

Shackling Sermons: How the Pseudo-Christian Communication of Proslavery Preachers

Fueled the South's Defense of Slavery

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Historical Paper

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## Process Paper

Growing up as the daughter of a pastor who loves history, stories of heroic and faithful Christians have greatly influenced my life. But as my passion for Christian history has grown over time, I have not been able to ignore the great evils committed by Christians claiming divine support. Challenging me to confront faulty doctrines and grow in my own faith, my dad suggested researching the arguments of proslavery pastors in the Antebellum South for this year's topic. I was inspired to deepen my understanding of religious leaders' influence over American society and their complicity with racism through the way they wielded one of the most powerful forms of communication, the sermon.

Struggling to gain a foothold in the mountain of information on this topic, I was extremely grateful after a family friend recommended Jemar Tisby's book *The Color of Compromise*. Its timeline overview of the American church's complicity in racism helped me narrow down my area of study to the Antebellum era of proslavery religious leaders. I then found numerous sermons praising slavery and bolstering the South in their preservation of the institution, and I analyzed the arguments made in them. To supplement these primary sources with secondary articles, reports and dissertations, I researched the social climate of the day, specifically concerning race and religion. To understand the impact of the ideas preached by proslavery sermons in the present day, I read and watched recent reports, statements, and videos from Southern churches and denominations on their racist histories and the changes they are working toward.

To begin writing, I created an outline detailing the social context of the topic (the nationwide conflict surrounding slavery), the most prevalent and important arguments made in proslavery sermons and their impact on Southern society, and a discussion of the present-day

implications of the topic. Having a detailed outline, I crafted a rough draft with details and arguments from primary sources and background information from secondary sources, then analyzed my research to argue that proslavery pastors used their belief in divine support of slavery to communicate to their Southern congregations that slavery was righteous and to justify their fight to preserve the institution. After Regionals, I read more primary sources, added appendices to supplement my paper, and used the judges' wise and helpful comments to improve the paper for the State competition. Following the NHD in Indiana State competition, I referred to the judges' notes and suggestions to edit both the format and content of my paper.

Understanding the beliefs driving the actions of any society is imperative to navigating the motives behind laws, movements, wars and more. What convictions led Reformers to defy the Catholic Church, and what inspired colonists to separate from England and form the United States? The same questions must be asked regarding the Civil War. To know why the Confederate army fought so fiercely against the Union to preserve slavery, one must dive into the prominent influencers of Southern society —pastors— and what they were communicating to their congregations.

The political and social viewpoints of Antebellum Americans weren't shaped by late night hosts, podcasters, YouTube influencers, or social media giants. Instead, their thinking was shaped by the men standing behind their local Protestant pulpit. Many citizens, whether they personally adhered to formal religion or not, believed that Christianity represented the best of civilized understanding and that paganism was tantamount to the worst of barbaric thought.<sup>1</sup> Entire days were set aside for national fasting during times of crisis, and people filled churches across the nation to hear sermons related to pressing societal issues, and to pray for the country.<sup>2</sup> As national division over slavery grew into a volatile conflict, abolitionist and proslavery pastors alike used these National Fast Days, and their weekly messages, to join the fight over slavery. Pastors did not shy from taking sides, and soon the division in the nation was mirrored in the American church. Entire denominations, as well as individual congregations, split along the Northern and Southern divide, creating abolitionist Northern and proslavery Southern sects. The schisms in these churches made the national situation even more volatile as politicized sermons, a powerful form of social commentary in the 19th century, stirred up the already-held biases of the local congregants. Both abolitionist and proslavery Americans ardently believed that God was on their side, and pastors on both sides used the Bible to mourn the state of the country and decry the moral bankruptcy of the opposing side's argument.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, pro-slavery pastors leveraged their significant voice in the Southern community to defend the institution of slavery. Their sermons quieted the conscience of slaveholders and encouraged parishioners to fight for the Southern way of life, and the racism they communicated fostered the racial divide and

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<sup>1</sup>Wilson, Charles Reagan. "Religion and the US South." Southern Spaces, Southern Spaces, 16 Mar. 2004, southernspaces.org/2004/religion-and-us-south/.

<sup>2</sup>Andover-Harvard, Theological Library. "Fast-Day Sermons." 2015, guides.library.harvard.edu/hds/civil-war/hds/civil-war-sermons-fast.; Hamilton, William Thomas. "The Duties of Masters and Slaves Respectively." Internet Archive, Mobile, F.H. Brooks, 1 Jan. 1970, archive.org/details/dutiesofmasterss00hami.

<sup>3</sup>Root, Rev. David. "The Abolition Cause Eventually Triumphant." Archive.org, 2021, ia600909.us.archive.org/17/items/abolitioncausee00socioog/abolitioncausee00socioogpdf.

mistrust that has persisted in the church to the present day. Through careful manipulation of various biblical texts, and by reinforcing the commonly held assumptions and generalizations of the day, influential Southern pastors communicated their belief that slavery was morally righteous, normalizing racism in the hearts of Southerners throughout the Civil War, Reconstruction, and beyond.

While politicians proclaimed in the public square that slavery was economically expedient, pastors proclaimed from their sacred desk that slavery was morally acceptable, and even righteous. They routinely interpreted various biblical texts through the lens of the prevailing scientific ideas of the day, arguing that slavery was a natural and God-ordained institution. In order to encourage the belief that the enslavement of Africans was the divine will of God, proslavery pastors frequently employed a text in Genesis,<sup>4</sup> where the Biblical figure Noah cursed his grandson Canaan and his descendants to perpetual servitude for the sins of Canaan's father Ham.<sup>5</sup> They interpreted this passage to mean that race-based chattel slavery was God's natural design.<sup>6</sup> For centuries, religious scholars propagated the mistaken idea that Ham's skin was turned black because of his sin, which marked him and his descendants as inherently inferior and destined for enslavement. This idea was woven into Christian sermons, especially in Antebellum and Civil War South.<sup>7</sup> While a straightforward reading of the Genesis passage reveals that it does not condone slavery or racism,<sup>8</sup> proslavery clergy twisted the text to align with the beliefs of most Southerners. In doing so, they eased the consciences of their slaveholding congregants. Due

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<sup>4</sup>Hendrick, J. T. "Union And Slavery." Archive.org, Clarksville, Tenn., Printed by C.O. Faxon, 3 June 2008, ia902700.us.archive.org/28/items/rightsandduties00thorgoog/rightsandduties00thorgoog.pdf.

<sup>5</sup>ESV: Study Bible: English Standard Version. Crossway Bibles, 2016.

<sup>6</sup>Hendrick, J. T. "Union And Slavery." Archive.org, Clarksville, Tenn., Printed by C.O. Faxon, 3 June 2008, ia902700.us.archive.org/28/items/rightsandduties00thorgoog/rightsandduties00thorgoog.pdf.

<sup>7</sup>Mesablashvili, Akaki. "Misinformation: Black Race Originated from Noah's Son Ham: Drupal." Mythdetector.ge, 19 Sept. 1970, www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/misinformation-black-race-originated-noahs-son-ham.

<sup>8</sup>Kell, Garrett. "Damn the Curse of Ham: How Genesis 9 Got Twisted into Racist Propaganda." The Gospel Coalition, 9 Jan. 2021, www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/damn-curse-ham.

to their upbringings in a society that emphasized white superiority, sermons concerning Noah's curse upon Canaan found fertile soil and were quickly and deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of Southern church members.

With prevailing scientific thought giving an intellectual justification of slavery, many proslavery pastors expanded the application of this text and opined that the "curse of Ham" was obvious in the African slaves' physiology.<sup>9</sup> Emboldened by the well received and widely-accepted assumptions made by like-minded pastors, Reverend Benjamin Palmer argued in a Thanksgiving sermon that "every attribute of their [African people] character fits them for dependence and servitude," and declared that abolitionists wishing to steal slaves from the protective patriarchal system of slavery would cause more harm to the slaves than their lives in bondage.<sup>10</sup> Other pastors communicated that slaves were completely dependent upon the "superior wills" of their masters, and some went as far as to communicate that regarding all people as equal was unnatural, and any society that sought equality for all was incapable of surviving.<sup>11</sup> The blatant racism of these statements reflected and affirmed the attitude that many white Americans held towards people of different races,<sup>12</sup> and the message conveyed eased the consciences and stirred the hearts of Southern men and women in favor of the protection of slavery at any cost. These sermons added a spiritual layer to the convictions of Southern

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<sup>9</sup>Ruane, Michael E. "A Brief History of the Enduring Phony Science That Perpetuates White Supremacy." Washington Post, 30 Apr. 2019, [www.washingtonpost.com/local/a-brief-history-of-the-enduring-phony-science-that-perpetuates-white-supremacy/2019/04/29/20e6aef0-5aeb-11e9-a00e-050dc7b82693\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/a-brief-history-of-the-enduring-phony-science-that-perpetuates-white-supremacy/2019/04/29/20e6aef0-5aeb-11e9-a00e-050dc7b82693_story.html).

<sup>10</sup>Palmer, Benjamin Morgan. "Thanksgiving Sermon" Internet Archive, New-York, George F. Nesbitt & Co., Printers, 1 Jan. 1861, [archive.org/details/thanksgivingserm00palmpage/n5/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/thanksgivingserm00palmpage/n5/mode/2up).

<sup>11</sup>Wilson, Joseph R. "Mutual Relation of Masters and Slaves as Taught in the Bible: a Discourse Preached in the First Presbyterian Church, Augusta, Georgia, on Sabbath Morning Jan. 6, 1861." Archive.org, Augusta, Ga.:Steam Press of Chronicle & Sentinel, 1 May 2019, <https://archive.org/details/30416500-4e1c-4b87-9581-aa29ccd3d5ae>.

<sup>12</sup>Lumen Learning. "US History I (OS Collection)." African Americans in the Antebellum United States | US History I (OS Collection), 2021, [courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-ushistory1os2xmaster/chapter/african-americans-in-the-antebellum-united-states/](https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-ushistory1os2xmaster/chapter/african-americans-in-the-antebellum-united-states/).

Christians and created strong feelings of moral superiority over abolitionists, greatly contributing to the high morale of the South in the Civil War.

Adding to the belief that the South was protecting the interests of African slaves, many clergymen argued that while abuses of a slaveholder's power could occur, benevolent Christian slave owners who treated their slaves humanely were protected by God's Word. Preaching on Ephesians 6:5-9, which opens with, "Bondservants, obey your earthly masters....," to argue that slavery was sanctioned by the Bible and was a righteous institution when under the authority of Christian men, Reverend Joseph Wilson declared, "The Bible brings human slavery underneath the sanction of divine authority," and argued that the abuses suffered by the enslaved were the result of imperfect masters, not the institution itself.<sup>13</sup> Easing the consciences of his congregants, another minister, Reverend W. T. Hamilton, delivered a sermon on the verse, "Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. (Colossians 4:1)"<sup>14</sup> He argued that "the direct tendency of religion is to eradicate vice and to correct all abuses," and advocated for just treatment of slaves, but promoted the continuation of their subjugation to their masters' whims as the inferiors in the relationship between masters and slaves. He also communicated that the stronger Christianity was in the South, the wiser and godlier masters would be in their treatment of the enslaved.<sup>15</sup> Ignoring the major abuses inflicted upon the enslaved, these pastors promoted the idea that their Christian identity purified their complicity in enslaving an entire race of people, giving them a firm moral standing in their effort to preserve slavery. The combined justification of slavery and communication that Christian

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<sup>13</sup>ESV: Study Bible: English Standard Version. Crossway Bibles, 2016.;

Wilson, Joseph R. "Mutual Relation of Masters and Slaves as Taught in the Bible: a Discourse Preached in the First Presbyterian Church, Augusta, Georgia, on Sabbath Morning Jan. 6, 1861." Archive.org, Augusta, Ga.:Steam Press of Chronicle & Sentinel, 1 May 2019, <https://archive.org/details/30416500-4e1c-4b87-9581-aa29ccd3d5ae>.

<sup>14</sup>ESV: Study Bible: English Standard Version. Crossway Bibles, 2016.

<sup>15</sup>Hamilton, William Thomas. "The Duties of Masters and Slaves Respectively." Internet Archive, Mobile, F.H. Brooks, 1 Jan. 1970, [archive.org/details/dutiesofmasterss00hami](https://archive.org/details/dutiesofmasterss00hami).

slaveholders were not the causes of evils within the institution shifted any guilt that their slaveholding congregants might have felt and allowed their consciences to continue their fight to protect slavery in the South.

Another major argument for the justification of slavery communicated by Southern pastors was that American enslavement of Africans was a successful missionary effort. Setting aside any major abuses or ethical grievances with the institution, ministers used the conversion of slaves to Christianity to prove the righteousness of slavery while appealing to the paternalistic ideals prevalent in Southern society. They expressed their firm beliefs that the existence of slavery saved more souls than any other Christian mission and encouraged Christian masters to provide religious instruction for their slaves.<sup>16</sup> In a sermon discussing the joy of being under God's rule, Reverend J. T. Hendrick referred to white men as the only hope of salvation for Africans, and said "God sent them [Africans] here to become civilized and Christianized, that they may take back these blessings to their own native land, and thus redeem from barbarism."<sup>17</sup> These ideas appealed to the South's paternalistic society where most well-respected intellectuals, including doctors,<sup>18</sup> communicated that Black people were naturally dependent on the benevolence of white men to keep them in their supposedly natural state of enslavement. Reverend James Thornwell (see Appendix A) praised the missionary efforts of white slaveholders, communicating that Christian slaveholders should treat the religious education of their slaves as that of their own children because of their "proneness to superstition and

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<sup>16</sup>Hendrick, J. T. "Union And Slavery." Archive.org, Clarksville, Tenn., Printed by C.O. Faxon, 3 June 2008, ia902700.us.archive.org/28/items/rightsandduties00thorgoog/rightsandduties00thorgoog.pdf. ;Thornwell, James Henley. "Report on the Subject of Slavery" Columbia, Press of A.S. Johnston, 1852.

<sup>17</sup>Hendrick, J. T. "Union And Slavery." Archive.org, Clarksville, Tenn., Printed by C.O. Faxon, 3 June 2008, ia902700.us.archive.org/28/items/rightsandduties00thorgoog/rightsandduties00thorgoog.pdf.

<sup>18</sup>Ruane, Michael E. "A Brief History of the Enduring Phony Science That Perpetuates White Supremacy." Washington Post, 30 Apr. 2019, www.washingtonpost.com/local/a-brief-history-of-the-enduring-phony-science-that-perpetuates-white-supremacy/2019/0429/20e6aef0-5aeb-11e9-a00e-050dc7b82693\_story.html.



extravagance.”<sup>19</sup> White Southerners wanted to believe that slavery was morally righteous, and proslavery pastors provided them the spiritual cover necessary to believe that they were appointed by God to be their slaves’ only hope for salvation. Communicating that African people were not only unreached by Christianity without slavery, but also that they were incapable of converting to Christianity without the assistance of white men, these pastors bolstered the belief, innate in the Southern slaveholder’s mind, that their enslavement of Black men and women was a noble and godly endeavor, and that Southern slave-dependent lifestyles did not need to be altered.

Employing all these arguments, proslavery pastors further justified slavery in the eyes of their congregations by advocating for its preservation at the expense of national unity. As most pastors of the time were highly respected by their communities and well-educated individuals, their sermons were published in many newspapers, allowing proslavery pastors’ messages to reach Southerners outside their congregations and states. In fact, manuscripts of their sermons were frequently sought after by newspaper editors for publication, allowing pastors’ fiery arguments promoting slavery and secession to spread across the South.<sup>20</sup> Assuming that God was on the side of the South in the conflict over slavery, many pastors condemned Northern abolitionists as atheistic. After detailing the role of the church in society, and claiming the righteousness of slavery, Reverend Thornwell argued that the church was bound by the authority of God’s Word to allow and protect slavery and accused abolitionists of forming their opinion “independently of the Bible.”<sup>21</sup> In another sermon, Thornwell praised the South Carolina

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<sup>19</sup>Thornwell, James Henley. “Report on the Subject of Slavery” Columbia, Press of A.S. Johnston, 1852.

<sup>20</sup>Hendrick, J. T. “Union And Slavery.” Archive.org, Clarksville, Tenn., Printed by C.O. Faxon, 3 June 2008, [ia902700.us.archive.org/28/items/rightsandduties00thorgoog/rightsandduties00thorgoog.pdf](https://ia902700.us.archive.org/28/items/rightsandduties00thorgoog/rightsandduties00thorgoog.pdf); Wilson, Joseph R. “Mutual Relation of Masters and Slaves as Taught in the Bible: a Discourse Preached in the First Presbyterian Church, Augusta, Georgia, on Sabbath Morning Jan. 6, 1861.” Archive.org, Augusta, Ga.:Steam Press of Chronicle & Sentinel, 1 May 2019, <https://archive.org/details/30416500-4e1c-4b87-9581-aa29ccd3d5ae>.

<sup>21</sup>Thornwell, James Henley. “Report on the Subject of Slavery” Columbia, Press of A.S. Johnston, 1852.

Convention for seceding from the Union and claimed that the actions taken were wise and justified by Scripture. Expressing similar sentiments in a Fast Day sermon, Reverend Palmer declared, “We defend the cause of God and religion. The abolition spirit is undeniably atheistic.”<sup>22</sup> This assumption, that God was on the side of the South, slavery, and secession became so pervasive, that the writers of the Confederate Constitution sought to “invok[e] the favor and guidance of the Almighty God.”<sup>23</sup> After using Scripture to “prove” that slavery was morally acceptable, these men advocated for the necessity of secession and argued that the preservation of slavery was more important than the unity of the nation. In yet another proslavery sermon, Reverend Thornwell outlines the sins of the nation, and places a large portion of the blame for the tragedies of the conflict over slavery on Northern abolitionists, even speculating that it was the North’s duty to secede from the Union as they were guilty of breaking proslavery laws. He claimed that the actions of abolitionists were not only the cause of the national conflict, but also sinful because they disobeyed the laws of God and the land.<sup>24</sup> Before going into battle, Confederate soldiers were encouraged and inspired by proslavery chaplains and ministers, including Reverend Robert Sledd (see Appendix B), who claimed that the South was fulfilling its duty to protect “constitutional liberty and Bible christianity” in their fierce fight against Northern atheist abolitionism.<sup>25</sup> Removing all blame from Southern slaveholders, proslavery pastors advocated for the South as the moral stronghold of the nation, and justifying any actions taken to defend the institution. Weaving the idea that race-based slavery was ordained by God into the

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<sup>22</sup>Palmer, Benjamin Morgan. “Thanksgiving Sermon” Internet Archive, New-York, George F. Nesbitt & Co., Printers, 1 Jan. 1861, [archive.org/details/thanksgivingserm00palmpage/n5/mode/2up](http://archive.org/details/thanksgivingserm00palmpage/n5/mode/2up).

<sup>23</sup>“Constitution of the Confederate States.” Edited by James D Richardson, Avalon Project-Constitution of the Confederate States; March 11, 1861, Lillian Goldman Law Library, 2008, [avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\\_century/csa\\_csa.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/csa_csa.asp).

<sup>24</sup>Thornwell, James Henley. “National Sins: A Fast Day Sermon.” Archive.org, 2014, [archive.org/details/dutiesofmasterss00hami](http://archive.org/details/dutiesofmasterss00hami).

<sup>25</sup>Sledd, Robert Newton. “A Sermon Delivered in the Market Street, M.E. Church, Petersburg, Va.: Before the Confederate Cadets on the Occasion of Their Departure for the Seat of War, Sunday, Sept. 22nd, 1861.” Documenting the American South, 1999, [docsouth.unc.edu/ills/sledd/Sledd.html](http://docsouth.unc.edu/ills/sledd/Sledd.html).

very being of the Christian South, proslavery pastors made defending slavery a matter of Christian faith for Southerners, and inspired the South's perseverance throughout the bloody conflict that was the Civil War.

Even after the Civil War, racist agendas still crept into the communications of Southern pastors, and many continued to use their platforms to justify horrifying actions against African Americans. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, which was founded by influential slaveholding Baptist leaders in 1859, promoted white supremacist and pro-segregation ideals for many years. It was not until 2018 that the seminary released a report detailing its racist history and renounced the faulty doctrines employed by earlier pastors of their denomination to defend slavery.<sup>26</sup> The Southern Baptist Convention specifically condemned the Curse of Ham argument used by proslavery Baptist pastors as harmful and untrue.<sup>27</sup> The Presbyterian Church in America (originally the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America) had a similar history of promoting segregation, and even after they reunited with Northern Presbyterians, some Southern Presbyterian churches greatly disapproved of the support of integration of churches and actions taken to gain civil rights for African Americans, and openly thwarted attempts at racial reconciliation to the point of creating a new, segregated seminary, the Reformed Theological Seminary, in order to hold on to their racist ideals.<sup>28</sup> The defense of race-based chattel slavery communicated by influential pastors permeated Southern Protestant churches and ingrained ideas of white superiority in the hearts of Southern white Christians so strongly that for decades following the Civil War, many Christians in the South still held on to the beliefs justified by their

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<sup>26</sup>Woods, Curtis, et al. *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 2018, pp. 5–72, Report on Slavery and Racism in the History of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

<sup>27</sup>“On Renouncing The Doctrine Of The “Curse Of Ham” As A Justification For Racism.” Southern Baptist Convention, 2018, Sbc.net, [www.sbc.net/resource-library/resolutions/on-renouncing-the-doctrine-of-the-curse-of-ham-as-a-justification-for-racism/](http://www.sbc.net/resource-library/resolutions/on-renouncing-the-doctrine-of-the-curse-of-ham-as-a-justification-for-racism/).

<sup>28</sup>Grant, Tobin. “What Catalyst Started the Presbyterian Church in America? Racism.” *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 16 Sept. 2019, [gazette.com/news/what-catalyst-started-the-presbyterian-church-in-america-racism/article\\_80baea35-10c4-5635-b55b-245dc565abc3.html](http://gazette.com/news/what-catalyst-started-the-presbyterian-church-in-america-racism/article_80baea35-10c4-5635-b55b-245dc565abc3.html).

religious leaders, owing to the failure of racial reconciliation in many churches. Even now, there is still a gap between Black and white Christians, especially in the South, because many Black Christians are wary of theology originating from white preachers.<sup>29</sup> But progress is being made, as the formal apology of a Mississippi Presbyterian church<sup>30</sup> shows the shifting of attitudes in Southern clergy and is another step in the long road to racial reconciliation in the American church, a journey made necessary by proslavery pastors in the Antebellum and Civil War era South. Just as proslavery pastors communicated racism and hate from their pulpits, modern Southern churches are using the same platform to reach reconciliation.

Through the twisting of specific biblical texts and common racial assumptions of the time, Southern pastors used their influence to communicate that slavery was righteous and the South was justified in their protection of their “peculiar institution,” greatly contributing to the overwhelming Southern belief of spiritual superiority over the abolitionist North. Their continuous message that slavery was a holy institution accepted by God greatly contributed to the ardent defense of slavery by the Confederate South throughout the Civil War. The entire Southern community centered upon slavery, and even though the institution hindered the economic flourishing of poor white farmers, most felt that the preservation of the Southern way of life was synonymous with the continuation of slavery. Poor whites craved the wealth, status, and carefree lives of slaveowners, and equated the thriving of slavery with the flourishing of the South.<sup>31</sup> Because slave-owning and non-slave-owning whites alike were committed to justifying slavery, they firmly grasped the moral arguments of their respected religious leaders and used them as fuel to justify race-based chattel slavery to themselves and to the world. Sermons of

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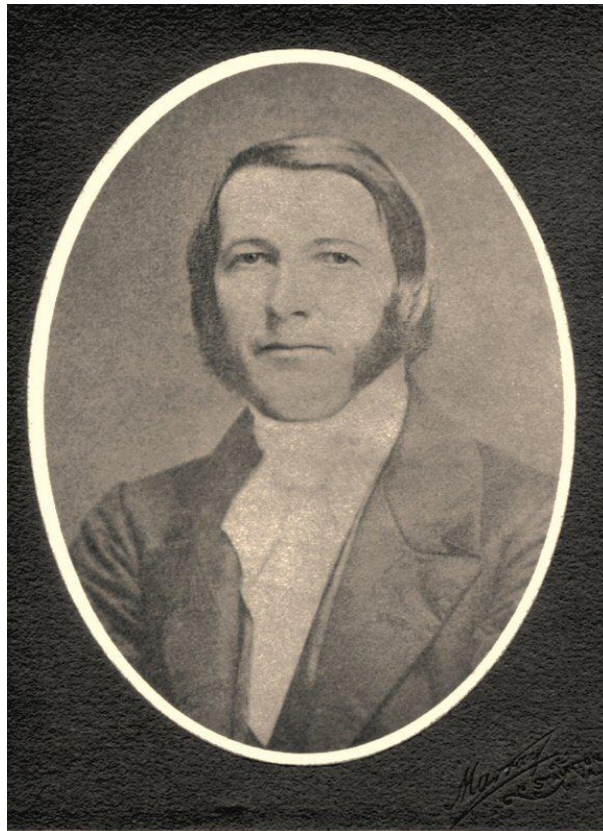
<sup>29</sup>“Theological Imperialism and the Black Community.” Performance by Eric Mason, et al., YouTube, The Gospel Coalition, 24 Mar. 2014, [youtu.be/4bNQkipPPvU](https://youtu.be/4bNQkipPPvU).

<sup>30</sup>Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley. “Confession of the Sin of Racism, and Commitment to Christian Unity.” [Pcahistory.org](http://Pcahistory.org), 3 May 2016.

<sup>31</sup>Rhea, Gordon. “Why Non-Slaveholding Southerners Fought.” American Battlefield Trust, 7 July 2017, [www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/why-non-slaveholding-southerners-fought](http://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/why-non-slaveholding-southerners-fought).

proslavery pastors were riveted to the hearts of their hearers in ways that were not going to be undone by political and military defeat. Even though slavery was barred with the end of the Civil War, the racism that undergirded the institution could not be uprooted through constitutional amendment. Racism was fostered through sermons which impacted the psyche of the hearers in profound, lasting ways. The only method that could truly reverse this impact was the method used to foster it in the first place: sermons.

## Appendix A

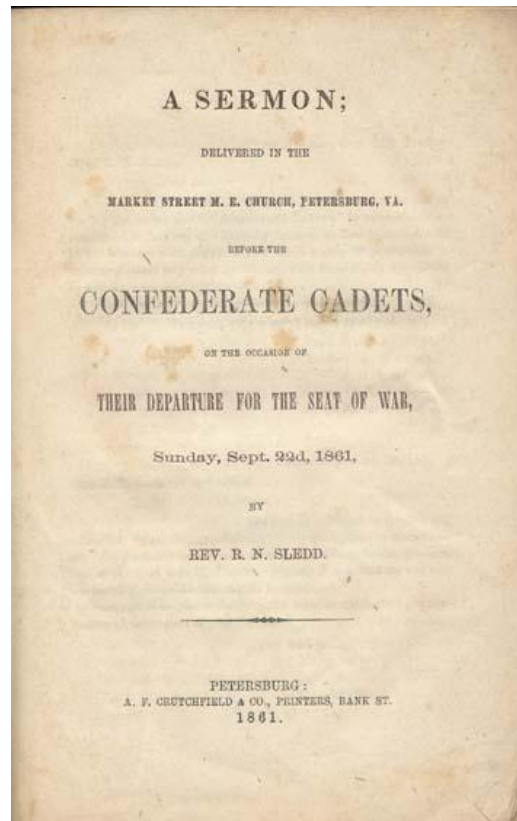


Reverend James Thornwell (1812-1862) was highly influential as a theologian and leader in the Southern Presbyterian community. Though he died in the middle of the Civil War, his numerous proslavery sermons not only greatly contributed to many Southern Presbyterians' understanding of the morality of slavery, but his ideas also influenced the beliefs and messages communicated by younger Southern proslavery pastors, specifically Reverend Benjamin Palmer, during the Civil War.

Waugh, Barry. "Lectures about Thornwell." *Presbyterians of the Past*, 28 Jan. 2020,

[www.presbyteriansofthepast.com/2020/01/27/lectures-about-thornwell/](http://www.presbyteriansofthepast.com/2020/01/27/lectures-about-thornwell/).

## Appendix B



Reverend Robert Sledd delivered this sermon before a group of Confederate soldiers preparing for battle. Later published by request of other proslavery Southerners, it is a prime example of how the messages of proslavery pastors were communicated to embolden and inspire the Southern people in their fight for slavery, as well as justify the South's firm stance on the issue that brought them to the violence of the Civil War.

Sledd, Robert Newton. "A Sermon Delivered in the Market Street, M.E. Church, Petersburg, Va.: Before the Confederate Cadets, on the Occasion of Their Departure for the Seat of War, Sunday, Sept. 22d, 1861." Documenting the American South, 1999, docsouth.unc.edu/imls/sledd/sledd.html.

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After Presbyterian churches in the Confederate states left the national denomination to form the Presbyterian Church in American, Reverend Thornwell wrote this inaugural address to all Christian churches. His goal was to communicate the new denominations specific beliefs concerning slavery, and the work contains his attempts to justify slavery from a biblical, natural, and racial standpoint.

Stringfellow, Thornton. "A Brief Examination of Scripture Testimony on the Institution of Slavery." *Documenting the American South*, 1841, [docsouth.unc.edu/church/stringfellow/stringfellow.html](http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/stringfellow/stringfellow.html).

Reverend Thornton Stringfellow wrote an essay that not only detailed all of the biblical passages that he believed justified slavery, but also claimed that the institution was righteous and full of mercy. Attached to this essay was his response to another theologian's biblical attack on slavery. He communicated that the only biblical answer to the question of slavery was that it was a positive good.



## Primary Reports and Minutes

Thornwell, James Henley. "Report on the Subject of Slavery" Columbia, Press of A.S.

Johnston, 1852.

A generally moderate man politically, Reverend Thornwell advocated for slavery from the view that the Bible did not outright condemn slavery. In this report, he did not attack abolitionists or the North, but implied that they were false Christians, and gave his congregation the moral encouragement that their slavery-dependent lifestyles were worth fighting for.

"Constitution of the Confederate States." Edited by James D Richardson, Avalon Project -

Constitution of the Confederate States; March 11, 1861, Lillian Goldman Law Library, 2008, [avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\\_century/csa\\_csa.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/csa_csa.asp).

The preamble to the Confederacy's constitution shows the South's strong religious motivation in the Civil War and the defense of slavery as they attempt to invoke "the favor and guidance of Almighty God." I was able to gain a better understanding of the grasp that Christianity held on the political leaders of the South.

Sermons:

Elliot, Stephen. “ ‘Samson's Riddle.' A Sermon Preached in Christ Church, Savannah, on Friday, March 27th, 1863, Being the Day of Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer, Appointed by the President of the Confederate States.” *Documenting the American South*, 2000, [.unc.edu/imps/samson/samson.html](http://www.unc.edu/imps/samson/samson.html).

Reverend Stephen Elliot delivered this Fast Day sermon during the war to keep the hearts of the Southern people in the battle for slavery. Preaching from the assumption that slavery was righteous, he declared that the continuation of slavery was far more important than compromising for peace. This sermon was sent to other churches and newspapers to “further the cause of the Confederacy.”

Hamilton, William Thomas. “The Duties of Masters and Slaves Respectively.”

Internet Archive, Mobile, F.H. Brooks, 1 Jan. 1970, [archive.org/details/dutiesofmasterss00hami](http://archive.org/details/dutiesofmasterss00hami).

Reverend Hamilton believed that slaves are human beings in need of salvation, but denied any belief in the existence of equality, claiming that differences in wealth or personalities prove the morality of slavery. He communicated his desire of a patriarchal society where white men lead their wives, children, and slaves to salvation. He argued that the continuing existence of slavery in America was imperative to the thriving of Christianity, influencing his congregation to firmly attach slavery to the church, an idea of white superiority that plagued Southern Protestant churches for decades after the Civil War.

Hendrick, J. T. "Union And Slavery." Archive.org, Clarksville, Tenn., Printed by C.O. Faxon, 3 June 2008, [ia902700.us.archive.org/28/items/rightsandduties00thorgoog/rightsandduties00thorgoog.pdf](https://ia902700.us.archive.org/28/items/rightsandduties00thorgoog/rightsandduties00thorgoog.pdf).

In this sermon, Reverend Hendrick communicated to his congregation by using specific Scripture passages that participating in race-based chattel slavery was ordained by God, thus justified, and that the conversion of slaves to Christianity outweighed any mistreatment of enslaved people. Not only did he justify the existence of slavery, but he removed any doubts of moral wrong, giving the South firm moral backing in their commitment to fight slavery.

Palmer, Benjamin Morgan. "Thanksgiving Sermon" *Internet Archive*, New-York, George F. Nesbitt & Co., Printers, 1 Jan. 1861, [archive.org/details/thanksgivingserm00palm/page/n5/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/thanksgivingserm00palm/page/n5/mode/2up).

Reverend Palmer communicated his firm belief that black people naturally belonged in bondage, and that it was the South's godly duty to enslave them. He went so far in affirming slavery that he declared abolition atheistic and defending slavery to be God's will.

Root, Rev. David. "The Abolition Cause Eventually Triumphant." Archive.org, 2021, [ia600909.us.archive.org/17/items/abolitioncausee00socigoog/abolitioncausee00socigoog.pdf](https://ia600909.us.archive.org/17/items/abolitioncausee00socigoog/abolitioncausee00socigoog.pdf).

This pro-abolition sermon from a Northern pastor was a prime example of the disagreement over slavery between Christians, and how both abolitionist and proslavery ministers (usually holding to the national geographic divide) believed and communicated

that God was on their side. The comparison between Northern abolitionism and Southern proslavery, and what their religious leaders were communicating solidified the argument that religious leaders were instrumental in shaping and fortifying those fighting in the battle over slavery

Sledd, Robert Newton. "A Sermon Delivered in the Market Street, M.E. Church, Petersburg, Va.: Before the Confederate Cadets, on the Occasion of Their Departure for the Seat of War, Sunday, Sept. 22d, 1861." Documenting the American South, 1999, docsouth.unc.edu/imls/sledd/sledd.html.

Reverend Robert Sledd delivered this sermon before Confederate troops to inspire them in their fight and assure them that God was on the side of the South and slavery.

Comparing their fight to those of biblical and American warriors, he justified their cause and war itself to the troops and encouraged them to fight for "constitutional liberty and Bible christianity [sic]."

Thornwell, James Henley. "National Sins: A Fast Day Sermon." Archive.org, 2014, archive.org/details/dutiesofmasterss00hami.

Reverend Thornwell communicated his firm beliefs in the righteousness of slavery and placed the blame for national conflict on Northern abolitionists. He eased the consciences of his slaveholding congregants by giving some room for improvement in the treatment of their slaves, but advocated for the continuation of the South's "peculiar institution," and justified the South's fight for the preservation of slavery.

Thornwell, James Henley. "The State of the Country." Internet Archive, Columbia, S.C. : Southern Guardian Steam-Power Press, 1 Jan. 1861, [archive.org/details/stateofcountryar00thor/page/8/mode/2up?q=slavery](https://archive.org/details/stateofcountryar00thor/page/8/mode/2up?q=slavery).

After South Carolina seceded from the Union, Reverend Thornwell delivered this sermon, communicating his beliefs that secession was necessary and justifying his congregation's slaveholding lifestyle as righteous.

Wilson, Joseph R. "Mutual Relation of Masters and Slaves as Taught in the Bible: a Discourse Preached in the First Presbyterian Church, Augusta, Georgia, on Sabbath Morning Jan. 6, 1861." Archive.org, Augusta, Ga.: Steam Press of Chronicle & Sentinel, 1 May 2019, <https://archive.org/details/30416500-4e1c-4b87-9581-aa29ccd3d5ae>.

Reverend Wilson communicated his firm belief that the Bible wholeheartedly embraced slavery as a righteous institution. Like Reverend Hamilton, he denied the existence of equality, affirming that all have a lot in life, and these lots are separate and unequal, and argues for the morality and protection of the South's "peculiar institution"

## Secondary Sources

### Articles:

Barnhart, Dave. "Reading a Pro-Slavery Sermon from 1863." Dave Barnhart, 7 July

2020, [davebarnhart.wordpress.com/2015/08/06/reading-a-pro-slavery-sermon-from-1863/](https://davebarnhart.wordpress.com/2015/08/06/reading-a-pro-slavery-sermon-from-1863/).

This analysis of a proslavery sermon delivered by Reverend Stephen Elliot detailed and explained the many inferences and arguments made by Elliot. Not only was this analysis crucial to understanding many of the similar arguments in sermons that I have read, it also helped me establish the right viewpoint to continue my research objectively.

"Benjamin Morgan Palmer." PCA Historical Center: Benjamin Morgan Palmer Obituary 1902, [www.pcahistory.org/biography/palmerbm.html](http://www.pcahistory.org/biography/palmerbm.html).

This short overview of Reverend Palmer's life provided by the Presbyterian Church in America contained praise for his strong spiritual influence throughout the South. While reading Palmer's written works was crucial to understanding his viewpoints, seeing the accolades he received from his church shows how influential he was in shaping the beliefs of his congregation.

"Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Christian History Magazine." Christian History Institute, [christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/broken-churches-broken-nation](http://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/broken-churches-broken-nation).

This article detailed the timeline of the divisions of the three major Christian denominations in antebellum America (Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist), as well as the causes of the splits. But the most important information it provided concerned the

influence of the Church on the American population, and how the schisms tore the entire nation apart.

Clarke, Erskine. "Thornwell, James Henley." South Carolina Encyclopedia, University of South Carolina, Institute for Southern Studies, 1 Aug. 2016, [www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/thornwell-james-henley/](http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/thornwell-james-henley/).

Though brief, this biography contained crucial details explaining the beliefs and influence of Reverend Thornwell. He used his impressive education and popularity to ardently promote and defend slavery during secession, making him a political icon of the Confederacy as it fought to justify slavery and the southern cause in the Civil War.

Cornwell, Allen. "Slavery Was Supported by White Southern Pastors." Our Great American Heritage RSS, 13 Jan. 2018, [www.ourgreatamericanheritage.com/2015/11/slavery-was-supported-by-white-southern-pastors/](http://www.ourgreatamericanheritage.com/2015/11/slavery-was-supported-by-white-southern-pastors/). (Statistics)

This source provided statistical analysis of the widespread influence of Southern pastors and their impact on the Civil War. Southern proslavery pastors eased the consciences of their large congregations by ardently defending slavery as a morally good institution, arguments that were used by the South to justify slavery at any cost.

Gourley, Bruce. "Yes, the Civil War Was About Slavery." | Baptists and the American Civil War:

In *Their Own Words*, 8 Feb. 2017,

[civilwarbaptists.com/featured/slavery/?scrlybrkr=825b17ce](http://civilwarbaptists.com/featured/slavery/?scrlybrkr=825b17ce).

This article documents a brief history of the conflict over slavery, and even points out that the reason many Southern pastors promoted slavery was because their large congregations allowed them to lead the lavish lives of Southern planters. Also, because of their large congregations, their clear communication defending slavery reached all across the South.

Grant, Tobin. "What Catalyst Started the Presbyterian Church in America? Racism." *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 16 Sept. 2019,

[gazette.com/news/what-catalyst-started-the-presbyterian-church-in-america-racism](http://gazette.com/news/what-catalyst-started-the-presbyterian-church-in-america-racism/article_80baea35-10c4-5635-b55b-245dc565abc3.html)

[/article\\_80baea35-10c4-5635-b55b-245dc565abc3.html](http://gazette.com/news/what-catalyst-started-the-presbyterian-church-in-america-racism/article_80baea35-10c4-5635-b55b-245dc565abc3.html).

This article provided a detailed description of the history of the Presbyterian Church in America, and the racism that motivated the creation of the institution. It deepened my understanding of the infiltration of racism into the very foundation of the institution and the actions needed for racial reconciliation.

Green, Laura. "Negative Racial Stereotypes and Their Effect on Attitudes Toward

African-Americans." *Negative Racial Stereotypes and Their Effect on Attitudes Toward*

*African-Americans - Scholarly Essays - Jim Crow Museum - Ferris State University*,

1998, [www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/links/essays/vcu.htm](http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/links/essays/vcu.htm).

This article's detailing of racial stereotypes created by white people to justify slavery and



segregation helped me interpret the assumptions made by Southern pastors in their sermons and increased my understanding of the racist beliefs held by most Southerners.

Guelzo, Allen. "Did Religion Make the Civil War Worse?" *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 23 Aug. 2015, [www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/08/did-religion-make-the-american-civil-war-worse/401633/](http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/08/did-religion-make-the-american-civil-war-worse/401633/).

This article discusses the dominating presence of Christianity in 19th century America and its control of American society, culture, and politics. The author argues that the influence of the church in the North and South caused both sides to justify their ruthless killing of each other in the Civil War.

Kell, Garrett. "Damn the Curse of Ham: How Genesis 9 Got Twisted into Racist Propaganda." *The Gospel Coalition*, 9 Jan. 2021, [www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/damn-curse-ham/](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/damn-curse-ham/).

This article, written by a modern pastor, not only details the main Biblical arguments employed by Southern pastors to justify slavery, but also used the Bible to show the fallacies in those arguments, and reinforced my understanding of the wrongful assumptions made by pastors in their sermons.

Learning, Lumen. "US History I (AY Collection)." *Culture in the Old South | US History I (AY Collection)*, [courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-ushistory1ay/chapter/culture-in-the-old-south/](http://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-ushistory1ay/chapter/culture-in-the-old-south/).

This article detailed the complete attachment of religion to Antebellum Southern life. Most Southerners belonged to one of the three main denominations, and their influence

affected all of Southern culture from gender roles, morality, and race.

Lumen Learning. "US History I (OS Collection)." African Americans in the Antebellum United States | US History I (OS Collection), 2021, [courses.lumenlearning.com](https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-ushistory1os2xmaster/chapter/african-americans-in-the-antebellum-united-states/)

[/suny-ushistory1os2xmaster/chapter/african-americans-in-the-antebellum-united-states/](https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-ushistory1os2xmaster/chapter/african-americans-in-the-antebellum-united-states/).

This article detailed the experiences of slaves in America under their white masters. It deepened my understanding of the attitudes already held by slave owners, and how their assumptions of racial superiority, combined with the proslavery messages, communicated by their religious leaders, allowed them to justify their holding and abusing of enslaved Africans.

Menikoff, Aaron, et al. "How and Why Did Some Christians Defend Slavery?" The Gospel Coalition, 24 Feb. 2017, [www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-and-why-did-some-christians-defend-slavery/](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-and-why-did-some-christians-defend-slavery/).

This article explains the arguments employed by both abolitionist and proslavery pastors. The Christian authors then join the abolitionist and argue that the only way to justify slavery was to fail to see black people as humans made in the image of their Creator God, a point rarely brought up in proslavery sermons.

Mesablashvili, Akaki. "Misinformation: Black Race Originated from Noah's Son Ham: Drupal."

Mythdetector.ge, 19 Sept. 1970,

[www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/misinformation-black-race-originated-noahs-son-ham](http://www.mythdetector.ge/en/myth/misinformation-black-race-originated-noahs-son-ham).

This article outlined the faulty arguments made by intellectuals, including religious leaders, when they employed the Curse of Ham in Genesis to justify Southern race-based chattel slavery. It deepened my understanding of the racist narrative woven into society by intellectuals that created the assumptions of the proslavery South.

Rhea, Gordon. "Why Non-Slaveholding Southerners Fought." American Battlefield Trust, 7 July

2017, [www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/why-non-slaveholding-southerners-fought](http://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/why-non-slaveholding-southerners-fought).

This address connects the isolation of the South and the three major church denominations' splits to the influence of Antebellum Southern pastors over non-slaveholding whites to fight for Southern slavery.

Ruane, Michael E. "A Brief History of the Enduring Phony Science That Perpetuates White

Supremacy." Washington Post, 30 Apr. 2019, [www.washingtonpost.com/local/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/a-brief-history-of-the-enduring-phony-science-that-perpetuates-white-supremacy/2019/04)

[a-brief-history-of-the-enduring-phony-science-that-perpetuates-white-supremacy/2019/04/29/20e6aef0-5aeb-11e9-a00e-050dc7b82693\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/a-brief-history-of-the-enduring-phony-science-that-perpetuates-white-supremacy/2019/04/29/20e6aef0-5aeb-11e9-a00e-050dc7b82693_story.html).

This article provided a basic understanding of the worldwide influence of 'science' in the justification of racist chattel slavery. With this information, I was able to better understand the racial assumptions held by most Southerners, and how their pastors incorporated those assumptions with Scripture to ease the consciences of slaveholders

and secessionists in their congregations.

Stout, Harry S. "Religion in the Civil War: The Southern Perspective." Religion in the Civil War: The Southern Perspective, Divining America, TeacherServe©, National Humanities Center, [nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nineteen/nkeyinfo/cwsouth.htm](http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nineteen/nkeyinfo/cwsouth.htm).

While both the North and the South were strongly motivated by religion in the Civil War, this article examines the South's belief that they were God's chosen people. Previously rare in Southern history, this belief and the conflict over slavery marked the rise of sermons with obvious political agendas.

Taylor, Justin. "James Henley Thornwell, Antebellum Southern Presbyterian and Defender of Slavery." The Gospel Coalition, 9 Dec. 2016, [www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/evangelical-history/the-regulated-freedom-of-james-henley-thornwell-antebellum-southern-presbyterian/](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/evangelical-history/the-regulated-freedom-of-james-henley-thornwell-antebellum-southern-presbyterian/).

This article explains Reverend Thornwell's paternalistic ideas of the white man's duty to provide, protect, and discipline their entire households, and how these beliefs, held by many pastors, blinded him to the many abuses associated with American chattel slavery.

"The South Secedes." Ushistory.org, Independence Hall Association, 2021, [www.ushistory.org/us/32e.asp](http://www.ushistory.org/us/32e.asp).

This article provided a short timeline for the time period I am studying. Understanding the political turmoil surrounding the sermons and reports written by Southern pastors was crucial to understanding the social effects of their words.

Weldon, Nick. "On Thanksgiving 1860, a New Orleans Pastor's Sermon Defending Slavery."

The Historic New Orleans Collection, 22 Nov. 2019,

[www.hnoc.org/publications/first-draft/thanksgiving-1860-new-orleans-pastors-sermon-defending-slavery-rallied](http://www.hnoc.org/publications/first-draft/thanksgiving-1860-new-orleans-pastors-sermon-defending-slavery-rallied).

This source detailed the extent of Reverend Benjamin Morgan Palmer's influence in the entire Southern community. His ideas became rallying cries for secessionist governments.

The article also described his complete devotion to racial purity, another attribute that immortalized him among many Southerners.

Wilson, Charles Reagan. "Religion and the US South." *Southern Spaces*, Southern Spaces, 16

Mar. 2004, [southernspaces.org/2004/religion-and-us-south/](http://southernspaces.org/2004/religion-and-us-south/).

This detailing of the South's religious history, explained the strong connection between Southern culture and Southern churches, and that while not all Southerners associated themselves with a denomination, religion held a dominating public presence.

Zipf, Karin L. "'The Whites Shall Rule the Land or Die': Gender, Race, and Class in North

Carolina Reconstruction Politics." *The Journal of Southern History*, vol. 65, no. 3, 1999, pp. 499–534. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/2588132](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2588132). Accessed 11 Jan. 2021.

This article, though primarily focused on reconstruction, discussed the lead-up to the resistance to many reconstruction policies. It was crucial to understanding the Antebellum society driven by the idea of Republicanism and the keeping of the emotional, unintelligent slaves (and women) dependent on the powerful white men.

Books:

*ESV: Study Bible: English Standard Version*. Crossway Bibles, 2016.

In order to understand the biblical arguments made by proslavery Southern pastors, I read the passages utilized by these pastors in their sermons. Understanding these passages objectively was crucial to understanding the extra assumptions pastors made in their defense of slavery.

Keegan, John. *The American Civil War: a Military History*. Vintage Digital, 2011.

While this analysis of the Civil War did not focus heavily on religion, it detailed many of the differences between the North and South in the Antebellum period. Understanding the differences of attitude toward slavery helped me further my comprehension of the motivation of poorer Southern farmers to fight for slavery.

TISBY, JEMAR. *COLOR OF COMPROMISE: the Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism*. ZONDERVAN, 2020.

This book was the starting point of my project. Its overview of the church's complicity in racist systems throughout America's history provided the basis of my understanding of the feelings and ideas shared by pastors and their congregations, especially in the Antebellum South.

## Databases:

Andover-Harvard, Theological Library. “Fast-Day Sermons.” 2015,

[guides.library.harvard.edu/hds/civil-war/hds/civil-war-sermons-fast](http://guides.library.harvard.edu/hds/civil-war/hds/civil-war-sermons-fast).

This source explained what fast-day sermons were: days set aside by the government for citizens to think on current issues or crises, and deepened my understanding of the increasingly political nature of sermons in the Antebellum era.

## Documentaries, Videos, Video Series:

“Color of Compromise.” Performance by Jemar Tisby, Prime Video, Zondervan,

2020, [www.amazon.com/Defending-Slavery-Onset-Civil-War/dp/B083ZMN](http://www.amazon.com/Defending-Slavery-Onset-Civil-War/dp/B083ZMN)

[B2/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=color+of+compromise&qid=1](https://www.amazon.com/Defending-Slavery-Onset-Civil-War/dp/B083ZMN/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=color+of+compromise&qid=198484394&s=instant-video&sr=1-1)

[98484394&s=instant-video&sr=1-1](https://www.amazon.com/Defending-Slavery-Onset-Civil-War/dp/B083ZMN/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=color+of+compromise&qid=198484394&s=instant-video&sr=1-1).

This video series, which is narrated by the author of the book *Color of Compromise*, supplemented my initial research of the history of racism in many American churches.

“Theological Imperialism and the Black Community.” Performance by Eric Mason, et al.,

YouTube, The Gospel Coalition, 24 Mar. 2014, [youtu.be/4bNQkipPPvU](https://youtu.be/4bNQkipPPvU).

This discussion between three influential Black Christians at a 2014 conference provided a new perspective on the lasting impacts of proslavery pastors. The gaps between Black and white Christians still exists, and many Black church members, especially in evangelical churches, remain wary of any theology developed by proslavery pastors or taught in predominantly white denominations.

“A Southern World View: The Old South and Proslavery Ideology.” Delivered by David Blight, YouTube, Yale Courses, 21 Nov. 2008, [youtu.be/yRfByLRO5xs](https://youtu.be/yRfByLRO5xs).

This lecture from a Yale professor contained a segment on the theology and ideologies behind most proslavery pastors, and it provided a broad picture of the underlying beliefs and assumptions that inspired the communications of proslavery pastors.

#### Secondary Reports:

Martínez, Xaris A. “Minds in Place: Thornwell, Palmer, Dabney, and Breckinridge in

‘Fast Day Sermons: or, The Pulpit on the State of the Country’ (1861).”

University of Mississippi, Graduate School at EGrove, 2011, pp. ii -186.

This dissertation laid the groundwork for my research, and provided enough pastors’ names and sermon titles to have a strong primary source research start and begin my deep dive into the ideas and effects of proslavery pastors in the antebellum South.

“On Renouncing The Doctrine Of The “Curse Of Ham” As A Justification For Racism.”

Southern Baptist Convention, 2018, Sbc.net, [www.sbc.net/resource-library/resolutions/on-renouncing-the-doctrine-of-the-curse-of-ham-as-a-justification-for-racism/](http://www.sbc.net/resource-library/resolutions/on-renouncing-the-doctrine-of-the-curse-of-ham-as-a-justification-for-racism/).

This resolution renounces the Southern Baptist Convention’s historic support of the faulty doctrine of the “Curse of Ham,” and the racist attitudes associated with this previously held conviction. It deepened my understanding of the changes being made within churches to condemn the racist actions of their founders, as well as the extent of the influence of racism in the Southern Baptist Convention.



Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley. "Confession of the Sin of Racism, and Commitment to Christian Unity." Pcahistory.org, 3 May 2016.

Today, the Presbyterian Church in America and the Mississippi Valley church are mourning its racist past, calling to indiscriminately love one another. While racism will likely never be completely eradicated, the fact that the Presbyterian Church is recognizing its horrific part in promoting race-based chattel slavery and apologizing for it shows that true change does happen.

Waugh, Barry. "Lectures about Thornwell." Presbyterians of the Past, 28 Jan. 2020, [www.presbyteriansofthepast.com/2020/01/27/lectures-about-thornwell/](http://www.presbyteriansofthepast.com/2020/01/27/lectures-about-thornwell/).

While this source did not contain pertinent information about Reverend James Thornwell's beliefs concerning slavery, it shows the immense respect he earned as an influential Presbyterian theologian, while also revealing the unfortunate truth that the offensive and harmful ideas communicated by many Southern pastors is often ignored when discussing the individual's holistic impact on their denomination and the general society.

Woods, Curtis, et al. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018, pp. 5–72,

Report on Slavery and Racism in the History of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

This report honestly details the racist actions taken by the founders of the seminary and the racism that permeated the institution for many years, and it explains the abstract form of slavery that most southern pastors defended. This report showed the actions being made by select denominations to openly recognize their past complicity in racism and work to shape a future of unity and reconciliation.