The Northern Clergy and the Impending Crisis, 1850-1860

The causes of the War between the States were many and very complicated. The people who lived through the critical period failed to understand and to appreciate all the direct and remote causes of the War. In spite of the wealth of source material available to and used by students of history and political science today, the last word on the causes of the War has, in all probability, not yet been written. In judging the position taken by the clergy of that day, we should understand that the ministers of the Gospel were human, subject to the emotions of mankind, and influenced by current war-time propaganda. In this study, after setting forth the issues, I shall let the clergy speak for itself on the causes of the sanguinary conflict.

The real issues between 1850 and 1860 that threatened a possible sectional conflict were fundamentally economic in character. Slavery, however, although really economic, furnished the occasion or the excuse for Northern and Southern politicians to appeal, with obvious effect, to the emotions and to the prejudices of their constituents. It provided the opportunity for the clergymen to persuade their congregations for or against the slave system as the ministerial conscience might dictate. It furnished the setting and the characters for Harriet Beecher Stowe's sensational Uncle Tom's Cabin, a book that made many Northerners weep and many Southerners grimly angry. Hinton Rowan Helper's Impending Crisis of America was such a devastating indictment of slavery on economic grounds that the Republican party, in 1860, practically used it as a campaign text. The press likewise used slavery as its opportunity to spread throughout the nation sensational accounts of the ill treatment of slaves, the barbarity of the system, and the cruelties made possible through the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act. Again, slavery was the occasion for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the violent raids in Kansas, and
the attack of John Brown on Harpers Ferry. Charles and Mary Beard visualized the situation clearly when they wrote:

Had the economic systems of the North and the South remained static or changed slowly without effecting immense dislocations in the social structure, the balance of power might have been maintained indefinitely by repeating the compensatory tactics of 1787, 1820, 1833, and 1850; keeping in this manner the inherent antagonisms within the bounds of diplomacy. But nothing was stable in the economy of the United States or in the moral sentiments associated with its diversities.¹

From 1850 to 1860 events moved with unusual rapidity to usher in the Civil War in 1861. In 1852 Franklin K. Pierce, controlled by Southern statesmen, was overwhelmingly elected President on a platform that supported a tariff for revenue only and advocated other economic issues so dear to the heart of the slave interests. The Gadsden Purchase was secured from Mexico and filibustering expeditions departed from the United States to bring Cuba into the Union by force. In fact, Pierre Soulé, John Y. Mason, and James Buchanan, American Ministers to Spain, France, and England, respectively, issued the strange proclamation known as the "Ostend Manifesto," which stated that the United States should offer a price to Spain for Cuba and if it was refused the federal government would be justified in seizing it. The public was so unready for such a coup de main that W. L. Marcy, Secretary of State, felt compelled to repudiate it. In 1854, under the leadership of Stephen A. Douglas, the Missouri Compromise was repealed and the territories of Kansas and Nebraska were created. All the national territories were, therefore, officially opened to slavery. The free-soilers and proslavery men rushed pell-mell into Kansas. It was in this territory that the first blows of the Civil War really took place. Charles Sumner's speech, The Crime Against Kansas, led Preston Brooks, a Representative from South Carolina, to attack him in the Senate chamber and beat him into insensibility. This incident, in May, 1856, aided the infant Republican party through the rise of an enraged North against the so-called ruthlessness of the "Slave Power."

Although James Buchanan defeated John C. Frémont in the

presidential election of 1856 on a platform of justice for the people of Kansas, it was the Kansas question that really started the events that eventually led to the split in the Democratic party—the party that now embraced almost every slaveholder and his friends. The split within its ranks was widened by the manner in which the constitution for the admission of Kansas as a state, the Lecompton constitution, was drafted, adopted, ratified, and accepted by the administration. As a result Robert J. Walker resigned as governor of Kansas and Stephen A. Douglas attacked the administration and the Lecompton constitution, in the Senate, in one of the strongest speeches of his life. Buchanan read Senator Douglas out of the Democratic party and attempted to secure his defeat for re-election. In the meantime the decision on the Dred Scott case had been rendered which, among other things, declared that the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional and always had been illegal. The Supreme Court further stated that the slaveholders could take their slave property into any of the territories of the United States. A stunned North, upon recovering, turned its ire upon “the nine old men” who constituted the Supreme Court, with most of the public wrath directed against the Chief Justice, Roger B. Taney.

Douglas returned to Illinois in the summer of 1858 to begin his senatorial campaign. With the administration at Washington determined to secure his defeat, Douglas’s re-election was doubtful. Lincoln, the Republican candidate, soon challenged the Little Giant to a series of debates, and there followed one of the great political debates in American history. Douglas was re-elected, but Lincoln had succeeded in making the Senator from Illinois unacceptable to a large portion of Southern Democrats as the party presidential candidate in 1860. Furthermore, Lincoln had made himself a potential Republican candidate, and in addition, his speeches had convinced the South that he was a dangerous man.

In the autumn of 1859 John Brown startled the nation with his raid on Harpers Ferry for the avowed purpose of putting an end to the institution of slavery in America. Although Brown’s campaign was doomed to failure, it succeeded in arousing the animosity of Southern slaveholders and united them against the hostile North. It succeeded further in promoting, rather than curtailing, sectionalism. It did the Republican party no harm, but it did succeed in
widening the breach between the Northern Democrats, led by
Douglas, and the Southern Democrats, directed by Jefferson Davis.

To Davis and his followers the doctrine of popular sovereignty,
as advocated by Douglas, was as untenable as the doctrine of liberty
in all the territories, as demanded by the aggressive Republicans.
Senator Davis, in 1860, presented a series of resolutions to the
Senate in which he reaffirmed the Calhoun doctrine of state rights,
declaring that Congress did not have the power, directly or in-
directly, to restrict the rights of an American citizen to take his slave
property into any of the national territories. He further declared that
the inhabitants of territories could not pass upon the status of slavery,
except at the time of admission into full statehood. He, therefore,
believed that slavery not only had the right to enter any of the
federal territories, but that Congress must protect it so long as it
existed there. Upon these issues the presidential campaign of 1860
was largely waged.

The industrial North, however, had become incensed at the grip
the Southern slaveholders had upon the national government due,
in part, to the proslavery policies of the Pierce and Buchanan ad-
ministrations. To Northerners a majority section had been ruled too
long by an aggressive slavocracy. To make matters even more un-
bearable the minority Southern rule had passed laws injurious to the
economic development of the industrial North. In 1857 the tariff
was again lowered—an ominous sign to Northern industrialists. Two
years later Congress ceased its policy of granting subsidies to trans-
Atlantic steamship companies—another pernicious act perpetrated by
the planters. In 1857 a panic hit the industrial North with such
force that financial ruin threatened it. The Democrats were charged
with flooding the country with unsound paper notes, and with over-
throwing the sound financial policy of Hamilton. Furthermore, it
was Buchanan who vetoed the homestead bill which the restless
farmers had forced Congress to pass. The presidential veto was ill
received by the farmers and mechanics who felt that the national
domain was their rightful inheritance.

The year, 1860, arrived with the economic, social, and political
forces of the North and South strongly opposing each other. All
this pointed to a significant presidential campaign. Since the Southern
Democrats had played a conspicuous rôle in national affairs during
the previous eight years, they demanded that the approaching Democratic convention adopt their economic program without any concessions to Northern capitalism: no protective tariff, no ship subsidies, no national banking system. In other words Northern capitalism must surrender to Southern planters. On the other hand, the Northern Democrats, antislavery men and captains of industry, were equally stubborn. To them the Southern control of the federal government must end, the expansion of slavery must be stopped, and the Northern economic program must be adopted regardless of price.

With Northern and Southern Democrats thus arrayed against each other, politically, economically, socially, and emotionally, there is little wonder that the Democratic party split in 1860. The constant threats of secession alarmed the lovers of the Union everywhere, but the Northern business men in the Democratic party insisted, nevertheless, upon the nomination of Douglas.

In this moment of danger the Northern clergymen leaned toward conservatism and maligned “political radicalism.” The Catholic churches were openly conservative. Episcopal clergymen were so cautious in their remarks that a sensitive South could find little or no fault in them, and the most outstanding and influential minister in the Old School Presbyterian Church of the Northwest, Dr. Nathan L. Rice of Chicago, upon three different occasions preached sermons to prove that both the Old and the New Testament sanctioned slavery. Despite their previous stands on the slavery question, the Methodist and Baptist clergymen of the Midwest, in the main, supported Douglas because of his conservatism. In Lincoln’s home town of Springfield only three of the twenty-three ministers, in 1860, supported the Republican candidate with their ballot.

Indeed the leadership of Douglas was so well established among the Democrats of the Northwest that they could not abandon him for a compromise candidate without facing a party split within the great Northwest. A political conflict between sections within the ranks of the Democratic party was at hand. As a result of the irreparable Democratic division at Charleston, the Republican party, now fully confident of victory, nominated Abraham Lincoln on a platform that was hostile to practically every political and economic interest of the South.
The Southern politicians, however, had loudly proclaimed that the slaveholding states would secede if the voters elected Lincoln. They knew Southern politics and they controlled the political machine. Therefore, not long after Lincoln’s election, the Southern states seceded, one by one, and organized a new government under the name of the Confederate States of America. The constitution thus drafted and adopted at Montgomery made it illegal for the Confederate government to impose protective tariffs or to grant bounties to shippers. Slavery was protected in all the territories and slave property was never to be impaired.

The irrepressible conflict was at hand. The views of Jefferson Davis, W. L. Yancy, Robert Toombs, Howell Cobb, Alexander H. Stephens, Salmon P. Chase, Charles Sumner, Thaddeus Stevens, William H. Seward, and Abraham Lincoln are well known. But what about the clergymen? What constituted their position on the controversial issues of the day? Did they have any influence? How did they view possible secession and Southern independence? What did they think the federal government should do?

The bitter feud that existed from 1850 to 1861 between the Northern and Southern politicians was equally bitter among the clergy of the two sections. In fact the Methodist and Baptist churches, as early as 1844, separated into Northern and Southern branches because they could not agree on the question of slavery. Other Protestant churches subsequently divided and in some cases subdivided. The Catholic church was the only large Christian church that was not jarred apart by the impact of war. It remained undivided because the head was in Rome. Yet Northern Catholics fought loyally for the Union and Southern Catholics fought heroically for the Confederacy. Despite the conservatism of the churches in the election of 1860, previously stated, the first blows of conflict brought practically all Northern clergymen of every church and creed to the support of Lincoln and the Union. In the South, however, the reverse was true. B. M. Palmer, a Southern Presbyterian minister of wide influence, proclaimed, “In this great struggle we defend the cause of God and religion.” In Philadelphia the Presbyterian synod called upon God to suppress “the most groundless, cruel, and wicked rebellion in the history of any people.” A writer to the Southern
Presbyterian soon after the first clash of arms, said: "This revolution has been accomplished mainly by the churches." ²

This statement was, perhaps, too large a claim for the credit or discredit of secession. The churches, through the ministers of the Gospel, nevertheless, had played an important rôle in the whole movement. The Northern clergymen of 1860 shall, therefore, be permitted, in this study, to state their views upon the current questions of the day.

As early as 1847, while in the midst of the war with Mexico, the Reverend Leonard Bacon of Connecticut published in the New Englander a prophetic warning to Congress in particular and to the American public in general. He wrote:

The war [Mexican War] has already precipitated upon the country a Missouri question and more than a Missouri question, descending upon the field of politics like an avalanche of fire, and illuminating the remotest point of vision with its portentous glare. What will become of all other questions upon which parties are now marshaled, when that one question shall be found standing in the way of every party and every politician, as a question not to be evaded? What will become of all existing parties, when the Union shall be shaken with the inquiry, not whether the Wilmot proviso shall be attached to an appropriation for the purchase of peace; nor whether a treaty for acquisition of territory shall be ratified without that proviso appended; but simply and directly whether the glorious old ordinance of 1787 shall be incorporated as fundamental law in acts for the organization of territorial governments between the upper Rio Grande and the Pacific. That question, be it remembered, will not be a question of the abolition of slavery, but, for the first time since our independence, a question of the deliberate abolition of freedom by the sovereign legislation of the Union. For it cannot be forgotten that in all those regions there is now no slave; the fundamental law there is the law of freedom. That question, moreover, will not be whether a soil and climate that repel the free and hardy laboring emigrant, and invite the toil of negroes for the cultivation of cotton and the cane, shall be given up to the planters of the South, but it will be, whether a country created for the abode of freemen, where the winds sweep pure over rugged mountains, and where the sloping hillsides are made for flocks and the valleys for corn, shall have slavery imposed upon it, by our legislation, as the memorial of our conquest. The voices from the North and from the West that will thunder the answer to that question, will be the utterance of no "third party." ³

² Quoted in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Political and Social Growth of the United States (Revised ed., N. Y., 1933), 57.
³ New Englander (April, 1847), 320. Quoted in Leonard Bacon, Jugglers Detected (New Haven, 1861), Appendix D, 39. A sermon delivered in the Chapel Street Church, New Haven, Conn., December 30, 1860. Bacon was pastor of the First New Haven Church.
In speaking of the Compromise of 1850, the Reverend Nathan S. S. Beman, of Troy, New York, who subsequently became known as the "War-horse of the New School Presbyterians," said on December 12, 1850 that in general he favored it. He believed that for the time being the measures should not be disturbed or even modified. Nevertheless he showed considerable resentment against the Compromise when he said:

To be sure it contains some bitter pills, and they are not sugar-coated either! It is a little humiliating, that the United States—that is, we—have given Texas ten millions of dollars for a part of the lands which belonged to ourselves and not to her, and left in her hands twenty-five thousand square miles of our territory, as a bribe or bonus, in order to make the ten millions go down with a better relish. But let Texas have it all, money and lands, for she is poor; and this settles the encroachments of slavery in our republic for ever. Call it a dower to our feeble young sister, if you please.⁴

In discussing the Fugitive Slave bill, Beman spoke plainly and adversely. He admitted that the Constitution stipulated for the return from free states of fugitives from service. He further recognized the fact that the Constitution was the only admitted bond of union between the states, its various provisions must be observed in good faith or we cannot continue as one people and one nation. But, he said:

The law in question aims to carry out a constitutional provision upon which the South have a right, by that instrument, to insist. I say nothing of the wisdom of making such a stipulation, but there it is;—"it is so nominated in the bond,"—and we should keep it till we are prepared to surrender the whole system and break up the government. Whether the law is constitutional or not, I have had my doubts, as President Fillmore had his, before he asked the opinion of the Attorney General;⁵ and mine have continued ever since I have

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⁴ Nathan S. S. Beman, Characteristics of the Age (Troy, N. Y., 1851), 19. A sermon delivered at Troy, N. Y., Dec. 12, 1850.

⁵ Attorney-General John J. Crittenden told President Fillmore: "The Supreme Court of the United States has decided that the owner independent of any aid from State or National legislation, may, in virtue of the constitution, and his own right of property, seize, and recapture his fugitive slave in whatsoever State he may find him, and carry him back to the State or Territory from which he escaped. (Prigg vs. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 18 Peters, 359). This bill, therefore, confers no right on the owner of the fugitive slave. It only gives him an appointed and peaceable remedy in place of the more exposed and insecure, but not less lawful mode of self redress; and as to the fugitive slave, he has no cause to complain of this bill—it adds no coercion to that which the owner himself might, at his own will, rightfully exercise; and all the pro-
read that opinion. But we have a tribunal to settle such questions, and the popular will is not that tribunal. It is the Supreme Court of the United States.6

If the Fugitive Slave Law was enforced by Southern slaveowners, without Northern cooperation, their efforts would result in the undoing of slavery itself. To use Beman’s own words:

Let the South execute it . . . , and let no one throw a straw in their way. But if it is executed, it will render slavery double-dyed in the deep popular execration of the free states, and especially if it be executed upon those who have long been in the enjoyment of the rights of humanity, and have families grown up around them. Or let the South take back the many thousands of fugitives who, they allege, are among us—many of whom are now intelligent and honorable men—and they would be so many torch-lights of freedom blazing, with prophetic rays, upon the dark midnight of slavery. The South better sacrifice ten times the amount of money at which they value these fugitives, than to admit such a corps of missionaries among them. If the North will keep still, and leave this law to itself and the South, all will be well in the end.7

Please observe that the Reverend Mr. Beman did not urge his listeners to cooperate, according to the spirit of compromise, in the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law. But he advised them instead to keep still and leave the law and the South to themselves, and all would be well. By this he probably meant and hoped that there would be a reaction favorable to the enslaved and his eventual emancipation. Be that as it may, Beman remarked:

It appears marvelous to me, that while the members of Congress, North and South, are disposed to unite in carrying out the articles of the Constitution for the return of fugitives, which has been evaded, as it is alleged, in the free States, other articles of the same great compact which are openly violated at the South, and that too under the sanction of State or municipal regulations, should not be thought of, or, at least, not provided for. The Constitution declares, that “the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States.” And yet the free colored citizen of Massachusetts, regularly employed on board of a vessel belonging to that State, and his name entered according to the laws of the United States, proceedings which it institutes are but so much of orderly judicial authority interposed between him and his owner and consequently a protection to him, and mitigation of the exercise directly by the owner of his personal authority. . . .” September 18, 1850. Executive Document, 31 Cong., 2 Sess., 2099–2102 passim. See Beman, Characteristics of the Age, 19.

6 Ibid., 20.
7 Ibid., 22.
is taken from that vessel when she enters the port of Charleston, South Caro-
lina, and locked up in prison till the vessel departs. This is refusing citizenship
to the person when the Constitution has given it to him. Besides, this imprison-
ment violates the fourth article of the "Amendments to the Constitution,"
which provides that "the right of the people to be secure in their persons,
houses, papers and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not
be violated." And yet there is nothing in the Compromise [of 1850] to carry
out these articles of the national compact. When I have seen the great ex-
pounder of constitutional law—the second DANIEL—stand by the original
compact, when Northern feeling and Northern prejudice were all against
him, I have admired his magnanimity; but when I have seen this same cham-
pion insisting on the return of fugitive slaves, and leaving his own fellow-
citizens uncared for in Southern prisons, I have said, with Daniel, "Lord
what is MAN?" How easy it is to make the colored race scape-goats or sacri-
fices when cupidity or ambition may require it! This last remark should not be
restricted to an individual.8

The Reverend Mr. Beman, however, said that he regretted to see
any portion of the North imitating that "peevish sister of the South,"
who had always made more disturbance in the family circle than all
the other members combined.

But [continued Beman] we should make some allowance for her—for she
inhabits a billious climate, and drinks in the beams of a fiery sun, and inherits
a rickety constitution, which makes up the frameword of her being—having a
much larger proportion of blacks than of whites, and even this minor class
must be put into two antagonistic categories: pauperism, and a self-styled
aristocracy. But in the free, educated bone and muscle of the North, there is no
excuse for nullification. We have been . . . a law-abiding people. We have a
Constitution, and we should preserve it inviolate, and carry out all its stipu-
lations, in good faith, till we are prepared to "tie a mill-stone around its neck
and send it down to the bottom of the sea."9

Evidently, Beman was not yet prepared to destroy the Constitu-
tion. Instead, he recommended carrying out all of its stipulations.
This position was not, however, quite consistent with his counsel,
as previously noted, to the Northern people to keep quiet and to
"leave this law to itself and the South. . . ."10

The learned and influential Dr. Henry A. Boardman of the Old
School Presbyterians of Philadelphia became alarmed in 1851 for
the safety of the nation because of the increasing treasonable talk of
disunion. His words read:

8 Ibid., 22–23.
9 Ibid., 21.
10 Ibid., 22.
Up to a period quite within the recollection of the young men before me, the atrocious word, Disunion, was never uttered in any part of the Republic but with abhorrence. The universal sentiment was that the Union of these States was to be maintained at all hazards—that it was not a question to be discussed—and that any individual who should presume to impugn its sacred obligation would be justly chargeable with treason, and ought to be regarded as an enemy to his country. This wholesome public sentiment has been for several years past gradually giving way. Our ears have become familiarized to the word, Disunion. A protracted session of Congress has been consumed in discussing the thing itself. One State is at this moment almost on the verge of secession. Others are threatening it. And a large and vigilant party elsewhere are pressing favorite measures within the full conviction that, if they succeed in carrying them, the Union must and will be riven asunder. Under these circumstances, the pulpit may no more keep silence than the press. We have the same civil rights as other citizens; and we do not mean lightly to surrender them.\textsuperscript{11}

Despite the indefatigable labors of the Fathers to create wisely a Union that would descend justly upon all states and individuals alike, Dr. Boardman pointed out in specific terms the internal forces at work to destroy the Union that was so sagaciously and laboriously wrought. He said:

There are, [in 1851] however—the fact cannot be disguised—parties actually at work in endeavoring to destroy the Union. A party at the South and another party at the North, the poles apart in their speculative views of the subject which agitates them, and inflamed with a bitter mutual hostility, have virtually joined hands for the purpose of demolishing this Government. This is not, indeed, as to one of these parties, the ostensible object they have in view; but it is essentially involved in that object, and they know it. They must, therefore, be held to the responsibility of aiming at a dissolution of the Union, equally with those inhabitants of the Southern States who avow this as their aim.

The subject [according to Dr. Boardman] which has occasioned this commotion is Slavery. The Southern Disunionists would secede because Congress, at its late session passed certain acts abridging, as they allege, the rights of slave-holding States; and the Northern Disunionists insist upon the repeal of a law passed at the same time, entitled the Fugitive Slave Law, even though its abrogation should involve a dissolution of the Union. My business as a Northern man, and a citizen of a free State, is with the latter of these parties or rather with the North generally. ... But I may say that the man who can put the American Union, with all its untold and inconceivable blessings, into one scale, and the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law into the other, and then strike the balance in favor of the latter, is without an exemplar in the history of the race. ...\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11} Henry A. Boardman, \textit{The American Union} (Philadelphia, 1851), 6-7. A sermon preached Dec. 12, 19, 1851, in the Tenth Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 30-32.
After charging certain parties in the South and North with attempts to destroy the Union, Dr. Boardman said that he hated the evil institution of slavery but that he could not uphold either the Northern or Southern extremists. His charge against Northern and Southern agitators is thus stated:

I utterly disdain any design to become the champion of Slavery. I have never set myself to defend it; and by the grace of God I never will. I concur in the estimate which is put upon it by the people of the North, by tens of thousands of our Southern countrymen, that it is a colossal evil; and that no consummation is more devoutly to be wished and prayed for than its removal. But I can as little undertake the championship of Northern agitators and fanatics as that of Slavery. I believe they are the worst enemies of the slave, and the most efficient protectors of slavery; and as such, I can have no fellowship with them. The law to which they object may be, or it may not be, defective or unjust in some of its provisions. If it is, it will no doubt at the proper time be amended; if it is not, it will stand. But what we are called upon to discountenance is the spirit in which this excitement is promoted—the recklessness and violence with which the unconditional repeal of the obnoxious law is demanded, irrespective of consequences—the abusive attacks which are constantly made upon the South—and the whole system of measures put in operation to alienate the two portions of the Confederacy, and bring about a disruption.\(^\text{13}\)

Dr. Boardman concluded this phase of his discussion with the statement that “Disunion would not help the slave but cause more stringent laws restricting his rights.” \(^\text{14}\)

What caused the perturbed and dangerous political emotions of 1850 and 1851? Were the conditions brought about by the machinations of slaveholders? Or were they caused by scheming politicians? To Dr. Boardman the dangerous conditions that threatened the safety of the Union were made possible not by slavery but by crafty or designing men. His views are stated succinctly:

There is, it is true, a settled conviction in the minds of the Northern people that slavery is a great evil, and there is an anxious desire to see the country rid of it. But, left to itself, this feeling is as still as it is strong and deep; and it never could have been lashed into the foaming surges which now break over the land but through the systematic, crafty, and wicked exertions of political demagogues. There were men in the ancient republics whose motto was, “Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven”; and they cared not what became of their country, so they were promoted.\(^\text{15}\)

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 32-33.
\(^{14}\) Ibid., 40.
\(^{15}\) Ibid., 41.
To prove that the dismemberment of the Union would be "one of the most appalling calamities" which could befall not only the American people but the entire world, Dr. Boardman quoted the great expounder of the Constitution—Daniel Webster:

Other misfortunes . . . may be borne or their effects overcome. If disastrous war should sweep our commerce from the ocean, another generation may renew it; if it exhaust our treasury, future industry may replenish it; if it desolate and lay waste our fields, still under a new cultivation they grow green again and ripen to future harvests. It were but a trifle even if the walls of the Capitol were to crumble, if its lofty pillars should fall, and its gorgeous decorations be covered by the dust of the valley. All these might be rebuilt. But who shall reconstruct the fabric of demolished Government? Who shall rear again the well-proportioned columns of Constitutional liberty? Who shall frame together the skillful architecture which unites national sovereignty with State-rights, individual security, and public prosperity? No, it these columns fall, they will not be raised again. Like the Coliseum and the Parthenon, they will be destined to a mournful, a melancholy immortality. Bitterer tears, however, will flow over them than were ever shed over the monuments of Roman and Grecian art; for they will be the remnants of a more glorious edifice than Greece or Rome ever saw—the edifice of Constitutional American Liberty.10

Dr. Nathan S. S. Beman, delivered a sermon, November 18, 1858, on the subject *Antagonisms in the Moral and Political World.* In this discourse he compared the issues of 1776 with those of 1858. He called the principles that confronted the Fathers of the Republic:

*the grand events which separated the American Colonies from Great Britain.* The revolution was an era in our history. It was a signal epoch in the annals of our Globe. . . . Every power of humanity was aroused, and the whole country became one vast battle-ground of contending elements. . . . A sublime war of principle was waged. It lasted for several long and sad years, but truth and justice triumphed at last. The principle involved and at stake, was not the payment, or resistance of a paltry tea tax, or a duty on stamped paper. It was a question of self-government. It was an appeal to arms and to heaven, for the principle of "popular sovereignty"; not the miserable shadow of modern times, born of Southern dictation and Northern subservience—a thing without a body, without a soul, and without a decent garb to cover its nakedness, which in our day has been baptized by this name, and has worn it. But popular sovereignty indeed,—the sovereignty of the people,—their right

10 Ibid., 54.
to govern themselves, without intervention of any higher power on earth. Nothing short of this is sovereignty... and they [the people] may govern themselves, and they should govern themselves, when they are mature for the exercise of such functions.¹⁸

Little did Dr. Beman realize, apparently, that, from the Southern point of view, all these principles and conditions were applicable to the Southern cause. As to the principle of popular sovereignty, it was not of Southern origin, neither was it acceptable to the South. Stephen A. Douglas, Lewis Cass, and others tried to sell it to the Southerners without success. Although the territorial measures involved in the compromise of 1850 contained the principle of popular sovereignty, they were accepted reluctantly by the South. The position that the South took, under the leadership of John C. Calhoun, was that the Federal Constitution extended to the territories. The slaveholders, therefore, had the right to take their slaves into any of the territories and receive the protection of Congress.

Besides, in 1775 and 1776 a majority of the American colonists, apparently, were not in favor of severing relations with Great Britain. The support of the Revolution was accomplished largely through intense propaganda and intimidation by an indignant minority. Although a majority of the Southern people might not have voted for immediate independence in 1858 or in 1860, a larger minority would probably have supported by ballot Southern independence in either year than would have supported independence prior to 1776. Be that as it may, the Southern people certainly met one of Beman's requirements for independence because they were most certainly capable of self-government.

To Dr. Beman those who fought for American Independence were good, wise, honest, and patriotic citizens; those colonists who fought on the side of England were called evildoers, traitors, easy-livers, and money-lovers. The latter were compared with the malcontented Southerners of 1858—traitors.¹⁹ Beman said that the framers of the Constitution were great men. They were likewise honest. They intended, he said, as speedily as practicable, to carry out the great principle on which the Revolution was based: “That

¹⁸ Ibid.
¹⁹ Ibid., 21.
all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." He then commented:

These men believed and meant what they said. They were no hypocrites—nor did they dream of any Jesuitical interpretation of this instrument in after times which would annihilate its living spirit, and efface its transcendent glory. As indicative of their cherished sentiments and of the prophetic hopes that cheered them, they excluded, by deliberate vote, the terms *slave and slavery* from the Constitution; and the reasons assigned, in debate, were, that it might not appear in future ages, that our free system of government, in its inception, had, in any form, recognized human bondage. *Now,* it might seem from the declarations and acts of many, that the Constitution was framed and adopted for the grand purpose of perpetuating this beautiful declaration of freedom—this sweetest boon dropped down from the opening heavens upon us. This is the purport of the ordinary language of the statesmen of the South; and as it floats along over "The land of the brave and the home of the free"—it wakes up in many a subservient politician the distinct response of a sweetly intoned "*amen.*" 20

The Presbyterian clergyman from Troy, New York, Dr. Beman, must not have realized that the writers of the Declaration of Independence did not really have the Negro in mind when they declared that all men were created equal. He, nevertheless, said that the framers of the Constitution meant what they said. They were careful to exclude the word slavery from that fundamental document. Yet, he said that "Satan in the impersonation of the slave-power, stood at the right hand of our Joshuas" when they framed the Constitution. Otherwise the Supreme Law would have embodied "their love of liberty." Several positions were taken by the framers of the Constitution that never could and never would have been assumed and maintained if the "evil genius of slavery" had not stood at their right hand "to resist their better and noble purposes." The "evil genius" prompted them to protect the foreign slave trade till 1808. No surer device could "these lovers of freedom have adopted to fasten the curse of slavery upon this country, in perpetuo, than by incorporating this protective clause in the organic law of the land." 21

The "evil genius" likewise hoodwinked the states that were destined to become free into agreeing to return fugitive slaves. This

21 Ibid., 26-27.
was "a solemn compact made by the fathers of American freedom for the protection of slavery." Yet the Bible commands: "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee."22 "I am fully aware," declared Dr. Beman, "that this is 'the higher law,' not much studied, nor fully admitted, by statesmen."23

In fixing the ratio of representation in Congress, the "evil genius" also saw to it that the Constitution offered the most attractive bounty in the gift of a republic for the encouragement of slavery—"a bounty to be awarded in political power." Counting five Negro slaves equal to three freemen, "the slave States had at one time 25 members on the floor of the House of Representatives, not by the census of men, but of property. I believe they now have [1858] about twenty, created, . . . by 'chattels personal,' and not by free agents. We need no Bible to inform us who stood at the right hand of these Joshuas, wielding a tremendous power, when they secured this political premium for the increase of slaves, and conferred peculiar glory, in the exercise of the elective franchise, on that portion of this country where they crush humanity into a thing—into a very ugly thing."24

At this juncture the "evil genius of slavery" apparently shifted its position to the right hand of the framers of the Constitution or else they never would have "made any Constitution and recommended that instrument to the adoption of the people, without a provision for the gradual manumission of slaves." In their debates, almost without exception, the Fathers were openly anti-slave. "It was the spirit of the age, as it had been the genius of the revolution." They expected slavery to come to an end within a few years. Thus they were cautious lest they might "reveal to future ages the footprints of this curse of humanity upon it." Therefore the Constitution did not contain the words, slave, slavery, or slave trade. "Take a specimen of two of the pleasant and euphonic terms of the Constitution by which those odious things are covered up. The slave is a 'person held to service or labor'; and the master, or slaveholder, is 'the party to whom such service or labor may be due.'

22 Deu. xxiii. 15.
23 Beman, Antagonisms in the Moral and Political World, 27.
24 Ibid., 27–28.
The slave-trade, is called the 'importation of such persons as any of the States now existing, shall think proper to admit.'" 25

Beman, furthermore, objected to the South, the minority section, wielding the political power that controlled the nation. According to the census of 1850, he said the white population of the South amounted to 6,699,252, while the same class in the free states amounted to 12,854,676. The North, therefore, had a majority over the South of 6,155,424. Beman did not include Negro population because Chief Justice Taney's opinion in the Dred Scott case said that no other two-legged creatures could be called "People," and are "consequently stock." Despite the fact that the North had a population almost twice the size of the slaveholding states, the latter

wields the sceptre of political supremacy. It does now and, with few exceptions indeed, ever has done. This phenomenon, in politics, cannot be explained without looking at various elements which have some connection with it. It is certainly not democratic. It could not exist, if the free North cherished a manly spirit of self-respect, and were true to freedom, as the South are to slavery. They are united,—we are not. They tell what must be done, or they will secede, and leave the North to her own imbecility, and consequently to her own destruction; and we have some men, especially in political life, who are weak enough to believe these threats, and to tremble at the consequences. There are others among us who sell themselves for office, and there is often but one way to secure this cherished good. Conciliate the South—for like the Roman Catholics, . . . they go in a solid body—and they may be sure to find Northern men enough with Southern principles, to give them their hearts' desire. And if they fail with this coalition, the great father, in the white house, will take care of the sick and wounded. 26

Satan, in the spirit of slavery, asserted Dr. Beman, remained at the right hand of the federal government to resist every step of progress toward freedom. If any one for the moment had any doubt such was the case or that the slave power dominated the political life of the nation, he should turn to the record for the facts:

Witness the breaking up of the Missouri Compromise, after the nation had enjoyed perfect quiet for thirty-four years under it. Look at our government as it is, or has been, and learn who rules us. The majority of our Presidents have been slaveholders. A majority on the Bench of the Supreme Court are

25 Ibid., 28.
26 Ibid., 30.
slaveholders. The majority of the present Cabinet are of the same class. A majority in the service of the government, as foreign ministers, are from the Slave States—and it is so in the army, and so in the navy, and so in the Indian Agencies. And by threats of dissolving the Union, and by the liberal use of the people's money, and the judicious distribution of snug offices, a majority can generally be found with the slave interests, in both houses of Congress. This is the way our free nation is governed. It is all a farce. Since the earth was framed . . . , there never was a subserviency so mercenary, so cringing, so disgraceful to freeman, as this; and for the honor of our common humanity, it is hoped that its parallel will never stain the records of this dishonest world.²⁷

As to the decision of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case, Beman declared that it was trumped up for the occasion:

If there had been no Kansas there would have been no judicial hands laid on the Missouri Compromise, no stretching of the Constitution . . . , and that too by strict constructionists, for the purpose of planting slavery, as a national institution, in every territory of the Union, no setting aside of all the judicial decisions both of England and of the Slave States, for the sole object of degrading the colored race so far below humanity as to render them incapable of asserting any rights in our national courts. But there was a necessity. The South demanded it, the President needed it, and the national DEMOCRACY,—which means slave-drivers and their Northern allies, shouted, amen.²⁸

Taney declared, asserted Beman, that the words "equal" and "liberty" in the Declaration of Independence did not and cannot apply to the African race and their descendants. He argued that if the language used did include the black race, then, in the words of the Chief Justice, "the conduct of the distinguished men who framed the Declaration of Independence would have been utterly and flagrantly inconsistent with the principles they asserted." Furthermore, "these were great men, high in literary acquirements—high in their sense of honor, and incapable of asserting principles inconsistent with those on which they were acting." Beman adds, "Now this may be good law, but it is bad logic."²⁹

Dr. Beman concluded his attack by saying that "the stubborn facts of history" refute the reasoning of the learned judge. The men who wrote and signed the Declaration had, most of them,

²⁷ Ibid., 31.
²⁸ Ibid., 31–32.
²⁹ Ibid., 32.
"borne their testimony against slavery and the slave trade." Jefferson had spoken against slavery in his original draft of the Declaration. Benjamin Rush, one of the signers, said, "Domestic slavery is repugnant to the principles of Christianity," and continued, "It is rebellion against a common Father." The New England colonies, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia had presented to the British King "the most humble and suppliant petitions, praying for the abolition of the slave trade. The Colonial Legislatures passed laws against it." But their laws were vetoed by the governors and "spurned by the throne." Supported by such incontrovertible historical facts, how could anyone doubt that the Fathers intended that the underlying principle of the Declaration, namely, freedom, should apply to the Negro and that they intended to obliterate forced slavery? 30

From the South, the Reverend John H. Aughey, a Northern man by birth and training, who had practiced his clerical profession in the state of Mississippi and was in that state during the election of 1860, reported an address delivered by a certain Colonel Drane to the people of Choctaw upon the political issues of the day. In addition to being a member of one of his congregations, Drane had presided over the state senate and had been a leading Mississippi statesman for many years. Aughey, therefore, "expected to hear a speech of marked ability, unfolding the true issues before the people, with all the dignity, suavity, and earnestness of a gentleman and a patriot; but... found his whole speech to be a tirade of abuse against the North, commingled with the bold avowal of treasonable sentiments." 31

The honored speaker, Colonel Drane, then retired, according to the description, amid the loud cheers of his listeners. Within a few days after the stirring address by the Colonel, the national election day arrived. The stirring news of Lincoln's election was flashed to every corner of the nation. In Mississippi the cannons boomed. The pretext for secession was at hand. Aughey gave a vivid description of his experience in casting his ballot in the election of 1860. Upon

30 Ibid., 33.
31 John H. Aughey, The Iron Furnace: or, Slavery and Secession (Philadelphia, 1863), 14–19. Aughey was later a chaplain in the Union Army in the South.
his arrival at the polls, he asked for a Union ticket, and was informed that none had been printed, and that it would be advisable to vote the secession ticket. He, accordingly, wrote out a Union ticket, and "voted it amidst the frowns and suppressed murmurs of the judges and by-standers." Aughey asserted that he had the honor of depositing the only vote in favor of the Union in his precinct. Many who wished to vote for the Union were so intimidated by threats and by the odium attending such action that they either voted with the secessionists or failed to vote at all. The secession candidates won throughout the state. A state convention followed and on January 9, 1861, "Mississippi had the unenviable reputation of being the first to follow her twin sister, South Carolina, into the maelstrom of secession and treason. Being the only States in which the slaves were more numerous than the whites, it became them to lead the van in the slave-holders' rebellion."  

The Reverend Mr. Aughey said that the South disliked the fact that the North regarded slavery as a moral, social, and political evil. The South also felt that it was a major grievance to have the North denounce the institution of slavery and to heap personal tirades upon the slaveholders. Aughey declared that it was impossible to suppress the alleged grievance and that secession would not remedy the evil. To accomplish the desired purpose all who denounced slavery would have to be seized, gagged, and the press muzzled. Since all this would be impracticable, it would be wiser to attempt to rectify the existing evils.

Weekly, almost hourly, bitter accusations were hurled back and forth through the newspapers, pamphlets, and oratory. In Congress, crimination and recrimination occurred every day. Politicians made no attempt to calm the troubled waters but endeavored instead to make them "turbid and boisterous." Sectional bitterness and animosity prevailed everywhere in the South. Aughey believed firmly that secession was not the remedy for that would render a double cure necessary. The South should remain in the Union and every patriot should "throw oil upon the troubled waters, and thus save the ship of State from wreck among the vertiginous billows."  

Aughey concluded his views on this phase of the nation's ills with the statement:

Most of our politicians are demagogues. They care not for the people, so they accomplish their own selfish and ambitious schemes. Give them power, give them money, and they are satisfied. Deprive them of these, and they are ready to sacrifice the best interests of the nation to secure them. They excite sectional animosity and party strife, and are willing to kindle the flames of civil war to accomplish their unhallowed purposes. . . . 34

John H. Aughey advised and warned the Mississippians to work against secession:

I see the sword coming, and would be derelict in duty not to give you faithful warning. . . . As to the great question at issue, my honest conviction is . . . that you should with your whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, oppose secession. You should talk against it, you should write against it, you should vote against it, and, if need be, you should fight against it. 35

A somewhat similar premise was taken, July 22, 1860, in Christ's Lutheran Church, New Bloomfield, Pennsylvania, by the Reverend D. H. Focht who asserted that the nation's ills were due to corrupt office-seekers and corrupt officials, to sectionalism and to slavery. He declared that:

Nothing can be clearer than that we have as a nation become more or less corrupt, and that the corruption is extending and deepening every day. Were it not for the common people, who are the bone and sinew of our nation, there can be no doubt but self-interested political demagogues would in a short time involve our country in ruin. We see everywhere, among a certain class, a party fanaticism and political rage that knows no bound. Office! Office! This is the cry. Yes, office-seekers, yell and foam and belabor themselves, just as though this great Union would fall to pieces, should they not get an office. Hence, in all quarters, north, south, east and west, the people are beaten and lashed into political excitement by frothy speeches of frothy politicians, and the ballot-box is controlled by money when other expedients fail. Our country is swarming full of political tricksters, and many if not all of our political papers are committed to detail political falsehood, teaching our people to lie by making them believe the untruth and by magnifying a molehill into a mountain. To make political game and to ride into office on an imaginary principle, men hatch schemes and devise platforms, and then make the salvation of the country depend on the success of the pigmy idea of their own brains. Thus, the issue of a political campaign is usually made to turn on some question that admits of strong appeals to the passions and feelings of the

34 Ibid., 43-45.
35 Ibid., 47.
people, whether that question be bleeding Kansas, the Tariff, popular sovereignty, or negro slavery. All these and similar questions, have of course their importance; but when made the stepping-stone to office, then they never receive that dispassionate and honest consideration their importance demands. The cry of some is, If you give not what we want, we will withdraw from the Union. I am no party politician, never was one, and can be none. Still, I was born an American citizen, and have always been an obedient subject of this great Commonwealth. I say then, that the men, whether north or south, east or west, who call for a disunion of this glorious Union, are to be classed with Benedict Arnold, Aaron Burr, and John Brown; for they are traitors to their country and seek its ruin.\textsuperscript{36}

The Reverend Mr. Focht turned to the members of the different state legislatures and of Congress to charge them with official corruption and with aiding the national crime wave by waving pistols and threats in the legislative halls of the nation:

Corruption in our Congressional and Legislative halls has reached its acme, and thence its pestiferous influence proceeds and descends among the people, scattering desolation like a stream of fire. There are enacted scenes of darkness that cannot but send a chill of horror to the heart of every lover of his country and his God. Our papers, and all papers, are crowded with recitals of murder, violence, and crimes of deepest dye. Pistols, bowie-knives, revolvers, and other instruments of death are the weapons of our Congressmen, and from them have the boys on our streets learned to carry them. "Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O Earth," our country is cheated by her own sworn officers, and the guardians of her interest have become her destroyers!\textsuperscript{37}

Focht, however, disliked slavery. He believed that it was an evil to his country, "but as the Constitution has made provision for certain States to hold slaves, we ought not to interfere with it there, nor should we extend it over territory that is free. We hold, therefore, that the abolitionist in the North and the slave extensionists in the South are both in the wrong. We want no north, no south, no east and no west. We are a Union."\textsuperscript{38} Focht believed that sectionalism was the bane of the Union and that the institution of slavery made possible its development and intensified its danger. He contended that a great mistake was made when the Missouri Compromise was repealed. Since 1854 "we have had continual trouble on the slave question, and God alone knows when and how

\textsuperscript{36} D. H. Focht, \textit{Our Country} (Gettysburg, 1862), 18–19. A sermon.
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Ibid.}, 21–22.
\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Ibid.}, 19–20.
As a solution to the slave problem, Mr. Focht offered the following:

It is admitted, we believe, by all good men in the north and south, that slavery is an evil, and all would be right glad to have this evil removed. But we have this evil in the Union, and of what use is it to quarrel about it, to criminate and re-criminate, and threaten to dissolve the Union on account of it! The question . . . should with every man be, How are we to get rid of this evil? This should be a question, not for the north or the south, for this party or that party, but for the whole Union. Would it not be an excellent measure, were our General Government to make an annual appropriation for carrying all free people of color to Africa, and for gradually, in some way, securing the freedom of all slaves and remove them also to Liberia. The slave question costs us annually thousands upon thousands, and still nothing is gained, as long as the evil is not removed. By colonizing the negroes we would rid ourselves of this bone of contention, and probably avert an internal war or an endeavor to dissolve the Union. For it is our candid conviction, that so long as slavery is in the Union, there will be no real sympathy between the south and north of the Union.40

The Reverend Leonard Bacon on December 30, 1860, asked, "Does anybody know who made the war with Mexico, and for what purposes?" His implied answer to the first part of the question was that the war was forced by an expanding slavocracy. The war was fought to gain additional territory for slavery. The nation was suffering from the same aches and pains in the year 1860. To use Bacon's own phraseology: "The question which the war with Mexico had already precipitated on the country in 1847, is the question which has brought us to the crisis to this day [December 30, 1860]." 41

Public opinion in the town of New Haven had, prior to 1860, apparently objected to clergymen preaching on the subject of slavery because it was preëminently political." The love of the people for what they called "the simple gospel" had, according to Bacon, at last yielded "under the pressure of a great exigency; and by their arrangement an ultra-Calvinist preacher, a 'true blue Presbyterian' of the narrowest and most rigorous school of orthodoxy [the Reverend Henry J. Van Dyke 42 of Brooklyn], has had the opportunity of preaching to the public of New Haven, through a political

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40 Ibid., 20.
41 Ibid., 20–21.
42 Leonard Bacon, *The Jugglers Detected* (New Haven, 1861), Appendix D, 39. Bacon was here referring to his sermon in 1847, previously referred to.
43 Henry J. Van Dyke was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn.
newspaper, a most political sermon, which he had at first preached from a pulpit elsewhere to a Sabbath congregation, on that most political of all subjects—slavery. . . . Surely religion and politics are not quite so far apart in these days, as they were once thought to be."

Mr. Van Dyke's political sermon on slavery thus referred to was probably the one he delivered on December 9, 1860, on the subject, The Character and Influence of Abolitionism. To this sermon Bacon took serious objections on the ground that it was proslavery and pro-Southern. Bacon objected to any legerdemain that undertook to justify slavery, not only in the abstract, but in the concrete horrors of this Africo-American slavery, and to bless it in the name of the Lord, because forsooth, the holding of slaves is not a crime in all circumstances and under all limitations and conditions. The question with which we have to do as citizens, is not a question about the moral responsibility of individual slaveholders in one case and another, nor about the consistency of slaveholding, in some sense, with a Christian profession. It is only a question about the moral character of this particular and well known system of slavery which we are expected to nationalize: whether it is consistent with the first principles of justice revealed to our moral nature by the word of God in the law and in the gospel.

In his continued attack on Van Dyke's sermon, Bacon quoted him as saying: "Abolitionism is the chief cause of all the strife that agitates, and the danger that threatens our country." Abolitionism and not slavery, he contended, was the evil that disturbed the peace, and threatened the existence of the Union. The Reverend Mr. Bacon denied the charge by saying:

It is a very common pretense, but one which cannot be set up without great impudence, or great forgetfulness, that "the abolitionists," in the technical meaning of that word, have caused all the political agitations and controversies about slavery. Thirty years ago, a handful of agitators undertook opposition to slavery as their specialty. Their object was the abolition of slavery in the slave holding States. Their method was agitation in the free States. From the beginning of their enterprise, I have had no fellowship with them. My belief is that the great body of clergy and churches in the free States . . . [have taken this position]. . . . It is not from them that the great agitation of the last few years has proceeded—unless we impute to them the annexation of Texas, and the war with Mexico, which that act of annexation

43 Bacon, The Jugglers Detected, 3.
44 Published as a pamphlet (New York, 1860).
45 Bacon, The Jugglers Detected, 16–17.
46 Ibid., 20.
involved. So far as the anti-slavery societies had any influence in the Presidential election of 1844, it was turned to the advantage of the candidate pledged to annexation, namely, Mr. Polk. Probably the annexation of Texas would not have been effected, or would at least have been postponed till it could have been peacefully arranged with Mexico, had the votes of the "third party," which were again to Birney [the Liberty Party candidate], been given to Clay, [the Whig candidate], in New York and some other states, in which that "third party" happened to hold the balance of power. But inasmuch as they meant not so, it would be unjust to make them responsible for the result. Texas, at war with Mexico, was incorporated into the Union, war and all. War was carried into Mexico; broad provinces were conquered; and then arose the question how those territories should be governed. Who is responsible for that question, and for all the questions raised by persistent attempt to nationalize an institution which only a few years ago was universally spoken of as "the peculiar institution" of certain States, and with which, as we were then so often told, nobody out of those states had any concern? 47

The question of the hour, contended Bacon, was not a question of slavery or abolition, but whether

slavery which is the basis of society in some of these States, shall be recognized as a national institution, to be endowed with national territory and maintained by national power—whether new securities for its perpetuation and ascendancy, and for the extension of it over regions not yet polluted by the footsteps of a slave, shall be incorporated into our federal legislation and into the Constitution of the Union. 48

Not only was the Reverend Mr. Bacon aroused because of Dr. Van Dyke's attack on the Abolitionists, but other clergymen also lifted their voices in protest. Perhaps the severest comment was made by the Presbyter when that publication called his sermon on The Character and Influence of Abolitionism "by far the most objectionable that we have seen. It is the result of breathing the atmosphere of the New York cotton, sugar and rice trade." 49

The antislavery clergymen in the Old School Presbyterian Church not only attacked Van Dyke's views on the slavery issue, they even went so far as to question his loyalty to the Union. Here they certainly did him an injustice, having obviously overlooked,

47 Ibid., 38-39. It should be remembered that Texas had maintained its independence for nine years, had been recognized by the leading nations of the world, and had no military fighting of any consequence for several years.
48 Ibid., 13-14.
49 Presbyter, January 24, 1861. Editorial.
intentionally or unintentionally, his Thanksgiving Day sermon of 1859 in which he contended that no one could resist the central government without clearly running counter to the law of God. Such views certainly were not in accord with secession or rebellion.\textsuperscript{50}

Dr. Van Dyke's position prompted the Reverend Mr. Bacon to warn the North of the danger of slavery extension:

But the question... the practical question with which you have to do—is not whether slavery shall be abolished, nor when, nor how; but whether this chattel slavery shall be extended and nationalized. Think what the extension of slavery means. It means not merely that black men shall be transported into our territories and labor there without wages, and that the master's right to their uncompensated services shall be enforced by our national power. It means the indefinite extension of that entire state of society which is inseparable from the existence of slavery, and which at this moment is a perpetual reign of terror in so large a portion of our common country... The question is whether you will consent to the indefinite extension of that state of society over all the territories now in possession of our government, and all that may hereafter be acquired. ... The question is not merely between the emancipation and the continued bondage of certain black men, if carried into the territories against their will. It is a question between liberty and slavery in the broadest sense. It is the question whether white men shall be free—whether the press shall be free—whether the pulpit and the Church shall be free—whether the Word of God shall be free—whether the knowledge and use of letters shall be free—whether speech in the intercourse of neighbors and in the conversation of fellow travelers on the highways and thoroughfares shall be free—whether thought itself shall be free. That is the question with which you have to do, under your responsibility to God for your posterity and for your country. On that question let every freedman stand firm, faithful and fearless in the love of right, and in the Confidence that God will do all things well.\textsuperscript{51}

The Reverend J. R. W. Sloane of New York delivered a sermon, December 23, 1860, on the subject, Review of Rev. Henry J. Van Dyke's Discourse on "The Character and Influence of Abolitionism." Among other things, the Reverend Mr. Sloane asserted:

It may be said that I do injustice, when I charge upon an ecclesiastical body the sentiments of a solitary individual connected with it. To this, I reply that the Rev. Mr. Van Dyke claims that these are the principles of his Church, and no one has ventured to deny the claim. I hold in my hand a volume com-


\textsuperscript{51} Bacon, The Jugglers Detected, 25.
pipled of articles selected from *The Princeton Review*, the acknowledged organ of the Old School Church. There are in this book two articles, one entitled "Abolitionism," being a review of certain speeches and discourses of Old School ministers in favor of slavery; the other entitled "Slavery," being a review of the work of Dr. Channing upon the subject. These articles from the pen of the justly distinguished Dr. [Charles] Hodge, state the principles of the Old School Presbyterian Church on this question, and have never been repudiated. Of these articles, Mr. Van Dyke's sermon is virtually a reproduction, a kind of echo, rather a faint and feeble one, too, as compared with the masculine vigor of the original.52

In referring to Dr. Benjamin M. Palmer of New Orleans the Reverend Mr. Sloane said:

I hold in my hand the discourse of Dr. Palmer, of New Orleans, delivered on Thanksgiving Day, a man of whom Mr. Van Dyke says, "that his soul is knit to him with the sympathy of Jonathan for David." From this discourse he [Van Dyke] quoted a long passage in a footnote to the pamphlet edition of his sermon, with high approval. Here are the closing sentences: "My servant, whether born in my house or bought with my money, stands to me in the relation of a child. Though providentially owing me service, which providentially I am bound to exact, he is, nevertheless, my brother and my friend; and I am to him a guardian and a father. He leans upon me for protection, for counsel, and for blessing . . . and so long as the relation continues no power, but the power of Almighty God, shall come between him and me." Here is another passage from the same discourse, which Dr. Van Dyke does not quote, "This argument, then, which sweeps over the entire circle of our relations, touches the four cardinal points of duty to ourselves, to our slaves, to the world, and to Almighty God. It establishes the nature and solemnity of our present trust, to preserve and transmit our existing system of domestic servitude, with the right unchallenged by man, to go and root itself wherever Providence and nature may carry it." This chivalrous sentence from New Orleans—bristling with Dr. Palmer's own italics—seems to have been rather uncourageously omitted by his enthusiastic friend [Dr. Van Dyke] on Brooklyn Heights. "This trust," he adds, "we will discharge in the face of the worst possible peril. Though war be the aggregation of all evils, yet, should the madness of the hour appeal to the arbitration of the sword, we will not shrink even from the baptism of fire. If modern crusaders stand in serried ranks upon some plain of Esdraelon, there shall we be, in defense of our trust. Not till the last man has fallen behind the last rampart shall it drop from our hands; and then only in surrender to the God who gave it." Well done, Dr. Palmer! Here is the exhibition of a courage second only to

the piety which may reasonably be supposed to characterize one who has been called to the pastorate of one of the largest, wealthiest, and most influential churches in this city; also to the important post of assisting in the education of the rising ministry of the Old School Church in Princeton! Mr. Van Dyke, with characteristic modesty, charges abolitionism with being not only a fanatical but a bloody spirit; and almost in the same breath, declares that his soul is knit, like the soul of Jonathan to David, to this modern "Peter the Hermit," who declares a crusade of blood, for the purpose of carrying slavery, not only into all the territories of the United States, but into all parts of the habitable world.

Sloane turned to the Bible to prove that the Fugitive Slave law was wrong:

"Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee; he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him." This law, as explicit as it is humane and merciful, guarded against the tyranny of masters, and gave the sacred right of protection to all under the Theocracy. What a contrast to the infernal enactment which disgraces our Christian nation! Yet, in the face of this benevolent decree of God, this man, professing to stand upon the Mosaic institutions, calls upon Northern States to repeal their "Liberty bills," in order that he who is flying toil-worn and weary, but with the light of the north star in his eye, and the light of the hope of liberty in his heart, from the prison-house of bondage, may be pursued by the hounds of the law, seized by the strong arm of the civil power, and thrust back into that hell of toil, suffering, and woe, from which he is attempting to escape! Would you do it? Not one of you! Would I? Not though opposed, as Luther said, by as many devils as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses! Would Mr. Van Dyke? No.

Furthermore, continued Mr. Sloane:

We can explain the avowal and advocacy of such sentiments as Mr. Van Dyke's only by a reference to the blinding nature of a monster iniquity. Such men have been so long accustomed to plead and apologize for slavery, that they are at length absolutely incapable of distinguishing right from wrong, darkness from light, sweet from bitter.

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien, That to be hated needs but to be seen, But seen too oft, familiar with her face, We first endure, then pity, then embrace." 

53 Dr. Palmer had received a call to the late Dr. J. W. Alexander's church on Fifth Avenue, New York.
55 Ibid., 15.
56 Ibid., 15-16.
Mr. Sloane went on:

Poor Dr. Thornwell of South Carolina, and his brother in distress, the bellicose Dr. Palmer of New Orleans, despairing of ever being able to convince the North that slavery is not sinful but a most lovely, beneficent, patriarchal, and divine institution, are already shaking off the dust of their feet and tearing their raiment as a witness against us. In other words, they are preaching disunion with all their might, while Dr. McVicar and Rev. Mr. Prentiss (he should be D.D.), are charming delighted audiences with their scriptural arguments for the slave-trade, with special reference to its adaptation to the spiritual wants of the negro race! Was there ever such an instance of turning the grace of God into lasciviousness? Did impiety ever go beyond this? Can such diabolical perversion of the truth be matched? Yes—by the man who stands in a northern pulpit, and approves; declaring that his soul is knit to such men by the Word and Spirit of God as the soul of Jonathan to that of David, and denouncing, as madmen and fanatics those who will not indorse his "doctrines of devils." 57

Sloane contended that the Northern abolitionist has not, as Mr. Van Dyke claimed, misrepresented Southern slaveholders. He said:

Mr. Van Dyke's second proposition is—"The principles of abolition have been propagated chiefly by misrepresentation and abuse. . . ." This second proposition declares that the anti-slavery sentiment in the North, which has so lately spoken in thunder tones that have carried dismay to the heart of this despotism, has been produced by misrepresentations of slavery and abuse of slaveholders, which declaration I pronounce as in itself a misrepresentation, and a slander upon the most intelligent people upon the face of the earth. To declare that the sober, intelligent, and conscientious masses of the North have been influenced to hate slavery, in some instances to enact statutes for the better protection of the fugitive, and at length to place in the presidential chair a man who believes slavery to be a social, moral, and political evil; to declare that all this has been produced by misrepresentation and abuse, exhibits a recklessness of statement, an audacity of impudence, absolutely inconceivable. 58

Describing the condition of the slaves, Sloane insisted:

There has been no misrepresentation, however; the man is yet to be born who can paint slavery in its true colors; the word is yet to be coined which expressed the combination of wickedness which constitutes its essence. Could it rise in all its dreadful lineaments before the eyes of the civilized world to-night, its doom would be sealed before to-morrow's dawn. Mr. Van Dyke talks about the Christian families in the South, in which the slaves are well fed, well clothed, and kindly treated. Suppose it granted—How many, I ask,

57 Ibid., 22-23.
58 Ibid., 23.
of these millions of slaves are in the family of the master, or in any way con-

nected with it? They toil during the day upon the plantation, under the eye of the overseer or underdriver; pass the night in cabins more or less com-

fortable, according to the ability or humanity of the owner, but always sepa-

rated from the mansion, of course; they have no more connection with the master's family than his horses and mules—not a particle; and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, as little effort is made for their improvement. Talk about families!—mockery of mockeries! Why I have seen a slaveholder upon his horse, with his gun in his hand followed by his dogs, out upon the hunt of a runaway slave! Fancy a father pursuing his son or daughter in that style! I have seen a slave-girl rise from the side of her mistress, and hobble across the floor, confined by fetters which clanked like those of a prisoner in his cell, to prevent her from flying to the woods, as she had formerly done, to escape the infernal tortures which that mistress inflicted upon her in out-

breaks of passion. A mother might thus treat her daughter, but would it be tolerated? I have seen the face of a babe six months old streaming with blood, from a cut inflicted by the lash of the whip of an overseer, who, in his reck-

less haste had aimed the blow at the nurse who held it in her arms; but I forbear; and yet Mr. Van Dyke dares to talk about misrepresentation, and asks us to send back fugitive slaves! 59

He spoke of the aggressive slave power in these words:

But has slavery been the meek and quiet lamb during these years which its apologists would have us believe? They would make one think that the ter-

rible lion of anti-slavery had stood with his tremendous paw upon its neck, with open jaws, blood-red tongue, glaring eyes, and erect mane ready at any moment to slay and devour, while the meek creature did nothing but bleat out piteous supplications for life! I affirm that slavery has been the aggressive power, and that slaveholders have accomplished by their own madness what abolitionists, without their assistance, would have failed to effect. There is a painful misrepresentation of facts throughout Mr. Van Dyke's discourse which we must in kindness conclude is the result of a pitiable ignorance of the history of events. I can conceive how a man who had read nothing but the Herald, or the Observer, or some of their echoes, might reach such conclusions as those stated under this fourth head, but I cannot conceive how a man abreast of the times, or having any tolerable acquaintance with the history of the last twenty years, could make such statements—I affirm that slavery has been the aggressor, and that the victory has generally been upon that side. In proof of this I appeal—

To the speeches of all the leading men of the South, from Calhoun to [Lewis T.] Wigfall in Congress, and upon the hustings, to the tone of her influential press with which, thanks to the honesty and candor of the "Anti-

Slavery Standard," we are pretty familiar.

To the imprisonment by South Carolina, of free citizens of Massachusetts guilty of no crime but a colored skin, their selling into slavery to pay their jail fees, and banishment from the State of the legal gentleman, Mr.

59 Ibid., 26.
[Samuel] Hoar, who had proceeded thither for the purpose of endeavoring to obtain justice for them by an appeal to the courts.

To the admission of Texas into the Union, and the consequent war with Mexico, in which life and treasure were lavishly expended in order to add additional slave territory to our already too much extended domain.

To the enactment of that infamous Fugitive Slave Law which affixes the severest penalties to obedience to God's law, and the plainest dictates of humanity, and visits with heavy punishments the performance of a duty which ninety-nine out of every hundred will discharge, the law to the contrary notwithstanding.

To the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, a measure proposed by Douglas, then a pliant, now a cast-off, tool of the Slave Oligarchy, and carried by southern votes—votes of the very men now talking about sacred compacts, and that too when not a single compact which the North has ever made has been, or is proposed to be violated.

To the attempted assassination of Charles Sumner, "the noblest Roman of them all," upon the floor of the Senate Chamber by southern bullies.

To the atrocious Dred Scott decision, making slavery national, and freedom local; capping the climax of all judicial iniquity by the declaration that black men never were, are not, and can not be citizens, and have no rights which white men are bound to respect.

To the terrible scenes enacted upon the plains of Kansas until it was as though the seven plagues of Egypt had been mingled with the seven vials of apocalyptic wrath, and poured out upon that unhappy territory.

To the banishment of free people, white and colored, from Southern States, together with the whippings, hangings, and burnings which have so aroused the northern mind during the past year.

In fine, to the whole history of the conflict in which this despotic power has been attempting to seize the Government and control it for the accomplishment of its own infernal designs.\(^{\text{60}}\)

These assertions satisfied Sloane that the slaveholders were the aggressors and not the Northerners.

The Northern clergymen proved to be alive to the current questions of the day in the North and also in the South. There were conservatives in both sections, but, in the main, the clergymen of each section became able leaders in the program of their particular section. The Northern clergy disliked the Mexican War, the compromise measures of 1850, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the Dred Scott decision, and the Buchanan administration. The Southern clergy, on the other hand, seemed to approve of these measures. The Northern and Southern clergymen, therefore, aided materially in arraigning the people of each section against the other.

\(^{\text{60}}\) Ibid., 39-40.