations, and Public Service of John Charles Fremont* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1856), 9-17.

injected new vigor into the South's understanding of slaveholding republicanism as part of their crusade for the University of the South:

There is secured to us, by the Constitution of the United States, the most perfect liberty of thought and expression; we have that division of classes which makes one a laboring and the other a dominant class- one a working and the other a thinking and governing class.

According to Episcopalians in the South, slavery had created a class structure in their region that incentivized intellectual endeavors. Southern Bishops propounded the sectional argument that the Constitution had given their region the "liberty" to have slavery and its attendant class structure. The Episcopal Church in the South had embraced the political ideology of many of the region's leading statesmen. Southern Episcopalians, both clergymen and laity, expressed a fervent support for slaveholding republicanism in their mobilization for to erect the University of the South. Republicanism's Creed had been resurrected in the Episcopal dioceses of the South.<sup>42</sup>

The Board of Trustees for the University of the South made clear that alongside southern republicanism, Episcopal masculinity and paternalism contributed to their goals. Trustees described a prospective student's connection to idyllic domestic scenes in his Southern home:

For the South, the proper vacation of an University is the winter; that season when our planters and merchants and professional men are surrounded by their families upon their homesteads; when the cheerful Christmas fire is burning on the hearth, and mothers and sisters and servants can receive the returning student to his home, and revive within him that holy domestic feeling which may have decayed amide the scholastic isolation of a College; when he can engage in sports which him a true Southern man, hunting, shooting, riding; when he can mingle freely with the slaves who are in the future to be placed under his management and control.

Notice how the Trustees considered a student attending the University of the South to be both a planter and patriarch in the making. Trustees depicted their students' homes as realms with

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<sup>42</sup> Leonidas Polk and Stephen Elliot, "Address of the Commissioners to the People of the Southern States" in *DeBow's Review* (April 1859): 544-545; Lacy K. Ford, Jr. *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 350-365.

mothers, sisters, and slaves, who all lived to serve the male student body. The University of the South became the largest church-enterprise designed to safeguard Episcopal masculinity for the region. Bishops Polk and Elliot summoned their brethren to be "Southern and Christian men and found a University for the South that shall be worthy of our fathers, worthy of our children."<sup>43</sup>

Southern bishops solicited the approval of their dioceses at the various state conventions in 1859. Bishop Thomas Davis of South Carolina told delegates in his diocese that "the Southern country" needed "comprehensive institutions; of social culture." South Carolina's state convention recommended their diocese provide "cordial and liberal" support to the University of the South. At the Diocese of Tennessee's state convention delegates endorsed the University of the South. Episcopalians in Tennessee worried about the "the peculiar aspects of the times" and desired to "provide for the education of our own children under our own immediate supervision." Tennessee's lay and clergy delegates cited special "interests of the Southern States" in their approval. Delegates at Mississippi's state convention declared that they concurred and "sympathized" with the proposed University of the South. Bishop Green conceded that while Episcopalians in the South "love their *whole country*, and pray for its *perpetual Union*, [they] are not insensible to the claims of that particular region in which their lot is cast." Although still nominal unionists, Episcopalians in the South had decided to elevate their regionalism over nationalism.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Stephen Elliot, Leonidas Polk, Alexander Gregg, George R. Fairbanks, and John A. Calhoun, *Address of the Board of Trustees of the University of the South to the Southern Dioceses* (Savannah: George Nichols, 1858), 6-7; Leonidas Polk and Stephen Elliot, "Address of the Commissioners to the People of the Southern States" in *DeBow's Review* (April 1859): 547.

<sup>44</sup>*Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: Bang, Walker, & Co., 1857), 25-26; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Eight Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 29-30, 40-41; *Journal of the Thirty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1857), 20-21, 46-47.



Bishop Otey surveyed mountains, including the "Ben Lomond" Mountain, near McMinnville Tennessee in 1857 as possible sites for the University of the South. The Board of Trustees for the University of the South amassed on Lookout Mountain to organize themselves on July 4, 1857. Bishop Otey delivered an address to the group of laity, clergy, and bishops from throughout the South. In selecting Sewanee Mountain, the University of the South's organizers hoped to position their academic fortress in the "centre of the Cotton growing region." The Cotton Communion wanted its premiere academic institution to be defined by the planter class's prized staple crop. After careful deliberation, at a meeting in Montgomery, Alabama organizers confirmed by a vote that the University of the South would be constructed on "Sewanee Mountain." The Board of Trustees considered the selection of Sewanee to be a prophetic choice for the Cotton Communion. As the University of the South's Trustees surmised: "This Cumberland plateau seems to have been formed by God for the benefit and blessing of the valley of the Mississippi and the cotton growing regions of the Southern States."<sup>45</sup>

In early 1858, Tennessee's state legislature passed "An Act to establish the 'University of the South.'" Tennessee legislators provided legal sanction to the University of the South's Board of Trustees and authorized the institution to issue a variety of collegiate degrees. Additionally, legislators ordered the Board of Trustees to draft a constitution for the University of the South to govern the institution. Section ten of the law codified that the University of the South had to be located "at Sewanee, on the Cumberland Mountain, in or near Franklin county." Tennessee's state legislature authorized the University of the South to purchase up to 10,000 acres of land to "protect said Institution and the students thereof, from intrusion of evil-minded persons who may settle near said Institution." The law promised the University of the South a tax exemption on

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<sup>45</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Tennessee*, 32-33, 46-47; Elliot, Polk, Gregg, et al., *Address of the Board of Trustees of the University of the South*, 3, 7, 10.

1,000 acres of its land. In July 1858, the Board of Trustees for the University of the South made plans to secure the title for 10,000 acres of land at their Sewanee site. Passage of the law incorporating the University of the South, reflected the intersection of politics and religion for Episcopalians in the South. One Episcopal politician provided invaluable aid to the establishment of the University of the South. Francis B. Fogg served in both church and secular politics. Nashville's Christ Church had elected Fogg to serve as a lay delegate for many years at Tennessee's state convention. In addition, Fogg represented Davidson County in the Tennessee State Senate in the early 1850s. Bishop Otey credited Fogg for using his connections in Tennessee's state legislature as a retired senator to secure the passage of the university's "act of incorporation." According to Bishop Otey, Episcopalians in the South owed Fogg gratitude for his "prudent management" of the University of South's legislation as it progressed through the multiple layers of Tennessee's state government. A retired Episcopal politician had provided invaluable aid to legislating the church's most sectional enterprise.<sup>46</sup>

Planning the University of the South, however, laid bare the paradoxes that confronted the South's planter class. Episcopalians aspired to create a university that exemplified their premodern values: Gothic architecture, a rejection of modernizing industrial capitalism in favor of cotton fiefdoms, and an apostolic faith. To create such a planter class utopia, the University of the South's Trustees had to ironically utilize the innovative structures of capitalism. Trustees heralded Sewanee as an ideal site since it had "connection by Rail and Electric Telegraph with every portion of the South and West." Trustees cited innumerable railroads with proximity to the

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<sup>46</sup> *Private Acts of the State of Tennessee, Passed at the First Session of the Thirty-Second General Assembly, for the Years 1857-1858*, (Nashville: Torbett & Co., 1858), 36-38; *Journal of the proceedings of the Seventieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, 49-50; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: Bang, Walker, & Co., 1858), 32-33, 46-47; Charles A. Miller, *The Official and Political Manual of the State of Tennessee* (Nashville: Marshall & Bruce, 1890), 99, 220; Fogg also represented Davidson County at Tennessee's constitutional convention in 1834.

University of the South in their promotional efforts. Railroads that helped connect Sewanee to the South's ten dioceses included: "Chattanooga and Nashville Rail Road," "the Sewanee Mining Company Rail Road," "Memphis and Charleston Rail Road," "Jackson Rail Road," "Wills Valley Rail Road." The University of the South's connection to the South's railroad network promised that students could reach any of the South's dioceses in forty-eight hours, with the exception of Texas. Trustees even celebrated how the Sewanee-related railroads used the modern innovation of the "T-Rail." As construction commenced, Trustees for the University of the South had to negotiate railroad freight charges, especially with the Sewanee Mining Company. Southern bishops even highlighted railroads to bolster support in diocesan convention as they enticed support from their laity and clergy. For example, Bishop Otey communicated to the Diocese of Tennessee that the proposed site for the University of the South had been located "near the line of the N. & C. Railroad." Along with railroads, Nashville's banks and merchants became critical tools in constructing the University of the South.<sup>47</sup>

In February 1859, the Board of Trustees for the University of the South approved an organization, constitution, and institutional statutes. The University of the South's constitution contained seventeen articles. In particular, the fourth article empowered the "Senior Bishop by consecration" from the dioceses of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and Tennessee to serve as Chancellor. Article four made Bishop Otey of Tennessee the institution's first executive as the most senior bishop in the South at the time.<sup>48</sup> On the eve of the nation's fiercely contested and sectional presidential election,

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<sup>47</sup> Elliot, Polk, Gregg, et al., *Address of the Board of Trustees of the University of the South*, 9-11. *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Tennessee*, 48-51; Superintendent for the Sewanee Mining Company [Mitchell] to Charles R. Barney, 18 October 1859 and James H. Otey to R. Barney 27 June 1859, JDLS; George Rogers Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860* (White Plains, NY: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1951), 81.

<sup>48</sup> Leonidas Polk, Stephen Elliot, Francis H. Rutledge, Henry C. Lay, David Pise, George R. Fairbanks, James Hamilton Couper, and Francis B. Fogg, *Report of the Committee of the Board of Trustees of the University of the*

Episcopalians from all across the South gathered at Sewanee to lay the cornerstone of the University of the South in October 1860. An audience of "several thousand" gathered to hear the Honorable John S. Preston of South Carolina deliver the keynote address at the ceremony. Preston praised what he called the "band of holy men who have devoted their gifts to an enterprise of Christian patriotism." After descending the mountain, Preston would carry his understandings of "Christian patriotism" to various secession conventions in 1860 and 1861. The Episcopal Church had become inseparable from the South's secular politics. Prompted by the impending election, secession and the ensuing Civil War prevented the University of the South from commencing operations until 1868.<sup>49</sup>

South Carolina's decision to secede from the United States following Republican Abraham Lincoln's election compelled many Episcopal politicians in the South, such as Mississippi's Jacob Thompson, to join the secessionist cause in both church and state. Jacob Thompson had emerged as a leading voice of Southern Democrats in the 1840s and 1850s. Thompson served six terms in the United States House of Representatives from 1839 to 1851. Thompson's congressional districts included most of northern Mississippi. During the crisis over California, Representative Thompson delivered a fiery speech in that panned the Compromise of 1850 as an affront to the South. Thompson alleged the "flag of the Union" had to offer "protection of our slave property." California's entry as a free state seemed to be the proverbial slippery slope for Thompson as he asked what Congress would do if "the Republic of Hayti should apply for admission into our Union as State with her negro population?" In playing upon

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*South, Appointed to Prepare the Draft of a Constitution and Code of Statutes* (New Orleans: The Bulletin Book and Job Office, 1860), 4, 9, 13; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Memphis: WM. F. Sutton & Co., 1860), 29.

<sup>49</sup> William K. Polk, *Leonidas Polk: Bishop and General* Vol. 1 (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1915), 261-262; Joseph D. Cushman, "University of the South," in *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South* ed. Samuel S. Hill, Charles H. Lippy, and Charles Reagan Wilson (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2005), 812; Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 60-63.

racist fears that inhibited both the North and South, Thompson asserted that his section retained the right to "complain and resist" such state admissions that threatened the hegemony of the planter class. Thompson called the prohibition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia "obnoxious." The Episcopalian from Mississippi concluded his speech with an appeal to the North on the basis of racism and religion:

In your pride of power, wrong us not; attempt not to trample down our proud American spirit, or to force us to admit the negro race into terms of social equality with ourselves... We are your equals in honor, in character, in virtue, in religion, in charity, in patriotism; your equals we shall remain. But deal with us in that christian spirit of doing to others, what you would have them do to you...

After defending the South's hardline position in Congress during the debates over California, Thompson lost his bid for reelection in 1850. Thompson's political career did not terminate with electoral defeat. Subsequent to vanquishing the Episcopalian Frémont, newly elected President James Buchanan appointed the Episcopalian Thompson to his cabinet as Secretary of the Interior in 1857. Secretary Thompson used his perch inside the Buchanan Administration to assist the South whenever possible, including in blood-soaked Kansas. After South Carolina seceded, Secretary Thompson tipped off the state to an early effort by a merchant ship to resupply Fort Sumter. Thanks to the intelligence, South Carolina opened fire on the merchant ship forcing it to retreat. Secretary Thompson resigned in 1860 in an act designed to communicate solidarity with his region. After resigning to support the South in secession, Thompson returned to Mississippi and entered church politics to assist Episcopalians in their own burgeoning secessionist movement. In 1861, St. Peter's Church in Oxford elected Thompson to serve as its lay delegate to Mississippi's state convention, which just happened to be the gathering that would ratify the diocese's secession.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> *A Biographical Congressional Directory: 1774-1903* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), 804; Jacob Thompson, "The California Question," *Appendix to the Congressional Globe for the First Session of the*

Thompson's resignation marked only the beginning as Episcopal politicians and clergy participated in secession efforts at the state-level all across the South. Episcopal clergy emerged as a priesthood of Confederate politics as they sanctified secession convention meetings with holy prayers. Florida utilized the Episcopal Church's services to a greater extent than most other states. At the opening of Florida's secession convention, McQueen McIntosh nominated Bishop Francis H. Rutledge of the Episcopal Church to offer an opening prayer and prayers on subsequent session days. Bishop Rutledge used his prayer on January 11, 1861 to expound upon the South's construction of Episcopal republicanism:

Impress, too, we beseech Thee, the minds of the people of this land with a sense of the unspeakable blessings and advantages which they may hope to realize under this newly-constructed government of liberty and equal rights and salutary laws...Heal all divisions among Thy people, and make them of one mind and one heart and as a band of loving brothers, struggling together in one common cause, let them do all in their power to maintain and defend the institutions of their country...

Bishop Rutledge had solicited God's support for Florida's effort to join a "confederated government." Episcopalians in the South contemplated no contradiction in seeking a republic of "liberty" that defended the institution of slavery. Episcopal laymen, who participated in church politics, also became delegates to their state's secession conventions. For example, Peter W. Gray represented Houston's Christ Church in the Diocese of Texas's state convention in 1859

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*Thirty-First Congress: Containing Speeches and Important State Papers* ed. John C. Rives Vol. 22 (Washington: Office of John C. Rives, 1850), 658-663; Donald M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861* ed. Don E. Fehrenbacher (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 541-544; *Journal of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Jackson: Mississippian Book and Job Office, 1861), 5-6. During the Twenty-Ninth Congress, Thompson served as Chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs. Mississippi also appointed Thompson to serve in the United States Senate, but he never received the commission and thus never took his seat in the chamber. "Thompson, Jacob, (1810-1885)," in *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress: 1774-Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=T000203>, Date Accessed August 5, 2012. Mississippi sent a number of Episcopal politicians to the United States Congress, who also served as church politicians. United States Senator Joseph W. Chalmers represented Christ Church in Holly Springs as a lay delegate. *Journal of the Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi* (Jackson: The Southron Office, 1844), 4; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Eighteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Mississippi*, 3; *Journal of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi*, 4-5.

before becoming a pro-secession politician. In 1861, Harris County elected Gray to Texas's secession convention. Gray demonstrated his commitment to secession when he offered a substitute resolution during a debate that stated "the people of Texas are in favor of the speedy formation of a federal union with other slave-holding States." Episcopalians throughout the South offered both prayers and policy proposals designed to make sacred the crusading cause of secession.<sup>51</sup>

In addition to conventions, states like Tennessee and Texas executed elections for secession referendums. Texas's Episcopal counties favored secession at a slightly higher percentage than the statewide electorate. Returns tabulated by Texas's secession convention indicated that 75.2% of voters statewide favored secession, while 24.2% opposed. In Texas's Episcopal counties, secession received an aggregate result of 77.5% for secession, with only

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<sup>51</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the People of Florida, Begun and Held At the Capitol in the City of Tallahassee, on Thursday, January 3, A.D. 1861.* (Jacksonville: The H. & W. B. Drew Company, 1928), 4, 22, 36-38, 45; *Journal of the Convention of the People of Florida* originally published by the Office of the Floridian and Journal in Tallahassee in 1861; *Journal of the Secession Convention of Texas, 1861* ed. Ernest William Winkler (Austin: Austin Printing Company, 1912), 21, 34, 459; *Journal of the Tenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas, Held in Trinity Church, Galveston,* (San Antonio: The Herald Office, 1859), 5-6. Texas's secession convention tabled Gray's resolution as continued deliberations. For more instances of Episcopal clergymen providing prayers for secession conventions: *Journal of the Acts and Proceedings of A General Convention of the State of Virginia Assembled at Richmond on Wednesday, The Thirteenth of February, Eighteen Hundred and Sixty-One,* (Richmond: Wyatt M. Elliott Printer, 1861), 48-49, 65, 68, 94, 98, 101, 111, 244- 245, 250; *Official Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the State of Louisiana* (New Orleans: J. O. Nixon, Printer, 1861), 34; *Journal of The Convention of the People of North Carolina Held on The 20th Day of May, A.D. 1861,* (Raleigh: JNO. W. Syme, Printer, 1862), 31, 48. Arkansas and Georgia likely used clergymen affiliated with the Episcopal Church at their conventions. Although not explicitly described as Episcopal clergymen in their state's respective journal minutes, the names and location of Reverends Wheat, Clarke, and Pryse appear to correspond with active clergyman in the Episcopal dioceses of Arkansas and Georgia. *Journal of the Convention of the State of Arkansas, Which Was Begun and Held in the Capitol, in the City of Little Rock...*, (Little Rock: Johnson & Yerkes, 1861), 59, 105; *Journal of the Proceedings of The Bishops, Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. Assembled in a General Convention...in the Year of Our Lord 1859.* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1860), 334-335; *Journal of the Public and Secret Proceedings of the Convention of the People of Georgia, Held in Milledgeville and Savannah in 1861* (Milledgeville: Boughton, Nisbet, & Barnes, 1861), 145, 201; *Journal of Proceedings of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia* (Savannah: Geo. N. Nichols, 1860), 5-6. For additional example of Episcopal laymen at secession conventions see, *Journal of the Convention of the People of South Carolina, Held in 1860-'61,* (Charleston: Evans & Cogswell, 1861), 315-319; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventieth Annual Convention of The Protestant Episcopal Church in South-Carolina, Held in St. Peter's Church, Charleston* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1859), 9-11; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventy-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South-Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1860), 9-10.

22.5% against secession. According to the returns certified by Governor Isham Harris, 69% of Tennesseans supported separation from the union, while 31% voted against secession.

Tennessee's Episcopal counties supported secession by a higher margin of 77.7% in favor and 22.3% opposed.<sup>52</sup>

After assisting the South's separation from the nation's political union, Episcopalians in the region began a secession movement within their church. Building upon the southern republicanism that had emanated from the University of the South's planning, Episcopalians contemplated the correlation between national and religious identity. Even as late as the Episcopal Church's General Convention in 1856, church politicians and clergymen from the South were willing to belong "to *One United Church*; and *One United Country*."<sup>53</sup> As states throughout the South began to secede, the "united church" prized by Episcopalians started to crumble. Historians have studied the disunion that existed in the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian denominations. In the South's evangelical churches, disunion predated and previewed the nation's political secession crisis. By contrast, Episcopalians in the South engaged in reactive secession after their states exited the nation's political union. Southern Episcopalians pursued secession by subordinating the Protestant Episcopal Church's national constitution to the action of their dioceses. In essence, Episcopalians in the South became secessionists by violating or explicitly abandoning the Protestant Episcopal Church's federal constitution. Taking such actions, broke the constitutional union between dioceses in the North and South, while also

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<sup>52</sup> *Journal of the Secession Convention of Texas*, 88-90; J. S. Hurlburt, *History of the Rebellion in Bradley County, East Tennessee* (Indianapolis: 1866), 48-50; *The Tribune Almanac and Political Register for 1868* ed. Alexander J. Schem, (New York: The Tribune Association, 1868), 59-60; Daniel W. Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists in the Secession Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 342-345. Electoral returns are imperfect, yet useful tools to gauge historical opinion. Inaccurate reporting, voter intimidation, and electoral fraud are important caveats to consider when using election returns, especially in the divisive political environment of the 1860s. All evidence, including the election returns from Texas and Tennessee, suggest that planter class dominated Episcopal counties favored secession at slightly higher rates than non-Episcopal counties.

<sup>53</sup> *Journal of the Thirty-First Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Natchez: The Daily Courier Office, 1857), 36.



making the southern dioceses independently sovereign entities. Too often, scholars have focused on the creation of the Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America as the act of separation. Instead, the Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America should be seen as the collective finality of the secessionist movement in the region. Each individual diocese in the South had to vote or declare they would no longer accede to the Protestant Episcopal Church's constitution, before they could submit themselves to the new Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America. States seceded prior to formation of the Confederate government, so too did dioceses secede prior to the formation of the Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America. Diocesan secession, then, mimicked the actual secession of states more than any other form of church secession that occurred in the South prior to the Civil War.<sup>54</sup>

Bishop Leonidas Polk of Louisiana and Bishop Stephen Elliot of Georgia animated the diocesan secession movement with a circular letter sent to all southern dioceses in March 1861. Polk and Elliot argued that civil secession required a reevaluation of the South's "relations to the Protestant Episcopal Church." According to Polk and Elliot any action by Episcopalians in the South should be accomplished "by the common consent of all the Dioceses." Dioceses, not parishes, would serve as the primary actors in the Episcopal Church's secession movement. The circular letter concluded by asking the state conventions of each diocese to appoint deputies for a convention to be held in July in Montgomery, Alabama. Polk and Elliot assured their readers

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<sup>54</sup> Lockert B. Mason, "Separation and Reunion of the Episcopal Church, 1861-1865: The Role of Bishop Thomas Atkinson," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 59:3 (September 1990), 345-365; Mitchell Snay, *The Gospel of Disunion: Religion and Separatism in the Antebellum South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); C.C. Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the American Civil War* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1985).

that the Montgomery Convention would contemplate a response to their region's secession that would then be acted on by the Episcopal Church in the Confederate States.<sup>55</sup>

Prior to the Montgomery Convention, many southern dioceses severed their ties with the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. Diocesan secession occurred at state conventions in two different forms. Most dioceses in the South allowed lay and clergy delegates at their state conventions to vote on abandoning their allegiance to the Protestant Episcopal Church's constitution. A few dioceses in the South used a second method in which the presiding bishop used his executive authority to issue a declaration absolving those under his charge from their constitutional obligations to the Protestant Episcopal Church. The dioceses of Mississippi and Louisiana initiated the secessionist movement for Southern Episcopalians. In April 1861, Bishop William Mercer Green reissued a pastoral letter to the state convention that "requested" Mississippi's Episcopalians violate the Protestant Episcopal Church's constitution by altering the liturgies and prayers contained in *The Book of Common Prayer*. In particular, Bishop Green asserted that prayers related to the United States government should be dispensed with and replaced by prayers for the Confederate States and their governments. Bishop Green's actions reflected how Episcopal republicanism had been revived. For just as the infant Episcopal Church had jettisoned *The Book of Common Prayer's* devotions for the king and Parliament to conform to the political changes wrought by the American Revolution, so too would secessionists in southern dioceses expunge references to the United States as they aspired to create an Episcopal liturgy that supported their revolution to save the planter class's economic hegemony. Bishop Green maintained that secession had created permanent "adjustments" to "civil and ecclesiastical relations." The Bishop of Mississippi had declared that his diocese

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<sup>55</sup> *Proceedings of a Meeting of Bishops, Clergymen, and Laymen, of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States, at Montgomery, Alabama* (Montgomery: Barrett, Wimbish & Co., Steam Printers and Binders, 1861), 3-4; Hein and Shattuck, *The Episcopalians*, 78-79.

## Secession Dates in the Episcopal South

Diocese/State	Diocesan Secession	State Secession
Mississippi	April 1861	January 1861
Louisiana	May 1861	January 1861
Georgia	May 1861	January 1861
Alabama	May 1861	January 1861
Arkansas	June 1861	May 1861
South Carolina	June 1861	December 1860
Virginia	May 1862	April 1861
North Carolina	June 1862	May 1861
Texas	June 1862	February 1861
Florida	December 1863	January 1861
Tennessee	N/A	May 1861

Table 5.1  
(Sources in footnotes)

would not allow the Protestant Episcopal Church's constitution or the General Convention to impede their support for Southern nationalism. In doing so, Bishop Green had made clear the Diocese of Mississippi no longer acceded to the authority of the Protestant Episcopal Church's constitution. Delegates at Mississippi's state convention voted to affirm Bishop Green's declaration of secession from the Protestant Episcopal Church's constitutional union.<sup>56</sup>

The Diocese of Louisiana's state convention gathered in May 1861 and voted to secede from the Protestant Episcopal Church. Bishop Polk offered a detailed exposition on church politics, which concluded with telling delegates that secession had become a reality because Southern Episcopalians had to "follow our Nationality." After Bishop Polk's lengthy address, lay and clergy delegates voted to approve the following resolution: "*Resolved*, That the Diocese of Louisiana has ceased to be a Diocese of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America." During the same month, Georgia and Alabama joined Louisiana in voting to secede from the Protestant Episcopal Church. Delegates at Georgia's state convention voted to approve a declaration that the Diocese of Georgia "included in a different nationality, is beyond that jurisdiction" of the "Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America." In Alabama, delegates at the state convention issued a declaration declaring any constitutional obligations related to the Protestant Episcopal Church's constitution would be "null and void." Other delegates desired stronger language in the declaration that would have pronounced: "By an act of Divine Providence, the Diocese of Alabama is released from her subscription...to the 'Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal church of the United

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<sup>56</sup> *Journal of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi* (Jackson: Mississippian Book and Job Office, 1861), 11, 35-65.

States of America.'" After debate and some parliamentary wrangling, Alabama's state convention approved a declaration of secession.<sup>57</sup>

In June 1861, South Carolina and Arkansas joined the Episcopal secession movement. Delegates at South Carolina's state convention ratified a resolution which articulated the premise that as a result of secession their diocese "by the terms of the Constitution of the Church in those States excluded from its General Convention...and being consequently under no obligation of obedience thereto, resumes now its delegated rights and its separate existence." Episcopalians in Arkansas confronted a unique challenge since the state had never been organized as a diocese by the General Convention. Absent a diocesan constitution or state convention, Episcopalians in Arkansas gathered in Little Rock on June 20 to organize a diocese. Insufficient attendance constrained delegates resulting in the postponement of definitive legislative action, but before adjournment attendees beseeched Arkansas's Missionary Bishop Henry C. Lay to issue a pastoral letter on the status of the church in the state. Bishop Lay used the pastoral letter requested by his state's laity to declare that as a result of secular secession the Protestant Episcopal Church's constitution henceforth would "exclude" Arkansas from its jurisdiction. Although not a diocese, Bishop Lay had declared Arkansas's secession from the Protestant Episcopal Church and expressed his state's desire to join "the Church in the Confederate States."<sup>58</sup>

Six dioceses had taken definitive actions at their state conventions to secede from the Protestant Episcopal Church prior to the opening of the Montgomery Convention in September

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<sup>57</sup> *Journal of the Twenty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Diocese of Louisiana* (New Orleans: The Bulletin Book and Job Office, 1861), 14-47; *Journal of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia* (Savannah: Steam Press of John M. Cooper & Co., 1861), 32-33; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama* (Mobile: Farrow and Dennett, 1861), 21-26.

<sup>58</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventy-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1861), 24-25; Bishop Henry C. Lay, *Pastoral Letter to the Clergy and Members of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Arkansas* (Memphis: Hutton & Freligh, 1861), 3, 17-21.

1861. The Montgomery Convention included many of the South's leading church and secular politicians, such as Jacob Thompson of Mississippi. Deputies at the Montgomery Convention sent a twelve article Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America to the region's dioceses for ratification. The Montgomery Convention provided the remaining southern dioceses with an opportunity to vote on secession by ratifying the Constitution of the Episcopal Church of the Confederate States of America at their state conventions during 1862. Delegates at North Carolina's state convention agreed on May 16 to abide by the Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederates States and enter into "union" with the South's other dioceses. By entering a union with other southern dioceses, Episcopalians in North Carolina had officially seceded from the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States. Five days later, the Diocese of Virginia adopted the Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States, thus severing the Old Dominion's ties with the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. On June 6, delegates at Texas's state convention also ratified the Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederates States. The Diocese of Florida would be the last state to formally secede from the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States. Florida's state convention officially acted to join the other seceded dioceses in December 1863. Prior to the conclusion of the Civil War, ten of the South's dioceses had acted at their state conventions to end their constitutional union with the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> *Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America, and Digest of the Canons Adopted in General Council, in Augusta, Georgia* (Augusta: Steam Power Press Chronicle & Sentinel, 1863), 2-5; *Journal of the Forty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of North Carolina* (Fayetteville: Edward J. Hale & Sons, 1862), 25-31; *Journal of the Sixty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond: MacFarlane & Fergusson, 1862), 20-25; *Journal of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas* (Houston: Telegraph Book and Job Establishment, 1862), 32-35; *Semi-Centennial of the Diocese of Florida Held in Tallahassee: January 18 and 19, 1888* (Jacksonville: The Church Year Publishing Company, 1889), 45-49. State secession

Thomas Jefferson's funeral had indeed marked a turning point in the theological and political history of Episcopal Church in the South. Jefferson's death symbolized the death of theological deism, non-sectionalized republicanism, and stagnated leadership. New planters in the Cotton Communion dedicated themselves to an impassioned theological orthodoxy and crusading quests to defend southern republicanism. Devotion to liturgies and political ideologies became indispensable to the Episcopal Church's renaissance in the South. Such renewed intellectual passions resulted in resurgent southern dioceses willing to use their zealotry to aid the planter class in a slaveholding republic grounded in apostolic religion. Indeed, the Episcopal Church's theological revivification converged with secession crisis, since Southern Episcopalians practiced a faith of liturgical seasons. Nine of the ten diocesan conventions seceded during the spring months in which the Episcopal Church celebrated the theological orthodoxies of their sacred seasons of Easter and Pentecost. Theological and political orthodoxies had collided. The South's church politicians could not have selected two more appropriate theological moments on their church's sacred calendar to preach their secessionist sermons than Easter and Pentecost. Resurrected from the Episcopal Church's post-Revolution death in the South, the seceded dioceses had summoned the Holy Spirit to descend in flaming glory to refine them into apostles of a Confederate Pentecost destined to create a new nation and church dedicated to serving the planter class.<sup>60</sup>

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dates in Table 5.1 are from: Steven E. Woodworth and Kenneth J. Winkle, *Atlas of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 66-67.

<sup>60</sup> Episcopalians continued to sanctify the slaveholding republic by serving as military chaplains in the Confederate Army. Edgar Legare Pennington provides a list of the sixty plus Confederate chaplains identified by Bishop Joseph Blount Cheshire as being affiliated with the Episcopal Church. Pennington, "The Confederate Episcopal Church and the Southern Soldiers," *Historical Magazine of the Episcopal Church* Vol. XVII, 356-383.

## CODA—LEONIDAS POLK'S PILGRIMAGE TO PINE MOUNTAIN

Leonidas Polk received the call to become a minister of the "Doctrines and Duties of the Christian Religion" while attending West Point in 1826. Polk's father, William Polk, did not accept his son's epiphany with any great enthusiasm. William Polk had warned his son not to succumb to the "ardour [sic] of feeling" induced by religion. For William Polk, a career in the ministry threatened the "honorable" reputation of a planter class family. Leonidas Polk acknowledged in a letter to his father that he "should act worthy of myself & family & station in life." Leonidas Polk had to reassure both of his parents that he had an unshakeable commitment to Christian ministry as wrote to his father: "in the exercise of its functions I should find my greatest happiness...it may meet the approbation of yourself & mother, is the earnest prayer." Polk insisted that his decision to enter the ministry had "not been the work of a moment, but of leisure consideration." As Polk toiled to assuage the reluctance of his parents, he wrote to his brothers seeking to encourage them to persevere in their Christian faith. Polk in a letter to Lucius Polk urged his brother "not procrastinate an investigation" into the "truth of Revelation" in Christianity. Polk reminded Lucius Polk that he had a "scriptural warrant" to search for God's truth.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Leonidas Polk to William Polk, 11 May 1826; Leonidas Polk to William Polk 9 May 1827; Leonidas Polk to Lucius Polk, 25 August 1826; Leonidas Polk to William Polk, 22 June 1827, Leonidas Polk Papers, 1767-1937, University of North Carolina, Microfilm.



After leaving West Point, Polk did some traveling before returning to his family plantation near Raleigh, North Carolina. During that sojourn prior to entering seminary, Polk recognized that he would become an Episcopal minister in the Cotton Communion. Polk estimated that in August 1828 the plantation would produce "250 or 300 shrubs of corn &...cotton, 12 or 14 bales perhaps." Polk took pride in the height of his low ground cotton which came up to the waist of a horse. Polk promised his brother that he would have "those stalks saved & hung up in a conspicuous place, to put to shame some of the exorbitant stories of Tenn[esse] Planters." For Leonidas Polk, religiosity and his membership in the planter class would be the two inseparable pillars of his identity.<sup>1</sup>

During the fall of 1828, Polk finalized his plans to enter the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria. Polk's decision to attend the Virginia Theological Seminary demonstrated a nascent sectionalism in the young Episcopalian. Selecting the Virginia Theological Seminary emerged as Polk contemplated the distinctiveness between the North and South. Polk wrote to his father: "it is better for me to study at Alexandria in the D. C.... the Spirit of the place I like better, than that of the Seminary in this city, New York, & it is important to study & become acquainted with those with whom I shall hereafter have to act." Polk intended to be serve the Protestant Episcopal Church in the South, thus he felt it necessary to reside among Southerners during his seminary education. Such a sentiment revealed Polk's conviction that the South's cultural values and practices required clergymen willing to immerse themselves in the region. Seminary taught Polk both religious and political doctrines. Alexandria's proximity to Washington ensured that Polk would also experience a political awakening. The late 1820s epitomized resurgence for the South's political class with the

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<sup>1</sup> Leonidas Polk to Lucius Polk, 22 August 1828, Leonidas Polk Papers, 1767-1937, University of North Carolina, Microfilm.

ascendancy of Andrew Jackson. Polk and his family supported Jackson and the emerging Democratic Party. In a letter, Polk welcomed his family's desire to attend Jackson's inauguration, weather conditions permitting. Jackson's war against banking and transportation legislation meshed with the political agenda of planters, like the Polk family, who desired to restrain Northern capitalism's usage of the federal government to metastasize non-plantation markets.<sup>2</sup>

On Good Friday in 1830, Bishop Richard Channing Moore ordained Leonidas Polk. On the following Sunday, Reverend Leonidas Polk preached his first sermon using John 3:16 as his scriptural text. Polk's career in the Protestant Episcopal Church had commenced. Polk served as clergyman in the Diocese of Virginia during the early 1830s and accumulated acclaim for his performance. Virginia Episcopalians praised Polk as a clergyman with a "most ardent piety and devotion to his duty."<sup>3</sup> Polk's reputation as an effective clergyman garnered notice from the Episcopal Church's bishops. In 1838, the Episcopal Church consecrated Polk at Christ Church in Cincinnati as "the Missionary Bishop of the South West." Bishop William Meade of Virginia and Bishop James H. Otey of Tennessee participated in Polk's consecration service. After serving only eight year as a clergyman, Polk had ascended to the highest office in the Protestant Episcopal Church.<sup>4</sup>

The Protestant Episcopal Church officially defined Bishop Polk's missionary southwest region as the states of Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana. In 1839, the Protestant Episcopal

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<sup>2</sup> Leonidas Polk to William Polk, 7 October 1828, Leonidas Polk Papers, 1767-1937, University of North Carolina, Microfilm.

<sup>3</sup> Leonidas Polk to Charles P. McLivaine, 21 July 1830, Leonidas Polk Papers, 1767-1937, University of North Carolina, Microfilm; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: John Warrock, 1832), 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: B. R. Wren, 1839), 12; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Convention of the Clergy and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the Dioceses of Tennessee* (Nashville: S. Nye & Co. Republican Banner Office, 1839), 15-16; Glenn Robins, *The Bishop of the Old South: The Ministry And Civil War Legacy of Leonidas Polk* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2006), 41-42.

Church's Board of Missions asked Bishop Polk to extend his missionary area to include the Republic of Texas. Bishop Polk approved the request and visited the Republic of Texas that same year. After traveling throughout Texas, Bishop Polk urged the swift appointment of a bishop for the republic, because an episcopal "influence would be immense, and no substitute can adequately take his place." Bishop Polk supported annexing Texas into the constitutional union of the Protestant Episcopal Church because:

I do not know that I perceive any peculiarity, distinguishing it from the South West generally. The population is composed of much the same material, having the same pursuits and sympathies, though somewhat more dispersed. The civil arrangement seems to be perfected, and the rights of citizens as effectually secured as they are in our States generally. The soil is fertile and capable of producing a great variety of agricultural products, the southern staple particular, in abundance.

Polk's decision to highlight cotton is telling. For Polk, Texas seemed a logical extension of the Cotton Communion. Episcopal Texans, Polk concluded, would create both religious and class structures that were congruent with the South in the United States. Bishop Polk had advocated Texas's admittance to the union of dioceses in the Protestant Episcopal Church long before the South's secular politicians commenced their campaigns to promote a "manifest destiny" designed to annex Texas into the union of states. Bishop Polk, in essence, implemented a manifest destiny for the Episcopal Church in the Republic of Texas. In 1843, Bishop Polk visited Houston and confirmed thirteen, including two converts from the Presbyterian Church.<sup>5</sup> On the Texas question, Polk's church politics presaged the nation's secular politics.

Polk ended his tenure as the Missionary Bishop of the South West after only four years. In 1842, Episcopalians in Louisiana elected Bishop Polk to serve as their diocese's first bishop. Polk continued as the Bishop of Louisiana until his death in 1864. Bishop Polk's governance of

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<sup>5</sup> Leonidas Polk, Report to the Foreign Committee, 26 July 1839, Leonidas Polk Papers, 1767-1937, University of North Carolina, Microfilm; *Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond: The Southern Literary messenger, 1844), 57.

the Diocese of Louisiana proved quite successful. In 1850, the Diocese of Louisiana had approximately 837 practicing communicants, which increased to 1,798 a decade later. From 1850 to 1860, Bishop Polk supervised the confirmation of over 2,000 souls, while Episcopal clergy under his administration baptized over 8,900 infants and adults in the same decade. Bishop Polk ensured that Louisianans participated in the Episcopal Church's renaissance. The Diocese of Louisiana included many Episcopal politicians, including Governor Henry Johnson. Governor Johnson not only participated in church politics, but he also demonstrated a great "liberality" toward the Church of the Ascension in Donaldsonville.<sup>6</sup>

Bishop Polk joined his colleagues in other dioceses in consecrating plantation chapels and extending the Episcopal Church's slave missions to Louisiana's slave population. In the late 1850s, Bishop Polk visited Meredith Calhoun's plantation and preached to "seven or eight hundred" slaves assembled. Episcopalians should celebrate, Bishop Polk asserted to his state convention, since Calhoun planned to erect "a suitable church edifice" for his slaves. Polk heralded the fact that Episcopalians would have a plantation chapel on "one of the largest [plantations] in Louisiana." In 1853, Bishop Polk visited the St. James's Church Mission in Alexandria where he "preached and confirmed thirty-three colored people who were assembled

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<sup>6</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Louisiana* (New Orleans: H. Spencer & Co., 1850), 52; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Louisiana* (New Orleans: H. Spenser, Printer, 1851), 57; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Louisiana* (New Orleans: Norman, Publisher, 1852), 49-61; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Louisiana* (New Orleans: Crescent Office, 1853), 20, 54; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Louisiana* (New Orleans: Sherman & Wharton, 1854), 48; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana* (New Orleans: Norman, Printer, 1855), 55-56; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Eighteenth Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Dioceses of Louisiana* (New Orleans: Norman, Printer, 1856), 67; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Nineteenth Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana* (New Orleans: Norman, Printer and Publisher, 1857), 121-122; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twentieth Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana* (New Orleans: K. Fuhri: 1858), 49-59; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-First Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana* (New Orleans: Albertson: 1859), 40-49; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana* (New Orleans: Isaac T. Hinton, 1860), 69.

form the several plantations." Bishop Polk extolled the St. James's Church Mission as a model since Alexandria's planters gave "assent in favor of their [slaves] Christianization." Polk comprehended how the Episcopal Church's renaissance depended upon the planter class. After visiting Bossier in the early 1850s, Polk described the town as "surrounded by an intelligent and thrifty population of planters" who would support the construction of an Episcopal Church. In 1855, Bishop Polk visited a plantation in Plaquemine Parish and confirmed forty-three slaves. Bishop Polk visited the Louisiana plantation of Governor John Manning of South Carolina to make arrangements to expand an existing slave mission to neighboring planters. Louisiana's shadow vestrywomen often assisted Bishop Polk in his diocesan labors. Like in other dioceses, shadow vestrywomen in Louisiana served the planter class's hegemonic agenda. Shadow Vestrywoman Ira Smith, who belonged to the Parish of Grace Church in St. Francisville, supervised a "congregation of colored people" on her plantation. Bishop Polk visited Smith's plantation in May 1856 to confirm eighteen slaves. During Polk's visit, Shadow Vestrywoman Smith credited Episcopal missionary Caleb Dow for improving the "moral and religious deportment" of her slaves. Bishop Polk echoed the Episcopal doctrine of paternalism as he prayed that every planter "will feel it to be as much his duty to make provision for the moral and religious instruction of his slaves, as he now feels it to be, to provide for the supply of their bodily wants." The Bishop of Louisiana encapsulated the paternalism of slave missions in his summation that: "the dependence of the slave, has, for its reciprocal, the responsibility of the master."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Nineteenth Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana*, 21; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Louisiana*, 20-21; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana*, 22; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Eighteenth Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Dioceses of Louisiana* (New Orleans: Norman, Printer, 1856), 21-23; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Twentieth Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana*, 26-27;

Bishop Polk strengthened his commitment to the South's distinctive economic vision after he joined Louisiana's planter class. The Bishop of Louisiana purchased the Leighton Plantation located sixty miles outside of New Orleans near the Bayou La Fourche. At the time of purchase, Polk owned over four hundred slaves, who would toil on his sugar-producing Leighton Plantation. According to William Mecklenburg Polk, Bishop Polk purchased a plantation since Louisiana existed "distinctively as a Plantation state" which inspired him to use the Leighton Plantation as a living example for Episcopalians in the state regarding "the duty of the master to the slave." In particular, Bishop Polk forbade Sunday labor at Leighton including during the harvest of sugar cane. Many of Louisiana's planters ran their mills on Sundays during cane-grinding season due to a fear that an early frost would diminish their crop. Bishop Polk proudly enumerated his many religious activities on the Leighton Plantation to both family members and delegates attending Louisiana's state convention. In 1849, Bishop Polk offered pastoral care to his slaves during a vicious cholera epidemic that claimed seventy lives and affected all but fifty people on the plantation. The Bishop of Louisiana mourned the death of "Christian" slaves who perished at their "post." Four years later, Polk conveyed to his state convention that on July 17, 1853 he "read prayers and preached to the negroes on Leighton plantation" during the afternoon. Later that same month, Bishop Polk baptized twenty-two slave children on the Leighton Plantation. Bishop Polk aspired to make Leighton a beacon of Episcopal paternalism, even if that meant jeopardizing immediate profits in exchange for both long-term hegemony and religious conversions.<sup>8</sup>

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William Kauffman Scarborough, *Masters of the Big House: Elite Slaveholders of the Mid-Nineteenth-Century South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), 137.

<sup>8</sup> William M. Polk, *Leonidas Polk: Bishop and General* Vol. 1 (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1893), 150-156; Leonidas Polk to Susan Polk Raynor, 9 July 1849, Leonidas Polk Papers, 1767-1937, University of North Carolina, Microfilm; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Louisiana* (New Orleans: Crescent Office, 1853), 20-23.

Bishop Polk had the assistance of his wife and their children in managing the Leighton Plantation. Frances "Fanny" Devereux married her childhood sweetheart Leonidas Polk in 1830. Marriage to an Episcopal clergyman and membership in the planter class assured that Fanny Polk would assume the responsibilities of a shadow vestrywoman. Fanny Polk, along with her daughters, supervised and provided religious instruction to slaves on the Leighton Plantation. The Episcopal Church's definition of gender roles in the South defined Polk's plantation. In serving as a Christian patriarchal master, Leonidas Polk had found a way to reconcile the planter class's definition of masculinity to his Episcopal identity. Meanwhile, Fanny Polk, as a plantation mistress and shadow vestrywoman, demonstrated how white women provided considerable contributions to the success of both plantation operations and the Episcopal Church. Southern women, like Fanny Polk, lived in a society committed to a patriarchal ideology destined to minimize their patronage and deem them subservient to men. For instance, William Mecklenburg Polk described Bishop Polk's family as one of "patriarchal simplicity and beauty." Despite such depictions, Fanny Polk and other Episcopal women in the South provided indispensable sustenance to the sustainability of their region's economic and religious institutions.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1850s, Bishop Polk rallied Episcopalians in the South to profess the creed of southern republicanism by using a university. Bishop Polk depicted the University of the South to the Diocese of Louisiana as an unapologetic effort "to unite the ten Southern Dioceses of our Ecclesiastical Confederation." The Bishop of Louisiana made clear he desired that his proposed university would "rival...Harvard, or Yale, or that of Virginia at Charlottesville." Polk asserted to Bishop Stephen Elliott that creating a confederation around the idea of a university would "save us a church, and as a Southern Church in particular." The University of the South would

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<sup>9</sup> Polk, *Leonidas Polk*, 106, 121, 156, 168.

compel, Bishop Polk argued, the South to "rally and unite...to develop our resources, and demonstrate our power." For Bishop Polk, the University of the South would not just be another educational institution, but rather it would promote a militant sectionalism. The Bishop of Louisiana made explicit the separatist nature of the University of the South. Although Episcopalians in the South had "been able to hold in check in the northern church mind, by the...manly and Christian way," Polk bemoaned the threat of northern clergymen "coming south to labour." Bishop Polk affirmed that his membership in the planter class had motivated the regional university: "Talk of slavery those mad-caps at the North don't understand the thing at all...We hold the negroes and they hold us...But besides we are afraid of the Northern domination of our schools and pulpits." Bishop Polk expected the University of the South would protect slavery from intellectual assaults, and therefore, preserve the hegemony of his associates in the planter class. Non-Episcopal Southerners, Polk assured Bishop Elliott, would support the university "on sectional account alone" and respect for the Episcopal Church's "social power." Social class, sectionalism, and faith collided in the University of the South, for Polk promised "The negro question will do the work" of rallying the South to the cause. In explaining his vision to Bishop Elliott, Bishop Polk tipped his political machinations by writing that to "unite the church in these 10 states is to unite the people of the 10 states." Polk, as part of a growing discourse on state's rights, expressed joy that the Episcopal Church's dioceses in the South had remained coterminous with the state boundaries. The University of the South's organization functioned as a prelude to the church's secession crisis since it created a unified identity and purpose for the region's Episcopalians. The South's Episcopalians weaved together a permanent web of contacts and interrelationships that spanned all of the region's dioceses by developing a



region-wide university. Organizing a sectional university created a template for the construction of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Confederate States.<sup>10</sup>

After Lincoln's election, Bishop Polk became an open and unabashed secessionist. Polk had inculcated his secessionist values in his children. In February 1861, William Polk expressed to his father utter dismay at the unionist sentiment in Virginia. William Polk familiarized his father what he perceived to be an ominous development: Virginians had elected unionist and abolitionist politicians. Bishop Polk's son estimated thousands in Virginia "would vote for Lincoln if they were not afraid." William Polk's anger with Virginia's politics reflected his father's own secessionist sympathies. Three months after receiving his son's letter, Bishop Polk propelled the Diocese of Louisiana to secede from the Protestant Episcopal Church. Bishop Polk proclaimed to delegates at Louisiana's state convention that the diocese had "to set aside her obligations to her Ecclesiastical Constitution in the United States of America, she must follow her Nationality." Since the State of Louisiana had seceded, Bishop Polk asserted that Episcopalians had to embrace the "position of Diocesan Independence." The Diocese of Louisiana must, Bishop Polk pleaded, recognize "the destruction of this constitutional bond." After Bishop Polk's address, delegates at Louisiana's convention adopted secession resolutions that declared their state "foreign to the United States," and hence they had "ceased to be a Diocese of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America."<sup>11</sup>

Once his diocese had seceded from the Protestant Episcopal Church, Bishop Polk entered the Confederate Army as a general. During General Polk's campaign in Kentucky, Bishop James H. Otey of Tennessee visited his dear friend at Union City in 1861. On November 19, Bishop

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<sup>10</sup> Leonidas Polk to Stephen Elliott, 21 July 1856; Leonidas Polk to Stephen Elliott 20 August 1856, Leonidas Polk Papers, 1767-1937, University of North Carolina, Microfilm.

<sup>11</sup> William Polk to Leonidas Polk, 4 February 1861, Leonidas Polk Papers, 1767-1937, University of North Carolina, Microfilm; *Journal of the Twenty-Third Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Louisiana* (New Orleans: The Bulletin Book and Job Office, 1861), 22-23, 46.

Otey stayed with General Polk in his tent as the two had a long and emotional encounter. Bishop Otey described the meeting in very evocative language:

Slept in the General's tent last night, and had much interesting and gratifying conversation with him, especially about his position, and his earnest desire and efforts to be relieved from it. We had sweet communion in prayer, morning and night. He stands higher in my love and esteem than ever.

In Bishop Otey, General Polk had a friend and colleague who understood the travails of being a leader in the Episcopal Church in the South. Bishop Otey offered unconditional acceptance and support to Polk, something the general had been in search of since his decision to enter the ministry back at West Point. Surrounded by military subordinates and at a great distance from his family, Polk welcomed the visit from Bishop Otey as an opportunity for unguarded conversation and intimate comfort from a close confidant. For Otey and Polk, their night of "sweet communion" and prayer had a deeper meaning, because both knew in wartime it could be their last meeting.<sup>12</sup>

As the "Fighting Bishop" who worshiped the Prince of Peace, General Polk on occasion remarked upon the contradictions inherent in his identity. For example, Bishop Polk wrote a Christmas letter to Fanny Polk. Polk's letter meditated upon the juxtaposition of war during the joyful holiday season: "It is Christmas Day! A day in which angels sang 'Glory to God in the highest peace on Earth, & good will toward men.' And oh how my heart yearns to join in the...song if these wretched [fanatics?] would let us."<sup>13</sup> Although General Polk made an aborted attempt to resign his commission, he would not find peace away from the battlefield. Instead, the Fighting Bishop completed his life-long spiritual pilgrimage as he entered into an eternal peace in 1864. On June 14, Bishop Polk ascended Pine Mountain in Georgia with a group of other

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<sup>12</sup> Bishop William Mercer Green, *Memoir of Rt. Rev. James H. Otey, D.D., LL.D.: The First Bishop of Tennessee* (New York: James Pott and Company, 1885), 99-100.

<sup>13</sup> Leonidas Polk to Fanny Polk, 25 December, 1861, Leonidas Polk Papers, 1767-1937, University of North Carolina, Microfilm.

Confederate generals to gather intelligence. United States military forces fired a canon at Pine Mountain causing a mortal wound for the Bishop of Louisiana. On Pine Mountain, Polk's blood seeped from the altar of battle into the southern soil and it joined the blood of thousands of other Southerners who died in the Civil War. Unbeknownst to the dying Polk on Pine Mountain, his sacrificial blood would offer a mysterious sanctification for the two groups that defined his identity: the planter class and the Episcopal Church. Bishop Polk's blood had been offered as a sacrifice on behalf of both the planter class and the Episcopal Church in their shared aspiration of creating a Christianized slaveholding republic. Pine Mountain marked a watershed for Southern Episcopalians since the greatest embodiment of the South's distinctive Episcopal republicanism had died. Unlike his Episcopal ancestors in Washington's revolutionary generation who simply had to outlast the British Empire to achieve political independence, Polk's doomed slaveholding republic confronted the unappeasable and irrepressible march of a nationalistic-industrial capitalism.

**A Consecration Liturgy for Leonidas Polk's Blood, June 1864**

**The Collect:**

*HdQrs. Army of Tennessee  
In the Field June 14, 1864*

*General Field Orders  
No. 2.*

*Comrades! You are called to mourn your first Captain—oldest companion in arms. Lieut. Genl. Polk fell to-day at the outpost of this Army—the Army he raised and commanded—in all of whose trials he shared—to all of whose victories he contributed.*

*In this distinguished leader we have lost the most courteous of Gentlemen, the most gallant of soldiers.*

*The Christian, Patriot, Solider, has neither lived nor died in vain. His example is before you-his mantle rests with you.*

*(Signed) J. E. Johnston,  
Genl.*

**The Gospel Lesson:**

*"a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water"*

**The Sermon:**

Bishop Stephen Elliott of Georgia-

*... Although a minister of the Prince of peace and a Bishop in the Church of God, he has poured out his life-blood for us upon the field of battle. Some, even of those for whom this precious blood is shed, have cavilled at it. Many, even of those who are stirring up this hellish warfare, have found a mote in their brother's eye. As he has given his life for us, our duty is not only to honor his ashes, but to place his noble life, and still nobler death, beyond the reach of human calumny...And now, ye Christians of the North, and especially ye priests and bishops of the Church who have lent yourselves to the fanning of the fury of this unjust and cruel war, do I this day, in the presence of the body of this my murdered brother, summon you to meet us at the judgment-seat of Christ--that awful bar where your brute force shall avail you nothing; where the multitudes whom you have followed to do evil shall not shield you from an angry God; where the vain excuses with which you have varnished your sin shall be scattered before the bright beams of eternal truth and righteousness. I summon you to that bar in the name of that sacred liberty which you have trampled under foot; in the name of the glorious constitution which you have destroyed; in the name of our holy religion which you have profaned; in the name of the temples of God which you have desecrated; in the name of a thousand martyred saints whose blood you have wantonly spilled; in the name of our Christian women whom you have violated; in the name of our slaves whom you have seduced and then consigned to misery; and there I leave justice and vengeance to God. The blood of your brethren crieth unto God from the earth, and it will not cry in vain. It has entered into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth, and will be returned upon you in blood a thousand-fold...<sup>14</sup>*

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<sup>14</sup> General Joseph E. Johnston, "General Field Orders, No. 2," Leonidas Polk Papers, 1767-1937, University of North Carolina, Microfilm; *Funeral Services at the Burial of the Right Rev. Leonidas Polk, D. D. Together with the Sermon Delivered in St. Paul's Church, Augusta, Ga., on June 29, 1864: Being the Feast of St. Peter the Apostle.* (Columbia: Evans & Cogswell, 1864) Documenting the American South. University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1999.

## A CONCLUDING COLLECT: THE CAMPBELL THESIS

The Collect for the Holy Day of Saint Matthew the Apostle: O Almighty God, who by thy blessed Son didst call Matthew from the receipt of custom, to be an Apostle and Evangelist: Grant us grace to forsake all covetous desires, and inordinate love of riches, and to follow the same thy Son Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*  
—*The Book of Common Prayer* (1789)

Priests used Bishop Polk's blood to baptize countless souls as they worshiped a Lost Cause for indeed something real had been lost. The Civil War reformulated the South's class structure, and as a result the Episcopal Church. Contrary to the traditional rendering which depicts the American Revolution and disestablishment movement as the greatest redefining moments for the Episcopal Church in the South, the Civil War proved far more consequential to the institution. Although the Episcopal Church experienced an unquestioned nadir resulting from the American Revolution, the lack of a social revolution in the South ensured that any downward spiral would be temporary. Since the American Revolution and disestablishment had not changed the South's class structure, the Episcopal Church never really faced extinction prior to 1860. Indeed, beginning in the 1820s, the Episcopal Church thrived in the South as a Cotton Communion of wealthy and pious planter class families. In 1860, expanding parishes, slave missions, new dioceses, and an ever-growing number of communicants suggested that had the Civil War not intervened resurgent Episcopalians in the South would have been competitive with evangelical Protestants for generations to come. Separation from the Church of England,

codification of disestablishment laws, and even the Canaan's language of evangelicalism could not seriously threaten the survival of the Episcopal Church in the South, so long as the planter class proved able to support the continuance of the institution.<sup>1</sup>

The Civil War, however, destroyed the Episcopal Church's Cotton Communion that had existed in 1860 by causing vanquished planters to adjust to a post-emancipation society replete with missionary capitalists seeking to convert Southerners to their market rituals. Unlike the American Revolution, the Civil War had challenged the hegemony of the South's planter class, and by extension posed the greatest danger to the Episcopal Church in the region since its inception. Planters had controlled the Anglican tradition in the South from the very first parish organized at Jamestown through the thriving ten Episcopal dioceses that existed at the start of the Civil War. In spite of the numerical superiority of evangelical Protestant churches, the Episcopal Church remained the singular religious institution in the South most attuned to the region's social and political values. The Civil War began a long process of severing the alignment between the Episcopal Church and the South's politics that had been forged in the early seventeenth century. Even as evangelical Protestantism ascended after the Civil War in the region's politics and filled the void, Episcopalians carved out a counterculture that provided their church with a new relevancy on the political margins that no longer depended upon the planter class.

Episcopalians in the South today are very different creatures from those who lived in the Cotton Communion. Perhaps, no other book better captures the long-term trajectory of the Episcopal Church in the South than Will Campbell's *And Also With You: Duncan Gray and the American Dilemma*. Although Campbell suggests *And Also With You* might not be history "in the ivy-tinged scholastic sense," the book must be considered one of the most significant

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1980), 54-55.

contributions to the historiography of the Episcopal Church in the South. Campbell's analysis uses a visit to Bishop Duncan Montgomery Gray Jr. at Sewanee as the prism through which to study the Episcopal Church's role in the South in both the past and present. Campbell begins by recounting Bishop Gray's activism in Mississippi's civil rights movement as opponents attacked the Rector of St. Peter's Church in Oxford during the integration crisis at the University of Mississippi in 1962. Following the unrest on the University of Mississippi's campus, Reverend Gray turned to the Confession of Sin in *The Book of Common Prayer* to remind his congregation at St. Peter's Church on October 7 regarding societal sins of omission:

...You and I didn't go out and throw bricks and bottles....Yet...we are responsible for the moral and political climate in our state which made such a tragedy possible...Maybe you and I didn't actually create the climate, but, if we didn't, it is certainly evident that we did all too little to dispel it or change it...It is we who have failed. We have failed our children, our University, and our state. It is for that we pray God's forgiveness this morning...to continue to breathe defiance and disobedience—will only bring more suffering and anguish. It will only mean more of the same violence and horror that has shocked us so deeply since we last came together at this altar of the Lord...

Throughout *And Also With You*, Campbell flashes back to the Episcopal Church's development in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In particular, Campbell recounts how the University Greys left the University of Mississippi, backed by the Reverend-Chancellor Frederick A. P. Barnard, a century earlier to fight in the Civil War in defense of their slave society. Campbell's astute analysis used the essence of place by chronicling the long saga of slavery, Civil War, racism, and civil rights in Mississippi. That juxtaposition of the University Greys and Bishop Gray became the basis for the Campbell thesis on the Episcopal Church, which he eloquently summarized: "And over the years Grey would turn to Gray." In one sentence, Campbell captures the radical and century-long transformation that occurred for Episcopalians in the South. In doing so, *And Also With You* makes a convincing case that defeat in the Civil War--

not the American Revolution or disestablishment—slowly reconstructed the Episcopal Church. The preceding dissertation subscribes to the Campbell thesis in recognizing the complexity of how religions can be defenders of established hierarchies or righteous advocates for social change. No other religious tradition in the South better encapsulates both polarities in its historical experiences than the Episcopal Church. To study the Episcopalians of the preceding dissertation is to "see through a glass darkly" awaiting an expectant transformation that incrementally occurred during the ensuing century.<sup>2</sup>

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Episcopal Church began to renegotiate its relationship to social class in the United States. A number of Episcopalians in the South joined the endeavor as the region witnessed new social problems wrought by increasing capitalist transformation. For example, Episcopalians in the Diocese of Kentucky deployed missionaries into the mining communities located in the eastern regions of the Bluegrass State. Reverend Henry H. Sneed presided over the Middleborough Mission in Bell County. In 1892, Sneed reported to the diocesan convention that Episcopalians had erected a "Mission Chapel at the Mingo Mountain Mines at the cost of \$356." According to Reverend Sneed, his average Sunday schedule included: "Celebration of the Holy Communion, 7:30 A.M.; Sunday-school 9:30; Morning Service, 11; Sunday-school and Service at the Mines, five miles away, 3 to 5 o'clock P.M.; Evening Prayer at 8 o'clock." Bishop Thomas Underwood Dudley of Kentucky celebrated the work of Sneed, but added a warning that in the mining mountains diocesan boundaries blurred since one of the missionary chapels appeared to be "situated in the Diocese of Tennessee." Bishop Dudley had "no fear" that the Bishop of Tennessee would object, because the chapel aided the vital work of extending the church's services to the working-class miners of

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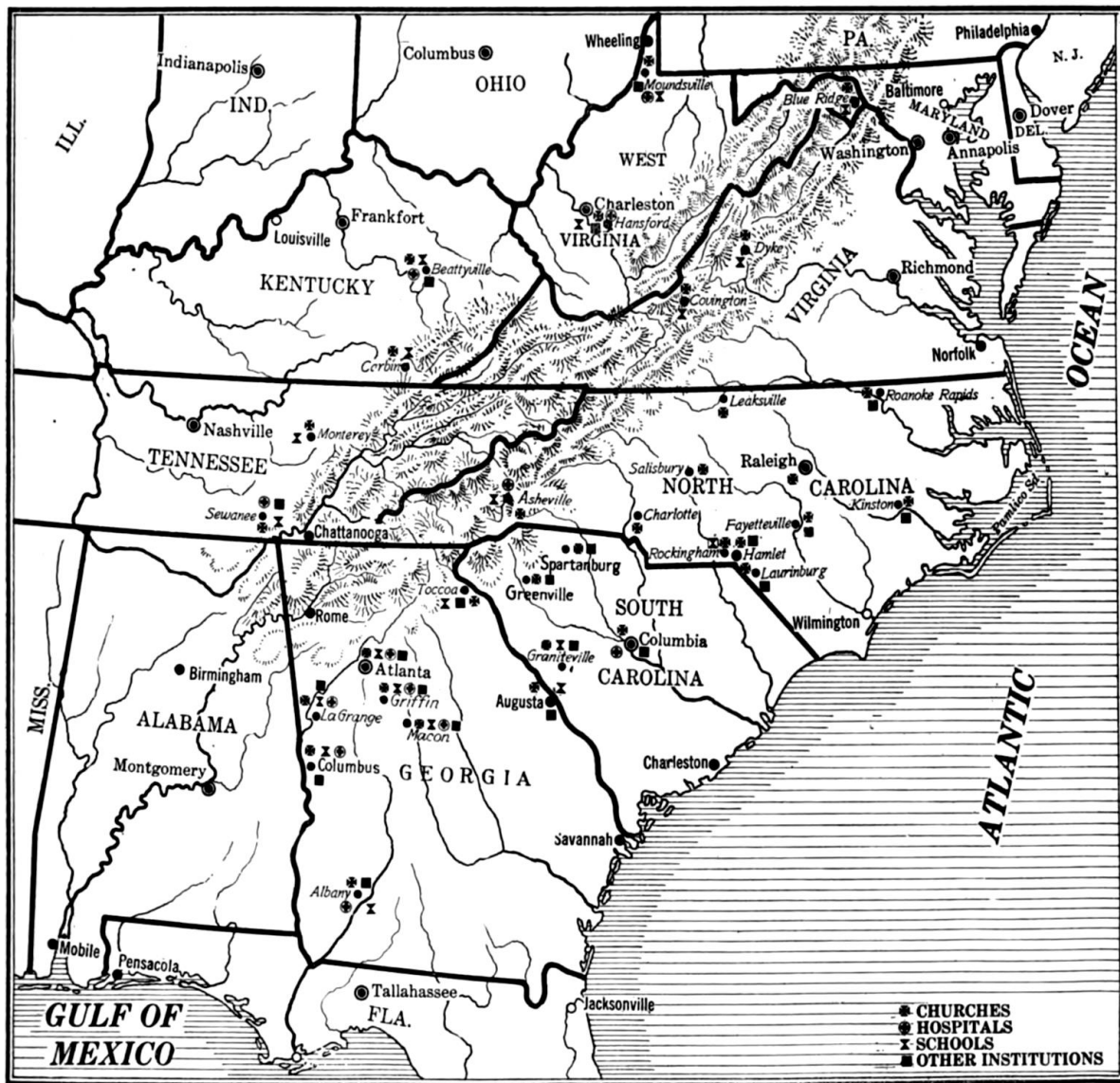
<sup>2</sup> Will D. Campbell, *And Also With You: Duncan Gray and the American Dilemma* (Franklin, TN: Providence Publishing House, 1997), ix-x, 3-11, 22-23, 212-213, 264; Araminta Stone Johnston, *And One Was a Priest: The Life and Times of Duncan M. Gray Jr.* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011), 170-174.



Appalachia. Beyond local dioceses and parishes, the Episcopal Church's bureaucracies joined the initiative to minister the South's poor and working class. The Episcopal Church's various agencies issued a detailed report entitled *General Survey of the Needs and Activities of the Episcopal Church* in 1919 to outline the denomination's plan for missions and social services, which included a section on "The Dwellers in Appalachia." Episcopalians projected that two-thirds of the estimated 3,000,000 people living in Appalachia identified themselves as "churchless" in 1919. Figure C.1 is an actual map from the *General Survey of the Needs and Activities* depicting the outposts of the Episcopal Church's holy warriors for the poor. The contrast could not be more definitive between the motivations of Bishop Polk and the Episcopal missionaries of the early twentieth century. In 1864, Bishop Polk had ascended Pine Mountain to defend a Confederate nation dedicated to the class hegemony of the South's planters, and that aspiration stood in stark distinction to the Episcopalians who ascended the South's mountains in the early twentieth century to serve the impoverished and the marginalized. The map majestically captures Sewanee's radical transformation from the prewar center of a Cotton Communion of planters into a postwar command center for southern mission stations designed to spread the Gospel and a "social conscience" amongst Appalachia's working class.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Kentucky* (Louisville: John P. Morton and Company, 1892), 5, 52, 73; *Journal of Proceedings of the Sixty-Fifth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Kentucky* (Louisville: John P. Morton and Company, 1893), 111; *General Survey of the Needs and Activities of the Episcopal Church* (New York: Nation-Wide Campaign, 1919), 28-33.



**Figure C.1: "The Dwellers in Appalachia"—  
The Episcopal Church's Mission Stations in the South, 1919.**

Source: *General Survey of the Needs and Activities of the Episcopal Church* (New York City: Nation-Wide Campaign, 1919).

**Bishop Robert Strange of East Carolina**



**Bishop William Alexander Guerry of South Carolina**



**Figure C.2: Transitional Southern Bishops**

Source: *The House of Bishops: The Latest Portraits of the Living Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States in the Order of Consecration* (New York: The Churchmen Company, 1907), 88, 102.

Outside of Appalachia, Episcopalians in the South targeted child labor. Arkansas-born Edgar Gardner Murphy attended the University of the South before serving in the Episcopal ministry, including a stint as Rector of St. John's Church in Montgomery, Alabama. Murphy's tenure in Montgomery allowed him to see the brutal conditions of many of Alabama's mills. Examples of children as young as ten toiling fulltime prompted Murphy to organize the Alabama Child Labor Committee to lobby for political change in the state. In 1904, Murphy launched the National Child Labor Committee. After Murphy died, William Porcher DuBose suggested that the term "saint" should be applied to the Episcopal priest and progressive crusader. Murphy's example inspired other Episcopalians in the South to accept a prophetic voice against child labor. For example, Bishop Thomas Frank Gailor promised the National Child Labor Committee that he would encourage his Diocese of Tennessee to "have the fourth Sunday in January observed throughout the Diocese by special services and addresses to promote the cause."<sup>4</sup>

Along with child laborers, the Episcopal Church had a concerted initiative to target resources on caring for cotton-mill workers throughout the region. In 1919, the *General Survey of the Needs and Activities of the Episcopal Church* considered cotton mills to be "one of the greatest opportunities for growth now before the Church." Episcopalians, using census data from 1910, estimated that South's mill town population had reached 3,000,000 in the early twentieth century. The *General Survey of the Needs and Activities of the Episcopal Church* pointed to the state of South Carolina as a "typical mill situation" in the South since the Palmetto State had mills in twenty-nine counties that relied upon 62,904 workers and their families. Bishop William Alexander Guerry used his annual address to the Diocese of South Carolina to summon the

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<sup>4</sup> William Porcher DuBose, "Edgar Gardner Murphy: An Appreciation," *Sewanee Review* Vol. XXII No. 4 (October 1914), 492-497; Wayne Flynt, *Alabama in the Twentieth Century* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2004), 43-44; *Journal of the Eighty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Church in the Diocese of Tennessee* (Nashville: Brandau-Craig-Dickerson Co., 1916), 99.

state's Episcopalians to mobilize their parishes for the state's working class. The Bishop of South Carolina offered a blunt and confessional assessment of how the legacy of the Cotton Communion's class hegemony persisted in haunting the Episcopal Church:

...Rightly or wrongly, laboring people in this country...feel that the Church is the bulwark of conservatism, and the enemy of progress. It is allied in their eyes with wealth and privilege; it is silent in the face of the rich and powerful pewholder, when it should lift up its voice in protest against social wrong and economic injustice...

After explicating upon the role of pastors and religious leaders in the British Labour Party, Bishop Guerry proclaimed that the "estranged masses" needed to recognize that their social and economic goals reflected "Christ's great conception of a Kingdom of God: a Kingdom founded upon righteousness and social justice." Misguided Christians, the Bishop of South Carolina continued, had "made religion too much a matter between God and the individual soul" rather than also addressing the relationship between "the individual and society." In closing his address to Episcopalians in South Carolina, Bishop Guerry prophetically asked: "Are we Churchmen prepared to preach the Social Gospel of the Kingdom of God?" Bishop Guerry's spiritual responsibility for a state with a rapidly expanding population of mill laborers had compelled him to question the Episcopal Church's relationship with social class. As cotton mills increased in the South the Episcopal Church began to renegotiate its relationship with social class in the post-Civil War cotton communion. Rather than prioritizing the planters and their upper-class successors, many Episcopalians in the South began to target their gospel message to mill workers and the poor.<sup>5</sup>

Two Episcopalians seeking to build the Kingdom of God described by Bishop Guerry traveled to Atlanta, Georgia to attend the Southern Sociological Congress in 1913. Bishop

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<sup>5</sup> *General Survey of the Needs and Activities of the Episcopal Church*, 33-38; *Journal of the One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Carolina* (Columbia: The R. L. Bryan Company, 1918), 63-69.

Robert Strange of the Episcopal Church's Diocese of East Carolina traveled to Atlanta from his home in Wilmington, North Carolina to declare his understanding of the church's role in advocating social justice. According to Bishop Strange, the church served as the "machinery with which [a minister] is to work the community, the city, or State for the advancement of the kingdom of God." Christians had a calling, Bishop Strange suggested, "to insure justice between man and man and to make the conditions of life more tolerable, more righteous, and more happy." Upon arrival in Wilmington, Bishop Strange recounted his awakening to the "problem of poverty" as there "were beggars at the door and on the streets." Such visible evidence of suffering served for Bishop Strange as an awakening to a "Christian conscience" designed to "press the power...on every power that can help, political and social." Bishop Strange concluded by surmising that Christians making "human life juster [sic], sweeter, and more righteous" would kindle a holy "fire...neither man nor devil can quench."<sup>6</sup>

At the very same Southern Sociological Congress in 1913, Reverend F. M. Crouch of the Protestant Episcopal Church's Joint Commission on Social Service delivered a paper on how Sunday Schools had the capacity to train an army of kingdom-making Christians committed to pursuing economic justice. One recommendation offered by Reverend Crouch including using the prophets Amos, Isaiah, and Micah as the basis for Sunday School lessons for young boys and girls to ensure they learn the "social aspect of the Bible." According to Reverend Crouch, Sunday School teachers had to be "inoculated with the social gospel" to provide their students with the teachings of the "Son of Man engaged in a crusade not only against the powers of the personal, individual evil...sin, but against the iniquities of the established order of the day." Reverend Crouch claimed that Sunday School teachers would "profit" from reading Bouck

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<sup>6</sup> Bishop Robert Strange, "How to Relate Church Activities to Social Service," *The South Mobilizing for Social Service: Addresses Delivered at the Southern Sociological Congress* (Nashville: Southern Sociological Congress, 1913), 541-545.

White's *The Call of the Carpenter*, because despite some heretical statements the book provided "needed emphasis on the social implications of the Gospels." Bouck White had warned Christianity of a deep "gulf between worshippers and workers...the alienation of labour from the church." *The Call of Carpenter* promised the church that "the working class will come back to her altars thronging her as they thronged her Founder from Galilee to Golgotha...[the] task of the twentieth century is going to be to convert the Church to The Carpenter." For White, the "Nazareth Workingman" recruited disciples to covert others to "a social gospel." The Jesus described in *The Call of the Carpenter* "identified himself with the proletariat of the ancient world" creating an "all-mastering faith in the common people." According to *The Call of the Carpenter*, "The Carpenter of Nazareth has redeemed the toiling masses from contempt...the hands which were nailed to Golgotha's cross had known the feel of tools and probably bore even at the moment some callouses from his wage-earner days." White powerfully surmised that Christ's crucifixion could be explained in part because the "Workingman of Nazareth" had "lifted up his voice against the industrial oppression; therefore he was led to the slaughter, though there was no harm found in him." Reverend Crouch's plea for the Sunday School teachers in the Episcopal Church to be inspired by White's holy manifesto contained extra symbolism since he delivered it in Atlanta. Just over fifty years earlier Episcopalians in in the very same city had used the religious education provided by Sunday Schools to perpetuate the planter class's hegemony over slaves, while in the early twentieth century Crouch and other Episcopal leaders in the same city now called their church to envision a Christ who not only preached a gospel of liberating solidarity with laborers, but had himself belonged to the working class.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Reverend F. M. Crouch, "The Sunday School as a Social Agency," *The South Mobilizing for Social Service: Addresses Delivered at the Southern Sociological Congress* (Nashville: Southern Sociological Congress, 1913), 545-552; Bouck White, *The Call of the Carpenter* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1914), 298, 311-315, 339, 349-350.

A church that once sanctified labor exploitation has started to stand with persecuted workers. Unlike the churchmen and churchwomen in the Cotton Communion, Episcopalians since the Civil War have battled against the rapacious abuses committed by the South's new economic barons. The United Mine Workers (UMW) began a strike in Carbo, Virginia after the Pittston Coal Group Inc. eliminated health benefits "to widows of UMW miners, disabled miners, and retired miners" in February 1989. Episcopalians demonstrated solidarity with the UMW by joining other faith activists on the picket lines in May. Police arrested Uncas McThenia, "chancellor of the Episcopal Church's southwestern Virginia diocese" along with other religious leaders for violating a restraining order issued by a federal judge. Strikers, including Episcopal activists, had blocked the paths of trucks hauling coal. During the arrest, McThenia carried a letter from the Episcopal Church's Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and Bishop A. Heath Light of Southwestern Virginia. Browning and Light offered an endorsement to the UMW, writing "by your peaceful, nonviolent witness and behavior [you] will help to abolish the injustices and hatreds by which policies alienate all persons of your communities and afflict the vulnerable and the needy." More recently, a broken immigration system has created a new systems of unfair labor practices. Immigration to the South has compelled many of the region's Episcopalians to advocate for reforms to the nation's immigration laws which enable inhumane labor practices. Bishop C. Andrew Doyle of the Diocese of Texas signed a letter with other religious leaders from the Lone Star State that declared in part "we see in the faces and hear in the voices of the immigrants in our midst, the image of God." Bishop Doyle and his colleagues urged the nation's politicians to pass laws to "punish those who exploit the immigrant." Gone is the communion that immersed itself in the brutal profiteering off the labor of others that empowered the planter class, instead many Episcopalians in the contemporary



South have decided to display unity with the region's working class in its pursuit of economic justice. The slow erosion of class-based captivities began a long process of change for the Episcopal Church in the South. Liberated from viewing the Episcopal Church's social mission through the planter class's eyes, churchmen and churchwomen gradually embraced the holiness of advocating social justice for their fellow Southerners in other areas.<sup>8</sup>

A church once defined by the planter class helped carry the flame of freedom in the South's civil rights movement. The laborious and painful journey to civil rights began in the tumultuous years following the Civil War as "thousands" of black Episcopalians exercised their new religious freedom to exit the Episcopal Church in the South. The General Conference of 1865 responded to the exodus by creating the Freedman's Commission, which would later be renamed the Commission on Home Missions to Colored People. Episcopalians charged the Freedman's Commission with halting their losses among African Americans by using a variety of evangelistic initiatives including the erection of educational facilities during Reconstruction in the South. The Freedman's Commission raised the prospect of appointing a bishop for freedmen in a report to the General Convention. Appointing bishops for black Episcopalians emerged as divisive issue for the church as it exposed institutional racism and disagreements over the meaning of inclusive fellowship. In the 1870s, Episcopalians commenced a lengthy debate on two plans: appointing black suffragan bishops under the supervision of white bishops versus the creation of black missionary districts. The General Convention of 1910 approved a canon creating black suffragan bishops without the right of succession. Pursuant to the new policy, Episcopalians elected their first black bishops to serve in the United States in the persons of

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<sup>8</sup> David Reed, "Church Leaders Jailed as Strike Arrests Top 2000," *The Harlan Daily Enterprise*, 25 May 1989; Michael deCourcy Hinds, "Bitter Coal Strike May Be at End, but Ripples From Dispute Are Widely Felt," *The New York Times*, 23 December 1989; Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, Janice Riggle Huie, C. Andrew Doyle, et al., "Vagueness of Arizona Law Invites Violations of Rights," *Houston Chronicle*, 13 May 2010, <http://www.chron.com/opinion> Date Accessed September 3, 2012.

Bishop Henry B. Delany of North Carolina and Bishop Edward T. Demby of Arkansas. One biographer has called Bishop Demby "the Jackie Robinson of the Episcopal Church." Critics of the church's treatment of black Episcopalians, however, labeled the new suffragan positions as "puppet bishops" and "suffering bishops." Reflective of the racism and segregation in American culture of the era, the Episcopal Church had created a separate and unequal class of bishops for black Episcopalians.<sup>9</sup>

During the middle decades of the twentieth century, many Episcopalians began a gradual awakening to the view that their discipleship encouraged civil rights. In 1954, the Supreme Court's landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision declaring unconstitutional the segregationist "separate but equal" doctrine occurred at a decisive moment for the Episcopal Church. The Supreme Court's ruling emerged just as white and black Episcopalians from around the world were making preparations to attend the General Convention of 1955 in the southern city of Houston, Texas, which happened to still be governed by an array of segregation laws. After listening to supporters of the civil rights movement, Presiding Bishop Henry Knox Sherrill decided that the General Convention would convene in Honolulu, Hawaii rather than Houston as a way to offer a living witness to the Episcopal Church's opposition to segregation. Once gathered in Honolulu at the General Convention of 1955, Episcopal-legislators advised all church members to "accept and support the ruling of the Supreme Court."<sup>10</sup>

Episcopal activism during the civil rights appeared in a variety of forms in the following two decades. Bishops in the Episcopal Church used their offices to propound grand statements endorsing civil rights. Presiding Bishop Arthur Lichtenberger issued a statement in May 1963

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<sup>9</sup> Michael J. Beary, *Black Bishop: Edward T. Demby and the Struggle for Racial Equality in the Episcopal Church* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 279.

<sup>10</sup> Harold T. Lewis, *Yet With A Steady Beat: The African American Struggle for Recognition in the Episcopal Church* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 143, 148; David Hein and Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr. *The Episcopalians* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 293-294.

proclaiming that "Discrimination within the Body of the Church itself is an intolerable scandal." In August 1963, the entire House of Bishops joined their Presiding Bishop by publically endorsing the enactment of effectual civil rights legislation. At the local level, Episcopalians attempted to challenge segregation and inequality. For example, authorities in Florida arrested three wives of Episcopal Church bishops because they had engaged in interracial demonstrations at a restaurant and motel in St. Augustine in 1964. Other Episcopalians weaved the civil rights struggle into the liturgy of their church. For instance, Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination occurred three days prior to Palm Sunday in 1968. Reverend Duncan Gray dedicated his entire Palm Sunday sermon at St. Paul's Church in Meridian, Mississippi to analyzing the striking commonalities between the sacred teachings, passions, and sacrificial deaths of King and Christ. For any skeptical parishioners who doubted the commonality between King and Jesus, Reverend Gray had a message: "it often takes the perspective of distance and detachment to recognize true greatness...The people of Nazareth would not accept [Jesus]...the people of Jerusalem finally killed him."<sup>11</sup>

The Episcopal Church dispatched holy saints willing to sacrifice all for black Southerners in pursuit of the church's increasingly egalitarian gospel. Reverend John B. Morris of South Carolina assisted in organizing the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity (ESCRU) in 1959. Reverend Morris encountered hostility, however, from some white Episcopalians in the South including Bishop Charles Carpenter of Alabama, who he described as a chaplain "to the dying order of the Confederacy." New Episcopal blood soaked into the South's soil on August 20, 1965. Jonathan Daniels, a student at the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, enlisted in ESCRU and traveled to Alabama. Daniels participated in the

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<sup>11</sup> Campbell, *And Also With You*, 177-178; David Hein and Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr. *The Episcopalians* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 135; Johnston, *And One Was a Priest*, 222-224.

ESCRU's efforts to desegregate St. Paul's Church in Selma. Daniels had also joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in its efforts to register black voters in the Selma-region. Opponents of civil rights murdered Jonathan Daniels on August 20, 1965 as he worked on a SNCC project. Daniel's bloody martyrdom for civil rights demonstrated for a new generation of Episcopalians in the South a kingdom-cause both worthy of adoration and more consistent with their gospel than Bishop Polk's lost cause.<sup>12</sup>

A church once committed to patriarchy gradually moved to include women in the denomination's leadership. In the decades following the Civil War, Episcopal women continued to serve on shadow vestries throughout the South. For example, Assistant Bishop Hugh Miller Thompson reported to the Diocese of Mississippi in 1885 that for many defunct parishes "sometimes one man and sometimes a woman...stands for the Church and represents a 'vestry' that years ago ceased to exist." Shadow vestrywomen remained committed to their parishes, even when all hope appeared lost in the post-Civil War South. Such fidelity encouraged women in the North and South to advocate for greater inclusion. Episcopalians from the South often played leading roles in advocating more rights for women. Bishop William Alexander Guerry offered an impassioned plea for his Diocese of South Carolina in 1919 to extend "the franchise to women at...Parish meetings." For Bishop Guerry, a "Church which withholds the franchise from its women is certainly an anachronism." After noting the pending amendment on women's suffrage to the Constitution of the United States, Bishop Guerry warned Episcopalians that they risked "the charge that the Church in a democratic age is less democratic than the State." The Bishop of South Carolina considered granting women voting rights in the church a matter of

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<sup>12</sup> Harold T. Lewis, *Yet With A Steady Beat: The African American Struggle for Recognition in the Episcopal Church* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 150-155; Charles Eagles, *Outside Agitator: Jon Daniels and the Civil Rights Movement in Alabama* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2000); David Hein and Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr. *The Episcopalians* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 123-137.

"justice." Other Southerners joined Bishop Guerry in to extend the advocacy for the inclusion of women to the national church at the General Convention. Margaret L. Campbell of the Missionary District of Southern Florida sent a petition to the General Convention in 1919. Campbell prayed that the Episcopal Church would "lead the Catholic World by giving absolute equality to its women." The House of Bishops referred the Campbell Petition to the Committee on Memorials and Petitions. On the sixth day of the General Convention, the House of Bishops agreed to discharge the Committee on Memorials and Petitions from further consideration of the Campbell Petition, thus avoiding any recommendations for policy changes. Supporters of extending more rights to women in the Episcopal Church offered additional proposals during the General Convention in 1919. Kentuckians from the Diocese of Lexington requested that the House of Deputies render a "judgment...to the desirability of making women eligible to representation in Diocesan Councils." The House of Deputies responded by leaving such decisions up to the "actions of the several Dioceses themselves." Meanwhile, the Synod of the Province of the Pacific petitioned the House of Deputies seeking an interpretation of church law on women serving in provincial synods. The House of Deputies argued that amended Canon 51 "provides that women may be elected by any Diocese to represent such Diocese in the Provincial Synod." Following the example of the Campbell Petition, a group of laymen and clergymen from the Diocese of Pittsburgh requested that the General Convention eliminate gendered language in the church constitution by amending the governing document to omit the word "layman," thus ensuring all communicants male or female would be allowed to serve in the House of Deputies. The House of Deputies referred the petition to the Committee on Amendments to the Constitution. Meanwhile the House of Bishops deferred to the House of Deputies since the proposed amendment would have a greater affect upon the other chamber.

The House of Deputies' Committee on Amendments ultimately recommended that the amendment not be adopted. Before accepting the committee's recommendation, a deputy from Maine offered a last-minute compromise proposal that would have changed Article I Section 4 with an amendment replacing "Laymen communicants" with "Lay communicants." A majority of the House of Deputies rejected the deputy from Maine's compromise and accepted the committee's report to maintain the gendered language permitting only men to occupy the church's highest offices. Although advocates for the inclusion of women had suffered legislative defeat, the struggle would continue throughout the remainder of the twentieth century.<sup>13</sup>

Twenty-seven years after the defeats of the General Convention of 1919, demonstrable harbingers of success for Episcopal women appeared at the General Convention of 1946. In a historic decision, the House of Deputies voted to seat Mrs. Randolph Dyer of St. Louis as a lay delegate. The General Convention of 1946, however, rejected calls to insert gender neutral language by substituting "layperson" for "layman" in the church's constitution. Progress for Episcopal women proved uneven, because only three years later the General Convention of 1949 refused to seat three duly elected women sent as deputies from the Dioceses of Nebraska, Missouri, and Olympia. Alongside the ongoing civil rights struggle for African Americans, Episcopal women in the South levied prophetic assaults upon patriarchal attitudes of exclusion in the 1960s and 1970s. Seventy-seven dioceses of the Episcopal Church permitted women to exit the shadow vestries and serve on official parish vestries in 1967. Seven years later in 1974, the Episcopal Church ordained women to the priesthood for the first time with the "Philadelphia Eleven." The Philadelphia Eleven began a long and arduous process of shattering the barriers to

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<sup>13</sup> *Journal of the One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Carolina* (Columbia: The R. L. Bryan Company, 1919), 60-61; *Journal of the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America Held in the City of Detroit...in the Year of Our Lord 1919* (Printed for the Convention: 1920), 41-42, 78-81, 87, 297, 347-348, 426.

women's equality within the Episcopal Church. Carter Heyward belonged to the Philadelphia Eleven. Born and raised in North Carolina, Heyward epitomized how Episcopal women in the South had moved out of shadow vestries to claim power in their church. The General Convention of 1976 approved the "regular" ordination of women, which it authorized to commence the following year. The Dioceses of Alabama, Arkansas, and Virginia joined twenty-three other dioceses in ordaining women at the first opportunity in January 1977. Six additional southern dioceses ordained women prior to the end of 1977. Some Episcopalians from the South remained hostile to women in the priesthood. The Episcopal Church selected Bishop John Allin of Mississippi to serve as Presiding Bishop. A conservative who had expressed his unease with ordaining women, Presiding Bishop Allin guided the House of Bishops in adopting a "conscience clause" in 1977 which allowed bishops to refuse ordination for women. In spite of such persistent obstacles, women successfully entered the priesthood in the South. Based upon an analysis of surveys completed by women who served in the Episcopal priesthood in the South, D. Jonathan Grieser, Corrie Norman, and Don S. Armentrout conclude that some: "identify their mission with a broader mission of liberation, usually mentioning race and class as well as gender...[w]ithout calling it 'feminism,' however, a majority of them describe an important part of their ministry as empowering women of all ages to become more active in the parish." By 1998, the southern dioceses of the Episcopal Church employed 368 women priests. In 2002, the Diocese of Southern Virginia elected Cherokee priest Carol J. Gallagher as its Assistant Bishop. Feminism and the advocacy for women's equality both have made the South's shadow vestries vestiges of an exclusionary past since women now have opportunities to occupy the highest positions within the Episcopal Church.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Mary Sudman Donovan, "Beyond the Parallel Church: Strategies of Separatism and Integration in the Governing Councils of the Episcopal Church," in *Episcopal Women: Gender, Spirituality and Commitment in an American*

A church that thrived in the Cotton Communion's inequalities now risks crippling schism and division as it advocates equality for gays and lesbians in the South. Beginning in the 1970s, the Episcopal Church joined other Protestant denominations in the United States in wrestling with the reconciliation of Christianity to human sexuality. The General Convention pursued conservative policies in the late 1970s. Gay and lesbian Episcopalians celebrated Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning's promise to craft a church with "no outcasts" after his selection in 1985. Although progress would be gradual, signs of definitive change emerged in the 1990s. In 1996, a church court of eight bishops acquitted Walter Righter for ordaining Barry Stopfel—an openly gay man—six years earlier. A majority of the bishops serving on the court concluded that ordaining a gay man had "not violated any core doctrine of Christianity." Seven years later, the General Convention of 2003 ratified the election of New Hampshire's Reverend Canon V. Gene Robinson to the episcopacy. A graduate of the Cotton Communion's University of the South, Robinson's elevation marked a milestone since the Bishop of New Hampshire lived in a committed relationship with his male partner at the time of his election. More recently, North Carolina became the final state in the South to vote on inserting a so-called "marriage amendment" into its state constitution in May 2012. North Carolina's marriage amendment declared in part "marriage between one man and one woman is the only domestic legal union." Conservative-evangelical Protestants mobilized to support the amendment. North Carolinian and

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*Mainline Denomination* ed. Catherine M. Prelinger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 157; Cynthia Lynn Lyerly, "In Service, Silence, and Strength: Women in Southern Churches," in *Religion And Public Life in the South: In the Evangelical Mode* ed. Charles Reagan Wilson and Mark Silk (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2005), 112-114; D. Jonathan Grier, Corrie E Norman, and Don S. Armentrout, "Quiet Revolutionaries: Stories of Women Priests in the South," in *Religion in the Contemporary South: Changes, Continuities, and Contexts* ed. Corrie E. Norman and Don S. Armentrout (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2005), 275-299; "Finding Aid for Carter Heyward Papers, 1967-1998," [http://library.columbia.edu/content/dam/libraryweb/libraries/burke/fa/awts/ldpd\\_5628207.pdf](http://library.columbia.edu/content/dam/libraryweb/libraries/burke/fa/awts/ldpd_5628207.pdf), Columbia University, date accessed 3 September 2012; *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*, Vol. 1, ed. Rosemary Skinner Keller and Rosemary Radford Ruether (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 278; Robert Pritchard, *A History of the Episcopal Church* (Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing, 1999), 264-268.



evangelical icon Billy Graham entered into the fray and lent his esteemed voice to the pro-amendment forces after he publically endorsed the marriage amendment. Opponents of the marriage amendment did have religious allies in their battle for equality, including a vocal Episcopal Church. Bishops Michael B. Curry, Clifton Daniel III and G. Porter Taylor, all of North Carolina, issued a pastoral letter opposing the marriage amendment by prophetically maintaining:

...all persons are to be treated with the love, respect, and dignity that befit a child of God. Therefore, we do not believe that the Bible or the Constitution of our state and nation should be used to oppress, harm or restrict the human rights and dignity of any human being. On the contrary, Jesus has taught us that the greatest and most important of all the commandments of God are to love God and to love our neighbor... Amendment One falls dangerously short of that standard.

Curry, Daniel, and Porter appealed to the baptismal covenant found in *The Book of Common Prayer* which upholds "the dignity of every human being." The Episcopal Bishops of North Carolina and other progressive North Carolinians lost the marriage vote in a landslide. On Election Day, 61% of North Carolina's voters supported the amendment, with only 39% in opposition. Even in defeat, Bishops Curry, Daniel, and Porter had confirmed the Episcopal Church's new countercultural identity in the South by proposing that the very same Bible being wielded by pro-amendment evangelical Protestants to codify discrimination appeared to many Episcopalians to actually affirm equal rights for gay and lesbian North Carolinians.<sup>15</sup>

Religion continues to be woven in the South's politics, and Episcopalians remain active combatants. Will Campbell's thesis regarding the Episcopal Church reminds all that for religious

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<sup>15</sup> David Hein and Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr. *The Episcopalians* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 143-147; Campbell Robertson, "North Carolina Voters Pass Same-Sex Marriage Ban," *The New York Times*, May 8, 2012; Miranda Leitsinger, "In North Carolina gay marriage vote, it's Bill Clinton versus Billy Graham," NBCNEWS.com, [http://usnews.nbcnews.com/\\_news/2012/05/07/11579197-in-north-carolina-gay-marriage-vote-its-bill-clinton-versus-billy-graham](http://usnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2012/05/07/11579197-in-north-carolina-gay-marriage-vote-its-bill-clinton-versus-billy-graham), Date Accessed September 3, 2012; According to returns compiled by the Associated Press, North Carolinians cast 1,318,486 yes votes and 832,618 no votes on the marriage amendment. Election Returns Compiled by the Associated Press, [http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/files/elections/2012/by\\_state/NC\\_Page\\_0508.html](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/files/elections/2012/by_state/NC_Page_0508.html), Date Accessed September 3, 2012.

institutions the failings of the past do not have to be determinative of the future. Class-based cultural captivities do not have to be permanent. An exodus can happen- Grey can become Gray. The Civil War compelled the Episcopal Church in the South to confront how the cause of the planter class's hegemony had been lost. No longer controlled by planters, Episcopalians in the South over time embraced a countercultural mission that articulated a social gospel supportive of many kingdom-causes that very often challenged the region's prevailing values. Beginning in the twentieth century, the Episcopal Church's activism in the South has included support for: alleviating poverty, civil rights, women's equality, labor unions, justice for immigrants, and ending prejudices based upon an individual's sexuality. Especially during the last eighty years, Southern Episcopalians have served as prophetic and countercultural voices in their region's most divisive political questions. Often exiled to the political wilderness by the region's conservative-evangelical Protestants, Episcopalians have remained unrelenting in their common prayers to build a new South characterized by true equality, social justice, and an inclusiveness whereby all people have a seat at "the Table."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>John Lee Eighmy, *Churches in Cultural Captivity: A History of the Social Attitudes of Southern Baptists* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988); Samuel S. Hill, *Southern Churches in Crisis*, (New York: Hold, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967). Rhys Isaac maintains that evangelicals in pre-Revolution Virginia acted as a "counterculture." In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Episcopalians have become a counterculture in the South against the region's dominant conservative evangelical culture. Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 164. For the "Table," see *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies, as Revised and Proposed to the Use of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (Philadelphia: J. Debrett, 1789), 39-63.

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