

THE PENNSYLVANIA CLERGY AND THE CIVIL WAR

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WE who live in the twentieth century fail to appreciate the influence of the Church upon the religious and political lives of the American people in the mid-nineteenth century. At that time the Church was a strong factor in the life of the nation, and rightly so, because the clergy constituted probably the best educated group of its size in America. Those who attended church—and the proportion was apparently large, for women made reluctant husbands and sons respect the Sabbath in this way—listened attentively and seldom questioned the words spoken by God's servant. To be convinced of the power of the Church and clergy, consult the newspapers from 1850 to 1865, and observe the space devoted to the activities of the Church and to the part played by the clergy in civic and national affairs. Some ministers of the gospel plunged boldly into the political discussions and controversies of the day and often sought and secured political offices in the state and in the federal government. The leading daily and weekly papers, not to mention the county and local papers, published within their columns the sermons of the leading ministers of the time. The people who never attended church could hardly escape the influence of that organization. The ministers met each week more people, in fact many times more, than any influential group in America.

More convincing still of the powerful sway of the clergy over the human mind and thought is to turn to the colleges and universities and examine their records. Students who attended college usually prepared themselves for law or for the ministry because these professions held the greatest opportunity for advancement and social prestige. "In 1861 of a total of 5,771

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students in thirty-nine representative colleges and universities [including several non-sectarian institutions, such as Yale, Michigan, and Washington College in Pennsylvania], 1,204 were preparing for the ministry; sixty-nine, to be missionaries."² A complete survey of all the sectarian and non-sectarian colleges and universities would probably reveal that an even larger proportion were studying for the ministry. Almost all the presidents of these institutions were clergymen and many of the professors were also ministers. In addition daily chapel exercises made it impossible for any student to graduate from an American institution without coming into contact with and being influenced by some strong-minded clergyman.

On the other hand the clergymen had to be cautious. If they went counter to public sentiment within their churches and communities there was danger of losing their influence as well as salaries. Since the southern clergy favored the cause of the Confederacy it might be asserted with an element of truth that the clergy followed public opinion and did not mould and direct it. Where public sentiment was undecided and divided, the clergymen were, as a rule, somewhat conservative, but their opportunities for leadership were proportionately increased. Within the Confederacy and within the Union the influence of the clergy seems to have varied along geographical lines.

Since, in 1860, America's most outstanding young men were drawn to the ministry or to law and politics, to what extent did the Church make its influence felt in politics and vice versa? What influence, if any, did the Church have in the crisis of 1860-1861, and during the war itself? These vital questions I shall attempt to answer.

In the eleven southern states that seceded from the Union, plus Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and the District of Columbia, the Catholic Church and seven leading Protestant churches had accommodations for over 7,000,000 communicant members and church property valued at approximately \$40,000,000. In the

²Lewis G. Vander Velde, *The Presbyterian Churches and the Federal Union, 1861-1869* (Harvard Historical Studies, XXXIII, Cambridge, Mass., 1932), 3. See *Presbyterian Banner*, February 23, 1861. The *Presbyter*, February 21, 1861.

North with a white population over four times as large and with considerably more wealth, the Church accommodations and property proportionately increased.³ In the United States in 1860, the total church accommodations for communicant members was 19,128,761, and the value of church property was estimated at \$172,397,922.⁴

The strength of the various religious groups according to membership in 1860 was as follows: Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Congregationalist, Protestant Episcopal, Lutheran, Christian, Union, German Reformed, Friends, Universalist, Dutch Reformed, Unitarian, Jewish, Moravian, Adventist, Swedenborgian, Spiritualist, Shaker, and other minor sects.⁵ In value of church property the order of the first five was, Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Protestant Episcopal, and Baptist. In proportion to their numbers and influence the Protestant Episcopal and Presbyterian churches were the most wealthy.

By 1860 several of the larger Christian churches had divided into two or more denominations. As is generally known the Methodist and Baptist separated over the slavery question in 1844, but the Presbyterian separated over the question of doctrine, Old and New Schools, in 1837. The Old or Conservative School had most members in the slave states and in the states adjacent thereto, whereas the New or Liberal School had most members in the North. However, some of the most influential members within the Old School lived in Kentucky, Maryland, New York, and Pennsylvania. The most prominent and influential member of the Old School clergy in Pennsylvania was the Reverend Henry A. Boardman of Philadelphia. In the Old School there were secessionists of the South; in Kentucky there were advocates of neutrality long before the state made up its mind on the question; in Pennsylvania there were those who opposed slavery, but urged the people to use caution in speech and temper in regard to slavery and the national crisis. Because the clergy of the extreme southern states advocated secession and played a conspicuous part in taking South Carolina, Alabama, Missis-

³ *Statistics of the United States . . . in 1860; compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census.* (Washington, 1866), "Miscellaneous," pp. 352-501.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

issippi, and Louisiana out of the Union, and because of the conservatism of the Old School Church and clergy, the members of this body were often accused falsely of being secessionist sympathizers and supporters. On the other hand the New School, a smaller organization and fervently patriotic, with its membership almost entirely in the North, became extremely anti-southern and anti-slavery.

As early as 1818 the General Assembly of the Presbyterians took a pronounced stand on the question of slavery when it reported:

We consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another . . . utterly inconsistent with the law of God . . . and . . . totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the Gospel of Christ. . . . It is manifestly the duty of all Christians who enjoy the light of the present day . . . as speedily as possible to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout Christendom, and if possible, through the world.⁶

In 1825 the Assembly praised the efforts of the Presbyterian Church to impart religious instruction to the slaves with these words: "No more honored name can be conferred on a minister of Jesus Christ than that of *Apostle to the American slaves*"⁷

Eight years after the division of the Presbyterian Church the General Assembly of the Old School resolved, "That the General Assembly . . . was originally organized, and has since continued the bond of union in the church, upon the conceded principle that the existence of domestic slavery, under the circumstances in which it is found in the southern portion of the country, is no bar to Christian communion."⁸ The next year the General Assembly asserted that this has been substantially the position of the Church on the subject of slavery from the beginning.⁹ In 1849 the General Assembly unanimously voted

⁶ Robert E. Thompson, *A History of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States* (American Church History Series, VI, New York, 1895), 364-368. See E. H. Gillett, *History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Revised edition, 2 vols., Philadelphia, 1873), I, 2-6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 242.

⁸ Thompson, *A History of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States*, VI, 136, 269-272. *Minutes of the General Assembly*, XI, 206-207.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

that it was "inexpedient and improper for it to attempt or propose" any specific method or system of emancipation.¹⁰ This position was carefully observed for the next twelve years.

It was an Old School Presbyterian clergyman, James Smylie, who first advanced the theory that slavery was a positive good before Calhoun, a politician, but a Presbyterian, advanced and popularized the doctrine. In the gulf states the Presbyterians took an advanced stand for secession in 1860-1861. In the Philadelphia area and in New York City the Old School was conservative and for compromise, but in western Pennsylvania and in southern Ohio a few bold members of this Church expressed frankly their opposition to secession and to slavery.

In May, 1861, the General Assembly of the Old School met in Philadelphia. At the beginning the more radical element constituted a small minority but it demanded that the Assembly take an unequivocal stand for the preservation of the Union. The conservatives who constituted a goodly majority had wished to take no definite stand and attempted to sidestep the proposals of the more fiery element. The minority was persistent and demanded a hearing. Days of bitter debate ensued. The Philadelphia papers published daily accounts of the debates and the population of the entire city seemed to be aroused on one side or the other. The Assembly halls were accordingly crowded to their capacity. The minority was voted down more than once but refused to accept defeat. With the passing of time apparently forty new converts were added to the cause of a clear cut stand for country and patriotism. With their aid the report passed declaring that it was the obligation of the General Assembly to strengthen, uphold, and encourage the Federal Government in the exercise of all its power under the Federal Constitution, and to assert its unabated loyalty.¹¹

While the Old School Presbyterians were discussing the national problems in Philadelphia, the New School Presbyterians were holding their annual General Assembly in Syracuse, New York. With no southerners within their midst they had no

¹⁰ Thompson, *A History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States*, VI, 136-137.

¹¹ *Minutes of the General Assembly* (1861), XVI, 329-330. Lincoln apparently not only welcomed such resolutions, he requested them.

hesitancy in pledging themselves to nationalism, union, and abolition. Among other things, they resolved: "That . . . there is no blood or treasure too precious to be devoted to the defense and perpetuity of the Government in all its constituted authority." A copy of these resolves was subsequently forwarded to President Lincoln.¹²

The Assembly also set aside a special day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, and to invoke the Higher Power, "that our noble young men who go, in the spirit of Lexington and Bunker Hill, to the defense of the Constitution and Laws, may be kept from the temptations of the camp and field. . . ."¹³

In 1862 the General Assembly met in Cincinnati and again pledged its undoubted patriotism to the cause of the Union. With unanimity the Assembly resolved to aid to the maximum the "suppression of the Rebellion," vehemently denounced those in high civil offices, in the state and national government and all others, "who never utter a manly thought or opinion in favor of the Government, but they follow it, by way of comment, with two or three apologies for southern insurrectionists; presenting the difference between an open and avowed enemy in the field, and a secret and insidious foe in the bosom of our own family."

The Assembly further resolved:

That in our opinion, this whole insurrectionary movement can be traced to one primordial root, and to one only—*African* Slavery, and the love of it and a determination to make it perpetual; . . . and while, under the influence of humanity and Christian benevolence, we may commiserate the condition of the ruined rebels . . .—should the case occur—despoiled of all that makes the world dear to them, we must be at the same time constrained to feel, that the retribution has been self-inflicted, and must add, "Fiat justitia, ruat caelum."¹⁴

This was a significant resolve in light of the fact that it forecast the destruction of slavery two months before Lincoln presented his Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet for con-

¹² *Minutes of the General Assembly* (New School, 1861), XII, 447-448.

¹³ *Ibid.*, XII, 445.

¹⁴ *Minutes of the General Assembly* (New School, 1862), XIII, 23-25.

sideration and four months before the Proclamation was issued. Finally, the New School Presbyterians resolved:

That we . . . lay ourselves, with all that we are and have, on the altar of God and our country; . . . that our Rulers . . . and our [army] commanders . . . and the brave men under their leadership, may take courage under the assurance that 'THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA' are with them, in heart and hand, in life and effort, in this fearful existing conflict.¹⁵

These resolutions not only expressed confidence in the administration and promised continued support of the President, but in the letter to Lincoln that accompanied these resolutions, the New School again pledged the assistance of the Church in the preservation of the Union:

We have given our sons to the army and navy; some of our ministers and many of our church members have died in hospital and field; we are glad that we gave them, and we exult in that they were true even to death. We gladly pledge as many more as the cause of our country may demand.¹⁶

The next year, 1863, the General Assembly of the New School met again in Philadelphia where the Church, through resolutions, pledged its continued support of the Union and of the President. In the meeting of 1862, the Church had decreed that the war must destroy the institution of slavery; in the 1863 meeting the Assembly rejoiced that the President had taken advantage of his war powers to issue the Emancipation Proclamation—making it a war on slavery as well as on rebellion.¹⁷ More than three score representatives carried the resolutions in person to Lincoln. The President read the resolves apparently with interest and expressed his gratification for such patriotic and personal loyalty.¹⁸ In the assemblies of 1864 and 1865 the

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, XIII, 23-25.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, XIII, 25-26.

¹⁷ *Minutes of the General Assembly* (New School, 1863), XIII, 241-245.

¹⁸ Edward McPherson (ed.), *The Political History of the United States of America, during the Great Rebellion, including . . . a Chapter on the Church and the Rebellion . . .* (Third Edition, Washington, 1876), p. 471.

New School Presbyterians did not relax in their support of the war and the Union.¹⁹

The United Presbyterian Church came into existence in 1858, and from the outset was strongly opposed to the institution of slavery. In the General Assembly of 1861, the Church declared for the Union, but denounced slavery. In the General Assembly of 1862 at Pittsburgh the United Presbyterians not only reaffirmed their support of the Union and their opposition to slavery, but further declared:

She [the United Presbyterian Church] refuses to have fellowship with slavery or its abettors. This testimony has, however, been disregarded by politicians and slaveholders, and by many professing the gospel. . . . Our testimony has been recorded on high. The tears of the oppressed, God has put into the battle. Their cries have been heard. The storm has gathered. The bolts of destruction have been hurled abroad. . . .

These results, too terrible to contemplate, we believe have flowed from this system of American slavery. . . . The struggle which is now convulsing our country is to maintain constitutional liberty.²⁰

Since slavery was regarded as the real cause of the war the true remedy was its destruction and that "liberty be proclaimed throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof"; "then shall our light break forth as the morning star, and our health shall spring forth speedily."²¹

A copy of the resolves was sent to the President and to all the heads of departments with an urgent request that they take immediate and effective steps to destroy the institution of slavery.

After Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, the United Presbyterian Church enthusiastically endorsed it as "a measure of high military importance and necessity, and statesmanlike in striking at slavery, the root, cause and strength of the rebellion. . . ." The Proclamation was the voice of God

¹⁹ *Minutes of the General Assembly* (New School, 1864), XIII, 465-467. *Ibid.* (1865), XIV, 36-41.

²⁰ *Presbyterian Historical Almanac* (1863), p. 349.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 349-350.

calling upon the people to "break every yoke and let the oppressed go free."²²

The United Presbyterians were able to reach many of their members in Pennsylvania through such journals as the *Evangelical Repository and United Presbyterian Review* (a quarterly, published in Philadelphia), *The Christian Instructor* (a weekly, published in Philadelphia), and the *United Presbyterian* (a weekly, published in Pittsburgh).

Other Presbyterian papers and periodicals published in Pennsylvania, to say nothing of similar publications by the same denomination and by other religious groups as well in nearby states and read by many Pennsylvanians, were: *The American Presbyterian* (a weekly, Philadelphia), *The American Presbyterian and Theological Review* (a quarterly, Philadelphia), the *Biblical Repository and Princeton Review* (a quarterly, Philadelphia), the *Presbyterian* (a weekly, Philadelphia), the *Presbyterian Banner* (a weekly, Pittsburgh).

In 1861 the Episcopalians did not hold a national meeting, but the southern dioceses followed the states in secession. In Pennsylvania, however, the Episcopalians held a convention in Philadelphia in which the local ministers took a decided stand for the Union.²³ This was the position that the Episcopal Church took in all of the northern states, but in the border states caution was urged by many of their clergymen.²⁴

In 1861 Philadelphia was also the meeting place of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The Lutherans took a decisive stand for the preservation of the Union,²⁵ but the Church subsequently separated into a northern and a southern branch.²⁶ The Evangelical Church passed a firm pronouncement against slavery in 1819. This declaration was not eliminated until October, 1938.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, the largest church in membership, separated over the question of slavery in 1844. The southern Methodist without hesitation, therefore, supported the cause of the Confederacy; whereas the northern Methodist

²² *Presbyterian Historical Almanac* (1865), pp. 175-176.

²³ *Philadelphia Press*, May 30, 1861.

²⁴ *New York World*, May 21, 1861.

²⁵ *Philadelphia Press*, May 29, 1861.

²⁶ Charles W. Heathcote, *The Lutheran Church and the Civil War* (New York, 1919), pp. 70-79.

supported with unflinching loyalty the Federal Union.²⁷ In 1860 the general conference at Buffalo adopted the cautious rule which did not exclude slaveholders from communion, but it advised its members "to keep themselves pure from this great evil, and to seek its extirpation by all lawful and Christian means."²⁸

The Baptist Church, the second largest in membership, like the Methodist separated over the slavery issue in 1844. The southern branch of this church likewise supported the southern cause and the northern wing took a firm stand for the Union. The northern Baptists in June, 1861, resolved:

That what was bought at Bunker Hill, Valley Forge, and York Town, was not, without consent, sold at Montgomery; that we dispute the legality of the bargain, and in the strength of the Lord God of our fathers still hope to contest, through this generation, if need be, the feasibility of the transfer.²⁹

The Synod of the Moravian Church through resolutions pledged its loyalty to the Federal Government,³⁰ while the individual dioceses of the Catholic Church in the North unhesitatingly declared their loyalty to the Union. At first some individuals of the Catholic clergy and laity seemed to hesitate, but later coöperated in the prosecution of the war. The *Philadelphia Press* declared that "the highest point [in Philadelphia] from which our flag floats, is the pinnacle of a Papal cathedral."³¹

We have observed the positions taken by religious denominations that had considerable membership in Pennsylvania. Let us turn to individual ministers representing the different religious institutions within the state. Since the Reverend Henry A. Boardman of Philadelphia was a member of the Old School Presbyterians, and had more power and influence within that city, if not within Pennsylvania, than any other religious leader, his position should be stated. He loved the Union and opposed

²⁷ McPherson, *Political History of the United States During the Great Rebellion*, pp. 494-496.

²⁸ Methodist Episcopal Church, *Journal of the General Conference for 1860*, pp. 425-426. See W. W. Sweet, *The Methodist Episcopal Church and the Civil War* (Cincinnati, 1912), pp. 38-40.

²⁹ *Ibid.* See *Philadelphia Press*, June 4, 1861.

³⁰ McPherson, *Political History of the United States During the Great Rebellion*, p. 483.

³¹ May 30, 1861. An editorial on "The Church and State."

secession. He believed, at the beginning of secession, that if the abolitionists would cease their over-zealous agitation and the southern "fire-eaters" would cease "spitting fire" a satisfactory compromise could be reached. Although never an unbalanced and heated crusader against rebellion and slavery, he sanely and unemotionally opposed both. In the Tenth Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia the Reverend Henry A. Boardman on November 28, 1861, declared:

For the course of events has disclosed a cumulative series of proofs, that this rebellion was concocted many years ago; that its leaders have kept it in view as their ultimate object through all the collisions of parties; and all the changes in our public affairs; that they ignominiously availed themselves of the very immunities the Constitution afforded them, not excluding even official place and power, to plot the subversion of the Government; and that the various alleged grievances which they put forward in newspaper articles, in legislative debate, and in inflammatory appeals to their constituents, were mere pretexts designed to cloak their real designs and help on their consummation. It is this conviction, I say, founded upon absolute moral demonstrations, which has brought the most prudent and conservative classes of society into full sympathy with this war for the defense of the Union. They feel that they have been misled and betrayed. In giving their sympathy and support for years past, to those who have become the master-spirits in this movement, they supposed they were dealing with men who, like themselves, were seeking in good faith to preserve the Union. And now, that the treachery is laid open, and they see that during all this while, the one cherished object of these men was to destroy the Union, they have the double motive of personal wrong and public duty to inflame their zeal in behalf of the cause of their country.³²

Ten months later, within the same church, the Reverend Dr. Boardman charged that the national crisis was due largely to political nonchalance:

It must be recorded to our shame, that the Christians of our country have been criminally remiss in respect

³² Henry A. Boardman, *Thanksgiving in War* (a pamphlet, 1861), p. 13. A sermon delivered in the Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.

to their social and political obligations. . . . Professing to regard Christianity as the paramount concern of man, and to recognize the Divine protection as the only security for nations, they have, to a great extent abjured politics and left the management of our affairs to whoever might succeed in seizing the reins. As a general thing, they have shunned nomination to office, and taken no pains to insure the election of suitable men. They have not brought their influence to bear, in any suitable degree, upon the course of legislation, so as to guard the interests of morality and foster the healthy, conservative element in our institutions. They have too often sacrificed either to personal ease or to party what was due their country; and by their silence connived at that frightful corruption which has of late years spread like a leprosy through the whole domain of our politics.³³

Many of the Old School Presbyterians in the southern half of Pennsylvania, as previously stated, hesitated or failed to take a clear stand for the Union. Is it likely or probable that the Copperhead movement in the state can be traced in part to this hesitancy? Of this I am thus far uncertain, but apparently many of the so-called Copperheads were members of this church, and their most influential leader, Vallandigham, was the son of a Presbyterian minister.

The Reverend Philip Schaff, born in Switzerland and trained in various outstanding European institutions of higher learning and a member of the German Reformed Church, became a professor in 1844 at the theological seminary at Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. He was an editor, teacher, and writer of church history. He wrote a pamphlet in 1861 entitled, *Slavery and the Bible*, in which he depicted slavery as a sound stepping stone from heathenism and barbarism to Christianity and civilization.³⁴

The vast majority of the Pennsylvania clergy, regardless of denomination, faithfully supported the Union and did more to arouse the people of the state to the defense of the nation than any other organized body, if the state itself be excepted.

³³ Henry A. Boardman, *The Lord Reigneth* (a pamphlet, 1862), pp. 23-24.
³⁴ A sermon delivered in the Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia.

³⁵ Philip Schaff, *Slavery and the Bible* (Chambersburg, Pa., 1861).

The Reverend Robert F. Sample delivered a Thanksgiving sermon in Bedford, Pennsylvania, on November 28, 1861, in which he said:

The course pursued by the people of the South is as detrimental to their interests as it is violative of the Constitution. It is not probable that this government would have ever, by any legislative act, excluded slavery from the territories, where the laws of nature would have admitted it. The very next election for the Presidency would have been, doubtless, on a principle to which the South could have offered no valid objection. But they have, in violation of their solemn covenants, risen in rebellion against the government, and in doing so, have acted in utter disregard of their present interests and future good. In the event of an early restoration of peace, slave labour will, to a great extent, lose its value. India will cultivate cotton for the manufactories of Manchester and Paisley, and our transatlantic mother will rejoice in her independence of the Gulf States of America. May it not be, though we have not sought such a consummation, that the fears of a Southern statesman will be realized, who said to the people of South Carolina, that in the event of secession, he should consider the institution of slavery doomed, and that the great God, in their blindness, has made *them* the instruments of its destruction.³⁵

After thus prophesying the destruction of slavery as a result of the war, the Reverend Mr. Sample placed the guilt on corrupt southern politicians. He said:

We shall apply no approbrious epithets to the people of the South; we do not impute the guilt of inaugurating a suicidal, fratricidal war to the whole population of the seceded States. In our humble judgment, corrupt politicians, unwilling to yield to the will of the majority and influenced by motives of personal aggrandizement, have delivered and misled the people—have rent in twain a national, conservative party, that the election of a 'sectional candidate' for the Presidency might furnish a pretext for disunion—have greatly exaggerated wrongs that existed, (from which no human government

³⁵ Robert F. Sample, *Our National Origin, Progress and Perils* (a pamphlet, 1861), p. 21.

is or can be free)—have accumulated fictitious pleas for national dismemberment; and thus they have opened up the flood gates of a rebellion which, for a time, endangered our own national existence, and seemed just ready to sweep over and desolate our fair heritage.³⁶

He praised the patriotic response of the North in the following words:

And the war in which we are now engaged, being forced upon us, and its successful prosecution being necessary to the preservation of our national life, the value of which none can fully estimate, we have reason for thanksgiving that so many have come voluntarily forward—not impressed into service—to fight, and, if need be, die for the nation. From New England and the North-west, from States bordering on the river St. Lawrence and the Lakes, thousands of patriots come, 'surging onward like the waves of the sea,' whilst our own loved State [Pennsylvania] redeems every pledge, and pours forth her sons from cities and hamlets, from humble cottages on the mountain side, and luxurious homes in fertile valleys. And as thus they come, the judge from his bench, the farmer from his plough, the mechanic from his workshop, the student from his books, and the pleasure-seeker from foreign lands, 'one spirit animates all hearts; it is the sentiment of loyalty; it is the sacred fire of patriotism; it is the instinct of a common nationality, now threatened with destruction.' They come, clad in warrior's dress, and bearing aloft the banner of freedom, resolved to conquer or die in the holy strife; and this, not that they love their misguided, erring brethren less, but their native country more. Patriotism is a Christian sentiment . . . [and] we should feel ourselves impelled to do and suffer anything and everything, to which duty calls, in order to maintain our Government, preserve our Union, and perpetuate our civil and religious institutions until the last setting sun. It is time to work, . . . to pray, . . . to bring our offerings to our national altar, to gird ourselves for the conflict, to die, if need be, for the salvation of our country.³⁷

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 27.

Two months after Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation the Reverend William M. Paxton of Pittsburgh declared:

But, we have, also, marks of progress of a different but higher kind. Listen to the echoes of that proclamation which is carrying the tidings of liberty to the slave; but striking terror to the heart of the rebellion. Oh, yes, there is progress in the Cabinet as well as in the field. Instead of the cautious, timid, vacillating policy of one year ago, the President has risen like a 'strong man armed,' and seized the monster, and with that proclamation of liberty he is now throttling him in his den. If this year had done nothing more than induce this advance in the convictions of the people and in the policy and decisions of the Government, it would be a year long to be remembered. We hail it as an advancing step in the progress of the race, and in the triumphs of principle—a stride onward and upward, which fifty years in the common progress of civilization would have failed to achieve. Let us thank God that this one year counts fifty in the march of progress.³⁸

In April, 1863, the Reverend William B. Stewart of Pottstown, Pennsylvania, delivered a sermon entitled, *The Nation's Sin and the Nation's Duty*. In dealing with the sins of the nation, Stewart was clearly influenced by the distinguished Henry A. Boardman of Philadelphia. The important sins constituted the omission of God in the Federal Constitution, the failure of the Fathers to prohibit slavery, and the neglect of the voters to demand and compel clean government. We have more than enough crooked politicians, he said, "to ruin the best Government, or to destroy the greatest nation that ever existed."³⁹

Despite the sins of the nation, the Reverend Mr. Stewart concluded it was the duty of every citizen to support the government in its primary object of suppressing the Rebellion and thereby restoring the Union. He praised the President's Emancipation

³⁸ Reverend William M. Paxton, *The Nation's Gratitude and Hope* (a pamphlet, 1862), p. 27. Delivered in the First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa., November 27, 1862.

³⁹ Reverend William B. Stewart, *The Nation's Sins and the Nation's Duty* (a pamphlet, 1863), p. 7. Delivered in the First Presbyterian Church of Pottstown, Pa., April 30, 1863.

Proclamation as an important war measure. It has revolutionized "the popular opinion of France and England in our favour, and . . . [it] has done more to prevent foreign intervention than almost any one thing which the Government could have done." No citizen has the right to perform any act that might injure the government or the Union. Every person should support the draft acts, and aid in the prosecution of the war in every possible way. There can be no peace until the Union emerges from the struggle victorious.⁴⁰

In November, 1862, the Reverend M. J. Hickok of Scranton denounced the efforts of the South to perpetuate slavery. He encouraged the North to support the war vigorously, and concluded that if the war reduced the nation to a mere shadow of its former glory and power, if the Union were preserved and slavery were abolished, the people would shout, "Glory to the God in the highest!"⁴¹

On November 24, Reverend Cornelius H. Edgar of the Reformed Dutch Church of Easton, Pennsylvania, declared that the re-election of Lincoln in 1864 was the interposition of God to save this nation. "The eighth day of November, 1864," he declared, "is a day to be remembered. . . . It is as much to be remembered as the Fourth of July, 1776. It was the pivotal day of this nation." The re-election of Lincoln reassured the abolition of slavery. An amendment to the Constitution would now be ratified that would abolish slavery throughout the United States.⁴²

In conclusion, we have seen the position of the Church and clergy in the North. At the beginning there was a slight division within the ranks of the northern clergymen as to policy, but there was certainly no organized anti-Union sentiment within that distinguished group above the Mason and Dixon line. From the beginning the ministers of the gospel probably rallied more completely to the support of the government than any large, influential class. Faced with a stunned and divided North, it is doubtful if President Lincoln could have united

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14.

⁴¹ M. J. Hickok, *The Mission of Calamity* (a pamphlet, 1862), pp. 18-19. The First Methodist Episcopal Church, Scranton, November 27, 1862.

⁴² Cornelius H. Edgar, *God's Help, the Ground of Hope for Our Country* (a pamphlet, 1864), pp. 10-15, 20.

the nation sufficiently to have won the war without the loyal support of the clergy. The Pennsylvania clergymen often faced congregations composed of many southern sympathizers, but they seldom failed to expound the doctrine of unity and patriotism. The ministers not only aided materially in uniting the northern people to preserve the Union, they helped to pave the way for Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Believing that slavery was the primary cause of the nation's ills, the clergymen were determined to have it removed. After more than a year of fighting, the northern people apparently agreed with the clergy that slavery must go. Lincoln, sensitive to public opinion, then declared slavery abolished within the rebellious states. The theologians not only rejoiced but coöperated with the government in securing the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution.