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Religious Rebels: The Religious Views and Motivations of Confederate Generals

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Doctor of Philosophy

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**Religious Rebels:
The Religious Views and Motivations of
Confederate Generals in the American Civil War**

(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

Robert Hugh Christopher Stephen Croskery

Graduate Program
in History

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

During the American Civil War, widely held Christian values and doctrines affected Confederate generals' understanding and conduct of the war. This study examines the extent and the manner of religion's influence on the war effort and the minds and lives of Confederate generals. Letters, diaries, and memoirs are used in addition to war reports and secondary sources to understand the range and complexity of this topic. Based on the supposition that each person's religion is a unique relationship between a human being and his or her Creator, this study analyses the uniqueness of the generals' religious beliefs using biographical details.

Religion had a variety of effects on these Southern military leaders. Some high-ranking generals, such as Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, embraced the virtues of faith, hope and charity as the basis of their religious behaviour. Others such as Jubal Early simply used religion to instill morality and discipline in their soldiers. Confederate generals possessed religious convictions about slavery that enabled them to support or ignore the peculiar institution. Their understanding of Providence gave them confidence in the power of their armies, and in their petitions to God. Many Confederate generals performed their duty not only through a sense of civil obligation but also religious mission. Pious generals led their men and fought the war according to Christian ethics. Many Confederate military leaders died fighting not only for their country, but for their God. Religious beliefs, specifically a belief in absolute Providence, encouraged some generals to be reckless with their lives and to believe death was not the end of their existence, but rather a new beginning.

This study examines some of the manifold relationships between religion and warfare in the Civil War South and argues that an understanding of the religious faith and practices of generals needs to be taken into account when writing military history. By integrating and comparing the religion of different Confederate generals this study offers a greater awareness of how religion influenced the conduct of the generals and the Civil War as a whole.

Keywords: American Civil War; Religion; Southern war effort; Confederate generals; Christianity; Robert E. Lee; Stonewall Jackson; Leonidas Polk; James Ewell Brown Stuart; William Nelson Pendleton; war; Providence; slavery; mortality; Nineteenth-Century United States church history.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: Faith, Hope and Charity.....	43
CHAPTER 2: Morality and Slavery.....	118
CHAPTER 3: Providence and Prayer.....	179
CHAPTER 4: Duty and Leadership.....	237
CHAPTER 5: The Morality of War and Mortality.....	288
CONCLUSION.....	346
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	375
VITA.....	433

Introduction

The vast number of books written about the American Civil War give but moderate attention to the role of religion. Studies of various facets of religion, including the role of chaplains, churches, preachers, sermons, and revivals, on both the Northern and Southern home fronts and in their respective armies, exist. Individual generals are the subject of numerous biographies and monographs, in particular, Ulysses Grant, Robert E. Lee, William Tecumseh Sherman, Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson, and numerous other well-known generals. Other lessor known generals forms the subject of one or more biographies. Seldom, however, have the subjects of religion and Civil War generals been combined. James McPherson and James Cooper believe that “...despite several good studies, the role of religion in the Union and the Confederacy needs more attention.”¹ For the South, religion is of key importance because, as Drew Faust states, “The most fundamental source of legitimation for the Confederacy was Christianity.”² In the case of the common soldiers, several recently published books do much to illuminate their religious beliefs and the role such beliefs played in the Civil War.³ For both Northern and Southern generals, numerous insights are presented in biographies of individual generals.⁴ However, to date no study of either Union or Confederate generals as a group deals with their religious views and how these beliefs influenced their conception and conduct of the Civil War.

¹James M. McPherson and William J. Cooper, Jr., Writing the Civil War: The Quest to Understand (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 6.

²Drew Gilpin Faust, The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 22.

³James M. McPherson, For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Steven E. Woodworth, While God is Marching On: The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001).

⁴James Irwin Robertson, Jr., Stonewall Jackson: The Man, The Soldier, The Legend (New York: Macmillan Publishing USA, 1997); Douglas Southall Freeman, R. E. Lee: A Biography (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1934-35), vols. 1-4; Joseph Howard Parks, General Leonidas Polk, C. S. A.: The Fighting Bishop (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962).

The present work addresses how religion, specifically Christianity, influenced Confederate generals in their understanding of the war, and how their religious beliefs shaped their conduct of the war. I argue that religious motifs, themes and ideals contextualized their conception and conduct of the war, and that an understanding of these motifs, themes and ideals is essential to understanding their motivations and their perception of the outcome of the conflict. In other words, religion matters. It is not a topic that can be aptly dealt with in a chapter or two in a book on the Confederacy, or only discussed when an author is writing a biography of a chaplain. Instead, religious beliefs and practices were central in the lives of Confederate generals, whether they were pious, such as Stonewall Jackson, or impious, such as Jubal Anderson Early. Currently some scholars tend to marginalize religion, and downplay its importance in the past. Lewis O. Saum, a historian of the antebellum United States, writes that “Frequently, modern scholars show secular inclinations, and they show impatience with what they deem unallowable amounts of religious expression. Sometimes, for example, they edit diaries in such a way as to leave the wheat of political or economic content while removing the chaff of religious fancies.”⁵ The same tendency can be seen in regard to military biographies of Confederate generals. In many, religion seems peripheral to the generals’ concerns. However, by reading the unedited primary sources, a far different picture emerges, one that substantiates my thesis that an understanding of religious motifs, themes and ideals contextualized the generals’ understanding of the war. In essence, they acted as a lens through which the generals viewed the conflict, and this religious lens had a discernible impact on how they waged the war, how they perceived it, and how they reacted to their eventual defeat. This thesis will be demonstrated through an analysis of the most prominent religious themes that were found in the primary and secondary sources on the generals. These themes are faith, hope, charity, morality, slavery, Providence, prayer, duty, leadership, war and death. When I began my research I kept an open mind as to what I would find in the sources. I did not force my own perceived ideas on how to organize this study. These eleven themes were far and away the most important subjects that had religious significance in the writings and the lives of the

⁵Lewis O. Saum, The Popular Mood of Pre-Civil War America (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1980), xx.

generals. Even secular sounding themes, such as duty and leadership, had strong religious undertones, and in the case of the most religious generals, such as Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, these themes cannot be understood without reference to religious ideals. Throughout the course of this study, the relationship between religious motifs, themes and ideals and the generals' conduct and conception of the war becomes clear, and thus the generals' military decisions become more comprehensible, because once one understands more about the generals' frame of mind and operating assumptions, their resultant actions and writings seem logical and even predictable.

This particular work investigates Confederate generals, only occasionally addressing the views of Union generals. Several reasons explain why the study of the religion of Confederate generals and Union generals should be addressed separately. Due to length requirements, the current study does not have sufficient space to address both Union and Confederate generals. Religion influenced Union and Confederate leadership in different ways. Some of the most prominent Confederate generals, namely Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, witnessed conspicuously to the Christian religion. Some of the highest ranking Union generals, especially Ulysses Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman, were not as religious as Lee and Jackson. A cursory examination of the major generals on both sides would present a distorted picture of the lower ranking generals. Many lower ranking Union generals were quite religious, while some high and low ranking Confederate generals were irreligious. In addition, religion played different roles in the two armies. Religion needed to sustain the Confederates through many defeats until their subjugation, while religion played a different role in victory for the Union army and for the Northern population as a whole. Although many similarities existed between the common soldiers of the Confederacy and the Union, Bell Wiley treats them separately in his seminal studies The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy and The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union.⁶ By addressing only Confederate generals this current study seeks to understand what similarities and

⁶Bell Irwin Wiley, The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Publishers, 1943); Bell Irwin Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Publishers, 1952).

differences existed in the religious experience of these men, and how religion affected their conception and conduct of the war. A companion study of Union generals would assist in understanding how religion shaped their own war effort.

Like their Union opponents, Confederate generals believed that their war effort was, in a secular sense, righteous. Southern military leaders felt justified in fighting for their states' independence, and for the new country, the Confederate States of America, that would protect and embody those rights. At the time of the war they did not view themselves as rebels, that is, as lawless individuals revolting against legitimate and established authority. Instead the Union government's refusal to recognize and respect what many Southerners thought was the proper jurisdiction of the various federal and state governments, formed one of their key arguments that the authority of Washington, D.C. was null and void, and that Southern states had the right to create and protect the Confederacy. Thus they maintained that the Union authorities were the true lawbreakers.⁷ In a strictly religious sense, few generals, except for the notable case of Stonewall Jackson, believed that they personally were righteous, and yet many of them yearned for a perfect state of grace in which their intimacy with God would benefit both themselves and their country. The title of this study, "Religious Rebels," thus alludes to the potent influence Christianity had in justifying and sustaining their efforts to establish their independence from the North. It was their enemies who contended that the Confederates were rebels, while during the war Confederates rejected the derogatory implications of the word rebel and instead reaffirmed their connection to the founding fathers of the United States and the legacy of the American Revolution. After the war, some Confederate soldiers willingly embraced the designation of 'rebels' both when they described themselves in their memoirs and in the title of their books. Most of these soldiers had reconciled themselves to living under the authority of the Union government and perhaps believed the label of rebel was a proof of Southern manhood and honour. "Religious Rebels" does not discuss the legal arguments over whether or not Southern

⁷See for example, Wayland Fuller Dunaway, Reminiscences of a Rebel (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1913); George Cary Eggleston, A Rebel's Recollections (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1875); John Newton Opie, A Rebel Cavalryman with Lee, Stuart, and Jackson (Chicago: W. B. Conkey, 1899).

secession was legal according to the Constitution. Nor does it seek to determine and judge the righteousness of Southern generals. Instead it seeks to illuminate the interaction between warfare and religion by examining the experiences and the views of Confederate generals. How did religion encourage or discourage these participants from engaging in warfare? By seeking to understand how religion prompted and sustained the military efforts of the Confederate generals, this study hopes to address a relevant historiographical question as well as to contribute to a larger understanding of how religion and warfare relate to each other.

As is the case with all historical treatises, numerous obstacles to a full and comprehensive understanding and treatment of the subject matter exist. Paramount among these obstacles is the fact that religious topics were not the focus of the generals' military reports. Instead, they concerned military activities, and occasionally included a mention of Providence or another religious matter. These intermittent references typify how they expressed their religious beliefs in public. In general, however, the personal letters of the generals, usually to their wives, and sometimes to their children, friends, and fellow generals are far more relevant. These letters provide insight into how religion inspired and sustained the war efforts of particular generals, such as Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Leonidas Polk, William Nelson Pendleton and many others. In the case of other generals, religion had a less pronounced role. This study does not argue that each and every Confederate general was fired with a religious zeal and that religion was the sole motivating factor in their waging of the Civil War. As far as the records show, religion proved a major factor in the lives of many generals, one which cannot be overlooked in understanding how such generals conceived of and conducted the war. For other generals, such as Jubal Early, religion played an important role, in that it acted as a foil with which to wrestle and achieve clarity about the meaning of life. Simply because Early did not obey most Christian doctrines and discipline, does not mean he was ignorant of them or that they did not influence him. As will be shown in the course of this study, his violation of religious precepts and expectations greatly influenced his self-perception and his understanding of the Civil War. In the case of many of the less renowned major and brigadier generals, the role of religion in their lives and their

participation in the Civil War is less well known. This is a result of the fact that many of their personal papers were lost, destroyed, or simply do not deal with matters of faith.

Even papers of renowned generals such as Stonewall Jackson were destroyed as a result of the burning of Richmond or in attempts to deliver them to a safe location. Robert E. Lee informed John Esten Cooke in November 1865 that owing to such destruction he no longer possessed any correspondence from his famous subordinate.⁸ Other documents were destroyed intentionally. Earl Van Dorn's sister destroyed his correspondence to ensure that her brother's reputation not be damaged by allegations of adultery and other scandalous conduct. In the case of this particular general, some papers remained after his sister eliminated any deemed unsuitable for public scrutiny. These surviving papers were collected together, only to be destroyed by fire in 1866. As a result of these incidents, Van Dorn's principal biographer, Robert Hartje explains that the general's "...courtship, his philosophy of life, his relations with his children, even the true story behind his assassination remain obscure because of lack of source material."⁹ Because of the obscurity of many other facets of his life, Van Dorn's religious views are also concealed. Only glimpses of his religious ideas and beliefs can be grasped, yet even these glimpses provide useful insight into how religion affected Van Dorn's conception and conduct of the Civil War.

Most of James Longstreet's personal papers were also destroyed by fire. As he never kept a diary,¹⁰ historians are left with little more than his memoirs, From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs of the Civil War in America, which was written years after the events discussed. In addition, even though memoirs typically are not as accurate as contemporary letters, Longstreet's memoirs are particularly deficient because they were written after he became a Republican and had been spurned by most of his former Confederates. Longstreet had become a scapegoat for the Confederate performance at

⁸Letter of Robert E. Lee to John Esten Cooke, November 17, 1865, Custis-Lee Family Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

⁹Robert G. Hartje, Van Dorn: The Life and Times of a Confederate General (Charlotte, North Carolina: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967), xii.

¹⁰William Garrett Piston, Lee's Tarnished Lieutenant: James Longstreet and His Place in Southern History (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 2.

Gettysburg, and as such he used his memoirs as a means of justifying himself and as a way to shift blame for that defeat. Like similar memoirs, such as Joseph E.

Johnston's Narrative of Military Operations during the Late War between the States,

Longstreet's narrative contains little information on religion and instead focuses on explaining battles, troops movements and his personal performance in the war. Religious ideas that do not appear in Johnston's memoirs occur occasionally in his personal papers, and the same might have been true in the case of Longstreet, had his papers survived.

However, as the majority of such papers have been destroyed, historians cannot ascertain whether or not religious references existed. H. J. Eckenrode and Bryan Conrad write that Longstreet's career "...as a soldier is pretty well known. His spiritual side...remains to be analyzed."¹¹ Although the present study makes some efforts to illuminate how Longstreet's religious beliefs influenced his performance in the Civil War, unless some hidden diary or trove of letters is discovered, Longstreet's spiritual side will continue to await comprehensive analysis for a very long time.

In addition to destruction of personal papers, many letters and personal reflections were never written by Confederate generals, either out of fear that they might be captured by enemies, or because such written expressions of faith were alien to men who were nonetheless devout Christians. Braxton Bragg illustrated one reason why he hesitated to commit his personal beliefs and feelings to paper, when he wrote his wife that it was "Strange, indeed, that none of my letters should have reached you since 1 June and I can only trust they have not met the fate of some written by my staff-being captured and published."¹² Bragg informed his spouse that because of the risk of letters being intercepted by enemy forces, it was necessary to use discretion and not reveal intimate feelings in their correspondence with each other. Thus the threat of enemy interception diminished the likelihood of generals recording their personal beliefs for their loved ones and for posterity.

¹¹H. J. Eckenrode and Bryan Conrad, James Longstreet: Lee's War Horse (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 359.

¹²Letter of Braxton Bragg to his wife, July 22, 1862, Braxton Bragg Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Also, some generals did not include expressions of faith in some letters because it was thought that such forthright revelations of one's beliefs might constitute disobedience to one of Jesus' instructions to His disciples. The four Evangelists reveal that Jesus detested the hypocrisy and the blatant piety of the Pharisees and commanded His disciples to avoid such displays of piety. In the Gospel of Matthew, readers are told that "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."¹³ Such instructions encouraged Christians to hide their devotions not only from the public, but also from their family members and even their wives. While many couples discussed religious topics with each other, Mary Anna Jackson commented that she knew nothing of her husband's "...secret intercourse with God..."¹⁴ Even though Stonewall Jackson shared many prayer meetings, church services and conversations about religion with his wife, she claimed to know nothing about his personal prayers. Consequently it is almost impossible for historians to find out the true beliefs and the course of a person's relationship with God. William Polk confirmed the fact that he, like Mary Anna, was quite close to a particular general, but he was not privy to all of the secrets of that person's heart. In his case, it was his father, Leonidas Polk, whom he did not fully know and the younger Polk was convinced that there were many details of his father's life of which he, and indeed the whole world, knew nothing, and were known only to God.¹⁵

In one way it is fitting that such a personal aspect of a general's life stays exactly that, personal, and known only to themselves and to God. However, when anyone attempts to understand the life of another person, knowledge of that person's most fundamental beliefs and core assumptions about the world, themselves and their fellow

¹³Matthew 6: 5-6.

¹⁴Mary Anna Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, by His Widow (Louisville: Prentice Press, 1895), 504.

¹⁵William H. Polk, Leonidas Polk, Bishop and General (New York, 1915), II: 394.

human beings is a prerequisite to achieving any understanding about what that person's life meant and what its goals were. While one can chronicle the events of a person's life, such as Robert E. Lee's career, or the military movements of Stonewall Jackson's Shenandoah Valley campaign, historians and biographers must delve deeper into their subject's lives, and seek to understand not just what they did, but why they did it. In the case of Stonewall Jackson, an appreciation of his religious beliefs is essential to understanding the general and his generalship. As William Davis writes, "Religion is the surest guide to understanding Jackson in his last ten years, and it is the failure to deal intelligently with this aspect of the man that has led more than anything else to the myths that have grown around him as an oddity or a congenital eccentric. When viewed through the lens of his intense Calvinist faith, his behaviour is in fact quite consistent."¹⁶ To his credit, one of Jackson's most recent biographers, James Robertson, conducted an intelligent and thought-provoking analysis of Jackson's religion in his book Stonewall Jackson: The Man, The Soldier, The Legend. The present study attempts to take this analysis one step further by comparing the religion of numerous Confederate generals, including Jackson, and the effect it had upon their conduct of the war. When viewed in this perspective, Jackson's and his fellow generals' beliefs become less puzzling and more comprehensible as they are placed in their proper context.

Since many primary and secondary sources exist concerning the religion of both Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee, these two individuals receive a large amount of attention in the pages that follow. A quantitative study examining all the religious beliefs and behaviour of the four hundred and twenty-five Confederate generals would be most desirable and conducive to establishing a comprehensive presentation of the religious beliefs of Confederate generals.¹⁷ However, due to the difficulties mentioned previously, such a quantitative analysis of the subject is impossible, and thus the methodology used

¹⁶William C. Davis, The Cause Lost: Myths and Realities of the Confederacy (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 169.

¹⁷Michael Barton, Goodmen: The Character of Civil War Soldiers (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1981). Barton's study uses quantitative analysis to discern the beliefs of Civil War soldiers. Insufficient data exists on the 'character' or the religion of Confederate generals to attempt an accurate quantitative assessment of their beliefs.

in this study is necessarily qualitative, often relying on anecdotal evidence from the generals themselves, their close associates and ordinary soldiers who served under their command. Further, this dissertation also examines specific generals, such as Lee and Jackson, while most of the four hundred twenty-five other Confederate generals are not mentioned. Many of these generals are excluded because of lack of source material, or lack of mention of religion in their letters or diaries. The generals which receive the greatest attention in this study include Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, William Nelson Pendleton, Leonidas Polk, Braxton Bragg, Joseph E. Johnston, Jubal A. Early, James Ewell Brown Stuart, James Longstreet, Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, Josiah Gorgas, Patrick Cleburne, Albert Sidney Johnston, Ambrose Powell Hill, Daniel Harvey Hill, John Bell Hood, Edward Porter Alexander, Nathan Bedford Forrest, Wade Hampton, William J. Hardee, Richard S. Ewell and several others. This dissertation makes no pretense of analysing all the facets of the religious beliefs of these men, as historians can only form arguments based on existent documentary evidence. Information on the religious beliefs of these men concerning the whole gamut of Christian life and doctrine would be invaluable, but as such information is not on record, historians are compelled to work with evidence that exists. Using available evidence, this study attempts to form valid hypotheses on issues of religious importance to many of these generals.

As befits the legendary status Lee and Jackson obtained in the South, some anecdotes about these and other generals are either partially inaccurate or complete inventions. One such story concerns Jackson's efforts to disrupt the functioning of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Some historians allege that he persuaded the directors of the railroad to run all of their railway traffic in a single two-hour span of time and then, after allowing a few days to pass, Jackson simply cut off the double-tracked line at both ends. He thus captured many locomotives and cars for the use of the Confederacy and then completely destroyed the track. However, James Robertson demonstrates that the story was a complete fiction.¹⁸ Because such commonly accepted stories have been accepted by many earlier historians as fact, discretion has been used in accepting tales

¹⁸Robertson, Stonewall Jackson, 229-230.

which seem too good to be true. Similarly, careful treatment of sources describing battles has been exercised, as at times individuals who claimed to have directly witnessed events on a particular battlefield were either not close enough to witness the events described or else did not even participate in the battle at all. As one Confederate cavalryman stated, “Every old soldier knows that he who fully describes a battle was not actually engaged in it; for, in battle, one is so busily occupied with his duties that he sees but little.”¹⁹ William Morgan, a Confederate soldier whose memoirs were published in 1911, believed that “The scenes and events of the battles are burned into the faculty of recollections so deep that they remain more firmly fixed than any other events in my experience. Amidst the rush and roar and crash of battle, every fibre of the brain is intensified and highly wrought, and receives the scenes and events of the hour with the accuracy and permanency of the camera.”²⁰ While some observers’ minds were certainly affected by the war, and they could not forget many of the horrible things that transpired during the conflict, due attention has been paid to the fact that memoirs written decades after the war suffer from numerous disadvantages not found in letters and other papers written at the time of the events they describe. I completely agree with George Burkhardt’s estimate of the worth of memoirs: “Accepted wisdom has it that the further removed in time from the actual event, the less reliable it is. Unless buttressed by reference to diaries or journals written during the war years, that may hold true for numbers, dates and other details. But no matter how many years have elapsed, Civil War veterans often accurately recalled the temper and mood of that era, so vivid and indelible were their impressions. So, even when written thirty-five or forty years later, memoirs can still provide valuable information.”²¹

However, even contemporary letters require due scrutiny and attention to detail. In one case, many letters considered written by George Pickett were in fact concocted by his widow and published by an editor who knew that the authenticity of the letters was in

¹⁹Opie, A Rebel Cavalryman, 12.

²⁰William Henry Morgan, Personal Reminiscences of the War of 1861-5 (Lynchburg, Virginia: J. P. Bell, 1911; reprint, Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 15.

²¹George S. Burkhardt, Confederate Rage, Yankee Wrath: No Quarter in the Civil War (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2007), 10.

doubt.²² Obviously, those particular letters were not used in the preparation of this study and similar dubious sources have also not been accepted without a critical analysis of their legitimacy.

In a related vein, some historical works about Confederate generals, chaplains and other persons involved in the Civil War, as is common in many historical periods, are written in a spirit of appreciation or to celebrate the deeds recounted and the individuals who performed them. Frank Hieronymous writes that his study of Confederate chaplains “...has been an attempt to honor those Godly men and to chronicle their record of one century ago.”²³ The present study attempts to understand the individuals involved and how their personal religious beliefs affected their performance in the Civil War. No deliberate attempt was made to honor the Confederate generals, nor to denigrate them. Instead, the intention of this study is to examine the generals, using evidence that both does them credit, and evidence that many modern readers would not consider praiseworthy. This study’s methodology includes the principle that a historian’s task is not to mythologize Jackson, Lee or anyone else,²⁴ but instead to see them as conscious participants, not unwilling victims, of the circumstances they experienced.

In focusing on generals as opposed to the hundreds of thousands of common soldiers who served in the Confederate armies, the present study examines how the religious beliefs of a relatively few men affected the lives of thousands of their soldiers and Confederate civilians. It is not assumed that a general’s life is worth more than the life of a private in the ranks. At least one historian believed that “If a thousand lives depend on that officer, his life is a thousand more times as valuable as that of anyone of the men in line.”²⁵ This dissertation concentrates upon Confederate generals as opposed to privates, all officers, or the entire military in order to focus on the considerable power

²²Gary W. Gallagher, Lee and His Generals in War and Memory (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998), 233.

²³Frank L. Hieronymous, “For Now and Forever: The Chaplains of the Confederate States Army” (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1964), ix.

²⁴Davis, The Cause Lost, 174.

²⁵Bradley T. Johnson, ed., A Memoir of the Life and Public Service of Joseph E Johnston (Baltimore: R. H. Woodward & Co., 1891), 90.

wielded by generals, whether on campaign, or in military discipline, and the effect their religious beliefs had upon the exercise of that power. The current study also “...proceeds from the assumption that generals made a very great difference in determining the outcome of the war.”²⁶ Generals were not the only factors that mattered in the conflict, but rather were actors with considerable ability to influence various important events in the war that helped lead either to victory or to defeat, both in individual battles and in the war as a whole. In addition, while many details are lacking about their religious lives, it is possible to amass more information about generals than about specific privates in the ranks, and thus to piece together their religious views and how those views affected their behaviour and conduct of the war.

One author commented that “The religious affiliations of many top military leaders [of the Confederacy] are well chronicled...”²⁷ However, for the lesser known generals, religious affiliations, let alone personal information about their relationships with God, is difficult to ascertain. As Michael Barton mentions in his book Goodmen: The Character of Civil War Soldiers, “...we cannot go into all the details of a single man’s moral life.”²⁸ And yet, in order to explore fully and understand the role religion played in the lives of the Confederate generals, that is exactly what is required. However, given that there is not sufficient room to provide such a detailed analysis of each general, nor do sufficient records exist to sustain such a detailed study, only elements of their personal relationships with God are related in the following pages.

One of the core beliefs on which this study is based is that each person’s religion is unique. Christianity does not simply invite believers to profess doctrines and participate in rituals; instead doctrines and rituals only possess meaning when linked with a personal relationship with God. Identifying a general as an Episcopalian, a Presbyterian or a Roman Catholic does not end the search for their beliefs and their attitudes about religion, God, and the world in which they live. Instead, such an identification only

²⁶Gary W. Gallagher, “‘Upon their Success Hang Momentous Interests’: Generals,” in Gabor S. Boritt, ed., Why the Confederacy Lost (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 85.

²⁷Hieronymous, “For Now and Forever,” 274.

²⁸Barton, Goodmen, 57.

begins the search. How did their denominational affiliation assist them in their relationship with God? Which beliefs common to their denomination did they ascribe to most strongly? Which beliefs did they theoretically accept, but reject in practice? Such questions only begin to illustrate the extensive process necessary to discover the complicated and dynamic relationship a human being has with God. This process of understanding a religious relationship is far more challenging than examining other important relationships in the lives of human beings. Occasionally Christians have kept spiritual diaries, or their part of a dialogue with God, as is the case with St. Augustine's Confessions. However, in the case of Confederate generals and most other contemporaries, such documents do not exist. Only by rigorously examining the sources that are available can one discover information about this critical relationship between God and each Confederate general. Thus in this study false generalizations are minimized and the uniqueness of each individual recognized and investigated. Lewis Saum recognized the necessity of this practice when he quoted George Boas "It is about time that we recognized the existence of individuals and hence the irreducible heterogeneity of society."²⁹ While I recognize the usefulness of generalizations, lumping individuals into a single category and expecting them to be similar in all respects is counterproductive and antithetical to true historical research.

This study makes use of basic theological concepts and ideas common to the nineteenth century South. Eugene Genovese commented that although he personally was an atheist, he found it "...remarkable how little attention is paid to theology in most current work on religion."³⁰ He believed that both an understanding of and a discussion of theology in works on religion was necessary and that he also found it amusing that "...when I read much Protestant theology and religious history today, I have the warm feeling that I am in the company of fellow nonbelievers."³¹ Frequent references to Christian theology as expressed in the theological work most often consulted by

²⁹Saum, Popular Mood, xxi.

³⁰Eugene Genovese, The Southern Tradition: The Achievement and Limitations of an American Conservatism (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1994), 11.

³¹Genovese, The Southern Tradition, 9-10.

Confederate generals, the King James Bible, are present throughout this dissertation. Bertram Wyatt-Brown writes that “The Old and New Testaments were more important than we might imagine in shaping the Southern mind.”³² Such references are suggestive of the religious foundation for their behaviour and thought. An appreciation of basic theology as expressed in the Bible and basic statements of faith is essential in understanding religious behaviour and motivation.

That all generals were not exemplary Christians is admitted at the outset of this study. It is also true that religion does not explain all of their actions, nor does it provide the true motivation(s) for the decision of Confederate generals to fight in the Civil War. Their loyalty to their respective states was far more important in prompting them to become Confederates and fight against the Union government than Christianity. Religion acted to sustain their war effort, and regulated their conduct in war, but even in the case of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson it was not the inspiration for their decision to become Confederate generals. Nevertheless religion was pervasive in their lives, and affected their philosophy of state authority and their understanding of warfare. Charles Osborne noted that “Even for the nonobservant...religion’s influence was pervasive enough throughout their lives to affect their feelings in much the same way it impinged on the emotions of the devout... [One general’s] faith in God and Jesus Christ appears only dimly in his life; but he certainly believed in the ‘arch-fiend.’”³³ The role of religion in the lives of the Confederate generals is examined for its true importance, not inflated to a level which is inconsistent with the existent source material.

In contrast to many works about Confederate generals and the Civil War as a whole, this study does not include extensive personal details about the generals that are not essential to an understanding of their religious views, nor does it include extensive treatment of battles that have been extremely well described and analysed in many other historical studies. Only essential details about battles mentioned in this study are provided, since extensive descriptions would detract from the narrative and would be

³²Bertram Wyatt-Brown, The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s-1880s (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 88.

³³Charles C. Osborne, Jubal: The Life and Times of General Jubal A. Early, CSA, Defender of the Lost Cause (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1992), 430.

inferior to the treatments such battles have received in other books specifically about those battles. Attempting to compete with such excellent analyses would be foolhardy and would not serve the purposes of the current study.

As stated earlier, this study focuses on the religious themes found most frequently in the letters, reports, documents and recorded conversation of the generals during the Civil War. These themes include faith, hope, charity, morality, slavery, Providence, prayer, duty, leadership, war and death. All of these themes, with the exception of charity, morality and leadership, are the very words the general themselves used to refer to these topics.³⁴ In general these themes were the most prominent ones that appeared in the extant documents, with certain themes occurring more often in one general's letters, while that same theme was totally absent from another general's correspondence. Thus these eleven themes provide a suitable framework for examining how religion influenced their conception and conduct of the Civil War.

The eleven themes are grouped together into five chapters. The first chapter, about faith, hope and charity, provides an underlying foundation for the study as a whole. These three theological virtues, central to the doctrine and practice of the Christian faith throughout history, were also central to the lives of devout Confederate generals. Faith is first examined in terms of its acceptance as a series of beliefs and as a creed, and how these official formulations of faith reflected the beliefs of Confederate generals. These beliefs helped some Confederate generals to withstand various tests of faith, and at times these men lacked the faith necessary to withstand the trials they endured in the Civil War. An analysis of how faith was strengthened by churches, the Bible and by chaplains demonstrates how religion entered and affected their lives. The war also had a definite and notable impact upon the faith and religious practice of Confederate generals and the South in general.

Expressions of faith helped to cultivate various types of hope in the minds of the generals. Trusting in God, believing that He would ensure that everything would turn out for the best led naturally to other types of hope, including the hope for a peaceful end to

³⁴In the case of the three words which were rarely used in their correspondence, the same ideas relating to these themes were expressed using different words. For instance the concept of leadership was referred to when a general spoke of 'being in command' of his troops.

the war. One type of hope that could be either in harmony with or in opposition to a general's hope in God was the hope for earthly rewards, for the satisfying of one's own ambitions. Other generals maintained so much hope for the Confederacy's victory that at times it seemed as if they were hoping against the facts, that their aspirations were unrelated to the dire conditions which prevailed. In other cases, a lack of hope, even despair was present, and efforts to resist this demoralization help illuminate the role of hope in sustaining the Confederate war effort, especially in the lives of the generals.

The examination of the third theological virtue, charity, probes how religion encouraged generals to care for their soldiers, their enemies, and for both Confederate and Northern civilians. One way generals believed they showed charity to others was through the dissemination of God's Word, the Bible, in the ranks of their armies. However, numerous instances illustrate that Christ's command to love one's enemies was particularly difficult to follow in wartime, and examples of a lack of charity reveal the limits of the piety and Christian practice of the generals. Demonstrating that they were not always charitable, and in fact tolerated the torture and murder of captured African American soldiers ensures that they are not mythologised, but rather examined for their actual beliefs and behaviour.

Chapter two examines the role of morality and slavery in the religious outlook of Confederate commanders. The first part of the chapter probes the connection between religion and moral attitudes to determine the extent to which religious beliefs dictated standards of morality. The just war concept is briefly discussed and related to its context in the Southern war effort. One of the key issues of Confederate generals' Christian morality was the importance of the Sabbath day and to what extent Confederates observed the Lord's Day in the army. Church attendance related to the observance of the Sabbath, and the efforts of generals to encourage divine worship in order to foster morality in their commands receive attention. These moral standards led them to restrain their own behaviour, and to attempt to restrain that of their soldiers. The mixed success of these efforts are examined, as not all soldiers wished to adopt the moral outlook of their superior officers. How leaders' standards of morality affected their own and their soldiers' indulgence in gambling, drinking, card playing, fornication and adultery reveals the diverse impact of religious ideals in the Confederate armies.

Christian morality motivated some Confederate generals to revile slavery, while others believed Christian morality served to keep slaves in their 'proper place,' in subjection and servitude. Their attitude toward African Americans shaped their view of the peculiar institution, and some of these notions were founded on religious ideas. This chapter examines the personal views of the generals as compared to the view of their churches and the government of the Confederacy in order to probe how religion influenced their perception of slavery. Efforts to restrict or preserve slavery are surveyed to discern how religion prompted them to influence the future of slavery.

Chapter three focuses on two key issues in Southern minds during the Civil War: Providence and prayer. Providence was the plans God had for humankind. Prayer was often the human response to those plans and a way to inform God of the desires of human beings. A discussion of Confederate belief in God shaping both the course of nations and of individuals helps open the discussion of Providence. The role of this theological concept in explaining how God interacted with the people of the Confederacy illustrates the conviction of many Southerners that they were God's chosen people, and that He would save them from the Northern invaders. The relationship of Providence with the doctrine of free will illustrates the differing opinions of various generals on this topic. Denominational affiliation provides some assistance in ascertaining the relative balance in the minds of the generals between free will and Predestination, but ultimately each individual had their own special opinion on the relationship between these two important theological concepts. God's Providence was frequently inscrutable to mortals, as divine wisdom was far above human comprehension.

In order to respond to God's plans for humanity, as well as to give thanks for God's blessings, Confederate generals offered prayers to God. Such conversations between humans and God occurred in worship services whether on days of fasting and prayer or during normal celebrations on Sundays. Prayers voiced by loved ones and fellow Confederates, both solicited and unsolicited, ascended on the behalf of the Confederate commanders to God. Pious Christians believed that prayers ensured the well-being, protection and the strengthening of the faith of themselves, their soldiers and their fellow Confederates. How generals perceived the worthiness of the petitions and of the people offering the prayers affected whether or not they believed God would answer the

prayers. The effectiveness of prayer and the degree to which prayer needed to be supplemented by action, depended on the faith and belief of each general. By examining how Providence and prayer interacted in the lives of these men, it is possible to understand how they believed religion could help alter and benefit their lives and the fortunes of their country.

In chapter four, the interrelated concepts of duty and leadership receive examination. Duty as conceived by devout generals encouraged them to insist that others, including soldiers and officers under their command, perform their own duties, or face punishment. This section of the dissertation examines the existence of conflicts between duty to one's country and duty to God, particularly in the case of clerics who felt called to serve their country as generals. Conflicts between the generals' religious obligations and their perception of duty involved instances where generals needed to modify or integrate religious and civil obligations.

One of the primary duties of Confederate generals consisted of leading their soldiers in battle and on the march. Many generals believed God wanted them to perform such tasks, thereby providing a Christian example to their men and their country. Theological notions informed pious generals' understanding of leadership and the implications of their duty. Some generals believed they held a sacred trust of leadership. Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson felt that as Christian leaders they were obliged to follow the model of Jesus Christ's leadership. A comment on the effect such beliefs had on their generalship concludes the fourth chapter.

Chapter five, which forms the heart and the locus of the study as a whole, analyses the role of religion in the war itself and in Confederate generals' understanding of death. Whether religious ideals affected generals' desire to wage war, and whether they believed war was thrilling or grotesque, is addressed. How religion modified different generals' practice of war is a key part of this study.

The second portion of chapter five addresses the role religion played in shaping the views of generals about death. Some individuals viewed it as inevitable. Others believed death abhorrent. Others still viewed death in combat as a sacrifice, similar to that of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, and while they regarded it with horror, they also believed it necessary and beneficial for the Confederate cause. Finally, some Confederate

generals viewed death as desirable, and while suicides rarely occurred, at times generals welcomed death to allow a reunion with lost loved ones or with God Himself. A discussion of each of these views of death and its relationship with religious beliefs and ideals, provides substance to the contention that death and religion were inseparably linked in the Southern mentality.

Together these five chapters serve to illustrate that religion played an important role in the conception and conduct of the Civil War in the lives of many Confederate generals. For some generals, such as Stonewall Jackson, and Robert E. Lee, religion was of critical importance. For others it was of some import, but was overshadowed by other motivations and priorities. Overall, however, the religious beliefs and ideals of these men need attention and analysis in order to understand their behaviour and conduct of the Confederate war effort.

This study helps create a bridge in the existing historiography between studies on religion in the Civil War, specifically in the South, and the numerous biographies of the Confederate generals. Since the time of the war itself, historians have investigated the role of religion in that conflict. R. L. Stanton, a Northern Presbyterian professor, wrote a study of the Northern and Southern churches and how their policies and teachings had influenced the onset of the Civil War. Because The Church and the Rebellion appeared during the war, the author exhibits a deep commitment to one side in the war, and therefore his analysis reflects his belief that the Southern churches were responsible for the war, both because they failed to denounce slavery and because they encouraged their members to engage in disloyal and treasonous activities. Stanton blames numerous Southern denominations for the outbreak of the war.³⁵ Although The Church and the Rebellion exhibits an ideological perspective, it is an early example of scholarly attention to the relationship between the Civil War and religion.

Christ in the Camp; or Religion in Lee's Army, published over two decades later, contains a similar ideological perspective. This book's Southern viewpoint occurred as a

³⁵R. L. Stanton, The Church and the Rebellion: A Consideration of the Rebellion against the Government of the United States; and the Agency of the Church, North and South, in Relation Thereto (New York: Derby & Miller, 1864), 177-184. Although the author wrote in his preface that "This volume does not claim to be a history..." it is clear that the book can serve as an example of this topic of study in its earliest historiographical form, see Stanton, Church and the Rebellion, v.

result of its author's, J. William Jones', service as a chaplain in the Army of Northern Virginia. Unlike Stanton's focus on ideology and doctrine, Jones focuses more on the concrete operation of religion in the major Confederate army in the eastern theatre. He describes the personalities and principles that fostered the religious revivals in that army. He also mentions how the Christian faith spread in the other Confederate armies. While Jones' work celebrates the effects of the revivals, it provides a useful counterpart to Stanton's work. Whereas Stanton concentrates on the unfortunate aspects of Southern religion, Jones aims to demonstrate the Christian faith embodied in the South as a testament to the work of hardworking ministers and the Holy Spirit.

Jones' work also includes encouragement for the further study of religion and the Civil War. This former chaplain insists that "The Army of Northern Virginia has a religious history as distinct and as easily traced as its military exploits...."³⁶ Thus the importance of describing and analysing that history seems both possible and a worthy complement to its often celebrated military exploits. However, as has been discussed, Jones's assertion that such a religious history is 'as easily traced' as military history is not true. Although Jones had a special advantage in writing about this religious history, in that he was personally present and watched the faces of both soldiers and generals as they listened to his sermons, only part of his congregation informed him of their personal thoughts and beliefs.³⁷ In addition, his role as a chaplain made him inclined to look for the best in his converts, although Jones confessed that the Army of Northern Virginia still contained many unrepentant sinners at the end of the war.

³⁶J. Wm. Jones, Christ in the Camp; or Religion in Lee's Army (Richmond, Virginia: B. F. Johnson & Co., 1887), 5-6.

³⁷While priests and ministers have access to such revelations of faith and sinfulness as their parishioners choose to give them, they are bound not to disclose such revelations to others. Roman Catholic priests are required to abide by the seal of the confessional, and while most other denominations do not have such strict requirements, all Protestant ministers would feel a certain reservation in disclosing personal secrets that were confided to them. Thus while Jones had much special knowledge of the religious history of one of the principal Confederate armies, he was morally forbidden from divulging important parts of that history. This necessary element of pastor-parishioner confidentiality is another example of the difficulties a historian faces in writing religious history. While military and intelligence secrets are often declassified after a specified number of years pass, religious secrets are not released for the benefit of historians.

Despite the fact that religion receives less attention than other facets of Civil War history there are nonetheless a wide range of books that expand historical understanding of religion in that conflict. William Warren Sweet examines one religious denomination and its role in the Civil War in his work The Methodist Episcopal Church and the Civil War. Sweet focuses mainly on this church's geographical regions, in addition to its periodicals, bishops, Union chaplains and its interactions with other charitable organizations. He describes how the war affected his church, and how that denomination in turn responded and assisted in the Northern war effort.³⁸

Some studies of specific denominations include information on both the North and the South. Benjamin Blied's Catholics and the Civil War is a collection of essays about Roman Catholicism and its relationship to the war. Blied's work helps historians realize that although the Civil War caused a division between the North and the South, such political realities did not automatically create identical divisions in the religious sphere. Numerous denominations separated into Northern and Southern sections, but usually such divisions did not mark substantial differences in doctrine and ritual. The different sections of most denominations were reunited within a short time after the war. In the case of Roman Catholicism no formal schism occurred, and while fellow Catholics were fighting in both Union and Confederate armies, they still belonged to the same religion. When attempting to understand religion and its relationship with a particular conflict, it is important not to overemphasize the amount of change that occurred as a result of the war.³⁹ By studying a variety of denominational histories, such as Sweet's and Blied's, it is possible to understand the differing impact the war had on different denominations. Such works exemplify the customary treatment of religion in denominational terms in the early twentieth century. Although not all books about Civil War religion published in this time period are denominational histories, such studies are more common during that time period than in succeeding decades.

³⁸William Warren Sweet, The Methodist Episcopal Church and the Civil War (Cincinnati: Methodist Book Concern Press, 1912).

³⁹Benjamin J. Blied, Catholics and the Civil War (Milwaukee: N.p., 1945).

Most of the later works on Civil War religion embrace a multi-denominational perspective. James Silver's Confederate Morale and Church Propaganda concerns religious history, although its author professed "...no interest in religion as such, but sees the church solely as a powerful social organization."⁴⁰ Silver's conclusions directly contradict those of Gardiner Shattuck. Silver's "...primary interest has been in the various forces which helped to sustain and elevate the morale of a hard-pressed people. There is not the slightest doubt in his mind that the most powerful agency of this nature was the church."⁴¹ Silver attempts to convince his readers that 'the church,' or in other words the organizations of the Christian religion, was one of the greatest supports of the same war effort. Silver states that "As no other group, Southern clergymen were responsible for a state of mind which made secession possible, and as no other group they sustained their people in their long, costly and futile War for Southern Independence."⁴² Silver's book embodied and helped create the traditional concept of religion as benefiting the Southern war effort.

H. Shelton Smith's work on Southern religion has a broader chronological scope than the Civil War and focuses on a topic crucial to understanding religion and that conflict: racism. The title of Smith's book illustrates the contradictory nature of his topic: In His Image, But...: Racism in Southern Religion, 1780-1910. Southern churches and Christians generally acknowledged the fact that only one Creation occurred, and that all human beings descended from Adam and Eve. However, there were always reasons advanced by Southern Christians as to why slavery should only be forced upon African Americans, and why one's colour influenced one's worthiness to hold church leadership. Smith believes that the Civil War was a substantial expression of this racism as Southern Christians "...massively supported a violent revolution in a desperate attempt to preserve chattel slavery and Negro subserviency."⁴³ Smith's conclusions assist the study of

⁴⁰James W. Silver, Confederate Morale and Church Propaganda (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1964), 8.

⁴¹Silver, Confederate Morale and Church Propaganda, 8.

⁴²Silver, Confederate Morale and Church Propaganda, 101.

⁴³H. Shelton Smith, In His Image, But...: Racism in Southern Religion, 1780-1910 (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1972), vii.

religion and the Civil War by addressing a critical issue that is at the heart of the nature of Southern religion and its influence on the advent of that conflict.

Other books provide additional context for the study of Southern religion. One of these works is Haunted by God by James Dabbs. Dabbs' analysis ranges throughout Southern history and evokes the diverse religious legacy of that region. Dabbs writes that "God, I believe, is our greatest resource and our greatest danger."⁴⁴ He also observed that "...the Protestant Church was not made for celebration of life; it was made for repentance of having deferred or denied life."⁴⁵ This work provides an understanding of the guilt generated by the slavery system and how Southerners who did not like slavery adapted to its existence and legacy in that region.

Donald Mathews' Religion in the Old South provides essential background information for an understanding of Southern religion as the Civil War began. He confines his analysis to the Old South in an attempt to understand "...how Southern society was affected by Evangelical values and institutions."⁴⁶ His thesis is that

As a social, historical process, Evangelical Protestantism in the Old South enabled a rising lower-middle/middle class to achieve identity and solidarity, rewarding its most committed religious devotees with a sense of personal esteem and liberty. From interaction with and participation in this process, blacks created the measure by which southern Evangelicalism itself could be judged, and through their appropriation of Evangelical Christianity expressed a religious-social ethos that could best convey its significance in the Evangelical promise to 'preach liberty to captives.'⁴⁷

Mathews' narrative thus integrates African Americans into the centre of Evangelicalism and into the mainstream of Southern religion in general.

Numerous works on the revivals held in the Confederate armies also provide support to Silver's thesis that religion strengthened the Confederate war effort. Gorrell

⁴⁴James McBride Dabbs, Haunted by God (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1972), 133.

⁴⁵Dabbs, Haunted by God, 250.

⁴⁶Donald G. Mathews, Religion in the Old South (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), xiv.

⁴⁷Mathews, Religion in the Old South, xv.

Prim's "Born Again in the Trenches: Revivalism in the Confederate Army" is one work that examines the importance of the revivals to the endurance of the Confederate armies.⁴⁸ The existence and the effects of the revivals can be felt in the conversion of numerous Confederate generals to Christianity during the war.

Sidney Romero's book Religion in the Rebel Ranks looks at religion in general in the Confederate armies. Romero focuses on religion, primarily "...from the military standpoint - to consider it as a weapon of warfare."⁴⁹ Although Romero's study bears some similarities to Jones' work of almost a century earlier, it concentrates on explaining why and how religion was used to support the Confederate war effort. He believed that Southern religion usually operated to the benefit of the Confederacy, and served to help offset the numerous disadvantages the South faced vis-a-vis the North. Romero's study is similar to the current one in the sense that it looks at how religion supported the war effort. Instead of looking at the generals of the armies, Romero looks at the common soldiers. However, the two studies proceed from a different appreciation of the relationship between religion and warfare. Romero writes that "In spite of its deficiency of war potential, the South had in its arsenal a powerful weapon which such Southerners as J.H. Thornwell, Benjamin Palmer and William A. Smith had nurtured and forged. That weapon was religion."⁵⁰ While the current study examines how religion affected the conduct of the war, it is quite different from Religion in the Rebel Ranks because religion is viewed here as a force in its own right, not only as a 'weapon.' The most religious generals did not wish to use religion primarily as a 'weapon' to win the war, but instead were eager to foster religion for its own sake, and for the salvation of souls. The consequent effects of such religion also aided the war effort. While Romero's approach is valid, it is far more precise and narrowly defined than the one adopted in this study.

John McKivigan's The War against Proslavery Religion: Abolitionism and the Northern Churches, 1830-1865 focuses on the North, but contains crucial information

⁴⁸Gorrell Clinton Prim, Jr., "Born Again in the Trenches: Revivalism in the Confederate Army" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1982).

⁴⁹Sidney J. Romero, Religion in the Rebel Ranks (Lanham, Maryland, New York and London: University Press of America, 1983), 1.

⁵⁰Romero, Religion in the Rebel Ranks, 1.

about the development of Southern religion. Most abolitionist activities occurred in the North, yet caused substantial counter effects in the Southern population. Devout Southern Christians, who felt attacked by the allegations of their Northern brethren, reacted by further deepening their belief in the righteousness or immateriality⁵¹ of slavery.

McKivigan demonstrates that "...despite the efforts of thousands of antislavery men and women both inside and outside the churches, all but a few small denominations balked at a commitment to uncompromised abolitionist principles and programs."⁵² Thus, although the book is focused on the Northern churches, the effects of abolitionism and the ramifications of the book are perhaps more significant for the South than for the North.

C. C. Goen's Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the American Civil War addresses the period immediately prior to the Civil War.⁵³ Goen argues that the schisms experienced by numerous Christian denominations prior to the war set an example for the political schism that occurred in late 1860 and early 1861. Mitchell Snay's Gospel of Disunion addresses a similar theme by focusing primarily on the South and analysing the various types of religious separatism that prepared and legitimated the mental assumptions and beliefs necessary for secession to occur in 1860-1861. Snay pays particular attention to the issue of slavery, both how it was defended and sanctified by the Southern clergy, and addresses the denominational schisms that are at the heart of Goen's work. Both books serve to illustrate the profound effect religion had upon the advent of the Civil War. Although both studies focus on the antebellum period, they are essential to understanding Southern religion and its relationship to the Confederacy.

Gardiner Shattuck's work A Shield and Hiding Place: The Religious Life of the Civil War Armies addresses the topic of religion in both Northern and Southern armies. One of his most notable arguments is that "...the Southern churches were less successful in supporting the Confederate war effort, and the Northern churches more successful in

⁵¹Some Southerners believed that slavery was simply part of the nature of the universe and therefore they should not become overly excited about its existence.

⁵²John R. McKivigan, The War against Proslavery Religion: Abolitionism and the Northern Churches, 1830-1865 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984), 7.

⁵³C. C. Goen, Broken Churches, Broken Nation (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1985).

supporting the Union one, than has usually been assumed.”⁵⁴ Gardiner does not argue that religion was the sole cause of the Union victory nor the sole cause of the Confederacy’s defeat. However, he does insist that “...religion in the South actually undermined the Confederate war effort.”⁵⁵ In stark contrast to other authors, James Silver in particular, Shattuck believes that Southern Christianity’s focus on personal morality undermined the South’s war effort, while Northern Christianity’s willingness to address society as a whole enabled it to strongly support to the Union government’s war effort. According to this argument, Southerners tended to only use religion to address their own personal situation while Northerners possessed a greater willingness to change themselves and the society in which they lived. This book is a worthy addition to the historiography of religion and the Civil War, and serves to illustrate the necessity of further study in this area to determine the extent and nature of religion’s effect on the combatants, the civilians and the organizations of the two sections at war.

Since the current work’s focus is on Confederate generals, it appears that Silver’s hypothesis is more applicable than Shattuck’s, as religion broadly considered strengthened the generals’ conviction and resolve to keep fighting. However, it also constrained them and limited the methods they could employ to wage the war. Religion encouraged generals to recognize that the war was over once their armies were surrounded or else were massively outnumbered and outsupplied. Thus the Christian religion greatly encouraged the generals to continue fighting until the spring of 1865, but once only guerrilla activities or suicide charges remained, religion helped convince the Confederate commanders to lay down their arms and admit defeat. The historiographical debate about religion’s effect on Confederate morale is one of the major questions in this field that needs further scholarly attention.

Studies incorporating religion along with other topics in a monograph contain important observations on Civil War religion. Richard Beringer, *et. al.*’s book The Elements of Confederate Defeat: Nationalism, War Aims, and Religion is one example.

⁵⁴Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., A Shield and Hiding Place: The Religious Life of the Civil War Armies (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1987), 9.

⁵⁵Shattuck, Shield and Hiding Place, 9.

In this work religion is placed in the context of the Confederacy's defeat, and several chapters analyse how religion facilitated the defeat of the South by encouraging Southerners to recognize that God either did not favour the South or was punishing them for their sinful behaviour. The authors believe that by accepting defeat Southern Christians were able to reduce the inconsistency between their belief that they were God's people and the fact that the Union was evidently winning the war from July 1863 onward.⁵⁶

Drew Faust made similar useful observations in The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South. Faust asserts that "Religion provided a transcendent framework for southern nationalism."⁵⁷ By placing religion in the context of its role in the creation of Confederate nationalism, Faust demonstrates one of the most prominent and perhaps influential roles religion played in the Civil War. Although there are many facets of Civil War religion, such broad frameworks help provide a deeper understanding of religion's multi-faceted character. Her main themes of nationalism and identity contextualize the role of religion in the Civil War.

Victor Howard's Religion and the Radical Republican Movement 1860-1870 explores the interaction between the Union government and the churches in regard to slavery. Howard concludes "...that the radical Christians significantly affected the course of the Civil War and Reconstruction and greatly influenced the men of principle."⁵⁸ Although this particular book focused only on one segment of Christians and their effect on one group of politicians, Howard's contentions do much to illustrate the potential of religious history to explain some previously unrecognized sources of Union tenacity and why the war became a war to end slavery.

⁵⁶Richard E. Beringer, Herman Hattaway, Archer Jones, and William N. Still, Jr., The Elements of Confederate Defeat: Nationalism, War Aims, and Religion (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1988), 166. All four authors worked on the book and make no particular claim to any specific chapters.

⁵⁷Faust, Creation of Confederate Nationalism, 22.

⁵⁸Victor B. Howard, Religion and the Radical Republican Movement, 1860-1870 (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1990), 6.

Books and articles about Southern Christians who did not support the war are also critical to understanding the full range of Civil War religion. Thomas Curran's article "'Resist Not Evil': The Ideological Roots of Civil War Pacifism,"⁵⁹ as well as Samuel Horst's Mennonites in the Confederacy are two examples of this genre. Even though the Mennonites only numbered a few hundred families in the Shenandoah Valley, their presence in a critically contested area as well as the Confederacy's dire need for manpower granted them a prominence larger than their numbers would otherwise warrant. The fact that many Mennonites were willing to perform duties other than actively participating in battle allowed them to be used for other essential military tasks.⁶⁰ By addressing the beliefs and practices of smaller religious groups in the North and South, a more comprehensive and balanced understanding can be achieved of the diversity of religion in the Civil War.

Some relevant works on Southern religion have a far broader scope than the Civil War. Christine Heyrman's Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt examines evangelical Christianity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century South. She argues that evangelicalism was a powerful force in the early nineteenth century, and that it bears similarities to the evangelical religion and attitudes that exist among modern Southerners. Her work is relevant to the study of Civil War religion in that it provides an overview of the religious background for some Southern Christians.⁶¹

James McPherson integrates religion into his book For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War.⁶² Instead of focusing solely on religion, McPherson explains why men were inspired to kill and be killed. Religion plays an important role in his analysis. By using religious doctrines and practices, Northern and Southern men overcame their ingrained cultural inhibitions about killing each other.

⁵⁹Thomas F. Curran, "'Resist Not Evil': The Ideological Roots of Civil War Pacifism," Civil War History XXXVI, no. 3 (1990), 197-208.

⁶⁰Samuel Horst, Mennonites in the Confederacy: A Study in Civil War Pacifism (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1967), 3.

⁶¹Christine Leigh Heyrman, Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997).

⁶²McPherson, For Cause and Comrades, 1997.

The groups of individuals that have received the most attention in Civil War religious history are the Union and Confederate chaplains who ministered to the soldiers and officers during the Civil War. While there are some areas of this genre of Civil War religious history that remain to be explored, the historiography on chaplains is extensive. In addition to the study of chaplains that has been included in the works by Sweet, Romero, and Shattuck, many other studies focus on chaplains as their primary subject.⁶³ Warren Armstrong's For Courageous Fighting and Confident Dying: Union Chaplains in the Civil War is one of the most recent books on this topic. Armstrong focuses on the character of the chaplains, their opinions about the war and his estimation of the quality of their service to the soldiers, among other themes.⁶⁴ These works provide a useful model for a study on Confederate generals in that such works analyse a specific body of men during the Civil War and their opinions on religion. Some chaplains left many letters and tracts for historians to comment on, while others left few. However, there are notable differences between a study of chaplains and generals, in that all chaplains were by definition and by profession religious,⁶⁵ and generals were not necessarily so. Chaplains' primary function was to propagate religion, while generals were called to carry out the orders of the Confederate government and their superiors.

When Religion and the American Civil War appeared in 1998, it made a major contribution to the study of Civil War religion. In this study, a wide range of noted authors address numerous important issues at the heart of this topic. Eugene Genovese

⁶³Some of these works include W. Harrison Daniel, "An Aspect of Church and State Relations in the Confederacy: Southern Protestantism and the Office of Army Chaplain," North Carolina Historical Review 36 (1959), 47-71; Sidney J. Romero, "The Confederate Chaplain," Civil War History 1, no. 1 (1955), 127-140; Rollin W. Quimby, "Congress and the Civil War Chaplaincy," Civil War History 10, no. 3 (1964), 246-259; Charles F. Pitts, Chaplains in Gray: The Confederate Chaplains' Story (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1957); Edwin S. Redkey, "Black Chaplains in the Union Army," Civil War History 33, no. 4 (1987), 331-350; Rollin W. Quimby, "The Chaplains' Predicament," Civil War History 8, no. 1 (1962), 25-37; Hieronymous, "For Now and Forever," 1964. For a notable biography on a particular chaplain, see Philip Thomas Tucker, The Confederacy's Fighting Chaplain: Father John B. Bannon (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1992).

⁶⁴Warren B. Armstrong, For Courageous Fighting and Confident Dying: Union Chaplains in the Civil War (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998).

⁶⁵It should be noted that there were allegations that some chaplains only joined to avoid conscription or to avoid manual labour, rather than out of any interest in religion.

examines how religion helped cause the disintegration of the United States. He viewed slavery as the heart of the divisions erupting not only in the political sphere, but also a source of division among Protestants.⁶⁶ Other sections of the book include “Church, Honor, and Secession,” by Bertram Wyatt-Brown, “Days of Judgement, Days of Wrath: The Civil War and the Religious Imagination of Women Writers,” by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, and “Christian Soldiers?: Perfecting the Confederacy,” by Reid Mitchell. This one volume addresses numerous issues of major importance in Civil War religion and serves as a good introduction to this diverse subject.

McPherson’s book serves the important purpose of comparing and contrasting the Union and Confederate armies. Just as the North and South were intimately related to each other, so too were the soldiers and generals of both sides. Similarly the current work makes several references to Union generals at times in order to compare them with their Southern counterparts. The current study does not emulate the dual approach of earlier authors in examining both sides equally because preliminary research indicated that religion did not operate in the same way or to the same scale in the Union high command as it did among Confederate generals.

While the preceding works all provide context for the current study, only a few of them touch on the issue of Confederate generals and Civil War religion. However, some works already bridge the gap between studies of Civil War religion and biographies of Civil War generals. Peter Carmichael’s “Christian Warriors” examines Virginian officers in the war and how their morale was sustained by religion. Carmichael argues that “Religion turned Pegram and virtually every one of his social counterparts in Virginia into ardent nationalists whose commitment to the Confederacy never wavered.”⁶⁷ Although Confederate generals were not all animated by religion, as Carmichael argues Pegram and his social counterparts were, religion did play a large role in the lives of many, and thus needs attention to determine the extent and characteristics of religion’s effect on their actions in the war.

⁶⁶Eugene D. Genovese, “Religion in the Collapse of the American Union,” in Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson, *Religion and the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 75.

⁶⁷Peter S. Carmichael, “Christian Warriors” *Columbiad* 3, no. 2 (1999), 88-106.

Anthony Gannon's article "A Consistent Deist: Sherman and Religion" is an example of an analysis of one general's religious beliefs. Although critical to understanding Sherman's own life, especially his relationship with his son who decided to become a Jesuit, Sherman's religious views help explain his actions and attitudes in the Civil War. Gannon's demonstration of Sherman's belief that the Civil War constituted a 'holy war' is placed in the context of that general's deistic beliefs. Sherman's meaning of a 'holy war' and the holy war references made by Christians, both Union and Confederate, had vastly different meanings. While Christians allowed for the possibility of divine intervention in a holy war, Sherman did not, and had already rejected the idea of miracles in 1846. He stated that "'The world is governed by universal laws and I do not expect any of these to be used for my benefit.'"⁶⁸ This is only one example of how a general's conception of the war varied depending on his religious beliefs. The current study attempts to make numerous such linkages to demonstrate the importance of religion not only for Civil War soldiers in general, but also for high-ranking generals in particular.

Perhaps the studies most akin to the current one, in spirit and subject matter, are Paul Offill's master's thesis "Stonewall Jackson: A Case Study in Religious Motivation and Its Effects on Confederate Leadership and Morale" and Warren J. Richards' God Blessed Our Arms with Victory: The Religious Life of Stonewall Jackson.⁶⁹ Offill examines Jackson from both a religious and a psychological perspective to understand the man himself and his contribution to the Southern cause. Richards briefly examines Jackson's entire life in an attempt to discern and understand this general's relationship with God. While Offill and Richards focus on only one general, the present work, although constrained by the lack of source material on most of the four hundred and twenty-five generals of the Confederacy, attempts to look at a number of different generals. In this study, Jackson remains a key figure, along with Robert E. Lee.

⁶⁸B. Anthony Gannon, "A Consistent Deist: Sherman and Religion," Civil War History 42, no. 4 (1996), 313.

⁶⁹Paul Miller Offill, Jr., "Stonewall Jackson: A Case Study in Religious Motivation and Its Effects on Confederate Leadership and Morale" (M.A. thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1962); Warren J. Richards, God Blessed Our Arms with Victory: The Religious Life of Stonewall Jackson (New York: Vantage Press, 1986).

Over the last decade or so, some authors have attempted to redress the deficit in studies on religion in the Civil War. Prominent among these is Steven Woodworth's While God is Marching On: The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers published in 2001. His argument is quite similar to that used in this dissertation: that the religious beliefs of the soldiers deserve close study and that the 'religious world' the soldiers operated in affected their war experience. Although this argument may seem imprecise, it is logical because most earlier commentators had paid so little attention to this question, and thus Woodworth's study is designed to act as a wedge to open up this relatively unexplored field of study. In Woodworth's book, rank does not matter, and that is one major difference between his study and my own, as well as the fact that he looks at both the Union and Confederate armies. "Religious Rebels" focuses on the Confederate generals and the effect their religious beliefs and practices had upon their men and their conduct of the war. I agree with Woodworth's methodological approach that all soldiers' and officers' religious views are inherently equal in spiritual terms, but differ in his estimate of these views in practical terms. I argue in my dissertation that the generals' religious views influenced their men and the Southern population more so than did the religious opinions of each common soldier. In other respects, I find that Woodworth's research almost universally substantiates my own, as well as his willingness to speak forthrightly about issues and famous historical figures.

Robert J. Miller's work Both Prayed to the Same God: Religion and Faith in the American Civil War is designed to impart to the reader a new appreciation of the importance of religion in the Civil War. Miller believes that religion has been generally neglected when historians study the Civil War, and wrote his own book to rectify this neglect. His book is similar to my dissertation in terms of argument and approach to theological integration, in the sense that religious topics are informed with a working knowledge of the Bible. Miller intends his work to be an overview of the topic, while my work is an in-depth analysis of the role religion played in the personal and public lives of Confederate generals. In addition, Miller and I disagree on some minor points, such as Miller's contention that Lincoln was the greatest wartime theologian, a point with which I totally disagree.

Miller's five central 'premises' are as follows:

(1) The most undeveloped and ignored area of Civil War studies is the impact that Religion and Faith had upon this conflict....(2) It was an extremely devout country that went into the Civil War....(3) In the pre-war decades (1840-1850s), religious divisiveness paved the way for political division....(4) During the War itself, the single greatest institution in maintaining morale among soldiers was faith in God....(5) After the war, religion and faith continued to play a significant role in shaping how the conflict was remembered, empowering freedmen for new worship opportunities, and providing a framework for the great ‘theological’ document to come out of that era.”⁷⁰

I agree that more work could be done on the role of faith and religion in the Civil War, that the United States could be considered an extremely devout country in the mid-nineteenth century and that religion and faith shaped how the Civil War was memorialized. I am not convinced of the argument that the split between Northern and Southern factions of different denominations ‘paved the way for political division.’ One reason Miller accepts this premise is because it has previously been argued by other historians, in particular C. C. Goen’s Broken Churches, Broken Nation. Previous historians, such as Goen, laid blame upon the churches for dividing, and therefore held those institutions at least partly responsible for the secession of the Southern states. Miller, being favourably inclined toward religion, is assuming a premise which is overstated and which is designed to attack and blame religion for the disintegration of the Union. I do not accept this premise, because religion, though powerful, was not almighty in people’s lives, and that it was instead social and political factors which prompted both the religious and political separations. As for premise #4, I would differ with Miller and instead state that religion was an important means of sustaining morale, but the most important ‘institution’ that sustained morale was patriotism, i.e., love of country (or of a particular state, i.e. Virginia, Louisiana, etc., in the case of the Confederacy), not of God, that prompted soldiers to remain on duty as long as they did.

Mark A. Noll’s The Civil War as a Theological Crisis, published in 2006, is further evidence of the increased importance some historians have started to place on Civil War religion. Noll’s argument is evident from the title of his work, and his “...main purpose is to show how and why the cultural conflict that led to such a crisis for the

⁷⁰Robert J. Miller, Both Prayed to the Same God: Religion and Faith in the American Civil War (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), xiv-xv.

nation also constituted a crisis for theology.”⁷¹ Noll argues that “From the historical record it is clear that the American Civil War generated a first-order theological crisis over how to interpret the Bible, how to understand the work of God in the world, and how to exercise the authority of theology in a democratic society.”⁷² While Noll and I agree that religion had a discernible and momentous impact on the Civil War, and that the war also in turn influenced the conception and practice of religion, we disagree on Noll’s contention that the Civil War constituted a theological crisis, at least as far as the Confederate generals are concerned.

Drew Gilpin Faust’s This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War, while not focusing exclusively on religion, includes extensive sections on religion due to the nature of her topic. Her primary thesis is that “The work of death was Civil War America’s most fundamental and demanding undertaking.”⁷³ Although I personally disagree with her contention, and would argue that the work of surviving (i.e., not dying, either physically or spiritually) was Civil War America’s most fundamental and demanding undertaking, she makes numerous valid points during the course of her work, specifically examining dying, killing, burying, naming, realizing, believing and doubting, accounting and finally numbering the dead. I agree with her to the extent that death is an incredibly important part of the Civil War, and to this end I examine Confederate generals’ reactions to death in my fifth chapter. At that time I will provide a more in-depth analysis of Faust’s work. It can be stated here that Faust’s work is indicative of scholars who, in the last decade, are more willing to take religion seriously and incorporate it into their studies. Faust demonstrates familiarity with the Bible and religious literature that makes her discussions about the topic appear well-reasoned and balanced.

In 2009 David Rolfs’ study No Peace for the Wicked: Northern Protestant Soldiers and the American Civil War was published. This work is quite similar to my dissertation in argument, approach and methodology. Rolfs focuses only on the Northern

⁷¹Mark A. Noll, The Civil War as a Theological Crisis (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 6.

⁷²Noll, Civil War as a Theological Crisis, 162.

⁷³Drew Gilpin Faust, This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008) , xviii.

Reformed Protestant soldiers, largely excluding Roman Catholics, because the Protestants were numerically superior at the time of the Civil War. He presents many valid conclusions, too many to list in this forum, but one of the most important is that “Although it would probably take a great deal additional research to make a hard-and-fast conclusion regarding the matter, many of the themes we have already treated in this book suggest that it was the moral failure of the nation’s largest Reformed Protestant churches, or at least many of their clergymen, not the common soldier’s revivalist faith that set the stage for a bloody Civil War.”⁷⁴ As can be seen from the quotation, Rolfs is cautious when advancing conclusions, and is wary of advancing an argument that he is not fully certain of it. Like Rolfs, I respect the limits of the evidence and do not seek to go beyond its inherent limits. In particular, Rolfs and I share a methodical approach that is critical to successful study of religion in the Civil War, and therefore I will reproduce this method at length, as it is similar to the one I use in this study:

Readers will note that while most historians traditionally shy away from or deliberately exclude overt religious expressions in their work, given my purposes I decided to pursue an opposite approach with this study. Considering the intensity of most antebellum Protestants’ faith and their extensive grounding in the Scriptures, I decided that whenever soldiers seemed to allude, either directly or indirectly, to a particular verse or passage I would reference it in the text or citations. I took this unusual step because antebellum Protestants attached such vital importance to these passages. Reading them in their entirety, in a similar literal, commonsense manner, can help us better understand both the meanings they ascribed to them and the various ways they used them to interpret their wartime experiences. Given their importance to the soldiers, I suspect any religious history that ignored these sources would be as flawed as a history of the founding fathers that ignored the literary influences of the Enlightenment.⁷⁵

Rolfs’ methodology is indicative of scholars in the last decade being more willing to take the Biblical influences on religion and the Civil War as a whole more seriously. My work continues in the same vein. Rolfs’ study is further evidence that religious beliefs and Biblical texts need to be taken more seriously by scholars, and that ignoring them is

⁷⁴David Rolfs, No Peace for the Wicked: Northern Protestant Soldiers and the American Civil War (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2009), 213.

⁷⁵Rolfs, No Peace for the Wicked, xix.

simply poor scholarship. Even if one does not share the religious beliefs of the authors of the Bible, it is inexcusable to remain in ignorance of such a foundational source of literary, cultural and intellectual ideas and phrases. Lincoln, though not a professed Christian, was clearly familiar with the Bible, to the extent that numerous historians, such as Robert Miller, acknowledge Lincoln as the ‘greatest wartime theologian,’ even though he was not formally a Christian. Obviously therefore, scholars need not fear demonstrating familiarity with the Bible, and should rather incorporate it into the discussions of mid-nineteenth century America.

The most comprehensive study about religion in the Civil War is George Rable’s God’s Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War. Published in 2010, it is arguably the most important book published about this topic. Interestingly, however, Rable does not structure his work with a thesis. Instead he states explicitly that

Although this is not a thesis-driven work, it does address important questions about the war’s origins, course and meaning. It is not a history of theology, yet theologians make an occasional appearance, and certainly theological questions receive considerable attention. Nor is the book primarily concerned with the relationship between religious values and the war’s conduct. Harry Stout has already offered a searing critique of how civil religion helped justify and sustain an increasingly brutal conflict in his ‘moral history’ of the Civil War. And, however pervasive civil religion proved to be in both the Union and the Confederacy, it is far from being the entire story. Instead, what follows is a broad narrative that shows how all sorts of people used faith to interpret the course of the Civil War and its impact on their lives, families, churches, communities and nations.⁷⁶

If Rable’s book does have a thesis, despite the author’s specific denial of this fact, it is simply that religion had a discernible and important impact on the course of the war, and that Rable is determined to redress the lack of scholarly attention previously given to this topic. Since I will be discussing the relevance of Rable’s work later in this study, I will be brief in mentioning important points of correspondence. Rable’s narrative often gives contradictory examples of how faith influences the reactions of soldiers, civilians or officers. He will say that some people felt this way, but that others felt another way. This

⁷⁶George C. Rable, God’s Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 6.

approach is similar to my own, in that it is a fair and balanced approach to the available evidence. One reason why Rable is willing to acknowledge the full range of evidence is that he is not arguing a thesis, and thus has no motive to neglect certain sources and avoid mentioning opposing beliefs. Rable is also humble in asserting that his work is only *a* religious history of the war, and not *the* religious history of the war. Rable states that “There could well be many different religious histories of the Civil War written and in these pages I am presenting merely one. Given the richness of the sources, the importance of the subject, and the complexity of the questions involved, there will be plenty of room left for other religious histories of the conflict.”⁷⁷ Rable’s modesty serves him well, and indeed there remains room for more thorough analyses of particular aspects of the war. However, as far as an over-arching study of the topic is concerned, it is unlikely that Rable’s work will be surpassed in the near future. If one is not familiar with the many primary sources and the fragmentary secondary sources, then Rable’s work would be hard to surpass to find a good introduction to this topic. However, as far as advancing original ideas, Rable largely leaves that task to later scholars.

As far as incorporating religion into the over-arching narrative of the war, previous historians have either neglected to do so or paid mere lip service to the topic. As James McPherson writes in an introduction to Robert Miller’s Both Prayed to the Same God, “Of the thousands of books written about the American Civil War, few have focused on its crucial religious dimensions.”⁷⁸ McPherson’s own Pulitzer Prize winning book itself neglected religious aspects of the conflict. However, since the recent shift in religious publications about the war, David Goldfield’s study America Aflame: How the Civil War Created A Nation changes this trend, and places religion front and centre in explaining the origins and the course of the conflict. Goldfield denounces evangelical Christianity for its culpability in causing the war, and the author insists that he is neither pro-Southern or pro-Northern, but simply anti-war. His thesis is that evangelical Christianity intruded into public discourse and acted as a toxin to prevent political leaders from pursuing any other course but war to solve the nation’s problems. While Goldfield

⁷⁷Rable, God’s Almost Chosen Peoples, 5.

⁷⁸James M. McPherson, “Preface,” in Miller, Both Prayed to the Same God, x.

feels the Evangelicals were justified in hating slavery, their morally unambiguous worldview prevented politicians from seeking other means of ending slavery.⁷⁹ Some historians might take issue with Goldfield's willingness to condemn slavery, and his decision to not argue "...that the death and destruction of the Civil War outweighed the good of abolition-rather, that there may have been other means to achieve that noble end."⁸⁰ This is an inherent weakness in Goldfield's argument, that even he who has performed meticulous research and written extensively about this topic cannot fathom exactly how slavery would have ended in the 1860's other than through a civil war. He does not state that there *were* other means to achieve that end, but only that there *may have been* other means. It seems quite clear from the sources that many Southerners were quite committed to maintaining slavery. Even Southerners such as Robert E. Lee, who was by no means an enthusiastic proponent of slavery, did not want to get rid of slavery because they wanted to have legal and economic control of African Americans. In fact, it was because Lincoln's election symbolized the fact that slavery would no longer be allowed to spread into other regions of the United States that South Carolina and the other states seceded from the Union. It was this desire to spread slavery that so brought Northerners and Southerners into violent confrontation, particularly in Kansas, and later in the Civil War as a whole. Goldfield's argument would be stronger if Southerners had been willing to allow all new territories to become free territories, and allow slavery to survive or die out in the states in which it was already established. Lincoln was well aware of the legal restrictions to his interference with the peculiar institution in states that currently possessed it. Even during the war, Lincoln knew that his actions to eliminate slavery in the rebellious states could be considered illegal. Thus Goldfield's argument is weak without a plausible alternative method by which slavery could have been abolished without a civil war. Otherwise, he appears to support the evangelicals in their efforts to eradicate slavery from America. Goldfield admits that "It is good, of course, to be righteous against slavery"⁸¹ and since risking confrontation with the South was the only

⁷⁹David Goldfield, America Aflame: How the Civil War Created a Nation (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011), 3.

⁸⁰Goldfield, America Aflame, 3.

⁸¹Goldfield, America Aflame, 3.

way to prevent the spread of slavery, therefore the evangelicals were justified in pushing the politicians into a civil war to get rid of slavery. In this scenario, the only fault one could find with the evangelicals is that they did not start the war sooner and end slavery a generation earlier.

Not all evangelicals were anti-slavery, especially those evangelicals who lived in the South. In addition, many abolitionists were not evangelicals, particularly William Lloyd Garrison, whose religious beliefs were definitely subordinate to his passion for ending the peculiar institution at any cost. Thus while Goldfield makes an important point that evangelicals who were abolitionists did help create the conditions for the Civil War, he is not able to suggest how else slavery might have come to an end during the same time period in a method other than warfare. And indeed, it was not the evangelicals who decided to wage war, but rather Abraham Lincoln. Some evangelicals were happy to see the South separate, and would have simply kept the territories in the Union, and thus the Union would have had most of its territory free of slavery (except in the border states and the Upper South, if they had remained in the Union).⁸² This scenario was the preferred outcome for some evangelicals. Thus while Goldfield's contention that evangelical Christians helped create the conditions that led to war has substantial merit, his overall thesis is unconvincing, because the cultural and political differences between the North and the South were substantial enough to precipitate the conflict, without laying the majority of the blame on evangelicals. Lincoln himself was not an evangelical, and yet he is the one who chose to use force to compel the seceded states back into the Union. Lincoln's role in creating the conflict must be acknowledged and appreciated, and blaming the evangelicals for creating a 'toxic' political environment simply obscures the fact that Lincoln had the choice in the spring of 1861 between peace and maintaining the full geographical Union. Under those conditions, he unhesitatingly and steadfastly chose to preserve the full expanse of the Union no matter what the cost.

Finally, another recent work that further broadens the scholarly approach to religion and the Civil War is Sean A. Scott's *A Visitation of God: Northern Civilians*

⁸²It needs to be remembered that the Upper South only seceded from the Union when Lincoln demanded troops from the states to suppress the rebellion. Had he allowed the Deep South to secede in peace, it is an open question whether the Upper South would then have left the Union. Virginia in particular only left once Lincoln had expressed his determination to conquer the seceding states by military action.

Interpret the Civil War. Scott focuses on the religious beliefs and practices of civilians in the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan during the Civil War. He attempts to look at a wide variety of members of Christian denominations but due to the availability of sources focuses mainly on Baptists and Methodists.⁸³ Scott's approach demonstrates current scholars' willingness to take seriously the religious beliefs of the laity, rather than only that of the clergy, as was the case earlier in the historiography. One of Scott's contentions is that "Far from sensing a tension between an earthy government and the heavenly city, most antebellum religious Northerners conflated the two and interpreted the Civil War as their opportunity to inaugurate a Christian nation."⁸⁴ As my study is concerned with Southern generals, it is logical that my conclusions about their perception of the nation's theological importance would be different. The fact that Southerners invested much less theological importance in their states' or nation's relationship to God's Providence is a major difference between the religious attachment many Northerners had to the Union, and the more pragmatic approach with which Southerners approached the Confederacy. Very few, if any, Southerners argued that the Confederacy was an exceptional nation founded by God to lead the world in righteousness as believers in American exceptionalism argued for the Union. Even Stonewall Jackson, who believed that God had willed the creation of the Confederacy, did not believe the country to be a special means of transmitting grace or blessings to God's people. This infusion of the nation with theological importance was largely restricted to the North.

My work differs from the secondary literature on the Civil War that has examined religion by arguing explicitly for realizing the importance of individual religious perspectives that, once they are understood on their own terms, are then studied in relation to their denomination's beliefs and practices and to the Christian community as a whole. Some scholars, such as Sean Scott, also pay attention to individual viewpoints, but rarely will scholars engage in in-depth analysis of how an individual's religious beliefs and practices affected his/her life and historical events. In the case of Confederate

⁸³Sean A. Scott, A Visitation of God: Northern Civilians Interpret the Civil War (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 7.

⁸⁴Scott, Visitation of God, 9.

generals, it is my contention that these religious beliefs and practices had a definite and momentous impact on their conception and conduct of the war.

My work contributes to current historiographical debates by agreeing with the majority of scholars who study religion and believe that religion was an important influence on the course of events. My study also seeks to emphasize the importance of the personal relationship believers have with God, and that these relationships, in addition to the communal worship services that have previously been emphasized in scholarly studies, need to be understood in order to fully explore the importance of religious beliefs and practices upon human activities. In addition, I also address specific historical debates that are often limited to one author, and these debates involve the works of Mark Noll, Drew Gilpin Faust and George Rable. Extended discussions of the principal arguments of these works are found later in this study.

In regard to the historiography as a whole, this dissertation attempts to connect works like Shattuck's broad analysis of religion, and biographies of Confederate generals, of which there are many, especially of Lee and Jackson. Some of the most famous, notably Douglas Southall Freeman's Pulitzer Prize winning R. E. Lee, provide numerous insights into the religion of their subjects. Other notable biographies, such as G. F. R. Henderson's Stonewall Jackson and the American Civil War, focus primarily on the war and the general's role in waging it. Glimpses of how religion affected the general's perception of and participation in the war are apparent in these works. By connecting biographic details, derived from biographies and directly from primary source material, with the existent material on religion in the Civil War, the present work successfully argues that religious motifs, themes and ideals contextualized and shaped the Confederate generals' understanding of and conduct of the war. Furthermore, I also argue that an understanding of these religious motifs, themes, and ideals is essential to understanding how they fought the war and how they accepted their defeat. The first theme to be analysed is faith. An appreciation of the importance Confederate generals placed on faith offers insight into how they lived their lives, fought in the Civil War and understood their place as military leaders in the Confederacy.

Chapter 1 - Faith, Hope and Charity

Whether in the heat of battle or during the frigid nights of the camp, a steadfast and enduring faith in Jesus Christ burned in the hearts of many Confederate generals. Their faith gave them hope, guidance and a perspective on their lives larger than the immediate political, military and social circumstances in which they found themselves. Each person's faith is unique, and the faith of each Confederate general was no different. Some generals cultivated a lifelong piety, some possessed a faith often lukewarm and occasionally inspired, while others nursed a tepid or even a feigned faith, one that served temporal ambitions. The faith of these generals manifested itself in many dimensions with varying repercussions. Faith as a belief or creed, the ways and circumstances in which faith was tested or found wanting, and instances where faith emerged or gained strength demonstrate different critical aspects of this theological virtue among Confederate generals. The war also deeply affected the faith and religious practice of many Southerners, as they encountered new opportunities or new challenges to their beliefs.

Intimately connected with faith in God was the generals' hope in His promises. Confederate generals understood God's promises in the Bible as directly applicable to themselves and their country, and found in these promises a reason to trust in God. Devout American Christians also trusted in God and believed that He wanted to bless them, and thus Confederate generals' beliefs largely mirrored the contemporary population. While their beliefs differed little from the general population, the effects these beliefs had upon the course of American history justifies an analysis of how this trust influenced their conduct in the Civil War.

The theme of trusting in God appears frequently in the letters of numerous generals, especially Lee, Jackson, Stuart, J. E. Johnston, and Pendleton. This trust in God was the greatest hope of Confederate generals. They believed that their hopes would be fulfilled by trusting in their Lord and Saviour. This trust in God, which was the foundation of their hope, branched out into hoping for the strength to endure setbacks, for

peace, and occasionally for earthly rewards. Even when hope clashed with reality it was often retained nonetheless. Eventually, however, even the most fervent Christian generals who hoped for victory came to despair of the Confederacy's success, and ultimately had to accept defeat in this world, and aspire for victory and deliverance in the next.

Confederate generals' hope in God took concrete form as they practised works of charity for their fellow human beings. They knew that as members of a professedly Christian country they were called to believe, to hope and to practice works of charity. Jesus had emphatically called his disciples to show charity to all, and the generals were in a position where they could and often did show charity to their soldiers, to civilians, and to their enemies. A key component of Christian charity was the spreading of the Good News, and numerous high-ranking officers spread the Gospel among their men. The motives for performing this duty were both heavenly and earthly. On the one hand, every believing Christian had a responsibility to his or her Master to spread the truth as he or she received it. These new believers were supposed to spread the Good News and were called to be more loving, caring and giving than prior to their conversion. However, these heavenly benefits were not the only ones Confederate generals could expect to produce by the propagation of the Gospel in their regiments. They also expected Christian converts to be harder working, more loyal, less likely to desert, and more willing to endure trials joyfully and patiently as their Master did when He suffered. Of course, they realized that only in the most fervent converts would all of the above mentioned changes occur, but they expected a degree of change in all who came to accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

The doctrinal aspects of the faith of the majority of Confederate generals can be found in the Nicene Creed. Many Christians in the mid-nineteenth century accepted most of the provisions of this creed. Episcopalians and Roman Catholics in particular professed it during church services. As rendered in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer the creed states:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible;
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made: Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down

from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man, And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, And ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead: Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord and Giver of life, Who Proceedth from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets. And I believe in one Catholick and Apostolick Church; I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; And I look for the resurrection of the dead, And the life of the world to come. Amen.¹

In addition to this basic statement of Christian doctrine formulated in 381 A.D. at the Council of Constantinople, each denomination had a variety of doctrines specific to its organization. Even when doctrines were held in common, some denominations emphasized the importance of certain articles of faith more than others. Thus, given the multitude of denominations, at first it may seem difficult to visualize Confederate generals, or nineteenth-century American society as a whole, having one faith, instead of a multitude of connected but ultimately distinct faiths based on the person of Jesus Christ. Despite differences in their doctrinal beliefs, their personal journeys of faith, although shaped to some degree by denomination-specific doctrines, were remarkably compatible. For instance, a faithful Episcopalian like Robert E. Lee could worship in common with a staunch Presbyterian like Thomas Jonathan Jackson.

The essential unity of the Christian faith the generals shared allowed them to visualize their cause as a holy one pursued by fellow Christians. Nathan Hatch, in his study The Democratization of American Christianity, attests to the effects of democracy on all of Protestant Christianity.² Such common experiences as the democratization of their religion served to associate Christians with each other, while at the same time allowing them to react differently to the new forces shaping their denominations. Because of such commonalities, and the need for Southern unity, few if any generals refused to

¹The Book of Common Prayer, with Marginal References to Texts in the Holy Scriptures (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1840), 184-185.

²Nathan O. Hatch, The Democratization of American Christianity (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 3, 12.

worship with their fellow Protestants, even if they were from different denominations. For instance, according to Warren Richards, even though Stonewall Jackson belonged to the Presbyterian Church and served faithfully as a deacon, he “...thought of himself as a Christian rather than a Presbyterian.”³ Jackson’s second wife, Mary Anna Jackson, confirms her husband’s open-mindedness and willingness to engage in Christian fellowship with both fellow Protestants and Roman Catholics.⁴ According to J. William Jones, Robert E. Lee, though a devoted Episcopalian, also spiritually welcomed “Christians of every name.”⁵

Other generals, however, were not as willing to accept and tolerate denominational differences as were Lee and Jackson. Daniel Harvey Hill was Jackson’s brother-in-law, a fellow Presbyterian, and a professor at the Virginia Military Institute prior to the Civil War. During Hill’s service in the Mexican War, he expressed disapproval and even disgust with Catholicism as practised by Mexicans.⁶ Although a large amount of his hostility can be linked to Mexican culture in general, it is likely that he still possessed such attitudes during his service in the Civil War a decade and a half later. Some generals held prejudices against other Protestants as well. Richard S. Ewell wrote in 1844 that “I detest the sour Presbyterians.”⁷ Ewell’s negative impressions of Presbyterians were confirmed in early 1862 when he served under Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley campaign and found this particular Presbyterian’s faith and mannerisms especially irksome. Eventually Ewell came to appreciate Jackson’s religion

³Richards, God Blessed Our Arms, 92.

⁴Mary Anna Jackson, Life and Letters of General Thomas J. Jackson (Stonewall Jackson) (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1892), 58. It should be noted that at least one later writer adhered to a different view of Jackson’s impressions of other denominations. Allen Tate in Stonewall Jackson: The Good Soldier (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1928; reprint, Ann Arbor Paperback, 1957), p. 45, states that Jackson believed “Protestants only were Christians. His Protestant blood flowed steady in his veins.”

⁵J. William Jones, “The Christian Character of General Lee,” in Frank L. Riley, ed., General Robert E. Lee after Appomattox (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), 194-195.

⁶Daniel Harvey Hill Diary, p. 209, Daniel Harvey Hill Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁷Percy Gatling Hamlin, ed., The Making of a Soldier: Letters of General R. S. Ewell (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1935), 50.

and credited him with inspiring his conversion. Ambrose Powell Hill also voiced his dislike of both Presbyterianism and Thomas Jackson when he wrote in 1862 to James Ewell Brown Stuart that Jackson was “that crazy old Presbyterian fool...”⁸ Unlike Ewell’s prejudices, A. P. Hill’s exasperation with Jackson and his Presbyterian religion did not disappear over time.

On the whole, however, the vast majority of Confederate generals found common ground with their fellow Christians and did not allow their doctrinal differences to keep them from fighting in the same cause or worshipping the same God. Frank L. Hieronymous has written of the chaplains in the Confederate Army that “The chaplains learned to rise above sectarianism as a result of the war. They learned to love men of different doctrinal persuasion and to put the emphasis on the major issues rather than the minor.”⁹ This ability to ‘place the emphasis on the major issues rather than minor,’ was characteristic not only of Confederate chaplains, but also of Confederate generals.

Confederate generals could easily realize that they shared a common faith because in their religious lives they placed little emphasis on minute observations about doctrine and formulas of faith. While Jackson is known to have “believed in infant baptism,”¹⁰ and to have accepted the Presbyterian Confession of Faith,¹¹ even for this frequently studied general few records remain of his position on theoretical doctrinal issues, such as millenarianism. Instead, virtually every Confederate general was similar to Albert Sidney Johnston, who “paid small attention to dogmatic theology....”¹² His son, William Preston Johnston, further explains that his father “was deeply impressed with certain fundamental religious truths, and that his religious aspirations were simple, as they were fervent and direct.”¹³ Many members of the laity agreed with Johnston on this point, although many

⁸Letter of November 14, 1862 from A. P. Hill to J. E. B. Stuart, James Ewell Brown Stuart Papers, 1832-1962, Mss1St923c, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

⁹Hieronymous, “For Now and Forever,” 211.

¹⁰Jackson, Life and Letters, 48.

¹¹Jackson, Life and Letters, 106.

¹²Johnston, Life of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, 721.

¹³Johnston, Life of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, 721.

clergymen believed such doctrines were important. The most convincing example of most generals' fixation on the most basic elements of the faith is that of Bishop and Lieutenant General Leonidas Polk. An Episcopalian bishop before the outbreak of the Civil War, and a supervisor of many clergymen, one would expect Polk to be most insistent of the generals in matters of doctrine and ritual. Clearly this bishop had no time or use for obscure doctrines. Before the Civil War, Polk remarked that "I see no use of doctrines which cannot be used to affect the practice of the hearer both toward God and man."¹⁴ In addition, even though, as a bishop, he was called to be a model to the priests who served under his leadership, Polk made mistakes in ritual propriety and rubrical observances.¹⁵ Polk, though unusual among Confederate generals as the only one who retained episcopal rank, was quite representative of the generals' priority on focusing in the useful aspects of faith and paying little heed to doctrinal details he believed obscure. The majority of Confederate generals shared a common Christian faith that allowed them to worship in relative harmony and to conceive of their efforts on the behalf of the Confederacy as a holy endeavour.

Frequently a lack of understanding is revealed in the few instances when a Confederate general's opinions on matters of precise doctrinal significance survive in the existing records. One such example is William Dorsey Pender's opinions on faith and good works. In a letter to his wife on Sept. 8, 1861, Pender writes that "I have faith in Christ and hope for the best. But if the hope and belief in good works is wrong, I fear I am in the wrong way. I cannot help from believing that our acts *if* done from *fear* as well as *love* will help in the world to come. For without the desire to do good and the practice of it, how are we to change?"¹⁶ As a Protestant, Pender needed to believe in *sola fides*, that is, that salvation comes to the believer from Christ through faith in Him alone. All Protestants, from the beginning of the Protestant Reformation until Pender's day were emphatic on this point, as this was one of the major doctrinal differences between

¹⁴Polk, Leonidas Polk: Bishop and General, 129. Polk evidently viewed doctrines that did not affect the immediate lives of his parishioners as obscure and largely irrelevant.

¹⁵Polk, Leonidas Polk, 215.

¹⁶William W. Hassler, ed., The General to his Lady: The Civil War Letters of William Dorsey Pender to Fanny Pender (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1962), 56-57.

Protestantism and Catholicism. Thus, Pender revealed to his wife that he agreed with one of the Catholic Church's doctrines, that of salvation through faith and good works, even though he was not considering conversion to that denomination. However, later in the war Pender confessed to his wife that "In reading Romans I am forced to see that by Faith and that only can we be saved."¹⁷ Thus, before sustaining a mortal wound at the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863, Pender adopted the traditional Protestant position on this doctrinal matter. Pender also expressed to his wife a desire for "such a thing in Heaven as marriage and giving in marriage, that we may enjoy everlasting bliss together."¹⁸ This desire seems remarkable for a Christian because Jesus was emphatic that "For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven."¹⁹ Even though it was logical for Pender to yearn for the retention in heaven of a state in life that brought him such joy on earth, it was adverse to Christian doctrine and suggested a lack of understanding of basic doctrine. Pender mentioned this problem himself in other letters, and attempted to acquire more information on the subject.²⁰ In essence Polk and Pender are fitting examples that while the faith of many Confederate generals was strong and resolute, it was focussed on major doctrinal matters with only slight attention paid to more complex formulations of doctrine. The available evidence indicates that Confederate generals had a basic understanding of Christian theology, but were still developing in their faith as the war progressed. Although their faith was not fully formed, they relied on its basic tenets for spiritual strength as the war continued.

Some generals were content to focus on basic authentic Christian doctrines, such as D. H. Hill, who joined the Presbyterian Church at twenty-two years of age. Hal Bridges insists he was so resolute in his faith that "no other general-not even Stonewall

¹⁷Hassler, ed., General to his Lady, 98.

¹⁸Hassler, ed., General to his Lady, 62.

¹⁹Mark 12:25.

²⁰Hassler, ed., General to his Lady, 80, 92, 102.

Jackson-went into combat with a firmer faith in God.”²¹ D. H. Hill’s resolute faith consisted of complete adherence to Presbyterian doctrine. Other Confederate generals, however, might have been seduced into agreement with a particular veteran, who, at a reunion after the war, stated that ““God will never send an old Confederate soldier to hell.””²² William Morgan heard this comment and disagreed entirely with its sentiment. He remarked that “My prayer is that none of them may ever go or be sent to that bad place; but lest us not forget that, ‘By grace are ye saved, through *faith* in Jesus Christ.’”²³ This split in opinion between what Confederates wanted to be true, and what they were taught to be true, was likely echoed during the war in the heart of many a Confederate general. Because they, their men and the people that were working and praying for them on the home front had endured hardship and privation for the sake of a holy cause, they were tempted to believe by such actions that they all would be reunited in heaven. However, such a belief was contrary to the most basic of Christian doctrine. Morgan prayed that no Confederate veterans would be condemned to hell, but in good conscience needed to insist that only by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ could they achieve salvation.

In addition to the religious generals mentioned above, some officers were somewhat hostile, or unable to adhere to the idea of a strong faith in God. Former Brigadier General E. P. Alexander wrote to his sister in 1900 “Belief-I sometimes feel indignant at the stress laid on belief! It ought to be preached against.”²⁴ Alexander’s views on religion grew increasingly bitter after the Civil War, and while not a model of piety during the war, he kept such views to himself. While Alexander’s desire to keep religion within a circumscribed sphere was not unique to this general, the religious opinions of more devout generals, such as Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, offered an ideal for both soldiers and fellow generals.

²¹Hal Bridges, Lee’s Maverick General: Daniel Harvey Hill (originally published 1961; reprint, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 17.

²²Morgan, Personal Reminiscences, 13-14.

²³Morgan, Personal Reminiscences, 13-14.

²⁴Maury Klein, Edward Porter Alexander (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1971), 212.

E. P. Alexander was not alone in experiencing the difficulties inherent in devoting one's thoughts, actions, and words to a God Who was perfect, all-knowing, and yet ultimately incomprehensible to mortal beings. Other generals and soldiers struggled with their faith and sought to achieve a deeper union with their Saviour, even though it could bring them pain, hardship, and, ultimately, death. Dorsey Pender explained to his wife that "...if I do not have faith it is because I cannot."²⁵ Pender, struggling to understand a faith that at times he found confusing and difficult to practice, ultimately persevered, and was confident enough to be confirmed in the Episcopal Church.

Even generals who had long practised the Christian faith realized their need to deepen their spirituality and their connection to God. Brigadier General William Nelson Pendleton, the Episcopal rector of Grace Church in Lexington, Virginia, commented in April 1862 that he and his wife needed to "make our faith more a reality=like that what martyrs have experienced in all ages."²⁶ Pendleton's reference to the martyrs, individuals who have borne the ultimate witness to Christ by shedding their blood for Him, is illustrative of the type of faith Pendleton believed he and the rest of the Confederacy needed during the discouraging days of April 1862. The loss of Forts Henry and Donelson in the Western theatre, and the discouraging Battle of Shiloh in which commanding General A. S. Johnston was killed, cast a pall over the Confederacy that Pendleton believed would end once Confederate soldiers won some victories. However, until that time arrived, faith in God was needed to endure whatever hardships the war might bring. As this same general wrote earlier in February 1862, "Nothing but prayerful intercourse with Lord our Saviour + habitual reliance upon him can prepare us for + sustain us under these bitter bereavements. It is therefore my darling a time for all of us to live peculiarly by faith. [,] having our treasure in heaven + our hearts there also."²⁷

²⁵Hassler, ed., General to his Lady, 92.

²⁶Letter of April 15, 1862 of William Nelson Pendleton to his wife, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

²⁷Letter of February 25, 1862 of William Nelson Pendleton, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The '+' sign, usually changed to '&' when handwritten type is converted into print, is left unchanged in this study because in some documents the authors seem to use that sign for a particular reason.

Although it was by no means easy to, in Pendleton's words, 'live peculiarly by faith,' that is exactly what many Confederate generals endeavoured to do no matter what the cost. J. E. B. Stuart, upon hearing of the dire sickness of his beloved daughter, Flora, was likely tempted to rush home, to be with her during her illness and to comfort his distraught wife. Instead, "he told his comrades, 'I shall have to leave my child in the hands of God; my duty requires me here.'"²⁸ Stuart believed that God would comfort his family in his absence. In this case, Pendleton's words about their treasure being in heaven had especial applicability, because Stuart's daughter did not recover, and the only place he could hope to see her beaming face once more was in Paradise.

Not all soldiers were as quick as Stuart to commit themselves and their loved ones to the tender mercy of God. Certain individuals, who had previously practised their religion, were now in such dire straits that they believed that God was either unable or unwilling to help them. One wounded soldier in May 1862, who upon hearing a visiting woman remark that he should trust in the Lord, responded "'It don't do a damned bit of good to trust in the Lord!'"²⁹ Another soldier felt that by July 1864 God had abandoned the Confederacy, and informed his wife that "It seems like death must be our portion."³⁰ In their suffering these two soldiers represented the officers and men who felt that their faith was insufficient to meet the trying circumstances that they faced. Even though many pious and God-fearing men led the Confederate armies, such notable examples were not sufficient to preserve the faith of every soldier in their armed forces.

The conviction that God acted in the lives of individuals and nations, usually referred to as Providence, permeated the Confederate army, from the highest levels of command, President Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee, down to the lowest private in the ranks. This notion will be discussed at greater length in chapter three, but its fundamental connection to the faith of Confederate generals and soldiers must be emphasized. When they found their faith tested and sorely tried numerous times during the course of the war,

²⁸Emory M. Thomas, Bold Dragoon: The Life of J. E. B. Stuart (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986), 188.

²⁹Mills Lane, ed., "Dear Mother: Don't Grieve about Me. If I Get Killed I'll Only be Dead": Letters from Georgia Soldiers in the Civil War (Savannah: Beehive Press, 1977), 120.

³⁰Lane, ed., "Dear Mother," 312.

most generals and soldiers found their faith strengthened even during their darkest hours. The degree of faith soldiers and generals exhibited in their cause derived in large part from their religious faith, and their trust that God would not let them down. In some way, through some last ditch miracle, soldiers hoped that their cause could be revived. The fact that their leading general, Robert E. Lee, was God-fearing increased many soldiers' willingness to remain in the ranks. This conclusion should not be overemphasized, however, as thousands upon thousands of soldiers deserted from the Confederate ranks. However, for the ones who remained, their leader's religiosity and their own religious faith were central in helping them endure to the end.

Reading the Bible, attending church, and witnessing the Christian example embodied in their senior commanders strengthened this faith. The Bible, read most frequently in the King James Version,³¹ was the mainstay of devout Southern Christians in both the army and in civilian life. During his teaching career at the Virginia Military Institute in the 1850's, Stonewall Jackson desperately tried to persuade his sister Laura of the importance of becoming a Christian, and to achieve this, he insisted that she turn to the Bible. He wrote: "But my sister...do turn to God, and obey the teachings of the Bible. If you do not believe its teachings, at least obey its doctrines and I believe that God will give you faith."³² Jackson read his Bible daily prior to the war, along with a suitable commentary.³³ As he re-entered the army in 1861, Jackson's conviction that "the Bible was the final authority for truth..."³⁴ remained firmly implanted in his mind.

Robert E. Lee was also a noted proponent of reading the Bible. When he received a Bible as a gift from Rev. Moses D. Hoge, Lee congratulated the minister for his successful attempt to procure the Bibles from England.³⁵ Lee favoured the Bible above all

³¹McPherson and Cooper, eds., Writing the Civil War, 95.

³²Letter of Stonewall Jackson to his sister Laura, April 17, 1854, Stonewall Jackson Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

³³Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 109.

³⁴Offill, "Stonewall Jackson: A Case Study," 50.

³⁵Letter of Robert E Lee to Moses D. Hoge of March 10, 1864, Robert E. Lee Collection, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, The Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond Virginia.

other books, and, according to Marshall Fishwick, believed that it was “sufficient to satisfy all human desires, [but that] The difficulty is to conform the heart and mind and thoughts to its teachings, and to obtain strength to bring the body under the control of the spirit.”³⁶ Unlike today, when many portions of the Bible are interpreted only in a metaphorical sense, in the mid-nineteenth century South the Bible was considered inspired and indeed written by God Himself through a number of human agents, such as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the case of the Gospels. Indeed, prospective Southern ministers could not equivocate on this issue, and needed to assert their acceptance of the view that “...the Bible was the authoritative Word of God.”³⁷ Thus the Bible itself was the source of the faith of Southern generals and soldiers, not theology texts which interpreted and contextualized the Biblical narratives.

In addition to the Bible, churches served as a means of strengthening and engendering faith. While church membership was not considered essential by all Protestant Christians, it was usually considered helpful and provided believers with liturgical structure and regularity, as well as fellowship with like-minded Christians. Future Brigadier General Josiah Gorgas recorded that he and his wife were baptized and confirmed in St. Paul’s Church, in Richmond, on May 6, 1862, and that he hoped that “I shall benefit by thus linking myself to the visible church.”³⁸ Gorgas’s reference to the ‘visible’ church is instructive because he, as a believing Christian prior to his initiation into the church, was already a member of the invisible church, that is, of the Mystical Body of Christ. However, by making public his commitment to obey and serve Jesus Christ, both he and his fellow Confederates were encouraged to live their lives in accordance with the Gospel. Other generals, although they believed in God, did not belong to an institutional church. A. S. Johnston never became an official member of a church, but he was willing to attend Episcopal services with his wife, and informed his

³⁶Marshall W. Fishwick, *Lee After the War* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1963; reprint, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1973), 213.

³⁷Hieronymous, *For Now and Forever*, 1.

³⁸Josiah Gorgas Diary, p. 62, William Crawford Gorgas Papers 1857-1919, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.; Sarah Woolfolk Wiggins, ed. *The Journals of Josiah Gorgas 1857-1878* (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1995), 49.

son that “I trust in God; in that consists the sum of my religion.”³⁹ Johnston’s biographer, Charles Roland, posits that the general was a deist, in the tradition of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin.⁴⁰ A deist believes that a Supreme Being created the universe, established its laws of operation and then allowed it to proceed according to those laws, without hindrance or interference. Thus, there was a serious theological conflict between Christianity and deism since Christians believe that Jesus, the Son of God, was born of a virgin to redeem humanity from sin and death. Whether or not Johnston was a deist or a Christian, it is apparent that he believed in God and that membership in a church was not necessary to be on good terms with the Supreme Being.

At least one general had a contrary opinion to Johnston’s ideas on church attendance. Gideon Johnson Pillow, in a letter written in 1847, instructed his wife that it was her duty to attend church. He was convinced that she “...will derive comfort and consolation by performing that duty; It is, in my humble judgement sinful not to attend Gods house and worship him and adore him...”⁴¹ Pillow himself attended church, and he wanted his wife to do the same.

While it is uncertain whether other generals believed it was sinful to neglect church attendance, it is certain that many of them found church membership and regular participation beneficial to their faith. By 1861, Robert E. Lee, had committed himself to the doctrines and liturgical practices of the Episcopal Church. As Douglas Southall Freeman indicates, Lee “...was content until he was past forty-five to hold to the code of a gentleman rather than to the formal creed of a church.”⁴² However, in 1853, at the occasion of the confirmation of his daughters Annie and Mary, Lee reversed his decision to stand aloof from active membership in his church, and was confirmed along with his

³⁹Charles P. Roland, Albert Sidney Johnston: Soldier of Three Republics (Austin: University Texas Press, 1964), 181.

⁴⁰Roland, Albert Sidney Johnston, 181.

⁴¹Letter of June 9, 1847 from Gideon Johnson Pillow to his wife, Gideon Johnson Pillow, 1847-61 Letters, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

⁴²Freeman, R. E. Lee: A Biography, IV: 502.

daughters. Freeman relates the tradition that Bishop Johns told Lee that “...if you make as valiant a soldier for Christ as you have made for your country the Church will be as proud of you as your country now is.”⁴³ Subsequent to Lee’s confirmation, he was a regular church-goer and also served as a vestryman in his parish in Lexington, Virginia after the war.

J. E. B. Stuart waited until 1859 to be confirmed in the Episcopal Church, after he previously joined the Methodist Church in childhood due to the intensity of a revival meeting.⁴⁴ Stuart also attended sessions of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church as a lay delegate, and while travelling to one of these conventions, was confirmed in St. Louis. One of Stuart’s most recent biographers theorizes that Stuart’s decision to request confirmation during that journey was less inspired by a sudden increase in religious ardour, than by prosaic considerations, like propriety. After all, Stuart “could hardly be a member of the ruling body of a church to which he did not belong.”⁴⁵ Despite the delay in both Lee’s and Stuart’s formal admission to church membership, both generals were thereafter committed members of the Episcopal Church.

Numerous other high-ranking generals waited until the fury of war was upon them to receive church membership. These generals included John Bell Hood, J. E. Johnston, Braxton Bragg, William J. Hardee, and R. S. Ewell. In each of these cases, it is apparent that the impetus of war encouraged these men to seek the solace of a church for moral and spiritual support. Richard O’Connor links Hood’s baptism and reception into the Episcopal Church directly to the difficult situation the Army of Tennessee faced in mid-1864. As the revival meetings increased in number in 1864, “The ‘valley of the shadow of death’ with the guns thundering all around them in the passes and on the ridges, had a literal meaning.”⁴⁶ In these conditions Hood went to his fellow general, Leonidas Polk, for baptism. Hood’s need for solace and strength increased shortly after his baptism, when he received command of the Army of Tennessee. His superiors charged him with

⁴³Freeman, R. E. Lee, I: 331.

⁴⁴John W. Thomason, Jr., Jeb Stuart (New York and London: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1946), 10.

⁴⁵Thomas, Bold Dragoon, 54.

⁴⁶Richard O’Connor, Hood: Cavalier General (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1949), 192.

the task of halting and destroying William Tecumseh Sherman's army, and saving the city of Atlanta. As his mission was difficult to achieve, if not impossible, Hood's ability to find solace in religion helped to cushion the devastating impact failure and defeat inflicted on his self-esteem.⁴⁷

Hood's predecessor in command of the Army of Tennessee, J. E. Johnston, also received baptism from Polk. Johnston's wife, Lydia, implored the bishop "to perform a good deed"⁴⁸ and baptize her husband. Lydia Johnston's insistence on the rite at this time was apparently stimulated by the danger and challenges inherent in the 1864 campaign to stop Sherman's advancing army. Not only was Johnston's life at risk, but he also needed God's blessing to halt and repel the superior forces that were advancing against him.

Braxton Bragg's decision to accept church membership transpired through the use of an approach that few others would have found conducive to conversion. In the spring of 1863, Bragg, commander of the Army of Tennessee, was busy with military matters and informed his sentries that unless someone arrived concerning a 'matter of life or death' he was not to be disturbed. Dr. Charles Quintard, a chaplain in Bragg's army, planned to win Bragg to Christ. Despite the general's reputation as having never shown any interest in spiritual matters, the chaplain was confident that Bragg would yield to his entreaties to embrace religion. However, a sentry informed Quintard that Bragg had no time to listen to him. The next day the chaplain refused to retreat back to his tent. Instead he ordered the sentry to admit him to Bragg's presence, insisting that his need to see Bragg was indeed caused by "a matter of life or death."⁴⁹ Finally, upon being granted permission to enter Bragg's presence, Quintard then asked if the others in the tent could leave the general alone with the chaplain. Bragg refused this request. Quintard did not relent, and finally the others left the two men alone. Quintard then "began to speak to Bragg of Jesus Christ and the responsibility of discipleship. He then asked him to be

⁴⁷John P. Dyer, The Gallant Hood (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., Publishers, 1950), 321.

⁴⁸Craig L. Symonds, Joseph E. Johnston: A Civil War Biography (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992), 290.

⁴⁹Larry J. Daniel, Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee: A Portrait of Life in a Confederate Army (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 118.

confirmed. With tears in his eyes, Bragg took Quintard's hands and replied: 'I have been waiting for twenty years to have some say this to me, and I thank you from my heart. Certainly I shall be confirmed if you will give me the necessary instruction.'"⁵⁰ After further instruction, Quintard's hopes were realized when Bragg "...was baptized and confirmed at Shelbyville."⁵¹ Whether or not one credits the specific details of this story, and these details do seem questionable, Bragg's conversion did occur as a result of the ministrations of Rev. Quintard. Prominent historians such as George Rable assert that Quintard's discussion with Bragg not only resulted in the general's conversion, and even brought him to tears.⁵² While Bragg was likely unique among Confederate generals in requiring an aggressive and even impertinent chaplain virtually to order him to become a Christian, he is an example that even hard-hearted generals were capable of conversion, and willing to receive the ministrations of a church.

Not all generals who attended a church regularly were filled with admiration for religion and its ministers. A. P. Hill is an example of a general who, despite attending church regularly with his wife, Dolly, did not respond eagerly to the ministrations of the Episcopal clergymen he encountered there. As his biographer, James I. Robertson asserts, "...Hill remained an undemonstrative Episcopalian who generally went to church on Sunday and attended other services only when convenient."⁵³ Robertson ascribes this lack of zeal to Hill's experience of religion during his teenage years. His mother, Fannie Hill, who had previously been a permissive Episcopalian, suddenly became a strict Baptist, and henceforth all "...dancing, boisterous conduct, card playing, [and] all forms of theatrics"⁵⁴ were forbidden. Hill never accepted the motivation behind these restrictions, and even though his wife's influence caused him to return to the Episcopal Church, his affection for religion was always moderate at best. This attitude generated much of the

⁵⁰Daniel, Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee, 128.

⁵¹Daniel, Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee, 128.

⁵²Rable, God's Almost Chosen Peoples, 311.

⁵³James I. Robertson, Jr., General A. P. Hill: The Story of a Confederate Warrior (New York: Random House, 1987), 231.

⁵⁴Robertson, General A. P. Hill, 6.

hostility that existed between him and Stonewall Jackson. One example of this hostility was previously mentioned, when Hill referred to Jackson as “that crazy old Presbyterian fool.”⁵⁵ Thus, in asserting that churches were important instruments in promoting and strengthening the faith of Confederate generals, it is necessary to remember exceptions like A. S. Johnston and A. P. Hill who spurned church membership or who were reluctant church members.

The churches, in addition to promoting faith in Christ, also promoted faith in secession and in the Confederacy. C. C. Goen argues “...that when Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist churches divided along North-South lines, they severed an important bond of national union...”⁵⁶ Goen also suggests that the “...division of the churches and their subsequent behavior reinforced a growing sectionalism that led eventually to political rupture and armed conflict.”⁵⁷ In a similar vein, Drew Gilpin Faust states that “The most fundamental source of legitimation for the Confederacy was Christianity.”⁵⁸ Because the churches proved that even in spiritual matters compromise could be impossible, religious generals thus found their state’s secession from the Union to be more easily understandable and justifiable. Secession became an increasingly realistic solution for political and sectional stalemates as well. It should be noted that the leadership of the churches was not the only consideration that prompted future Confederate generals to adhere to their states rather to the Union, but that their churches’ example helped to make the choice easier.

In addition to the stabilizing influence of the churches, the reputation and living witness of the generals who were known to be regular churchgoers and devout Christians had an impact on soldiers’ faith. J. Wm. Jones states that “No army, with whose history I am acquainted, at least, was ever blessed with so large a proportion of high officers who were earnest Christian men, as the Army of Northern Virginia.”⁵⁹ Jones lists a number of

⁵⁵Robertson, General A. P. Hill, 157.

⁵⁶Goen, Broken Churches, 6.

⁵⁷Goen, Broken Churches, 3.

⁵⁸Faust, Creation of Confederate Nationalism, 22.

⁵⁹Jones, Christ in the Camp, 42.

officers, including Lee, Jackson, Pendleton and others who provided a consistent Christian example to their soldiers. In addition, Jones also included a list of soldiers, such as John Bell Hood, R. S. Ewell and Dorsey Pender who, in the course of the war, converted to Christianity and became new sources of Christian witness to their men. Other Confederate armies also possessed men of Christian character, such as Leonidas Polk in the Army of Tennessee. Gardiner Shattuck states that “the Confederate Armies were estimated to have fostered the conversion of at least 100,000 men.”⁶⁰ Although I am not convinced that Shattuck estimate of ‘at least 100,000 men’ is accurate, it is clear from evidence that numerous conversions occurred, and that the conversion experience was sufficiently widespread as to affect the character and reputation of the Confederate armies. It is difficult to imagine such a high level of conversions occurring under apathetic or irreligious officers. While it is not argued that the Christian example of the Confederate generals was the sole or even the principal motivating factor in spurring such conversions, the fact that such witness existed helped both to lead soldiers to the faith and also to retain faithful soldiers in the field fighting under the standard of men they knew to walk with God.

Stonewall Jackson was convinced of the need to strengthen the faith of his soldiers, because he insisted that his “...gallant little army...be an army of the living God as well as of its country.”⁶¹ However, this ability of Southern soldiers to look to their pious superiors as role models sometimes contained hidden dangers. Some Confederates came to believe that “We have depended too much on Gen. Lee [,] too little on God.”⁶² During the course of the Civil War, many Confederates looked on their generals, Lee in particular, as their saviours in the various military crises that arose during the course of the Civil War. This is one of the meanings inherent in the preceding quotation. However, by seeing Lee and Jackson as exemplars of the faith, Confederate soldiers and civilians could be tempted to place them on a level with Christ, thus turning their earthly leaders

⁶⁰Shattuck, A Shield and Hiding Place, 96.

⁶¹Letter of Stonewall Jackson of April 7, 1862, Dabney-Jackson Papers Series Two, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

⁶²Eugene D. Genovese, A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 66.

into idols. Many Confederate letters and diaries reveal a conflicting desire to see Southern generals as instruments of God's Will upon earth, and yet as agents in themselves, who would through their own merits achieve the Confederacy's salvation. The first interpretation of the general's role was theologically sound, while the latter was heretical and ultimately idolatrous, and many Southerners realized this danger.⁶³ As time passed and the Confederacy's plight grew more and more desperate, some Confederates drew encouragement from the generals' piety.⁶⁴ They also became more inclined to put their trust in God alone. By strengthening the faith of their soldiers, Confederate generals helped them to understand that military might alone would not suffice to repel the Northern invaders.⁶⁵ Both generals and their soldiers needed a strong and persevering faith to withstand the mounting evidence that their country was doomed.

Generals and all participants in the war needed to wrestle with the conflict's effects on their faith life and their practice of religion. Christian doctrine advanced the notion that human beings were made in the image of God. Since these images of God were callously terminated in the Civil War, the struggle's brutality and severity thus became painfully apparent to pious and sensitive individuals. Such a reprehensible state of affairs did not foster a reverence for life, which was one of the fundamental truths of Christianity. As such it is imperative to consider the effects of the war on religion, particularly that of the soldiers and officers. Just as religion influenced the way the war was conducted, especially by men such as Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, the process also operated in reverse. Religion, and how it was practised, was profoundly affected by the war. Some clergymen and soldiers believed the war gravely damaged the cause of religion in the South. One example of how the war directly damaged both the

⁶³One example of this interpretation is found in Daniel E. Sutherland, ed., [A Very Violent Rebel: The Civil War Diary of Ellen Renshaw House](#) (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1996), 162.

⁶⁴Woodworth, [While God is Marching On](#), 280.

⁶⁵Further discussion of the generals' efforts to spread the Gospel among their troops will be provided later in this chapter in a discussion of the generals' practice of charity.

practice and spirit of religious observance occurred when J. E. B. Stuart avenged himself upon some Yankees that prevented divine worship.⁶⁶

Interference with church services was only one way the war affected the religious practice of the soldiers. The urgent demands of army duties also inhibited soldiers' efforts to engage in regular times of prayer to God. William Nelson Pendleton urged his son always to set aside a specific time, ideally in the early morning, during which he could commune with God. The father warned his son that neglect of prayer would ultimately lead to the death of the soul.⁶⁷ Sandie Pendleton needed his father's advice, because he later confessed to his wife that "You don't know how near I came to letting go [of] my profession. It is hard to live the life of a Christian in camp, especially for a man of my temperament."⁶⁸ The son likely found it difficult to deal with the violent emotions generated by war. Religion proscribed emotions like fury, rage, jealousy, and lust. Many Christians believed that once indulged, these emotions became addictive, enticing the sinner to indulge even more deeply and frequently in such base thoughts and sensations. Sandie's father himself recognized what the war was doing even to a trained and committed minister of God like himself. In March 1862, Pendleton wrote to his wife, gloating over the activities of the Confederate ironclad 'Merrimac.' He referred to its destructive exploits as 'glorious work.' Once he had written that line, Pendleton caught himself, and then wrote "It is horrible that we are obliged to speak of such wholesale destruction as glorious work."⁶⁹ Pendleton realized that as a man of God it was unbecoming and antithetical to his position as an envoy of the Prince of Peace to rejoice

⁶⁶Letter of J. E. B. Stuart to his wife, February 8, 1864, James Ewell Brown Stuart Papers, 1862-1864, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

⁶⁷Letter of William Nelson Pendleton to his son Sandie Pendleton, August 2, 1862, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁶⁸Copy of a letter of Sandie Pendleton to his wife Kate Corbin Pendleton, Sunday, September 13 [1863?], William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁶⁹Letter of William Nelson Pendleton to his wife, March 12, 1862, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

in the death of God's children and acclaim such activities as 'glorious,' the same adjective often used to describe God and His works. The war changed Pendleton from a man who cared for all people into one who rejoiced over the painful and brutal deaths occasioned by mid-nineteenth century technology. He bemoaned this state of affairs, but also defended his militant attitude. He believed himself 'obliged to speak' in such a fashion, even though he was not obliged to speak that way at all. He could still have bemoaned the activities of the Merrimac, while also believing that its work was necessary to prevent the subjugation of the South. Instead, he accepted the customary mind set in warfare that any harm that came to the enemy was 'glorious,' and should be celebrated, instead of acknowledging the Christian belief that all victims deserved compassion and sympathy, even if they were on the opposing side.

While Pendleton struggled with the temptation to celebrate the misfortunes of his enemy, other soldiers embraced the pleasures of the flesh. Leonidas La Fayette Polk disdained the activities of his fellow officers who availed themselves of the services of the many whore houses open to paying customers. He pitied the wives and children who suffered betrayal by such unworthy husbands and fathers, and was glad that he himself refused to be led into any 'den of whoredom.'⁷⁰ Many officers and men, having been freed from the supervision of wives, mothers, and close-knit communities decided to indulge themselves with the willing women they met in their travels. Some of these women were prostitutes, others engaged in sexual intercourse without pay, but all of them served the common desire of soldiers to live life to the fullest. Since a single bullet in the next engagement might cut their lives short, they believed it was better to live life now, rather than plan for a future life that might never come. Instead of concerning themselves with religious precepts, such men took advantage of the mobility and confusion of the wartime situation to engage in sexual activities that were denied them at home.

Not all moral transgressions committed by carefree soldiers were sexual. Indulgence in alcohol, profanity, gambling and other activities frowned upon by wives and mothers quickly spread among many of the fresh Confederate recruits in the early

⁷⁰Letter of Leonidas La Fayette Polk to his wife, March 26, 1863, Leonidas La Fayette Polk Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

years of the war. Bell Wiley explains that “They might have been good boys when they left, and they would be good boys after they returned, but in the meantime they wanted to have a fling at gambling, drinking and swearing, and they did not want to be bothered with preachers.”⁷¹ Had the war not come, these same boys would have stayed at home and had far less opportunity to engage wholeheartedly in such behaviour. The war allowed them not only access to other young men with whom to explore such activities, but also freed them from parental and societal restraint. In addition, the stress of war provided a convenient excuse for their actions, as they could always attribute their conduct to the immoral environment in which they lived and their fear of death. In both the army and in civilian life the demands of the war caused many individuals to overlook preparation for the next life, and instead focused all their energies on improving their lot in this one.

For many other soldiers, the war had the opposite effect. Men who had never considered religion began to inquire about God and faith. Richard Ewell was only one general among many who became a Christian as a result of the war. Had Ewell not been placed in close proximity to Stonewall Jackson it is uncertain whether he would ever have converted to Christianity. As it was, Ewell recognized both the genuineness and the value of his superior’s faith, and consequently adopted a similar faith for himself. He eventually diminished his notorious use of profanity and adopted a new, more religious outlook on the world.⁷² The difficulties of the war led Ewell to pay more attention to spiritual affairs, not less. Not only generals found that the war offered them spiritual opportunities, but so did lower ranking officers and common soldiers. Especially in 1863 and 1864, when religious revivals swept the armies of the Confederacy, men who previously gave little or no thought to religion stepped forward to receive baptism into a new life. Many commentators, including Edward Phillips, have noted the remarkable

⁷¹Wiley, Life of Johnny Reb, 175.

⁷²Eggleston, Rebel’s Recollections, 136.

nature of these revivals, especially when many previous wars were renowned for encouraging moral laxity.⁷³

Warfare was capable of promoting religion as well as offering opportunities to engage in irreligious activities such as whoring, gambling and immoderate drinking. Given the apparently contradictory nature of the war on religious faith, in that it could strengthen or help create the faith of some soldiers and generals, while at the same time weakening or destroying the faith of others, a few comments are in order. Given the intense and death-filled nature of the war, I argue that the war served as an accelerant on each individual's faith. As time was short during the war, in that each soldier frequently risked death, the war speeded up each individual's relationship with God, and offered each both more temptations and more spiritual consolation than they usually experienced in peacetime, in their hometowns.

J. William Jones confirms the fact that the war played a positive role in purifying the faith of the soldiers. Jones refers to one pastor's testimony "...that of twenty-seven members of his church who returned at the close of the war, all save two came back more earnest Christians and more efficient church members than they had ever been, and many other pastors have borne similar testimony."⁷⁴ John Gill was an example of this kind of soldier. Gill endured the terrifying Seven Days Battles in June and July 1862, and his experience in those encounters convinced him that "...every soldier should try to love God, and try to be the kind of man God would have to be."⁷⁵ Gill adopted his own advice. Although he never claimed to have reached perfection, he became "...a much better soldier after that experience."⁷⁶ He was also a better Christian. Thomas Goree, an aide to James Longstreet, similarly became a better Christian as a result of the war. He

⁷³Edward Hamilton Phillips, "The Lower Shenandoah Valley during the Civil War: The Impact of War upon the Civilian Population and upon Civil Institutions," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1958), 261-262.

⁷⁴J. William Jones, "The Morale of the Confederate Armies," in Clement A. Evans, ed., . Confederate Military History: A Library of Confederate States History (Atlanta, 1899) 12: 167.

⁷⁵John Gill, Reminiscences of Four Years as a Private Soldier in the Confederate Army, 1861-1865 (Baltimore: Sun Printing Co., 1904), 69-70.

⁷⁶Gill, Reminiscences of Four Years, 70.

considered the behaviour of J. E. B. Stuart, who used neither alcohol or tobacco, as a useful example to follow in denying oneself such pleasures.⁷⁷ While the war offered Goree and his fellow soldiers the opportunity to wallow in many sinful activities, it also challenged them to renounce sin and embrace their resolutions to lead lives in keeping with the commandments of their Master.

Southern clergymen adamantly defended the ability of a good soldier also to be a faithful Christian.⁷⁸ Simply because the fundamental purpose of a war, that of achieving political ends by killing enough of the enemy's soldiers to force them to concede to specific demands, was antithetical to the life-affirming message of Christianity did not ensure that the war's effects on religion were wholly negative. Instead, morality and immorality existed simultaneously throughout the armies, in each company, regiment, brigade, division and corps. Indeed, even in individual soldiers there existed elements both of sin and righteousness, each part stimulated and strengthened by the effects of the war.⁷⁹ While the passions of the war might incite a man to hatred in the morning, as he prayed for the painful deaths of his enemies, in the afternoon he might risk his life to offer a drink of water to a wounded enemy soldier.

James McPherson was correct in writing "Wars usually intensify religious convictions. The possibility of sudden death increases the concern for the state of one's soul."⁸⁰ However, the Civil War did not only scare young men with the prospect of death; it also allowed them to see religion as a way to understand and conceive of the world in a new way, a way in which the powerlessness of individuals does not diminish them, but instead can lead to their union with a higher power, with God. The uncertainty and challenges of the Southern war effort called each Southerner to rely not on themselves, not on their armies, not on President Davis, not even on devout and skilled generals like Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee. Instead Southern soldiers and civilians were called

⁷⁷Thomas Jewett Goree, Longstreet's Aide: The Civil War Letters of Thomas J. Goree, Thomas W. Cutrer, ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 53.

⁷⁸Shattuck, Shield and Hiding Place, 46.

⁷⁹Hieronymous, "For Now and Forever," 272.

⁸⁰McPherson, Cause and Comrades, 63.

to rely on God, and on God alone,⁸¹ to cultivate a personal and meaningful relationship with Him, and to trust that the future of the South was in God's Hands. Of course, not all soldiers responded to this invitation, and instead used the opportunities offered by the war to indulge their base appetites and to avenge themselves on their enemies. The Civil War affected Southern religion by piercing the soul of many Confederates and forcing them to face themselves, their desires and their priorities. It encouraged them to turn away from those things that were less important to them, and focus on living their lives the way they themselves, and not their parents, families and society, wanted them to live. Many of these individuals responded to the opportunities the war offered and sought to realize their true personality, their true self. Christians believed that Jesus "...knew all men. And needed not that they should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."⁸² While they believed that the Son of God knew what was in each member of the Southern population, frequently they themselves did not. The Civil War helped most to discover essential and fundamental truths about themselves and about each other.

The virtue of hope reinforced the faith of Southern military leaders. Before the fighting began, Jefferson Davis, in his farewell speech to the United States Senate, announced his fellow Confederates' hope in God. Davis stated that if the United States were to wage war on their former countrymen, "...we will invoke the God of our fathers, who delivered them from the power of the lion, to protect us from the ravages of the bear; and thus, putting our trust in God and in our own firm hearts and strong arms, we will vindicate the right as best we may."⁸³ From Davis's speech it is evident that Confederates

⁸¹The notion of hoping in God alone, discussed in chapter one, expresses itself in that all of a Christian's plans for the future depend on God alone. In the context of the Southern war effort, God may have chosen to use a certain individual as a tool to accomplish His will, but devout Christians recognized that God was the principal Agent, not the individual who carried out His will. By hoping in God alone, Christians looked only to God to save them. They might hope for peace, or for earthly rewards, but all such hopes were supposed to be based in and proceed from their hope in God. Matthew 6: 33 stated that "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [food, clothing] shall be added unto you." Only by putting God first, and retaining only those secondary hopes that proceeded from the bounty of the Heavenly Father, could a Christian be true to Christ.

⁸²John 2: 24b-25.

⁸³Lynda Lasswell Crist and Mary Seaton Dix, eds., The Papers of Jefferson Davis (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 7: 22.

placed their trust not only in God, but also ‘in our own firm hearts and strong arms,’ in other words in their own determination and in their military prowess. Of course such other sources of hope could be subsidiary to the over-riding hope they had in God, or they could be in competition with each other. Marshall Fishwick believes that Robert E. Lee’s trust in God was not compromised by other lesser hopes, and that he “put trust in God above all earthly things.”⁸⁴ When Virginia seceded from the Union, Lee wrote that “...[I] trust that a merciful Providence will not dash us from the height to which his smiles have raised us.”⁸⁵ In early July, 1861, Lee confided to his wife that “Our adversaries are revelling in their strength and think they will have their own way. I trust God will aid us yet.”⁸⁶ It is useful to notice the distinction Lee made between what the enemy put their trust in, their own strength, and Who Lee relied on for assistance, Almighty God.

After Lee had succeeded to the command of the Army of Northern Virginia, and had fought the Seven Days Battles in mid-1862, he frequently received estimates and reports of the strength of McClellan’s army. Lee wrote his wife on July 2 that “I am prepared to find them [the enemy’s positions and entrenchments] as strong as they can make them. I trust a way through them will be opened to us when the time arrives.”⁸⁷ Although Lee realized the North’s armies were strong and that they were larger and in most respects better equipped, he trusted in God to find a way ‘through them’ when the time arrived. Thus Lee found the confidence to launch attacks with what many military observers would have contended was insufficient force. Some military theorists contend that an attacker who wishes to have a good chance of success is wise to ensure a 3-1 force to force ratio, that is three soldiers of their own to every one of the enemy. Lee disdained such notions, and instead launched attacks with at best a 2-3 force to force ratio, that is, two of his soldiers for every three of the enemy. Such attacks often produced high

⁸⁴Fishwick, Lee after the War, 105.

⁸⁵Clifford Dowdey, ed., The Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1961), 12.

⁸⁶Letter of R. E. Lee to wife, July 8, 1861, Lee Family Papers, 1810-1894, Mss1L51g285-317, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

⁸⁷Dowdey, Wartime Papers, 56.

casualties and occasionally disasters, such as Malvern Hill on July 1, 1862, and Pickett's charge at Gettysburg, July 3, 1863. However, they also demonstrate that Lee, while taking into account military considerations, never allowed such earthly realities to limit his belief in the power of God. Despite all evidence to the contrary, Lee believed that God would grant the Confederacy a place among the nations of the earth. Lee's religious beliefs accentuated his natural predisposition to launch tactical offensives, which included assaults upon numerically superior forces. Although his religious beliefs did not create this tendency, his beliefs served as a justification and an excuse, and Lee often trusted that God would 'open a way' through Lee's enemies. Thus religion arguably served to intensify the number of casualties the Army of Northern Virginia suffered, as its commander frequently relied on God to bless his attacks with success, even though the attacks were in violation of conventional military doctrine. Thus Lee was using religious doctrine to override military doctrine in his conduct of the war.

By April 1864, Lee still trusted in God, but in a letter to one of his sons, his phrasing of this trust indicated a possible shift in what Lee believed God would do to fulfil his hopes. Lee wrote "...we have no time to wait, and you had better join your brigade. This week will in all probability bring us active work, and we must strike fast and strong. My whole trust is in God, and I am ready for whatever He may ordain."⁸⁸ Lee had by no means abandoned his efforts to win the war and do his best to destroy the armies which threatened his beloved state of Virginia. However, in this passage he also implicitly informed his son that this desired outcome, that is, the outcome desired by Lee and the people of the Confederacy, might not be the desired outcome of God. Being ready for 'whatever He may ordain' helped Lee to accept God's will, and to bring him closer to his divine Master by willingly accepting suffering and humiliation. Lee's hope in God brought him the assurance that the war was worth continuing, even at the risk of his own sons' lives.

Lee's devout lieutenant, Stonewall Jackson, also placed his trust in his Lord. Initially Jackson's hope in God led him to believe in 1860 that a civil war would be averted. Jackson knew there was "...great reason for alarm," but his "...trust is in God; and

⁸⁸John William Jones, Life and Letters of Robert Edward Lee, Soldier and Man (New York: Neale, 1906), 299.

I cannot think that he will permit the madness of men to interfere so materially with the Christian labors of this country at home and abroad.”⁸⁹ When the Southern states seceded and civil war raged in the country, Jackson’s hope remained in God, despite his earlier misconceptions concerning what God would or would not permit. Jackson’s hope in God focused on winning battles and using whatever troops or resources he possessed to win the war. Instead of settling down into winter quarters and planning for the spring campaign, in November 1861 Jackson was determined to bring both his and General Loring’s troops into action against the Yankees. Jackson wrote to J. P. Benjamin, the Confederate Secretary of War, that “Admitting that the season is too far advanced or that from other causes all cannot be accomplished that has been named, yet through the blessing of God who has thus far so wonderfully prospered our cause much more can be expected from General Loring’s troops according to this programme than can be expected from them where they are.”⁹⁰ Despite the realities of the military situation, namely that the soldiers lacked the necessary training or equipment for a winter campaign, and that his subordinates, especially General Loring, were not convinced of his leadership or this particular scheme, Jackson persisted in his attempt to launch the expedition. This movement, usually referred to as the Romney expedition, accomplished little other than the Secretary of War’s countermanding of Jackson’s orders, and the failure of Jackson’s plans to retake and occupy Virginian territory previously occupied by the Union army. Even though this betrayal by the Secretary of War prompted Jackson’s resignation, Stonewall did not despair. Others argued that Jackson’s unrealistic expectations had wasted resources and even caused several soldiers to freeze to death on sentry duty. Jackson’s hope in God convinced him that, in retrospect, the expedition was a realistic endeavour. In this same spirit of trusting in God, he sent a letter to prepare for his return to teaching at the Virginia Military Institute. Jackson’s commanding officer at the time, J. E. Johnston, refused to accept the resignation, and through an appeal to Jackson from the Governor of Virginia, Stonewall’s services were retained for the Confederate army.

⁸⁹Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 132.

⁹⁰Letter of Thomas Jonathan Jackson to J. P. Benjamin, Thomas Jonathan Jackson Papers, 1842-1898, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Through all this uncertainty about his future Jackson remained hopeful, and did not doubt that God, in His Providence, would lead him on the right course. Later in the spring, this same undimmed hope led Jackson to challenge three Union armies, all with superior numbers, and send them into retreat.

J. E. Johnston also hoped in God. Over a year before his baptism, he wrote to President Davis that he desperately needed reinforcements from Lee's army to supplement the army under his command in the Western theatre. Even in January 1863, Johnston realized the potential danger to the integrity of the West, which would be cut off from the Trans-Mississippi if the key city of Vicksburg was lost. Despite the danger, Johnston contended that "...the hand of Almighty God has delivered us in times of as great danger. Believing that he is with us I will not lose hope."⁹¹ Obviously Johnston greatly desired additional manpower in order to increase the prospects for success, but even without those reinforcements, Johnston was determined to maintain his hope and find some way to achieve victory.

D. H. Hill was also known to his troops as a man who trusted in God. In his General Order No. 7, dated March 23, 1863, Hill implored his men "...to put our trust in that Gracious God, who will never leave, nor forsake those, who confide in him." He continued that "If soldiers, and citizens, looked to Him as the only true source of help, our armies would stand as a rock in the ocean, against which the waves fume, and fret and dash in vain."⁹² Earlier in the war, in April 1862, Hill confided to his wife that "All will be ordered by a wise, gracious and merciful God. I feel confident that it will be well with me. I think that I have a sure hope + that I will not be confounded."⁹³ However, despite Hill's faith in God, his confidence in the people of the Confederacy was not as strong. Hill confessed that "My dear wife, my faith in God is unshaken, but my confidence in our people is weak....We are a wicked people + God is punishing us justly.

⁹¹Crist, ed., The Papers of Jefferson Davis, 9: 4.

⁹²General Orders No. 7 of D. H. Hill, March 23, 1863, D. H. Hill Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

⁹³Letter of D. H. Hill to his wife, April 13, 1862, D. H. Papers, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Trust in Him always even in the darkest hour.”⁹⁴ It is evident that Hill, in his General Order No. 7 to his troops, exhibited his trust in God, but he did not mention that he had little faith in the people of the Confederacy, whom Hill saw as more interested in themselves and their own interests than in serving God or promoting the good of the community. His comment on deserters and shirkers in that document bears witness to his disillusionment with earthly forms of strength and confidence, and to his increasing realization that the only way the Confederacy could prevail was through the power and indulgence of Almighty God.

Other generals, although hoping in God, also placed their confidence in other forms of support. Frank Paxton remarked in April 1863 that “We have a just cause and a splendid army, and I trust that our next engagement may be attended with such signal success that much will be accomplished towards closing the war.”⁹⁵ Paxton believed that God would give them a resounding victory in the Army of Northern Virginia’s next encounter with the Army of the Potomac, but it seems as if he believed that some of the triumph would be due to the valour of his soldiers. Of course, it is difficult to divide the confidence a general set in God and in an army, a commanding general or the Confederacy as a whole. After all, if the Army of Northern Virginia was a ‘splendid army,’ was that not due to the blessing of God? Only each individual general and God would know whether his hopes were divided between heavenly and earthly forms of assistance, or whether a person’s sole source of hope was in their Lord and Saviour. With the Bible’s assurances that God was willing and able to work such wonders on behalf of his people, Confederate generals such as Robert E. Lee, J. E. Johnston, D. H. Hill and Frank Paxton were quite rightly confident in His ability to save them. Many Confederates believed that miracles, although not as frequent in the nineteenth century as in the time of the apostles, were still possible.

The generals’ hope in God did not exclude the possibility of suffering and even death before the arrival of God’s deliverance. Instead of diminishing their hope, such

⁹⁴Letter of D. H. Hill to his wife, April 29, 1862, D. H. Papers, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina.

⁹⁵John Gallatin Paxton, ed., The Civil War Letters of General Frank “Bull” Paxton, CSA.: A Lieutenant of Lee & Jackson (Hillsboro, Texas: Hill Jr. College Press, 1978), 80.

adversity often served to purify and nourish their trust in God, as they became more and more certain that He was their only hope of salvation not only in the afterlife, but in the bloody battles that lay in the near future. William Nelson Pendleton believed that it was essential for his soldiers and their families to put their trust in God. Pendleton, when writing to a friend whose son had died at Gettysburg, urged unrestrained trust in God, and in His “perfect goodness, faithfulness, + trust.”⁹⁶ Simply because God had allowed Pendleton’s correspondent’s son to die in one of the furious charges on July 3, 1863, did not mean that all hope was lost. Instead, the minister-general informed his friend that his son, if a believer, would have “...received admission into a home...”⁹⁷ not made with human hands, but one designed to fulfill the deepest longings of the human heart, and where tears and sadness would not intrude. Even though Pendleton’s earlier hope, expressed to his son on April 16, 1861, that “...God may frustrate Lincoln’s schemes...”⁹⁸ had already proved overly optimistic, Pendleton did not abandon his trust in his Redeemer. By February 1862 Pendleton realized that Lincoln’s schemes would not be frustrated so easily or quickly, and he asserted to his son that “Unworthy as I am the Lord is my God. His covenant + mercy I have reason to feel assured is my portion. So it is with my household. And therefore, though he may chasten, he will never leave or forsake us. Precious certainly this! Unfailing support!”⁹⁹ As months passed and victory did not arrive, Pendleton retained his trust in God, but admitted in November 1863 that “There seems to be much suffering in store for us.”¹⁰⁰ Even though he fully trusted in God, the recognition that he and his fellow Confederates were still to endure many hardships, did

⁹⁶Letter of William Nelson Pendleton to a friend, July 9, 1863, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

⁹⁷Letter of William Nelson Pendleton to a friend, July 9, 1863, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

⁹⁸Susan P. Lee, Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, D.D. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1893), 136.

⁹⁹Letter of W. N. Pendleton to his son, February 19, 1862, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

¹⁰⁰Letter of W. N. Pendleton to his wife, November 13, 1863, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

not shake Pendleton's hopes. Instead this understanding merely confirmed his notions about redemption through suffering. After all, if God did not spare His only Son, but subjected Him to humiliation, torture, and a miserable death, surely His disciples could expect little better treatment. Pendleton knew and preached about this very issue, and God had now called him to experience it personally.

The examples provided by the aforementioned generals as well as numerous others including Dorsey Pender, J. E. B. Stuart, and Leonidas Polk communicated to the ordinary Confederate soldier the need to trust not in the military might of the Confederacy's armies, but in the strong Arm of the Lord of Hosts.¹⁰¹ The last letter written by Polk was filled with hope for the future, for his daughter's impending marriage, and for the prospects of the Confederacy. Polk died with his hope undimmed in June 1864. As Polk stated simply "Our trust is in God."¹⁰² Both officers and ordinary soldiers witnessed their leaders' pronounced hope in God, and in their letters home frequently reiterated the same themes and the same refusal to allow setbacks to overwhelm their hope in God. Lieutenant Colonel William Thomas Poague informed his mother in February 1865 that he drew strength from his belief "...that he [God] will do that which is the very best for us and that to those that love him all things shall turn out for good."¹⁰³ Likewise, at the beginning of the war, William Butt implored his wife to "Trust in Him and He will lift you above the things of this transitory life."¹⁰⁴ A. H. Mitchell, in a letter to his father in May 1861, revealed one reason why both generals and privates believed God would not disappoint them. Mitchell wrote that "God will prosper us and finally give us a triumphant victory over those followers of Mormon, Miller, &c.,

¹⁰¹William W. Hassler, ed., The General to his Lady: The Civil War Letters of William Dorsey Pender to Fanny Pender (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), 47; Letter of J. E. B. Stuart to his wife, February 19, 1862, James Ewell Brown Stuart Papers, 1851-1868, Mss1ST923d, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁰²Polk, Leonidas Polk, II: 368.

¹⁰³William Thomas Poague, Gunner with Stonewall: Reminiscences of William Thomas Poague, Lieutenant, Captain, Major and Lieutenant Colonel of Artillery, Army of Northern Virginia, CSA, 1861-1865. A Memoir written for his children in 1903, Ed. Monroe F. Cocknell (Jackson, Tennessee: McCowat-Mercer Press, 1957), 150-151.

¹⁰⁴Lane, ed., "Dear Mother," 17.

and spiritualism and free love....”¹⁰⁵ Many Confederates believed like Mitchell that because the South held to the truths of the Bible and disdained new prophecies, such as those contained in the Book of Mormon, and because it rejected unrestrained sexual intercourse and the consultation of necromancers, that God would hear their prayers and reject the impious blasphemies of the North. To Mitchell, it did not matter that the majority of Northerners also rejected all of the above-mentioned heresies. The very fact that such apostates from the true faith were allowed to practice their falsehoods proved that the North had rejected God. Not all generals and soldiers subscribed to such notions, but it was a convincing and convenient solution to the apparent dilemma of both parties in a war interceding for help from the same God. Because He could only answer the prayers of one side affirmatively, it was reasonable to assume that He would choose to aid the people who obeyed His commandments and offered Him true devotion. Mitchell and many other Southerners firmly believed that since their hope was in God, they were the people whose God was the Lord. Generals and soldiers believed that God’s assistance was conditional upon their good behaviour and faithfulness to the covenant between humankind and God. Because Southerners’ religious practices were more traditional than those of the North, Southerners believed that they had a greater claim on God’s Power. Whereas Northerners generally believed that slavery had compromised Southerners’ claim on God’s help, Southerners believed that slavery did not compromise this relationship. Southerners did admit that it added complications to their relationship with God, and these complications will be discussed in chapter 2.

The hope Southern generals expressed in God also included the hope for peace. Despite the potential allure of war, and the fame and advancement made possible to high-ranking officers only in wartime, numerous Confederate generals refused to fight for fame and glory and instead earnestly prayed that the war would end quickly, even though they stood to gain recognition and accolades from a culture that valued martial prowess. Stonewall Jackson, on the day when he was to leave his home in Lexington, Virginia, prayed with his wife “...that ‘if consistent with His Will, God would still avert the

¹⁰⁵Lane, ed., “Dear Mother,” 11.

threatening danger and grant us peace.”¹⁰⁶ As previously cited, in 1860, Jackson believed that God would avert the war and not allow it to hinder the spread of the Gospel. When he was about to depart to lead men into battle against the Northern invaders, Jackson still retained this hope, even though it was clearly vain.

Once the war began in earnest in July 1861 during the First Battle of Manassas, the prospects for peace receded further and further from realization, yet Jackson still trusted in God and believed that peace was possible. Of course, the peace Jackson had in mind was predicated on the recognition of the Confederacy as an independent political entity, a concession that President Abraham Lincoln would never, under any circumstances, accept. In November 1861, Jackson believed that peace could be achieved swiftly if the Confederacy vigorously pursued the war.¹⁰⁷ While more Yankees would be killed in the short run (as well as more Confederates), a swifter conclusion to the war meant fewer men would die because the war would not continue for years on end. This attitude explains Jackson’s advocacy of the black flag policy, as well as Jackson’s Romney expedition. Because peace was so precious and such a blessing from God, Jackson wanted to prove himself and the Confederacy worthy of it by quickly routing the Northern war effort and demonstrating the sheer futility of attempting to subjugate the South.

After a year elapsed, Jackson’s desire for peace remained as strong as ever; however, his understanding of the requirements for such a peace had changed. At Christmas 1862, Jackson wrote to his wife, “I do earnestly pray for peace. Oh that our country was such a Christian, God-fearing people as it should be! Then might we very speedily look for peace.”¹⁰⁸ Perhaps because the war had been prosecuted with vigour in 1862, or because Jackson had realized the extent of the Confederacy’s transgressions, by the end of 1862 he realized that a wholesale religious conversion of the Southern people was necessary to achieve a true and lasting peace. Jackson still believed that peace was

¹⁰⁶Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 145.

¹⁰⁷Copy, made by Jackson, of a letter from Jackson to his wife, November 4 [?], 1861, Dabney-Jackson Papers Series Two, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁰⁸Sarah Nicholas Randolph, The Life of Gen. Thomas J. Jackson (Stonewall Jackson) (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1876), 282; Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 373.

not something to be conceded by Abraham Lincoln or established by force through the successful direction of the war by Jefferson Davis; instead, peace was a gift from God, and it was to Him that Jackson knelt down in prayer to beg for this precious blessing.

On that same Christmas Day as Jackson expressed the wish for peace to his wife, Robert E. Lee also communicated the same hope to Mrs. Lee. Lee's earnest desire for peace directly challenged his frequently quoted remark made earlier that month at Fredericksburg, "It is well that war is so terrible-we should grow too fond of it!"¹⁰⁹ He wrote "I pray that on this day, when only peace and good-will are preached to mankind, better thoughts may fill the hearts of our enemies and turn them to peace."¹¹⁰ Like Jackson, Lee believed that peace was a gift to be given to those who put their trust in God, and therefore he prayed to receive that elusive gift, and witness the restoration of peace in his ravaged Virginia. Lee thought that this peace could only be achieved when 'better thoughts' filled 'the hearts of our enemies,' thus suggesting that better thoughts already filled the hearts of Confederates, or else he would have mentioned the hearts of his countrymen in his prayer. While Lee was well aware of the sinfulness of the Confederacy, he believed that it was the North which was waging an unjust war against his native state, and that only when the North abandoned this aggression would peace be restored. Not until his army faced annihilation at Appomattox in April 1865 did Lee consider that peace could also be achieved by the Confederate Army's surrender.

Frank Paxton's desire for peace echoed that of Jackson and Lee. He too, like Jackson, believed that the Confederacy needed to be composed of committed Christians, and, if this condition were satisfied, that they would receive peace when they deserved it.¹¹¹ On February 20, 1863, Paxton's desire for peace surfaced from his disgust over executions for cowardice and desertion. He asserted "I trust that God in his mercy may soon grant us a safe deliverance from this bloody business."¹¹² Paxton's trust in God led him to the belief that peace would be granted by God when the Confederacy's people

¹⁰⁹Freeman, R. E. Lee, II: 462. For a discussion of the meaning of this remark, see pages 257-258.

¹¹⁰Jones, Life and Letters of Robert Edward Lee, 213; Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers, 379-380.

¹¹¹Paxton, ed., Civil War Letters of Frank Paxton, 59-60.

¹¹²Paxton, ed., Civil War Letters of Frank Paxton, 74.

deserved peace. Although Paxton ardently longed for an end to hostilities, he knew that his trust in God required him to perform his duty as long as necessary. Since that duty involved killing Union soldiers, Paxton's actions, as well as those of every other Confederate general, seemed to prevent peace from being realized. If an individual desired peace, a logical course of action would be the surrender of one's weapons and a refusal to engage in warfare. Such thoughts would have seemed nonsensical to Confederate generals, not only because they would thereby be branded as cowards and traitors, but also because through such a violation of their duty they would be sinning against God, thus incurring His displeasure, and rendering the Confederacy even less deserving of peace. Southern generals believed that the best hope for peace was to kill as many Yankees as possible, not only to force Lincoln to abandon his plans to subjugate the South, but also to please God by performing what they regarded as their sacred duty. Most Confederate generals believed that peace would come as a gift from God, as a response to their earnest efforts to throw back the Yankee invaders. As a consequence of this attention to the ability of God to grant them peace, they paid little consideration to the diplomatic and political ramifications of their military actions. Arguably, if they had not believed that peace would come from God, but instead only grudgingly from the United States government, then they would have conducted their war effort differently. For instance, Lee's invasions of Maryland and Pennsylvania served to increase Northern anger and hatred of Southerners, and made Northerners more determined to destroy the Confederacy. Although the generals had to obey the orders of Jefferson Davis, their president, they could have chosen actions most likely to convince Northerners that Confederates were being persecuted unjustly, and that they deserved their freedom. Their trust that God, not the U.S. Congress, would give them peace, caused them to disdain actions that might have increased the Northern desire to let Southerners depart in peace.

Confederate generals, although often hoping for peace and striving to trust only in Almighty God, also at times hoped for secular achievements. Stonewall Jackson attempted to justify the Romney expedition to the Secretary of War by mentioning that his soldiers would be prepared to undertake the expedition because of the potential for the

advancement of their cause, and the opportunity for ‘distinction.’¹¹³ It was more likely that the soldiers preferred warm shelters and ample food for the coming winter, not the chance to distinguish themselves chasing after the Yankees through the snow, ice and freezing temperatures. The expedition was indeed designed to achieve distinction, not for the soldiers, but for their commander, Stonewall Jackson. Numerous authors who otherwise praise Jackson comment on his hunger for advancement in fame and military rank. Robert Tanner describes Jackson’s ambition as “a crack in his Christian armor....”¹¹⁴ Charles Royster insisted that Jackson never succeeded in eliminating “...his ambition; despite his continual striving for humility, a hunger for advancement pervaded his conduct.”¹¹⁵ Hunter McGuire and others who knew Jackson personally substantiate Tanner’s and Royster’s assessment.¹¹⁶ Several other writers have disagreed with this analysis of Jackson’s character. One author in particular argues that “At his [Jackson’s] death he had reached the peak of his character development, a character that left no room for guilty desires, personal ambition, avarice, notoriety, weakness or moral cowardice....”¹¹⁷ Certainly, Jackson’s character did not suffer from cowardice, moral or otherwise, but it is less clear whether he ever managed to purge a soldier’s instinctive hunger for rank and advancement from his psyche. He was modest in front of his men, charging away on his horse whenever his soldiers spotted him and cheered him. However, he also seemed to enjoy praise from others, notably in the wake of his celebrated performance at First Manassas, in which he received the name ‘Stonewall.’ He wrote his wife after this battle that “‘...God made my brigade more instrumental than any other in repulsing the main attack....This is for your information only. Say nothing about

¹¹³Letter of T. J. Jackson to J. P. Benjamin, November 20, 1861, Thomas Jonathan Jackson Papers, 1846-1932, Mss1J1385a, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

¹¹⁴Robert G. Tanner, Stonewall in the Valley: Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson’s Shenandoah Valley Campaign Spring 1862 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1976), 35.

¹¹⁵Charles Royster, The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 56.

¹¹⁶Hunter Holmes McGuire and George L. Christian, The Confederate Cause and Conduct in the War between the States (Richmond: L. H. Jenkins, 1907), 207.

¹¹⁷Offill, “Stonewall Jackson: A Case Study,” 90.

it. Let others speak praise, not myself.’”¹¹⁸ Although earlier in the letter, Jackson ascribed the victory to God, he seemed to believe that his conduct was indeed worthy of praise, as he wrote ‘Let others speak praise.’ If Jackson did not deserve any praise, then logically he should have said, ‘Let no one speak praise, neither myself nor any one else.’ To what extent Jackson hoped for recognition and glory remains a mystery, but his desire for praise demonstrates that he was not perfect. Jackson, as well as numerous other Confederate generals, tried to put their whole trust in God, but that does not mean that they were able to eliminate aspirations for promotion and public recognition.

J. E. B. Stuart, even more markedly than Jackson, felt tempted by the prospect of promotion and public adulation. He too trusted in God, but the public response to his exploits, such as the renowned ‘Ride around McClellan’ in June 1862, lured him into hoping for even more popular recognition. Prior to this ‘ride’ Stuart wrote his wife that “I do not expect promotion [to the rank of Major General] till all hands are so clamorous for it that it cant well be withheld [?], my reasons for that conviction are that I am so young and men are too envious not to combine to pull one down.”¹¹⁹ By September 1863 Stuart longed for a promotion to Lieutenant General, and avidly hearkened to any suggestion that his name might come before the Confederate Senate for approval to that rank. Stuart wrote his wife that “Rumor is quite rife that I have been actually appointed Lt Gen’l, I think it must be so.”¹²⁰ Stuart never received such a promotion, as Robert E. Lee, the commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, did not believe that the army’s chief of cavalry required such a high rank to fulfill his duties. Stuart’s hopes for earthly recognition at times overshadowed, but did not supplant, his hope in God.

Other generals also seemed to have hopes for earthly advancement or believed such hopes in others should be encouraged. J. E. Johnston wanted President Davis to acknowledge his seniority over all other Confederate officers, and when Davis refused to do so, Johnston composed a pointed and insulting letter, but then chose not to send it for

¹¹⁸Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 270.

¹¹⁹Letter of J. E. B. Stuart to his wife, January 24, 1862, James Ewell Brown Stuart Papers, 1851-1868, Mss1ST923d, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

¹²⁰Letter of J. E. B. Stuart to his wife, September 4, 1863, James Ewell Brown Stuart Papers, 1862-1864, Mss2ST922c, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

two days. After that time, Johnston's desire for what he believed to be his legitimate rank remained so strong that he sent the letter unaltered. Johnston's latest biographer, Craig Symonds, believes that sending the letter "...was the single worst decision of his professional career."¹²¹ The most pathetic aspect of Johnston's hunger for rank was how little it mattered in the composition of the Confederate army. In mid-1861 there were a total of five full generals. Davis accorded Samuel Cooper the earliest commission date,¹²² followed by A. S. Johnston, Robert E. Lee, J. E. Johnston and then Beauregard. Cooper's rank specified that he was only to hold that rank as a staff officer, not as a line officer, and could never command troops in the field. Since J. E. Johnston wanted to command an army instead of sitting in a Richmond office, Cooper's seniority was irrelevant. Thus only two individuals, one of whom, A. S. Johnston, was soon to be killed at Shiloh in April 1862, surpassed J. E. Johnston in rank. There were many theatres of war, and so the likelihood that this difference in standing would have had any effect on Johnston's career was minimal. In the event, J. E. Johnston received what was arguably the most prestigious and important command: Northern Virginia. He held that post until wounded in action on May 31, 1862. Thus Johnston's yearning for a purely titular acknowledgement indicates that perhaps Johnston's hope, at least in the early stages of the war, was not fully in God, but also in the trappings of military power and prestige. The fact that Johnston was wrong to believe that, according to Confederate law, he should receive an earlier commission than his peers, as Steven Newton demonstrates, was immaterial.¹²³ Davis, as commander in chief of the Confederate armed forces, was Johnston's superior officer, and as such deserved Johnston's respect and obedience.

¹²¹Symonds, Joseph E. Johnston, 128.

¹²²A general's rank is composed not only of its title, such as general, lieutenant general, major general or brigadier general, but also of the date the officer was accorded that rank. If two armies joined together, both commanded by two generals of the same rank, then the general with the earliest date of commission would be considered as being the senior, and thus, the commander of the army as a whole. Commissions for general officers needed to be approved by the Confederate Senate, and as this could be a lengthy process, commissions were often backdated by months.

¹²³Steven Harvey Newton, Joseph E. Johnston and the Defense of Richmond (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 6.

Johnston only desired to obtain the position promised to him by the Confederate government. When Davis refused to give him that rank, Johnston felt betrayed.

Despite being occasionally tempted to focus their hopes on earthly matters, Confederate generals demonstrated a remarkable ability to hope for the best for their country, even to the point of ignoring conspicuous signs of approaching military disasters. Religious generals believed that God would save the Confederacy in His own time, and all they needed to do was work hard, pray often, and wait for their liberation to arrive. In May 1863, although the war had raged for two long and bloody years, Lee retained great confidence in his men and his God. He wrote that “There never were such men in any army before + there never can be better in any army again. If properly led they will go anywhere, never failing at the work before them. Since it has pleased Almighty God to take from us the good + great Jackson may he infuse our commander’s with his unselfish devoted,...spirit + diffuse his indomitable energy through our souls. Then indeed we shall be invincible + our country safe.”¹²⁴ Lee wrote this letter shortly after winning his greatest victory at Chancellorsville. Soon after, Lee’s optimistic outlook led the Army of Northern Virginia across the Potomac, through Maryland, and into Pennsylvania. On July 1-3, 1863, near a small settlement called Gettysburg, the Army of the Potomac commanded by George Gordon Meade repulsed Lee’s army. Although most of Lee’s army escaped, it suffered a significant loss of morale when it recrossed the Potomac, and many soldiers in the army began to leave, believing they had done their part, but that all their efforts had been in vain. Freeman emphasizes the toll the battle took on senior officers, and comments that eleven of these men who had been killed, captured or seriously wounded “...would have been an excessive price to pay for a victory.”¹²⁵ Yet as Freeman and many other authors make clear, Gettysburg was not a Confederate victory. Instead it was a political, military, diplomatic and logistical defeat. While not recognized by all at the time, the Confederacy’s ‘high noon’ had passed in July 1863. More and more Confederate soldiers were killed, died of disease, were seriously

¹²⁴Letter of Robert E. Lee of May 21, 1863, Robert E. Lee 1861-1865 Letters, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

¹²⁵Douglas Southall Freeman, Lee’s Lieutenants: A Study in Command (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1946), III:191.

wounded, captured or discouraged, and the gallant senior leadership of the armies continued to suffer heavy casualties. Lee's religious beliefs strengthened his ingrained propensity for the strategic as well as the tactical offensive. Although religion did not create this propensity in Lee, it helped to blind him to the potential consequences of his actions. Lee trusted that God would bless his feats with victory in the North, just as He had at Chancellorsville. Thus religion created an overconfidence in Lee that led to one of the most unnecessary and greatest defeats of the war: Gettysburg.

Not only did the Confederacy suffer a defeat in the Eastern theatre in July 1863, but in the Western theatre Union forces achieved an equally crippling blow on the Mississippi river. Ulysses S. Grant, the commander of the Union army responsible for this victory, believed that "The fate of the Confederacy was sealed when Vicksburg fell. Much hard fighting was to be done afterwards and many precious lives were to be sacrificed; but the morale was with the supporters of the Union ever after."¹²⁶ The fall of Vicksburg cut the rest of the Confederacy off from Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana, as Union gunboats more or less controlled the rest of the Mississippi river. Once cut off from reinforcement these three states were in danger of being completely overwhelmed by an onslaught of enemy forces. Edmund Kirby-Smith, commander of the Trans-Mississippi region, wrote to Davis in September 1863 that he desperately needed help: "Unless a great change takes place, unless succor comes to us from abroad, or unless the Providence of God is strikingly exhibited in our favor this Dept. will soon have but a nominal existence...."¹²⁷ Despite Kirby-Smith's realization of the immense challenges of continuing resistance, he persevered, and ironically, even though his department seemed to be the most isolated and indefensible region of the Confederacy, it was the last major department to admit defeat in 1865. Its commander fought long and hard to keep his troops inspired and willing to sacrifice their lives for a cause that suffered repeated heart-breaking defeats.

¹²⁶Ulysses S. Grant, Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant (New York: Charles L. Webster & Company, 1885), I: 567-568.

¹²⁷Crist, ed., Papers of Jefferson Davis, 9: 412.

Further evidence that some Confederate generals' hearts remained hopeful while their minds absorbed the frequent pessimistic reports comes from Helen Longstreet's book, Lee and Longstreet at High Tide. James Longstreet's second wife wrote that her husband's "...mental belief for two years before the surrender was that from the very nature of the situation the Union forces would in all probability triumph, but his brave heart never knew how to give up the fight, and the surrender was at last agreed upon while he was still protesting against it."¹²⁸ Longstreet's commander, who referred to Longstreet as 'my old war horse,' also realized that the odds the Confederates faced were daunting. In October 1864, General Josiah Gorgas believed that Lee was "...subject to fits of despondence..." because a member of Lee's staff reported his general as saying "'If we can't get the men, all that is left for us is to make peace on the best terms we can.'"¹²⁹ A similar statement allegedly made by Lee in June 1861 further disturbed Gorgas. What Gorgas did not realize was that Lee simply stated the obvious conclusion any rational commander would come to when faced with an absence of available manpower: make peace on the best terms possible while your side still retains some bargaining power. Otherwise, when all your soldiers are eliminated because they refuse to surrender, the enemy will have little incentive to accord the defeated any terms at all except unconditional surrender. Lee had no intention in October 1864, June 1861, or even March 1865, of surrendering his army and his hope that the Confederacy would achieve independence. Instead, he made a statement that every politician in Richmond would have been wise to consider and adopt as their own: *if* the men cannot be found, then terms of surrender must be requested. It was obvious with the issue so vividly clear that only one course of action remained: get the men, no matter who they were or how you got them. Lee knew that if the men were found, the Confederacy had a chance; if not, the Confederacy was indeed doomed. This hopeful and honest attitude explains why Lee, a few months later, pressed Davis to get African American men into Confederate grey to resist the Yankee onslaught immediately. Lee also tried many different strategies to

¹²⁸Helen D. Longstreet, Lee and Longstreet at High Tide: Gettysburg in the Light of the Official Records (Gainesville, Georgia: Published by author, 1904; reprint, New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), 208.

¹²⁹Gorgas, The Civil War Diary of Josiah Gorgas, 146.

retain, recover or recruit any white man who could fire a rifle. It is clear that far from falling prey to ‘fits of despondency,’ Lee’s determined hope for the Confederacy was guided by a realistic assessment of the Confederate war effort’s need for additional manpower.

Other Confederate generals’ hope for victory also burned brightly, although perhaps tempered with less appreciation of the realities of the situation. J. E. B. Stuart fervently believed that the Confederate armies would still be triumphantly marching around “Long after the inhabitants (non-combatants) crouch to the conqueror...”¹³⁰ Who was to feed or supply these armies, if all the civilians were ‘crouching to the conqueror,’ Stuart did not specify. When Patrick Cleburne realized the Confederacy’s fortunes were failing, he increased his commitment to duty. He was so obsessed with victory, that his biographer believes that even had he known in September 1864 of his approaching death on November 30, 1864, and the events that led up to it, Cleburne “...would have behaved no differently.”¹³¹ Such dedication to the cause, which at times amounted to blind optimism, paid tribute to the generals’ faith in Providence¹³² and their own armies’ prowess in battle.

William Nelson Pendleton’s trust in God remained strong, and this hope nourished his conviction that the Confederacy would be freed from Union incursions even in 1865. In January he insisted that he was no “...less confident than heretofore of the result. We shall suffer much, and have before in a long time of trial.”¹³³ In March his hope remained strong. To his wife he wrote that “If God is I believe [sic] for us, and if so

¹³⁰Letter of J. E. B. Stuart to his wife, February 8, 1864, James Ewell Brown Stuart Papers, 1862-1864, Mss2ST922c, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

¹³¹Craig L. Symonds, Stonewall of the West: Patrick Cleburne and the Civil War (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997), 242.

¹³²This connection of hope to the overruling Providence of God will be discussed at greater length in chapter three.

¹³³Letter of W. N. Pendleton to his daughter, January 11, 1865, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

no matter who or what is against us. In the end we shall be delivered.”¹³⁴ Pendleton’s strong faith in God preserved his hopefulness in the midst of the worst calamities. In this regard Pendleton was not alone. Steven Woodworth argues that near the end of the war Southerners believed it was still possible to “...win God’s favor and His intervention on their behalf.”¹³⁵ Some ordinary soldiers also maintained their desire to serve God and their country, waiting patiently for the dawn.¹³⁶ The increased fervour of missionaries and chaplains during this war was partially responsible for maintaining the hope of the generals and the population as a whole.¹³⁷

Even after all seemed lost, some Southerners still maintained their hopes. One soldier wrote to his wife in January 1865 that “If during the next six months you hear of Charleston & Richmond falling, don’t be unnecessarily alarmed. If we gather wisdom from this, we yet have a chance. If not, our cause is lost.”¹³⁸ This soldier, having already learned of the fall of Atlanta, could bear to see Charleston, and even Richmond, fall, and still believe that if wisdom was acquired, then independence could still be achieved. This phenomenal hope received support from his faith in God and the hopefulness of the generals, one of whom, Robert E. Lee, the soldier described as a “tower of strength...”¹³⁹ Even after this ‘tower of strength’ had fallen, by surrendering to Grant at Appomattox, some Southerners were willing to carry on. One woman, finally convinced by April 23, 1865, of Lee’s surrender, felt sorrow at the news, but refused to believe her cause was lost. She was adamant that “I believe as firmly we will be free as I do there is a God in

¹³⁴Letter of W. N. Pendleton to his wife, March 2, 1865, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

¹³⁵Woodworth, While God is Marching On, 283.

¹³⁶A. D. Kirwan, ed., Johnny Green of the Orphan Brigade: The Journal of a Confederate Soldier (Lawrence: The University of Kentucky Press, 1956), 184

¹³⁷William Wallace Bennett, A Narrative of the Great Revival Which Prevailed in the Southern Armies (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen and Haffelfinger, 1877), 413.

¹³⁸William Lewis Nugent, My Dear Nellie: The Civil War Letters of William L. Nugent to Eleanor Smith Nugent (William M. Cash and Lucy Somerville Howorth, eds. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1963), 231.

¹³⁹Nugent, My Dear Nellie, 189.

Heaven.”¹⁴⁰ Both generals and soldiers in every army of the Confederacy retained hope for their dying country, even long after, in Grant’s words, “...its fate had been sealed.”¹⁴¹ Although tempered by an awareness of the increasing difficulties of achieving independence, this hope flourished in their hearts, nourished by their hope in God and faith in His Providence. Religious belief helped obscure some of the harsh realities of the Civil War for both generals and soldiers. Trusting in God helped many Southerners to ignore the clear signs that their cause was waning. This religiously induced obscurity enabled many to continue to fight on despite the mounting evidence that the Confederacy was doomed. However, while lengthening the duration of many generals’ and soldiers’ resistance, it also prevented them from appreciating the gravity of their situation, and to take the appropriate action to remedy the situation. Arguably Lee should have learned more about the importance of the western theatre, and realized what the loss of Vicksburg would mean for the Confederacy. In the spring of 1863, after the victory of Chancellorsville, there was time to transfer troops to the west, and break the siege of Vicksburg before Grant conquered it. However, Lee’s ignorance, combined with his religious overconfidence, led to the debacle at Gettysburg. Only Meade’s inexperience allowed Lee to escape from Pennsylvania without having Lee’s army totally destroyed.

While some generals and soldiers maintained their hopes for independence until the very end of the Confederacy’s existence, others suffered from a lack of hope or even despair. Although almost all Confederates believed God was on their side in the war, and felt reassured because pious men such as Lee and Jackson led their armies, hopefulness was not universal among any segment of the army. As early as December 1861, Frank Paxton expressed to his wife that he occasionally looked “...to the future with much despondency.”¹⁴² On this particular occasion the cause of Paxton’s discouragement was the fact that his soldiers had only been committed to the service for one year when they volunteered. At the beginning of the war, the Confederates believed this short period sufficient to defeat the Yankees and insure their independence. However, only a few

¹⁴⁰Sutherland, ed., Very Violent Rebel, 161.

¹⁴¹Grant, Personal Memoirs, I: 567-568.

¹⁴²Paxton, ed., Letters of Frank Paxton, 30.

months later, Paxton and many others arrived at the grim realization that Lincoln and his Union armies would not relent in their determination to subdue the rebels. While Paxton's hope for the future subsequently revived, it is appropriate to note how early hope flagged in some minds.

Other Confederates' hopes remained strong until mid-May 1863, when the news of Stonewall Jackson's death swept the South. Mourning was virtually universal. Some, like Lee, believed that God would raise up another like him to take his place. Others, like Berry Benson, a Confederate scout, focused on the fact that the bravest soldier of the South was dead.¹⁴³ Private Robert Couper acknowledged that the army as a whole was filled with anguish over the loss of Jackson, but that he had not witnessed any despondency.¹⁴⁴

Longstreet's hopes remained strong until early July, when his army's failure at Gettysburg combined with news of the loss of Vicksburg. These events discouraged him, and he believed they also demoralized the senior officers in the Army of Northern Virginia. He did not think it had the same effect on the ordinary soldiers. Longstreet wrote after the war that "For myself, I felt that our last hope was gone, and that it was now only a question of time with us."¹⁴⁵ However, his hope revived when he considered the possibility of sending reinforcements to Bragg's army, advancing against Rosecrans' army and destroying it. Longstreet's plan was to then move through Kentucky and ultimately win the war.

The escalating rate of desertions, once the army returned to Virginia, challenged Longstreet's belief that Confederate defeats in early July had not affected the morale of the rank and file. In early August, Sidney Richardson explained to his parents that he thought the war was going badly, and that foreign intervention was essential. He continued that "...I am willing to fight them as long as General Lee says fight. But I think

¹⁴³Susan Williams Benson, ed., Berry Benson's Civil War: Memoirs of a Confederate Scout and Sharpshooter (1962; reprint, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 40.

¹⁴⁴Lane, ed., "Dear Mother," 241.

¹⁴⁵James Longstreet, "Lee's Right Wing at Gettysburg," in Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders of the Civil War (New York: Century Co., 1887-88), III: 350.

that we are ruined now without going any further with it.”¹⁴⁶ Many of Richardson’s comrades, having come to the same conclusion he had, reacted differently to the notion of impending doom, and instead left the army either temporarily until their morale was restored, or permanently, in an attempt to return home to save their families if they could not save their country. The importance of Lee’s opinions can be seen from Richardson’s statement that he was willing to fight as long Lee commanded him to, even though he, as an ordinary soldier, did not personally believe they could win. It should be noted that this source is a letter written during the war, not a memoir written decades later. Thus Lee’s religiously induced optimism affected not only his performance in the war, but also thousands of others in the Confederate Army, including General James Longstreet.

Some generals, although knowing that they were fighting on behalf of a lost cause, continued to resist nonetheless. By the fall of 1863, Nathan Bedford Forrest’s hope for victory had expired, as he testified that “Eighteen months before the war closed I was satisfied that we were going to be defeated....”¹⁴⁷ As Forrest only embraced Christianity ten years after the war ended, he did not often rely on God to sustain him during the war years.¹⁴⁸ However, even the generals who were practising Christians also found their hope tested and even wanting during the Confederacy’s final days. Josiah Gorgas, having already suffered from a short bout of depression by the end of January, 1865, fixed his hope for victory on the survival of Lee’s army. He believed that “As long as it holds true we need not fear.”¹⁴⁹ The possibility of Lee’s army no longer holding ‘true’ was simply too horrifying for Gorgas to consider.

During the summer of 1864 Robert E. Lee himself considered this possibility. Freeman explains that “His [Lee’s] views, of course, were expressed only in confidential

¹⁴⁶Lane, ed., “Dear Mother,” 258-259.

¹⁴⁷Robert Selph Henry, “First with the Most” Forrest (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Publishers, 1944), 14.

¹⁴⁸Henry, “First with the Most” Forrest, 459.

¹⁴⁹Gorgas, Civil War Diary of Josiah Gorgas, 166. One author has contended that during this period that Lee was no longer able to arouse hope from the people of the Confederacy. See C. Irvine Walker, The Life of Lieutenant General Richard Heron Anderson of the Confederate States Army (Charleston, South Carolina: Art Publishing Company, 1917), 196.

letters to the administration, and were carefully concealed even from his staff and his corps commanders, but they give more than a hint that he believed the Southern cause was becoming hopeless.”¹⁵⁰ Even Lee, who trusted in God and placed his hopes for the future in God’s hands, could rationally understand that his country’s prospects, while not hopeless, were dwindling rapidly. By early 1865, Lee insisted that President Davis get the African American slaves organized and trained immediately. The challenge Lee faced at this juncture was that even if African American soldiers were recruited, it was questionable whether their numbers would suffice to replace the white soldiers whose desertion rates were rising. Charles M. Cummings, in his biography of Bushrod Rust Johnson, writes that during this time period “Faith and hope were fading rapidly.”¹⁵¹ This was especially true in the case of deserters who no longer needed to sneak off individually. Instead, groups as large as sixty men were trying to desert together.¹⁵² As the end drew near, even the most optimistic individuals confronted severe and pressing challenges to their aspirations for the Confederacy. While hope remained strong among Confederate generals, it was not invincible, and even the most fervent believers faced periods of near despair or even depression.¹⁵³

While many generals’ hope in God undergirded their hopes for their country and helped them to be emotional pillars of support to their troops, it is clear that this correlation was not completely fixed. When they believed that God would deliver their country, their hope in God strengthened their temporal understanding of the Confederacy’s prospects for success. When they began to reconsider whether it was truly God’s plan to establish the Confederacy, or whether it was simply a human arrangement, although their hope in God remained intact, their hope for the Confederacy’s future began

¹⁵⁰Freeman, R. E. Lee, III: 499.

¹⁵¹Charles M. Cummings, Yankee Quaker, Confederate General: The Curious Career of Bushrod Rust Johnson (Rutherford, Madison and Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1971), 313.

¹⁵²Cummings, Yankee Quaker, 313.

¹⁵³The reaction of Confederate generals to the loss of the war and their dreams for independence will be analysed in the epilogue, as the present chapter is concerned with hope as it was retained and practised during the war.

to weaken.¹⁵⁴ The religious virtue of hope encouraged many generals, especially Robert E. Lee, to continue to fight a conventional war as long as possible. Thus it is apparent that religion did serve to lengthen the conflict in terms of the willingness of Confederates to resist subjugation.

Cultivation of faith and hope encouraged the practice of works of charity. The greatest act of charity was the propagation of the Good News. Stonewall Jackson was likely the Confederate general who most zealously desired and sought to obtain conversions among his soldiers. Jackson, who prior to his service as a Confederate general indicated his willingness to die as a missionary in Christ's service,¹⁵⁵ sought any opportunity to foster faith in every person he encountered. These attempts ranged from distributing tracts in the army on a Sunday,¹⁵⁶ to encouraging the advent of a religious publication in his corps,¹⁵⁷ to consoling a friend who had lost his beloved servant to a lethal illness.¹⁵⁸ Jackson felt that it was his duty, not only as a soldier of Christ, but also as a general in the Confederate service, to spread the Gospel. He believed that if his army was "a godly army,"¹⁵⁹ God would grant them victory after victory until the North would have no choice but to allow the South its independence. By being loyal to God, God would in turn reward His people.

Even though Jackson insisted on leading 'a godly army,' several authors claim that he "never sought to impose his own beliefs upon others."¹⁶⁰ While there is no

¹⁵⁴This lack of understanding of God's plan, and the generals' acknowledgement of their ignorance of the Divine Will, will be considered further in chapter three.

¹⁵⁵Robertson, Stonewall Jackson, 136. It is instructive to note the militaristic language Jackson used when phrasing this desire: "...I should not be surprised were I to die upon a foreign field, clad in ministerial armor, fighting under the banner of Jesus."

¹⁵⁶Archie P. MacDonald, ed., Make Me a Map of the Valley: The Civil War Journal of Stonewall Jackson's Topographer (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1973), 21.

¹⁵⁷Richards, God Blessed Our Arms, 73.

¹⁵⁸John W. Schildt, Hunter Holmes McGuire Doctor in Gray, (Chewsville, Maryland, 1986), 61.

¹⁵⁹Schildt, Hunter Holmes McGuire, 54.

¹⁶⁰Robert F. Hunter, Lexington Presbyterian Church, 1789-1989 (Lexington: Lexington Presbyterian Church, 1991), 66.

evidence that Jackson tried to impose his beliefs by force, he used more subtle ways to convert others to the Lord. Prior to the Civil War he had desperately tried to convert his sister Laura to the faith. James Robertson refers to these attempts as “overkills.”¹⁶¹ During the Civil War Jackson remained convinced of the need to do everything in his power, short of physical force, to spread the faith. He asked others to spread tracts for him among the men,¹⁶² and insisted that it was the duty of his soldiers to give thanks to God for the victories that they received.¹⁶³ While he did not impose punishments upon those who did not attend divine service to give such thanks, Jackson expected it would be given. In addition, a soldier’s Christian faith or lack thereof was a major factor in Jackson’s assessment of whether or not the man was suitable for promotion. The importance of this characteristic in Jackson’s mind, as well as his overriding desire for ministers to join the army, found chief expression in Jackson’s appointment of Robert L. Dabney as his head of staff. Robertson conveys the general contemporary and historical appraisal of this choice, in his statement that “Jackson’s appointment of Dabney to head the staff was an amazing piece of shortsightedness. The theologian was a misfit from the start.”¹⁶⁴ Other generals, such as Robert E. Lee, although nurturing a profound respect for ministers of God, realized that simply because a man might be a good preacher did not necessarily make him suitable for military staff duties. Jackson, however, believing that a man of truth would be useful in virtually any capacity, appointed Dabney in the belief that since the minister was useful in saving souls, he would also be useful in sending them to their Maker. Although this fancy was not realized, Jackson still believed that the few months Dabney served on his staff aided in the effort to Christianize the Army of Northern Virginia.

Jackson’s zeal to spread the Gospel was most apparent in his efforts to procure and retain dedicated chaplains for his army. Even though Jackson attempted to secure as

¹⁶¹Robertson, Stonewall Jackson, 139.

¹⁶²Elihu Samuel Riley, A Thesaurus of Anecdotes of and Incidents in the Life of Stonewall Jackson, Lieut.-Gen., C.S.A., (Annapolis, Maryland, 1920), 152.

¹⁶³John Esten Cooke, The Life of Stonewall Jackson (New York: C. B. Richardson, 1863), 59.

¹⁶⁴Robertson, Stonewall Jackson, 360.

many chaplains as possible, fewer than one-half of the regiments in his corps had chaplains by March 1863.¹⁶⁵ Instead of being discouraged, he simply redoubled his efforts and appealed to Samuel Cooper, Adjutant and Inspector General of the Confederate Army, to appoint Rev. B. T. Lacy to preach in the regiments of the Second Corps that were without a chaplain.¹⁶⁶ In addition to this improvised measure, Jackson continued to search out and investigate any chaplains that he could recruit for service in his army. Unfortunately for Jackson and the cause of religion in the armies of the Confederacy, not all chaplains were astounding exemplars of morality nor were they the most effective of preachers. One soldier attests that the chaplains he heard were uncertain as to basic points of dogma, and had enrolled as preachers in order to avoid their previous occupations which involved manual labour.¹⁶⁷ Even those ministers who were properly educated and filled with a genuine faith faced challenges in dealing with their new position as a chaplain. Charles Pitts writes that at the beginning of the war many Confederate chaplains compromised their morals in order to get closer to the men in the ranks who “...held the use of blasphemous oaths to be a mark of masculinity....”¹⁶⁸ Finding chaplains able to inspire and yet remain distinct from their charges was difficult. The effectiveness of each chaplain varied depending on their personality and moral stature.¹⁶⁹ One chaplain, having previously declared himself sick and tired of soldiers and their swearing, suddenly returned to the camp when his engagement to a nearby farmer’s daughter ended. The man had been staying at the farmer’s house while he recuperated from a supposed illness. The farmer, having learned that the preacher was already

¹⁶⁵Bennett, A Narrative of the Great Revival, 260.

¹⁶⁶Letter of Thomas Jackson to S. Cooper, March 10, 1863, Thomas Jonathan Jackson Papers, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, The Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁶⁷Thomas E. Caffey, Battle-fields of the South, from Bull Run to Fredericksburg (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1864), I: 195.

¹⁶⁸Pitts, Chaplains in Gray, 3.

¹⁶⁹Armstrong, For Courageous Fighting and Confident Dying, 114.

married and had children to support, encouraged him to leave the farm in short order.¹⁷⁰ When ministers engaged in such sinful exploits, they compromised the trust placed in them by the men, their officers, and their churches. Jackson realized the hazards a bad chaplain posed to the individuals in his charge.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, some authors question the extent to which Jackson's love of God was passed on to his troops.¹⁷² Instead of taking heed of the difficulties of converting men, and thus surrendering his dream of a 'godly army,' Jackson persevered and even on his deathbed desired the spread of the Gospel among his soldiers.

Other officers, although less zealous than Jackson, also desired to spread the Gospel. John Gordon, in September 1863, wrote to Dr. A. E. Dickinson, wondering why the Army of Northern Virginia received so few preachers. He believed that the men in the ranks were more eager than civilians to hear the word of life. Gordon finished his letter by proudly stating that "...in the last few weeks nearly two hundred in this single brigade have been added to the different churches."¹⁷³ Both Lee and Jackson "...endeavoured to impress upon the Southern soldier a sense of moral duty and a belief in Divine protection, and it certainly added hope, strength and steadiness to their efforts...."¹⁷⁴ Some officers, while supporting and encouraging the appointment of chaplains, sought to downgrade their spiritual mission, using them as aide-de-camps, to assist the officers performing regular military duties.¹⁷⁵ Other officers, like A. P. Hill, allowed the chaplains to perform their duties but did not want them or anyone else to practice their "...religion with

¹⁷⁰James Cooper Nisbet, Four Years on the Firing Line (Jackson, Tennessee: McCowat-Mercer Press, 1963), 23.

¹⁷¹Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 385.

¹⁷²Paul Miller Offill, Jr., "Stonewall Jackson: A Case Study in Religious Motivation and Its Effects on Confederate Leadership and Morale," (M.A. thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1962), 89-90.

¹⁷³Allen P. Tankersley, John B. Gordon: A Study in Gallantry (Atlanta: The Whitehall Press, 1955), 9-10.

¹⁷⁴Augustus Choate Hamlin, "A Tribute to General Jackson," in Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 558-559.

¹⁷⁵Romero, Religion in the Rebel Ranks, 36.

excessive intensity.”¹⁷⁶ J. William Jones insists that even irreligious officers furthered the cause of religion by “...having preaching regularly at their headquarters, and treating the chaplains and missionaries with the greatest courtesy and respect.”¹⁷⁷ Converts ranged from General Ewell, who was influenced to become a Christian by Stonewall Jackson himself,¹⁷⁸ down to lowly privates in the ranks, like Joe F. Shaner, who attributed his conversion to a prayer meeting held in camp.¹⁷⁹ While their efforts to further the spread of the Good News originated from their faith in Christ, devout Confederate generals knew that the greatest charitable deed was spreading the faith that would in turn bear fruit in other converts, leading to a greater number of believers and more acts of charity.

Confederate generals not only encouraged their soldiers to perform works of charity. They also personally performed charitable acts to benefit their soldiers, civilians and enemies. The general most renowned for caring for his soldiers was Robert E. Lee. Lee firmly believed that there was “...nothing so important to an army as to save the lives of its soldiers.”¹⁸⁰ Even though Lee was willing to order men to their deaths, he did not do so gleefully, or without considering the suffering they endured on the battlefield. As G. Moxley Sorrel, a Confederate staff officer, phrased it, “Lee was an aggressive general, a fighter. To succeed, he knew battles were to be won, and battles cost blood, and blood he did not mind in his general’s work. Although always considerate and sparing of his soldiers, he would pour out their blood when necessary or when strategically advisable.”¹⁸¹ Lee considered the suffering endured by his soldiers and desired to spare them such suffering whenever possible. Randolph McKim goes so far as to state that Lee

¹⁷⁶Robertson, General A. P. Hill, 7.

¹⁷⁷J. William Jones, “The Morale of General Lee’s Army,” in The Annals of the Civil War (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994), 199-200. Irreligious officers often believed that religion could instil obedience in their men.

¹⁷⁸Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 287.

¹⁷⁹Cocknell, ed., Gunner with Stonewall, 63.

¹⁸⁰Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 184.

¹⁸¹G. Moxley Sorrel, Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer (New York and Washington: The Neale Publishing Company, 1905), 80.

“...knew thousands of them [the common soldiers] by name. He was their Father as well as their Commander.”¹⁸² McKim’s statement is a good example of Lost Cause mythology but at its base is an acknowledgement of the perception of many soldiers that Lee actually cared for their well-being, and that they could trust him with their lives. Lee’s personal acts of charity included giving out socks his wife had made,¹⁸³ and insisting that soap be procured for the men in the ranks.¹⁸⁴ It is logical to wonder whether Lee’s time as a commanding general might have been better spent preparing for the next campaign, or getting some much needed rest. Even though Lee mentioned not having enough time to write to his son Robert, he still wrote to his wife for a few pairs of socks and handed them out to his ill-clad men. Lee’s act of charity, although seemingly insignificant and negligible, gains meaning when Christ’s words are recalled: “For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.”¹⁸⁵ Lee knew that in a world overseen by an all-knowing and all-powerful God, every action, whether for good or for ill, was seen and remembered. By ministering to the most needy of his soldiers, he was, in a way, ministering not to them, but to his suffering Master. Lee knew that socks and soap would help them to retain their health and morale, but more importantly, he also knew that by performing such acts of mercy he would also be retaining his Christian sense of compassion and kindness in a landscape filled with killing and destruction. Lee’s concrete actions helped build the devotion his men felt for him, and encouraged them to remain willing soldiers in his Army of Northern Virginia. Thus charity, as well as faith and hope, helped this particular army to continue the fight until April 1865.

Robert E. Lee’s predecessor in command of the Army of Northern Virginia, J. E. Johnston, also cared for his soldiers. Johnston sought to care for their physical needs. In

¹⁸²Randolph H. McKim, *The Soul of Lee* (New York, London, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras: Longmans, Green and Co., 1918), 123-124.

¹⁸³Dowdey, ed., *Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee*, 78.

¹⁸⁴Douglas Southall Freeman, ed., *Lee’s Dispatches: Unpublished Letters of General Robert E. Lee, C.S.A., to Jefferson Davis and the War Department of the Confederate States of America, 1862-1865* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1915), 288.

¹⁸⁵Mark 9: 41.

addition, Johnston was more wary of committing them to battle than both Lee and Hood, the latter his successor in command of the Army of Tennessee. Robert Hughes, one of Johnston's most admiring biographers, argues that the "...general is the greatest who, careless of his own blood, spares the lives of his men; who, despising, the eclat of a bloody field, fights only when he has an object for battle and reasonable chances for victory."¹⁸⁶ Johnston's concern for the lives of his soldiers prompted him to fall back again and again before Sherman's advance in 1864. These withdrawals occurred so frequently that Jefferson Davis questioned whether Johnston would actually stand and fight for Atlanta, or whether he would allow the city to fall to Sherman without forcing a decisive battle. Because of this uncertainty, President Davis replaced Johnston with John Hood, who decided to fight Sherman at any cost, and who, arguably, did not consider whether 'reasonable chances for victory' actually existed before he engaged the enemy. As a result, Sherman's forces shattered the Army of Tennessee and only demoralized fragments remained by the beginning of 1865. Johnston's concern for his soldiers not only helped many of them to live longer, but also preserved the Army of Tennessee, while it was under his command, as a viable military force and a continuing threat to Sherman's advance. Hood, although he too cared for his men, and suffered the loss of a leg and the use of an arm by leading troops in battle, believed it was more charitable to try and save Atlanta and win the war. He preferred not to consider the improbable chance of success and the number of casualties that would result from forcing an encounter with Sherman's troops.

The charity senior officers exercised toward their troops could take imaginative and unusual forms. E. P. Alexander, faced with the prospect of having a deserter shot to death, sought to devise a means by which this particular man could be saved. Alexander knew that an order to execute a soldier named Hamilton would arrive in the morning, and, thinking that sending a petition to Robert E. Lee would be both unfair and ineffective, he contrived to ensure that Hamilton would not be in the vicinity in the morning to be shot to death. Lee, who was the commanding general of the Army of Northern Virginia, was Alexander's commanding officer, and was maintaining a hard line

¹⁸⁶Nathaniel C. Hughes, Jr., General Johnston (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1897), 297.

on deserters at this point in the war. Alexander knew that Lee would deny any request for leniency. As Alexander could not openly challenge Lee's orders, and thus be guilty of insubordination, he devised a more creative solution to the problem. Alexander discussed the matter briefly with the officer of the guard, and that night, Hamilton escaped from the sentries who were only armed with a few old sabres. Alexander knew that arranging a prisoner's escape contradicted regulations and could still result in the man's recapture and execution. He pitied Hamilton because the soldier had not tried to desert permanently, but only sought a lengthy furlough. Furthermore, Alexander explained that "I just could not shoot a man who had been free to escape but walked sixty miles alone to join his command, and meet his sentence."¹⁸⁷ The honest and brave response of the deserter triggered Alexander's mercy and compassion.

One of Dorsey Pender's charitable impulses concerned both his soldiers and the South as a whole. He believed in April and May 1861 that the 'best thing' for the South was for the Confederate troops to get "...two or three sound whippings."¹⁸⁸ Later Pender remarked on this necessity again, writing that "I have thought for some time that a little whipping would be of immense benefit to us, not that I wish anything of the sort."¹⁸⁹ Of course, Pender's last comment belied his true desire. He knew that early in the war most Southern men were too cocky. They believed that one Southerner could defeat ten Yankees, and that at the first sign of opposition the Union armies would scurry back to Washington. Pender was well aware of the raw military potential inherent in the Northern population, and did not assume that the war would be easy or short. Thus, although lives would be lost, he knew that a few good whippings, or military defeats, would both awaken the Southern soldiers to the true nature of the war they were waging and convince them that victory could only be achieved with stupendous effort, suffering and bloodshed. Just as corporal punishment was designed to inflict pain on a child in order to teach them right from wrong, so, Pender believed, Southern armies needed their own brand of

¹⁸⁷Personal Recollections of Knoxville Campaign - undated, p.2-3, Edward Porter Alexander Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹⁸⁸Hassler, ed., General to his Lady, 16.

¹⁸⁹Hassler, ed., General to his Lady, 23-24.

corporal punishment to bring them a true understanding of the conflict that lay ahead. Pender approved of the whipping of an African American servant girl who worked in his household, and believed that such an experience would persuade the girl to behave properly in the future. Logically, such an experience would also prove beneficial to Southern armies which needed to learn humility and perseverance. Even though Pender's desire for a few good whippings might at first seem cruel and heartless, in his mind such an experience would be the height of charity to the South because only through the reception of such discipline would the Confederacy realize its independence.

Confederate generals, in addition to caring for their soldiers, also sought to preserve the safety of the civilians encountered by their armies. Robert E. Lee gave explicit orders to the Army of Northern Virginia as it passed into Pennsylvania in the summer of 1863. His army needed to forswear taking vengeance on the civilian population of the North, and his army was only to fight armed men. Lee's motives in leaving the civilian population undisturbed were not only influenced by his ideas of charity and chivalry. Indeed, he knew it to be in the South's best interests to conduct the war honourably both in human eyes and in the sight of Almighty God. Lee explained "...that we cannot take vengeance for the wrongs our people have suffered without lowering ourselves in the eyes of all whose abhorrence has been excited by the atrocities of our enemies, and offending against Him to whom vengeance belongeth, without whose favor and support our efforts must all prove in vain."¹⁹⁰ Thus Lee's practice of charity took into consideration the effect such a policy would have upon the outcome of the war effort. Although wreaking havoc and ruin in the North might seem at first to be the rational and logical practice of warfare for Lee's army, upon reflection Lee and most other generals realized that such ruthless tactics would simply anger Northerners, making them more supportive of Lincoln's war effort, and, even more importantly, would anger God and alienate Him from such heartless sinners. Charity and self-interest combined in this case to dictate Lee's course of action.

Confederate generals also sought to practice charity towards Confederate civilians. In early 1862, William Nelson Pendleton, having learned of the suffering

¹⁹⁰Woodworth, While God is Marching On, 140.

caused by a fire in Charleston, South Carolina, suggested that a collection be made for their benefit.¹⁹¹ Pendleton's fellow officers embraced the idea and a collection was made throughout the Army of Northern Virginia. Stonewall Jackson also treated Confederate civilians with charity. Pacifists who refused to be conscripted and serve in the army were not harassed or imprisoned by Jackson, but instead engaged as teamsters. Rather than attempt to force them to renounce their beliefs, Jackson allowed them to support the war effort in a manner that did not violate their consciences.¹⁹² Instead of wishing harm to Northern civilians, or ignoring Southern civilians, most Confederate generals often practised charity towards non-combatants.

Perhaps the most unselfish practices of charity that Confederate generals performed were toward their enemies. Christ stated explicitly that His followers were to "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendth rain on the just and on the unjust."¹⁹³ Even though every Confederate general believed the Yankees were waging an unrighteous and unjustified war against their beloved Southern states, many of them found the courage to live up to Christ's demanding doctrine concerning the treatment of enemies. Leonidas Polk, on Christmas Day, 1862, was tired of the war and wished to return to his duties as the Episcopal Bishop of Louisiana. However, as Union armies prepared to begin further invasions of the South, President Davis considered Polk's presence in the Army of Tennessee essential. Polk wrote to his wife that

It is Christmas Day! A day on which angels sang 'Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards men,' and oh! how my heart yearns to join in the same song, if our enemies would let us. Indeed, I may say with truth, I can and do feel the full force of the sentiment of the song toward them. Notwithstanding the warlike purposes in their hearts, I feel no unkindness toward them or toward any living being, and would bless and

¹⁹¹Circular, early 1862, written by G. Rhett, A.A. Gen'l, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

¹⁹²Horst, Mennonites in the Confederacy, 35.

¹⁹³Matthew 5: 44-45.

pray for them, if they would let me. But we trust now as ever that the Lord will deliver us out of their hands, and that with a great deliverance, and give them a better mind.¹⁹⁴

Polk wanted to bless and pray for his Northern enemies, but was unable to do so, because they would not ‘let’ him. Polk, as a bishop, knew that Jesus forgave his persecutors on the cross, and that even though they had the power to put Him to death, they did not have the power to prevent Jesus from forgiving them and blessing them. Perhaps Polk felt unable to pray for his enemies and truly forgive them as they continued to invade and pillage his country. Only after they had received from the Lord ‘a better mind,’ would the bishop forgive them and pray for them once more. This resistance to praying for his enemies began quite early in the war when Polk severed relations with the Episcopal Church in the North. As a sign of the Confederacy’s independence, he substituted the liturgically required prayer for the President of the United States with a prayer for the governor of the state (Louisiana), and, later, with a prayer for the President of the Confederacy.¹⁹⁵ Although this was a symbolic act of his state’s sovereignty, it also indicated Polk’s belief that it would be improper to retain a prayer in the liturgy for the leader of his enemies. This intercessory prayer generated much controversy and acrimony as Northern forces occupied Southern territory and insisted that in Episcopal services the usual prayer for the President of the United States be included. Thus in Polk’s case it is evident that even when a general did not harbour ill will towards the North, it was still incredibly difficult to pray for the people and soldiers who were determined to conquer their homeland. Thus the war served to modify the generals’ perception of what constituted proper charity. As the Northerners became the generals’ enemies, even a bishop felt challenged to pray for them, despite Jesus’ direct commandment to His followers to pray for their enemies. Ironically, it was prayer for their enemies that was most desperately required, particularly for Abraham Lincoln, for only when the Union armies relented from invading the South could the Confederacy win the Civil War. The prayer in the Episcopal liturgy for the president therefore needed to be retained to pray for Lincoln, not because he claimed to

¹⁹⁴Polk, Leonidas Polk, II: 53.

¹⁹⁵Polk, Leonidas Polk, I: 306.

still be their lawful president, but because he needed, in Polk's words, 'a better mind,' a mind willing to conceive of and accept a truncated Union that would allow Southerners to be free. In this instance, as in many others in which religion affected the war effort, the war effort in turn affected religious practices. It is this reciprocal process between religion and the Confederate war effort that allowed religion to have such an impact during this war. Southern religion's malleable nature allowed generals and others to rely on it for guidance, but it also allowed the war to alter religious expression and enticed individuals to hone theological concepts according to the needs of the war.

Robert E. Lee served as a model of charity for his fellow Confederate generals throughout the Civil War. In July 1861, Lee ordered that all prisoners of war be treated kindly and attended to in every way that was consistent with their continued imprisonment.¹⁹⁶ A year later, Lee's concern for enemy soldiers had not abated. He ordered that all of the enemy wounded still left on the field of battle be taken where they would be comfortable.¹⁹⁷ At the end of the war, Lee maintained that he had never harboured ill will towards his persecutors, and instead had always wished them peace and happiness. In one particularly dramatic episode, a badly wounded Union soldier noticed Lee riding his horse over the battlefield. In defiance, the Yankee shouted "'Hurrah for the Union!'"¹⁹⁸ The general noticed the soldier, dismounted, and approached his enemy. The soldier believed that Lee meant to kill him. Instead, Lee "...extended his hand to me and, grasping it firmly and looking right into my eyes, said: 'My son, I hope you will soon be well.'"¹⁹⁹ Lee then departed, and the contrite soldier wept bitterly. Lee was firmly resolved to defeat every Union army that entered his beloved Virginia, but his love for his state did not efface his concern for human life and for the suffering that the wounded experienced on the field of battle.

¹⁹⁶Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 57.

¹⁹⁷Letter of R. E. Lee to D. H. Hill, July 4, 1862, D. H. Hill Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia; Dowdey, Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 207-208.

¹⁹⁸Gregory A. Coco, On the Bloodstained Field: 130 Human Interest Stories from the Campaign and Battle of Gettysburg (Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania: Wheatfield Press, 1987), 14.

¹⁹⁹Coco, On the Bloodstained Field, 14.

Stonewall Jackson, despite usually being remorseless towards killing the enemy,²⁰⁰ could on certain occasions show mercy and compassion towards his enemies. Harry Gilmor, who eventually rose to the rank of colonel, had an opportunity to shoot a sentry in cold blood. Instead of pulling the trigger, he watched the man walk away. The enemy sentry departed, completely unaware of the lurking Confederate soldier and the unfired bullet that had nearly ended his life. When Jackson heard this story he declared, ““That was right, that was right. I do not like this killing of sentinels.””²⁰¹ Jackson did not hesitate to order the killing of Union soldiers in the heat of battle, when their deaths could help to win a battle, and hopefully drive the Union armies back into the North permanently. However, when he considered the apparently senseless shooting of individuals in the darkness, Jackson found such conduct more reminiscent of bushwhacking, than true military engagements. Even though every Union soldier killed meant one fewer to encounter on the next battlefield, Jackson knew that the enemy would simply find a way to kill a Confederate sentry. Neither side would be closer to victory, and individuals who might have survived the war were simply slaughtered to no avail.²⁰² Jackson’s aspirations for victory and the Confederacy’s independence did not eliminate his respect for an individual’s life, even though in almost all other cases he ordered his men to kill the enemy as quickly and in the greatest quantity possible. Jackson believed in exercising charity whenever it was consistent with the goal of the Confederacy’s independence.

Soldiers from lower ranks also attempted to practice charity towards their enemies. A man named Johnson, heedless of the danger, leapt over the Confederate breastworks and into the contested area between the two armies. He acted in response to a

²⁰⁰Jackson’s advocacy of the ‘black flag’ policy and his usually ruthless treatment of the enemy is discussed on pages 268-271.

²⁰¹Harry Gilmor, *Four Years in the Saddle* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1866), 29.

²⁰²This viewpoint does not take into consideration the effect attrition would have upon the armies of the Civil War, as Stonewall Jackson was interested in winning great and decisive battles, and believed that such victories alone would herald the end of the war, as they had in the Mexican War. Of course, Ulysses Grant, who relied on constant and bloody attrition to corrode and eventually overcome the Army of Northern Virginia in the trenches of Petersburg in 1864 and 1865, did not discount this method of warfare, and instead used it to the North’s advantage.

Yankee's persistent and pathetic cries for water. Johnson reached the supplicant, gave him a drink of water, and then dropped to the ground. He had been shot dead by the Yankees.²⁰³ J. William Jones insists that this act of self-sacrifice was not an isolated incident. Because of Lee's standing order concerning the good treatment of wounded enemy soldiers, Jones had witnessed the "...brave fellows...wearied out as they were, searching the field for the wounded of the enemy...."²⁰⁴ Lee's thoughts on the matter coincided with those of a French priest who was ministering to both Confederate and Union soldiers during the war. The clergyman remarked: "When an enemy is vanquished and can no longer do you any harm, he is no longer an enemy; he is simply an unfortunate human being who has a right to Christian charity."²⁰⁵

There were limits on the practice of charity, especially towards enemies and deserters. J. E. B. Stuart, although willing to aid a Union family by revealing unfortunate truths to the wife of an adulterer, experienced intense emotions when he considered his Northern enemies. He insisted in March 1862 that "I have no friends on the yankee side. The enemies of my country are my enemies...."²⁰⁶ One of the most tragic 'friends' that Stuart lost as a result of the war was his father-in-law, who refused to resign from the United States Army. As the weeks dragged on in mid-1861, Stuart could not understand why Philip St George Cooke would not join the Confederacy in its quest for independence. Stuart only gradually came to understand his father-in-law's preference for the Union, a preference Stuart had personally disavowed when he resigned from the Union army upon the secession of Virginia. By July 1, 1861, Stuart worried whether

²⁰³James Cooper Nisbet, Four Years on the Firing Line (Jackson, Tennessee: McCowat-Mercer Press, 1963), 200.

²⁰⁴J. William Jones, "The Morale of the Confederate Armies," in Evans, ed., Confederate Military History, 142.

²⁰⁵Cornelius M. Buckley, trans., A Frenchman, A Chaplain, A Rebel: The War Letters of Pere Louis-Hippolyte Gache, S.J. (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1981), 131.

²⁰⁶Letter of J. E. B. Stuart to Laura, March 17, 1862, James Ewell Brown Stuart Letters, 1861-1862, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Cooke would ever resign, and could not understand Cooke's loyalty to the Union.²⁰⁷ By the end of the month Stuart lost hope for his father-in-law, and reckoned him a Yankee. Cooke was likely foremost in Stuart's mind when he wrote that "I am fixed in my hatred to those Yankee scoundrels + look to no reconciliation..."²⁰⁸ Stuart's estrangement with his father-in-law was so complete that he legally changed the name of his eldest son, who had been named in Cooke's honour, to James Ewell Brown Stuart, Jr. Since the boy's first namesake had failed to live up to Stuart's conception of honour, the cavalryman hoped that at least the boy's second namesake would surely cover himself in glory by battling his country's unrighteous foes. Fortunately for Stuart, his wife Flora was also committed to the Confederacy, and did not attempt to leave him and rejoin her father in the North. Stuart's hatred for Cooke's behaviour deepened, and as both men were brigadier generals in the cavalry arms of their respective country's armed forces, by November 1861 Stuart had concocted a fantasy whereby he would avenge himself upon Cooke. Upon hearing from a captive Northern officer that Cooke had improved the Army of the Potomac's cavalry, Stuart replied that "I know he has command, and I propose to take him prisoner. I married his daughter, and I want to present her with her father; so let him come on."²⁰⁹ While Stuart did not wish to kill his father-in-law, he was obsessed with the notion of humiliating him by defeating him personally in battle and taking him captive, and then offering him to his daughter as a trophy of war. Stuart's fantasy never materialized, but his alienation from a man who had once been a respected and beloved colleague continued until Stuart's death.

While Stuart's desire for revenge against Cooke went unfulfilled, there were other times when his craving for vengeance was indeed sated. In February 1864 a demonstration by Northern forces precluded the celebration of divine worship. In response, Stuart went on the offensive with his troops and he "...punished them however

²⁰⁷J. E. B. Stuart to his wife, July 1, 1861, James Ewell Brown Stuart Papers, 1861-1863, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

²⁰⁸J. E. B. Stuart to his wife, July 27, 1861, James Ewell Brown Stuart Papers, 1861-1863, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

²⁰⁹Thomas, *Bold Dragoon*, 95.

at Morton's Ford capturing about 80 + killing quite a number."²¹⁰ Stuart was engaged in a war in which men were frequently killed and even slaughtered by the thousands in the larger battles. However, the notion of 'punishing' Northern troops by killing them for preventing a church service definitely lacks any semblance of Christian charity, and was contrary to Christ's injunction to love one's enemies and to bless those who persecute you. Even though Stuart's job as a military officer was to kill the enemy, his understanding of why he did so on this occasion reflected the theological notions he adopted as a result of the long and bloody war he was fighting. Stuart had come to believe that killing those who interfered with a church service was appropriate and in harmony with the Divine Will, as it was in God's honour that divine service was to be held. Thus even though Stuart could still show mercy at times to his enemies, as when he allowed a wounded Union soldier's wife through his lines to nurse her husband,²¹¹ the cruel nature of the Civil War shaped Stuart's understanding of the Divine Will and obstructed his understanding of Christ's desire that His followers love their enemies no matter how many times they interrupted church services. This is one example of how the idea of charity and serving God could become twisted in war time. Thus even when generals and soldiers tried to be charitable, and Stuart was trying to be charitable to his fellow Confederates by discouraging Yankees from disrupting future church services, such actions contradicted the typical understanding of this concept.

Jubal Early's understanding of charity allowed him to believe that in certain circumstances the killing of prisoners was justified. Early wrote that "The very principle which justifies killing in battle, that is the universal principle of self-preservation, will justify the taking of no prisoners or the destruction of all those that may be taken, if they can be neutralized in no other way."²¹² Modern readers, who are not military personnel, might take exception to Early's words, believing that in no circumstances is the killing of

²¹⁰J. E. B. Stuart to his wife, February 8, 1864, J. E. B. Stuart Collection, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, The Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia.

²¹¹J. E. B. Stuart to his wife, July 27, 1861, James Ewell Brown Stuart Papers, 1861-1863, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

²¹²Jubal Anderson Early, Lieutenant General Jubal Anderson Early C. S. A.: Autobiographical Sketch and Narrative of the War between the States (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1912), 289.

prisoners acceptable. Active military personnel, however, could likely sympathize with Early's position. In fact, the Union Army endorsed Early's theory and officially codified it in the Lieber Code of 1863. The Lieber Code states that "It is against the usage of modern war to resolve, in hatred and revenge, to give no quarter. No body of troops has the right to declare that it will not give, and therefore will not expect, quarter; but a commander is permitted to direct his troops to give no quarter, in great straits, when his own salvation makes it impossible to cumber himself with prisoners."²¹³ The situation Early described can fit into the parameters specified by the Lieber Code. The commander, not the troops themselves, who, in a perilous and hostile country, could find himself unable to transport prisoners, and was thus allowed to order his troops to murder them. Early himself could claim to have been in such a situation in Pennsylvania in 1864 when he launched a raid into Northern territory. Ironically, had Early followed the provisions of the Lieber Code during his 1864 raid, this U.S. Army document could have directly authorized the murder of their own personnel. Had the United States decided to prosecute the rebel leaders, Early could not have been punished because of these specific actions, because they would not constitute a war crime, being authorized by the Lieber Code. In other words, prisoners who would soon be recaptured by the enemy, or those who could not be taken with the army because of lack of food, or horses, in the case of a cavalry raid, merited an immediate death sentence according to Early's theory and according to the Lieber Code. Early's conception of charity was warped by his devotion to the absolute success of the Confederate cause. As he had no competing claims (by religion, for example) on his morality, his notions of right and wrong were predicated totally by the dictates of the wartime situation. Few other generals endorsed such a policy, but they understood the harsh philosophy of war that spawned it. After Wade Hampton's son was killed in battle, he vowed that he would avenge him.²¹⁴ While not usually permitting himself the luxury of killing prisoners, Hampton was eager to kill as many Federals as

²¹³U.S. War Dept., comp., War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), ser. III, vol. III, sec. 124, paragraph 60.

²¹⁴Manly Wade Wellman, Giant in Gray: A Biography of Wade Hampton of South Carolina (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons; London: Charles Scribner's Sons, Ltd., 1949), 163.

possible before they threw up their hands in surrender. One exception Hampton made to his policy of not killing prisoners was in 1864 when faced with Sherman's foragers. Hampton wrote to Sherman stating that "'I have directed my men to shoot down all of your men who are caught burning houses.'"²¹⁵ Hampton justified this decision because he "...did not question the right to forage but warned that Federals did so at their own peril. That risk, he asserted, stemmed from an older and more inalienable prerogative-the right of every man to defend his home and protect his dependents."²¹⁶

R. S. Ewell similarly felt the need to take the war personally and hate his enemies. Ewell bore witness to the intimate friendship that existed in the army between men of every section and that there were no sectional feelings in January 1861. By May 1862, Ewell himself undeniably harboured such sectional feelings and instructed Lizzie Ewell to "Hate away at the Yankees. It will tend to relieve you of your troubles."²¹⁷ Although Robert E. Lee did not endorse Ewell's hatred of the Yankees, or believe that such hatred would relieve anyone of their troubles, even he at times found it hard to forgive Southerners who had sided with the North. Lee apparently would not forgive a man named Louis Marshall because he had joined forces with John Pope, a Union general Lee particularly detested.²¹⁸

Lee worked strenuously to ensure that his bitter feelings towards individuals like Louis Marshall did not manifest themselves against innocent bystanders in the Civil War, especially when he entered Maryland in 1862 and Pennsylvania in 1863. However, not all of his fellow generals and soldiers felt themselves obliged to follow his example. Dorsey Pender, following his conversion to Christianity and his reception into the Episcopal Church, dedicated himself to becoming a more earnest and loving Christian. However, as the war raged and the South began to experience greater and greater suffering, he began to dream of exacting a corresponding recompense on the North for its offenses. On March 29, 1863, he informed his wife that "I want to be a Christian to have 'Faith, Hope, and

²¹⁵Burkhardt, *Confederate Rage*, 228.

²¹⁶Burkhardt, *Confederate Rage*, 228.

²¹⁷Hamlin, ed., *Letters of R. S. Ewell*, 108.

²¹⁸Dowdey, ed., *Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee*, 240.

Charity, but above all Charity, and I think I am getting to be less hard-hearted toward my neighbour than I used to be.”²¹⁹ A mere three weeks later, on April 19, 1863, either the war had corrupted his understanding of charity, or else he no longer considered the Yankees his ‘neighbours.’ He confided that “Our officers - not Gen. Lee - have made up their minds not to protect them [the Northern civilians] and some of our chaplains are telling the men they must spoil and kill. Our endurance has almost worn out....Hill is going to burn the town down and he is right provided he will not take any prisoners. They have gone systematically to work to starve out and destroy all we have, to make the country a desert. I say we play at the same game if we get the chance.”²²⁰ It is a testament to Lee’s Christian restraint and control over his men that the invasion of Pennsylvania was not attended with an orgy of plundering, rape and murder. Clearly Pender’s words bear witness to the immense strain the war placed upon the Christian philosophy of war practised by many generals and soldiers. Such a philosophy of war should have been foremost in the minds of the chaplains, but even upon them, the war had taken such a mental and spiritual toil that they were instead urging the troops to ‘spoil and kill.’ Although Confederate generals often found opportunity to engage in charitable works during the Civil War, at times the war also seduced some of them into nourishing hatred in their hearts and scheming to achieve an earthly vengeance. Although they knew that ‘vengeance was the Lord’s,’ at times they wished to share in exacting some of that vengeance themselves. Most Confederate generals acknowledged the claim of Christian charity upon their minds and consequently attempted, especially at the beginning of the war, to exercise this virtue. However, as the Yankee onslaught continued as the months passed, their ability to paid heed to the dictates of Christian charity could often wear thin. Demonizing the enemy is a persistent temptation in every war, but most Confederate generals refused to succumb to this easy explanation of Yankee actions. While they might hope for the intervention of an ‘avenging God,’ as did one of their men, James E. Hall,²²¹

²¹⁹Hassler, ed., General to his Lady, 214-215.

²²⁰Hassler, ed., General to his Lady, 226.

²²¹James Edmond Hall, The Diary of a Confederate Soldier: James E. Hall, Ruth Woods Dayton, ed. (Philippi, West Virginia: Mrs. Elizabeth Teter Phillips, 1961), 26.

they also hoped that a loving God would give the Yankees ‘a better mind,’ and allow the two countries to go their separate ways in harmony and peace.

There was one class of military personnel to whom Confederate generals did not believe that any sense of Christian charity was due. This class was African Americans enlisted in the Union Army and their officers. According to numerous sources, including official military regulations, Confederate generals, officers and soldiers were allowed, perhaps even encouraged, to torture and murder African American soldiers and their white officers. Confederate military law specifies

That every white person, being a commissioned officer, or acting as such, who, during the present war, shall command negroes or mulattoes in arms against the Confederate States, or who shall arm, train, organize, or prepare negroes or mulattoes for military service against the Confederate States, or who shall voluntarily aid negroes or mulattoes in any military enterprise, attack, or conflict in such service, shall be deemed as inciting servile insurrection, and shall, if captured, be put to death, or be otherwise punished, at the discretion of the court.²²²

In other words, such white officers were not to be considered prisoners of war, but were instead to be classified, to use a modern term, as terrorists, individuals who were using illegitimate means to wage war, and thus had thereby earned themselves a death sentence. The nightmare that Southern culture had dreaded for years finally came true as a result of the Civil War: armed African Americans shooting, killing and pillaging the South, determined to liberate any and all slaves that they found. What made this nightmare worse than the Southerners had ever imagined was the fact that the President of the United States had armed them, trained them, and then sent them against the South, in an authorized attempt to take away each and every slave that the South possessed, and to kill any white man who stood in their way. The fact that the African Americans were wearing military uniforms, and were formally enlisted in the Union Army, did not mitigate the Confederates’ loathing for armed African Americans. As will be discussed in chapter two, the vast majority of Southerners could never accept the propriety of African Americans being armed, even if they were still held in slavery, as well as receiving the permission of their masters, and being commanded by none other than Robert E. Lee.

²²²W. W. Lester and W. J. Bromwell, eds., A Digest of the Military and Naval Laws of the Confederate States, From the Commencement of the Provisional Congress to the End of the First Congress Under the Permanent Constitution (Columbia: Evans and Cogswell, 1864), 171-172.

Even though Lee was begging for slave soldiers in early 1865, President Davis, true to the deeply rooted and irrational racist ideology of the South, would not give his most famous general the slave troops Lee insisted upon until it was too late to employ them. Ultimately the Southern people, as a collective, decided to suffer subjugation rather than enlist slave soldiers to help them fight the Union invaders.

The South's racism encouraged Confederate politicians, such as Confederate President Jefferson Davis, to resist plans that called for employing African Americans as soldiers. The President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, although hesitant at first, knew by mid-1862 that striking against slavery would further his sole war aim of saving the Union. Previously he had been held back by the possibility of the border states seceding and joining the Confederacy, but after the Union Army's partial victory at Sharpsburg (Antietam), he released the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, which was to take effect in all rebellious states as of January 1, 1863 (but not in the border states, because Lincoln did not want to lose their support). By April 1863, this anti-slavery attitude found its way into the Lieber Code, which argued that "The law of nations knows of no distinction of color, and if an enemy of the United States should enslave and sell any captured persons of their Army, it would be a case for the severest retaliation, if not redressed upon compliant. The United States cannot retaliate by enslavement; therefore death must be the retaliation for this crime against the law of nations."²²³ This was one section of the Lieber Code that the Confederacy would never accept, and indeed one may argue that the 'distinction of color' was the immediate cause of the entire Civil War. While other nations may not know of this 'distinction of color,' the Confederacy certainly did, and thus in both official and unofficial statements made it clear that armed African Americans crossing into Dixie would receive none of the privileges of being prisoners of war, but instead be slaughtered, tortured, murdered and perhaps enslaved. Although some earlier historians have uncovered the atrocities perpetrated by Confederate forces, George Burkhardt has written what is perhaps the most extensive and incriminatory narrative of the atrocities. Burkhardt convincingly argues in Confederate Rage, Yankee Wrath: No Quarter in the Civil War that "During the Civil War's last two years, Confederate soldiers massacred black and white Federals in

²²³Official Records ser. III, vol. III, sec. 124, paragraph 58.

every theater of the conflict. Historians have known about most such incidents but treated them as discrete and random affairs. But they were not distinct, unconnected events. Instead, they formed a pervasive pattern and stemmed from Southerners' common desire to defend and protect their heritage and society."²²⁴ Nathan B. Forrest was the worst offender in this regard, but was by no means the only perpetrator. Robert E. Lee knew of such occurrences, and did not punish the offenders. Thus, while charity was theoretically supposed to be extended to all human beings, in practice charity was abandoned when images of a race war loomed in the minds of Confederate generals and soldiers.

To sum up this chapter, most Confederate generals knew the value of the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. All of the generals, even the most devout, such as Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, recognized the numerous challenges the Civil War posed to their retention of these virtues. However, their determination not to submit to doubt, despair and hatred led them to trust in God and preserved them from eagerly embracing the fury and savagery of the Civil War. The Christian faith encouraged them to look beyond the present and adhere to lasting beliefs that demonstrated the survival of Christianity through many challenging periods of history. This faith helped to preserve them through their current crisis. Challenging ordeals demonstrated how their faith was wanting or else helped to strengthen it. The war challenged the faith of some individuals while other soldiers embraced new lives in Christ. The virtue of hope led many generals and soldiers to trust in God. This trust branched out to include the strength to endure reverses, to pray for peace, and even to long for earthly rewards. Hope at times also became so intense that it conflicted with reality. Charity emanated from the faith and hope of the Confederate generals and produced numerous acts of mercy toward Confederate soldiers, civilians and enemies. Charity also spurred Confederate military leaders to spread the Gospel. These three theological virtues, although not practised at all times or by all generals, served to undergird their religious activities throughout the war. Confederate generals used the practice of believing in Christian doctrines and in implementing those beliefs in word and practice for both spiritual and temporal purposes. It needs to be remembered that rarely, if ever, was a spiritual objective preferred to that of a temporal one. In this regard, Confederate generals agreed with Francis Lieber, the

²²⁴Burkhardt, *Confederate Rage*, 1.

author of the Lieber Code of 1863, “To save the country is paramount to all other considerations.”²²⁵ Confederate generals practiced their faith in ways that ensured that saving their country, the Confederate States of America, was paramount to all other considerations, including those of religion. For instance, should a specific war need necessitate a particular course of action, such as attempting to dissuade soldiers from deserting, a general’s belief in the importance of preserving human life would not prevent them from executing a deserter. Instead, generals often used religion to justify their actions, instead of abiding by the letter and spirit of religious doctrine. For instance, Jesus, as presented in the Gospels, is quite insistent that His followers forgive one another. However, if a soldier deserted to re-join and help his family, religious generals such as Lee and Jackson were eager to execute the deserter, even if the man was contrite and promised never to desert again. Therefore the virtue of faith’s demands upon beliefs and practices were modified by Confederate generals based upon the beliefs’ utility at the time. In essence, for the vast majority of generals, faith was allowed to shape beliefs and influence behaviour when it was convenient and did not interfere with the war effort. When elements of faith became inconvenient, such as the idea of Christ as the Prince of Peace, the idea was modified or simply forgotten in the wartime environment. One example of this phenomenon previously mentioned was Pendleton’s reference to the Merrimac’s destruction of almost three hundred men as ‘glorious work.’ Even clergymen came to glory in the killing of their fellow human beings, despite this attitude being in direct contradiction to Jesus’ commandment to ‘Love one another as I had loved you.’ As previously argued, it was theoretically possible to realize that destruction of an enemy was tactically necessary, and yet still bemoan and regret their deaths. However, Christian generals, including those who were also clergymen, were still lured into rejoicing over the destruction of their fellow believers, and despite the fact that they themselves realized their theological inconsistency, they did not attempt to resolve it. The ultimate conclusion is that faith had important consequences upon generals’ words and behaviour, but that careful scholarly study is necessary to discern exactly what these effects were, because at any point generals, after feeling the pressure of wartime demands, might modify or circumvent religious doctrines in order to survive or thrive in the Civil War. This need for

²²⁵Official Records Ser. III, Vol. III, sect. 124, paragraph 5.

Careful analysis of religious beliefs, words and behaviour makes clear the need for additional study into religious practice during wartime, and not either ignore it or assume that conventional religious belief and practice predominate.

The theological virtue of hope had a profound effect on Confederate generals and affected how they conceived of and conducted the Southern war effort. Both their hope for entry into Paradise and their earthly hopes were so intertwined and influenced by each other that examination of these hopes is essential to understanding how and why the generals fought as long as they did and when they decided to lay down their arms and surrender. Their behaviour is in marked contrast to soldiers in later wars, who fought with far fewer resources, such as the fighters in Afghanistan and Iraq in the early twenty-first century. While culture differences play a huge role in determining how long an enemy will continue to resist when their principal armies are destroyed, religious beliefs also play a huge role in convincing soldiers when to lay down their arms. The religious virtue of hope convinced Lee and Johnston to resist as long as their main armies were intact. When those main armies were threatened with imminent and total annihilation, these generals decided that further resistance was futile, and that they should lay down their arms. It is conceivable that a protracted guerrilla campaign could have sapped the strength of the Union armies, and eventually compelled them to abandon the South. However, many generals, Lee in particular, were uncomfortable in engaging in unconventional warfare, and saw such activities as more akin to murder than the accepted practice of uniformed soldiers shooting uniformed soldiers.

Religious hopes also provided a safety valve for generals when their earthly hopes were dashed. In essence, heaven was a convenient plan 'B' for generals such as Lee and Jackson. All Confederate generals hoped and worked for the success of the Confederate war effort. However, when the war was going badly, and especially when the war had been lost, religion offered generals a means of avoiding despair and a way of shifting their hopes for an earthly paradise to a Heavenly one. This explains much of the relative ease generals such as Lee had in agreeing to lay down their arms. A few hard-core Confederates, such as Edmund Ruffin, who were less convinced of religious doctrines, used suicide as a means of avoiding the consequences of Union victory. Generals such as Lee used religion as a way of convincing themselves that, in the end, they would emerge

victorious. Religion helped sustain the Confederate armies and the Confederate state until the elimination of the armies, but then operated to smooth its decommissioning in the spring of 1865 by allowing generals to accept its death and believe that, despite the horror of their situation, the best was still to come for the South, in a mysterious and spiritual way known only to God.

Despite the pressures of the wartime environment, Confederate generals still generally acknowledged that they had a duty to be charitable to their soldiers, their fellow Southerners and even their enemies. Few generals allowed the war to totally compromise their belief in Christianity charity, even though some soldiers did. For instance, “One Tennessee Confederate offered a chilling calculus: ‘I really believe he who kills the greatest number of abolition thieves and their abettors is the best Christian.’”²²⁶ However, despite the fact that the war did not totally destroy Confederate generals’ understanding of charity, it did have important influences upon it, and even encouraged Jackson and Lee to kill deserters and vigorously prosecute the war. While these actions may seem contradictory, and therefore should not be considered ‘charity,’ many Confederate generals would disagree. Even Francis Lieber, author of the Lieber Code of 1863 for the Union Army, believed that fighting a war vigorously was a charitable act: “The more vigorously wars are pursued the better it is for humanity. Sharp wars are brief.”²²⁷ The thinking behind this policy was that if the war was brief, fewer people would be killed than if the war dragged on for years on end. While contemporary society views the killing of any human beings as inherently uncharitable, Confederate generals, many having been schooled at West Point and trained from their youth to be soldiers, viewed the killing of human beings as an inevitable part of their vocation in life. Men without military training who had been promoted to generals during the Civil War likewise viewed the killing of uniformed soldiers as a necessary evil of warfare. Therefore an important conclusion of this section of my study, as well as the dissertation as a whole, is that charity, and all other theological concepts discussed, need to be understood in the context of nineteenth century America. While twenty-first century Americans and Canadians generally regard

²²⁶Rable, God’s Almost Chosen Peoples, 164.

²²⁷Official Records Ser. III, Vol. III, sec. 124, paragraph 29.

the killing of fellow human beings as horrible and regrettable, nineteenth century Americans were more accustomed to regarding killing as an unfortunate necessity of existence. First Peoples were customarily killed and even slaughtered when they dared oppose white expansion in the western territories. Americans witnessed the Mexican War a decade and a half before the Civil War, which was a blatantly aggressive and greedy slaughter of Mexican armies which occurred in order to acquire much of Mexico's territory. President Polk had wanted to buy some of Mexico's territory, but when that nation's leaders prudently refused, he then launched a war of aggression against them, using a border skirmish as a pretext. While some Americans had objected to this immoral and imperialistic action, many supported the war, including numerous military officers. When the Civil War erupted, the concept of charity was influenced, one might say perverted, by the wartime environment. While later observers might believe that Confederate generals were using religious language and terminology hypocritically and merely as a pretext to mask their anti-Christian activities, I argue that the majority of Confederate generals, with the exception of Jubal Early, honestly believed that they were being charitable to their soldiers, their fellow countrymen and their enemies by their actions. While later observers would find such claims laughable and even ridiculous, my argument is that it is absolutely necessary to understand others' religious beliefs on their own terms, not on our own. This is a critical conclusion, and one that needs to be emphasized. We may find it strange that Jackson orders a deserter shot and then piously prays to his God for the man's soul, but it must be acknowledged that this situation was indeed the case, and that all available evidence insists that Jackson honestly believed that shooting deserters was indeed charitable for all concerned. Thus one conclusion of my study in regards to charity is that the Civil War served to twist common conceptions of Christian charity in the minds of Confederate generals.

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that this process of twisting operated within limits, and that more commonly accepted standards of Christian charity also remained intact throughout the war experience. Lee and his fellow generals still recognized the humanity of their combatants, especially when they were wounded. Their previously held standards of 'charity' toward African Americans also prevailed, and thus Lee could stand by and watch free African Americans be enslaved during his raids into

Maryland and Pennsylvania in August –September 1862 and June-July 1863.²²⁸ Although we cringe at Lee and his army's activities, Southerners believed that African Americans were better off enslaved and with whites as their masters, than if they were free in Africa or in the North. Lee and his fellow generals believed that the savage and slothful nature of African Americans necessitated an indeterminate period of 'tutelage' before they could be trusted to be freemen. However, as Southerners believed that the slaves were racially inferior, it was becoming more and more clear that this 'indeterminate period' would last forever. While twenty-first century readers are outraged by seeing such peculiar ideas in print, historians have a duty to the truth, and must not whitewash it for the 'benefit' of modern sensibilities. Mid-nineteenth century America was inherently racist, Abraham Lincoln included, and the primary difference between the North and the South was that the South wanted the African Americans to be slaves and the North did not want them in the country at all, whether as slaves or as freemen. Early in the Civil War, Lincoln himself agreed with the tenets of African American colonization schemes. Only when it became clear that these schemes were doomed to failure, did Lincoln relinquish these ideas. Thus my conclusion is that charity is a culturally specific virtue that has different interpretations based on the culture in which it is practiced and the specific individual who holds it. It is logical to deduce that the Christian churches needed to adopt a more standardized approach to the all-important concept of charity in mid-nineteenth century, in order to bring the practice of individuals into line with Jesus' specific and direct commandments to 'Love your neighbour as yourself,' and 'Love one another as I had loved you.' It is to be concluded that the racist beliefs held by Southerners prevented them from understanding and implementing the injunction to 'Love your neighbour as yourself' in the case of African Americans, because they believed that African Americans were fundamentally different from themselves, and as such could not and should not be 'loved' in the same way as whites. Thus could generals such as Lee look on while African American prisoners were slaughtered, and generals such as Forrest eagerly engage in such atrocities.

²²⁸Edward L. Ayers, *In Presence of Mine Enemies: War in the Heart of America 1859-1863* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003), 405.

Chapter 2 - Morality and Slavery

While many Confederate generals practised the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, the exercise and enforcement of a strict morality based on the Christian religion was even more common among these men. Both generals and lesser officers used religion as a tool to identify whether or not their soldiers' behaviour was in line with their interpretation of the moral code. While considerable variations existed in what was considered acceptable, tolerable or downright sinful behaviour, especially in the case of alcohol, there was a uniform understanding that religion could play a useful role in regulating human behaviour. Morality influenced the common understanding in the army and the Confederacy as a whole that Sunday was the Christian Sabbath, and consequently all unnecessary work was discouraged on Sundays. In addition, church attendance was generally encouraged to keep the Sabbath day holy, and to engage in worship of the Creator. Through one or more of these outlets of Christian morality, religion affected virtually all Southern generals. Some officers, although not members of any church, encouraged the rank and file to attend services and follow Christian morality merely to improve the discipline and combat power of the Confederate armies.¹ This use of religion, although it could become callous and unconnected to a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, ensured the permeation of religion in the lives of virtually all soldiers. Of course, in some areas soldiers operating in small groups and on detached service, had little contact with clergy and with religious services, but even in those desolate places an understanding of the necessity of Christian morality resided in some individuals whose behaviour stood as an example and a reproach to those who did not acknowledge or discarded such morality.

The issue of slavery was intimately connected to beliefs about morality. Views on African Americans, personal opinions versus church and government conceptions, and efforts to restrict or preserve slavery all contributed to Confederate commanders'

¹Bennett, The Great Revival, 413.

understanding of the peculiar institution. Although many abolitionists believed Southern acceptance or advocacy of slavery undermined Southern morality, Confederate generals held opposing views. Many believed that since God had created slavery, He alone was responsible for eliminating it. Their duty was to practice Christian morality and obey God's laws.

Christian morality as practised by Confederates and generals in particular accepted the notion that killing their country's enemies in a war was justifiable homicide. Christian just war theory, promulgated by St. Augustine and developed through the Middle Ages, defended the right of Christian rulers to engage in warfare under specific circumstances. If a Christian state was threatened by invasion, such a state had the right to defend its territory and the lives of its inhabitants. William Nelson Pendleton elaborated his version of the just war theory by referring to the conduct of Abraham who resorted to warfare when his nephew Lot and his family were captured by enemy forces.² As Abraham was "...honored as the father of the faithful and the friend of God, so, even under the pacific dispensation of the Gospel, the Lord's faithful servants and children, though they may not individually avenge themselves, may, with His approval and by His sanction, wield the sword of society against public wrong-doers seeking to subvert social right by iniquitous force."³

In the conduct of such a war both Christian states and Christians themselves needed to abide by the same moral code as prevailed in times of peace, that is, all murdering of civilians, raping of women, stealing of property and other actions condemned by Biblical laws were entirely forbidden. Such sins could not be justified simply because a state of war existed. Instead, a Christian had the prerogative to exercise a corporate version of the right of self-defence. Just as a Christian could defend himself or herself from bodily harm from an aggressor,⁴ a Christian state had the moral right to

²Genesis 14: 14-16.

³Lee, Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, 236.

⁴Christian doctrine, as espoused by the large Christian denominations, has consistently defended a Christian's right to defend himself or herself from bodily harm. Such a defense obviously is intended to inflict the least amount of harm upon the aggressor, but at times the only way to thwart an aggressor is to kill them. Jesus' commandment that His followers must turn the other cheek if attacked would seem to contradict and forswear a right to self-defence. Many Christians who have been acclaimed for their holiness

target military personnel of the enemy nation who were seeking the subjugation of the nation. The just war theory did not permit all actions that might bring about the conclusion of the war, although a Christian state had the duty to end a war as soon as possible. Southerners generally viewed war as a necessary evil, not something to be desired or revelled in, but simply something made necessary because of the sinful nature of human beings. However, some inhabitants of the South, notably Mennonites and other pacifists, did not believe war was justified in any circumstances. Others believed that war allowed men to prove themselves and gain glory, and since everyone died eventually, war was simply a way to make their deaths meaningful, and therefore should be promoted. Both pacifist and war-mongering sentiments were far less common in the South than a reluctant acceptance of war as a last resort to resolve differences between nations.

As many Confederate generals had attended West Point, and had chosen or least considered making soldiering their lifelong vocation,⁵ none believed war was always wrong. Those generals who had not attended West Point, but who sought or were offered a commission in the Confederate Army, also had predispositions towards the belief that war was justifiable in at least some circumstances. Given these facts, it would be irrational to seek a full range of opinions on the morality of warfare in this group of individuals, since pacifists did not become Confederate generals. However, despite this obvious qualification, a considerable diversity of beliefs concerning the morality of the Civil War and warfare in general is evident from both Southern generals and soldiers. Robert E. Lee indicated his reluctant acceptance of the martial profession in a letter to his daughter Mildred. Lee wrote that “I hope you did justice to the Farmer, the Soldier and

have indeed refused to defend themselves, and instead meekly allowed themselves to be harmed or killed in emulation of their Master. However, a Christian’s right to self-defence also includes the defense of defenceless human beings, such as children and babies. Given Jesus’ love for children, it is inconceivable that He wanted His followers to stand back and watch little children be perverted or murdered while Christians watched, believing that they could ‘only turn the other cheek.’ Such dire moral considerations have caused much difficulty for Christian pacifists.

⁵Individuals who attended West Point in the mid-nineteenth century did not always choose the army as their career. Many young men, some of whom performed quite well at the academy, did not intend to remain in the army, but instead desired the free education provided at West Point, which was less a school for generalship than it was for engineering. At the time, no other institution in the United States provided such sound training for both civil and military engineering than West Point.

the Sailor. The first is the most useful citizen. The two last are necessary evils which will disappear when the world becomes sufficiently Christianized.”⁶ Other generals were more optimistic about serving in the army. During his time as a cadet at West Point, J. E. B. Stuart was quite excited about becoming a soldier. He wrote that “So far I know of no profession more desirable than that of the soldier, indeed everything connected with the Academy has far surpassed my most sanguine expectations.”⁷ Stuart revelled in the glories of the army, relishing the parades, army tradition, and comradeship that a career in the armed forces provided. Lee on the other hand worried about the potential for destruction inherent in any military. Military officers’ attitudes about their profession ranged from ambivalence to eagerness, depending on their perceptions of the army and its function in society.

Although the United States retained some soldiers during times of relative peace in the nineteenth century, the primary function of a soldier was to fight in a war. Unlike the North which had some organized troops established before the beginning of the war, the Confederacy, as a new country, had very few trained and battle-tested units ready for combat. While a sizable proportion of Southern officers tendered their services to the Confederacy, very few privates or non-commissioned officers left the United States Army to serve with the South. Many Southern states possessed substantial numbers of men enrolled in state militias, but the training, experience and equipment of such units was generally poor.⁸ As such, the Confederacy needed to rely almost exclusively on volunteers, and later conscripts, for soldiers to fight for its independence. Such men, accustomed to the civilian life, had more scruples to overcome in fighting a war than did their commanders, many of whom had long trained to fight a war. As James McPherson writes, both Union and Confederate soldiers were reluctant to kill each other due to the

⁶Letter from Robert E. Lee to his daughter Mildred “Life” Lee, April 1, 1861, Lee Family Papers, 1810-1894, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia. When Lee mentioned the word ‘sailor,’ he was evidently thinking exclusively of a sailor on a naval vessel, and not those sailors who served in the merchant marine or on other civilian vessels.

⁷Letter of J. E. B. Stuart to his cousin [name unknown], August 17, 1850, James Ewell Brown Stuart Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

⁸Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones, How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War (Urbana, Chicago and London: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 10.

prevalent morality of the Judeo-Christian culture in which they lived. However, most of them overcame such reservations when they considered the holiness of their cause, and the fact that in war it was either kill or be killed. Many soldiers on both sides believed that "...it was a just war, a holy cause against an evil enemy. Both sides believed that God was on their side and that they were doing their duty to God and country by trying to kill the godless enemy."⁹ Drew Gilpin Faust confirms this reluctance: "But in most circumstances and for most individuals during the war, killing posed a problem to be overcome."¹⁰ Confederates also overcame their moral reservations about engaging in a war by refusing to accept blame for the initiation of the conflict. Jefferson Davis himself, even though he was the leader of the Confederacy, and had a major role in directing the movements of the Confederate armies, did not believe that he was responsible for any of the thousands of deaths that occurred in the Civil War. Davis believed himself guiltless in the conflict because he had not desired its arrival and had attempted for twelve years to prevent the war. Only after he had recognized the failure of his efforts at conciliation between the two sections did he become President of the Confederate States of America and try to prevent the subjugation of his newly created country.¹¹ Just as Davis thought that he was not morally accountable for the Civil War, so did common soldiers also justify their actions by maintaining that as they had not started the war, they too were not to blame for the deaths that occurred.

Southerners also felt that they were fighting a just war because their territory was being invaded. They believed that as the North was clearly the wanton aggressor, it could not honestly claim to be fighting a just war. Only the Confederacy, fighting on the defensive, could claim such a moral standpoint. This religious belief also inhibited the willingness of some Southern soldiers to prosecute offensives into the North, since it was thought that such actions would constitute an aggressive and unChristian attack on their enemies, and thus would anger God. Northerners in turn did not believe that they were the aggressors, but that it was the rebellious Southerners who had forced the war upon the

⁹McPherson, Cause and Comrades, 72.

¹⁰Faust, This Republic of Suffering, 32.

¹¹William J. Cooper, Jr., Jefferson Davis, American (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 524.

Union. One chaplain testified to his belief in the righteousness of the Northern war effort when he ‘baptized’ an artillery gun in early 1861. The chaplain hoped that God’s blessing would rest on the gun for the duration of the war, as it proceeded to mow down countless numbers of rebels.¹²

The fact that war had such a disruptive ability dismayed many Confederates. Indeed, some came to recognize the potential for evil in the Civil War. During the Mexican War Stonewall Jackson recognized such sinister potential in warfare, and thus needed to consider the morality of any future conflict, such as the Civil War, before he entered it. He needed to be sure that it was God’s Will that he participate in a war, and that the war was indeed justifiable.¹³ Jackson was quite convinced of the morality of the South’s position in the Civil War, and therefore entered the conflict eagerly, ready to wage war on behalf of his state and his God. Other Confederates questioned the godliness of the Southern war effort. Josiah Gorgas was particularly dismayed by the wickedness of the residents of Charleston, South Carolina, believing that “The sins of the people of Charleston may cause that city to fall; it is full of rottenness, every one being engaged in speculations....Her fall will be looked on by many as a righteous doom.”¹⁴ Even though Gorgas wrote this diary entry in mid-July 1863, a time of great disappointment for the Confederacy, his loathing for speculators and the selfish activities of the people of Charleston extended beyond these times of difficulty for his country. Throughout the war he believed that unless Confederates measured up to the moral standards Jesus set for them, they would suffer defeat after defeat until they either became righteous or else succumbed to the foe. Thus religion could serve to further demoralize generals, like Gorgas, or else, if their religious beliefs sanctioned their behaviour, as in the case of Stonewall Jackson, it could fill them with righteous zeal. Religious generals such as Jackson used that zeal as motivation to do their best at waging war and pleasing God through the destruction of their enemies.

¹²Pitts, Chaplains in Gray, 27.

¹³Lenoir Chambers, Stonewall Jackson (New York: William Morrow, 1959), I: 254.

¹⁴Vandiver, ed., Civil War Diary of General Josiah Gorgas, 50-51.

In order to ensure that the South's war effort was a 'just war,' Confederate commanders sought to restrain immoral behaviour among their soldiers. The basic matters generals and officers concerned themselves with were the vices that Christians have wrestled with since the earliest ages: drinking, gambling, lying, card playing and trivial amusements, fornication, adultery, profanity, and engaging in dirty talk. Many generals believed that each of these sins diminished, to varying degrees, the efficiency and battle worthiness of their commands. Drunkenness in particular was frowned upon in official Confederate military regulations. Confederate law specified:

That any commissioned officer of the Regular or Provisional Army who shall be found drunk, either while on duty or off duty, shall, on conviction thereof before a court of inquiry, be cashiered or suspended from the service of the Confederate States, or be publicly reprimanded, according to the aggravation of the offence; and in addition to a sentence cashiering any such officer, he may also declared incapable of holding any military office under the Confederate States during the war."¹⁵

It must be noted that this particular regulation applies only to officers, and not to enlisted men. As the range of punishments was quite limited, this regulation did not specify what would happen to ordinary soldiers who became drunk. While officers could be punished through the loss of their commission and dismissal from the army, enlisted men had no commission to lose, and being dismissed from the army might very well save their lives. Imprisonment was unrealistic, because every imprisoned soldier meant less manpower in the ranks, in addition to the loss of troop strength to guard the many soldiers who would need to be locked up. Death by firing squad for getting drunk was too severe a punishment, even in the estimation of Stonewall Jackson. Therefore while formal legal means were used to convince officers to remain sober, less formal means, such as the encouragement and example of generals such as Lee and Jackson, were used to convince soldiers to avoid drunkenness. As will be seen below, however, these efforts met with mixed success at best.

Confederate generals' attitudes concerning the consumption of alcoholic beverages demonstrates the varying range of responses they had towards moral issues and the effects these issues had on their men. Some generals had few reservations about the use of alcohol. Jo Shelby, in the words of his biographer, "...could drink, fight and court

¹⁵Lester and Bromwell, eds., Digest of the Military and Naval Laws, 111.

with the best of them.”¹⁶ James Longstreet liked drinking, as well as smoking and uttering profanity. Shortly after the victory at First Manassas, Longstreet joined a number of his fellow officers in a celebration which included the consumption of considerable amounts of whisky.¹⁷ There is no record, however, of an overindulgence in alcohol that affected his performance on the battlefield or that he was drunk.¹⁸ His biographers, H. J. Eckenrode and Bryan Conrad, believe that these habits were ones that “endear men to men.”¹⁹ Longstreet’s habits did indeed endear his men to him in November 1862 when he allowed wealthy residents of Fredericksburg, Virginia to distribute fine wine to his soldiers. As the Army of the Potomac was soon to occupy the town, it was believed better to rouse the spirits of the men with the alcohol rather than allow it to fall into the hands of the enemy.²⁰ Whereas Stonewall Jackson would have gladly dumped the intoxicants into the sewer, or even left the wine for the enemy to devour, Longstreet saw little harm in allowing his men to have a reasonable amount of alcohol as a reward for their exertions. Other generals adamantly believed that alcohol was dangerous and even evil. Although Patrick Cleburne, a member of the Episcopal Church, spoke infrequently about religious matters, he refused to use liquor or tobacco during the war and encouraged others to do the same by both words and example.²¹ Cleburne had previously been all too liberal in his use of alcohol, but after nearly murdering a friend in a drunken rage, he consequently renounced the bottle forever.²²

¹⁶Daniel O’Flaherty, General Jo Shelby: Undefeated Rebel (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1954), 3.

¹⁷Sorrel, Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer, 49.

¹⁸Jeffrey D. Wert, General’s James Longstreet: The Confederacy’s Most Controversial Soldier- A Biography (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 92; Eckenrode and Conrad, 369.

¹⁹Eckenrode and Conrad, James Longstreet, 369.

²⁰Donald Bridgmen Sanger, and Thomas Robson Hay, James Longstreet: I. Soldier; II. Politician, Officeholder, and Writer (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1968), 109.

²¹Irving A. Buck, Cleburne and His Command (New York and Washington: The Neale Publishing Company, 1908), 26.

²²Symonds, Stonewall of the West, 30.

Although some of Jackson's men liked whiskey, they believed Jackson himself obviously "detested liquor."²³ They therefore needed to use subterfuge to obtain the drink they craved so much. Jackson did not avoid liquor because he detested it, but because he enjoyed it all too much. He realized alcohol's powerful influence on a man's physiology, and therefore endeavoured rarely to touch it. He denied it to his troops, not because it was evil in itself, but because it would degrade the efficiency that Jackson fought so hard to improve. A soldier who drank with due moderation at home might indulge himself all too readily because of the stressful circumstances of the war. The dangerous combination of alcohol and firearms was all too readily apparent to Jackson, and to most Confederate generals. The danger of intoxication applied not only to ordinary soldiers, but extended throughout all branches of the army, including to medical personnel. One tragic example of the abuse of alcohol occurred when an intoxicated surgeon treated a wounded soldier. When a nurse came by some time later, she discovered that the doctor had inadvertently harmed the patient instead of helping him. The wounded soldier paid with his life for this mistake.²⁴ The surgeon most likely used alcohol to cope with the horrors and suffering he witnessed on a daily basis, and in so doing merely increased the suffering and mortality rates of his patients.

Other generals took a strict personal stance on alcohol but occasionally allowed their men to indulge in what they had forbidden to themselves. By June 1862 R. H. Anderson was under a pledge of abstinence, which Robert E. Lee believed would protect that officer "...from the vice he fell into."²⁵ J. E. B. Stuart made a similar pledge much earlier in his life, not because he had already overindulged in the bottle, but because of a promise he made to his mother. Even though his mother had already died by the time of the Civil War, Stuart remained faithful to his promise, only breaking the oath on his deathbed when it was believed some spirits would assist his recovery. Although Stuart did not indulge, he allowed members of his staff to quench their thirst, and even when

²³Opie, A Rebel Cavalryman, 57.

²⁴Phoebe Yates Pember, A Southern Woman's Story: Life in Confederate Richmond, Bell Irvin Wiley, ed. (Mockingbird Books ed., St. Simon's Island, Georgia, 1974), 88.

²⁵Crist and Dix, coed., The Papers of Jefferson Davis, 8: 229.

some officers overindulged, he was understanding with them and did not impose official sanctions upon them.²⁶ Stuart's moral beliefs contradicted the image he fostered of being a gay cavalier, riding around the countryside on a handsome horse, embarrassing the Yankees and protecting the Army of Northern Virginia from hostile cavalry. His willingness to forgo the use of alcohol and his refusal to prove his manhood in drinking bouts undermines the traditional perception of this cavalryman as an unbridled cavalier. The temperance movements of the early and mid-nineteenth century which sought to restrict or eliminate the use of alcohol for recreational or social purposes influenced Anderson and Stuart. Many temperance advocates used religious concepts and imagery in their attacks against alcohol.

Braxton Bragg was even more determined to win the war against alcohol than Stuart. Although historians do not cite Bragg as a successful campaigner in either strategic or tactical terms, he is praised for fostering discipline in his commands. One of the most effective measures he enforced was the prohibition of the traffic in liquor to his soldiers. He accomplished this feat by imprisoning all who defied his orders. The Confederate War Department acknowledged the success of Bragg's efforts by insisting in early 1862 that every commanding officer should follow his example and eliminate drunkenness in the armies.²⁷ The fact that the War Department needed to issue such a general order demonstrates that drunkenness was indeed a major problem in Confederate armies. Excessive drinking was not a problem confined to Confederate armies since in the Union armies alcohol was also abused. One prominent Union general, Ulysses S. Grant, was notorious for heavy drinking and once showed up at his headquarters "...in the most disgusting state after having vomited all over his horse's neck and shoulders."²⁸ One of his fellow generals, William Smith, tried to prevent liquor from getting to Grant, but was not entirely successful. Lincoln, when informed of this officer's fixation on alcohol, wondered facetiously where he could find more of the substance to give to his other

²⁶Thomas, Bold Dragoon, 202.

²⁷Grady McWhiney, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1969), I: 161-162.

²⁸William Farrar Smith, Autobiography of Major General William F. Smith, 1861-1864 Herbert M. Schiller, ed. (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside, 1990), 110.

generals, because although this particular general was occasionally drunk, he fought, and fought hard.

Over-enthusiastic drinking could range from an individual deciding to get drunk,²⁹ to approximately half of an entire regiment becoming intoxicated all night and remaining so into the following morning.³⁰ One soldier was disgusted by the fact that his entire company, with the exception of himself, was drunk for two entire days. Seeing them lying in the dirt, unable to defend their country, or even to defend themselves, James Hall consequently swore ““an eternal abstinence.””³¹ With some soldiers eager to overindulge in alcohol, generals were wise to restrict the flow of liquor to their troops, and religion served as a justification for denying men the ability to become intoxicated. Alcohol was not the only temptation generals combatted in the ranks of their armies. J. William Jones, although eager to present the best possible picture of the Army of Northern Virginia, also admitted that “...vices common to most armies were, alas! but too prevalent in our own, and that many of our most skilful officers and bravest men blotted their fair name by open vice or secret sin.”³² That Jones would emphasize the presence of sin in the army is certain evidence that it was deep and pervasive within the Confederate ranks. As a former chaplain and an ardent admirer of the Southern cause, Jones had every reason to attempt to minimize the presence of sin in the army, if at all possible. The fact that Jones would admit to its pervasiveness testifies both to his willingness to provide honest information about his experiences as a chaplain and to the fact that sin remained a persistent irritant to religious leaders such as Jones who sought to eradicate it. One soldier, Leonidas LaFayette Polk, echoed Jones’ confession when he wrote to his wife that “People at home have no conception of the utter corruption + deep rooted degradation even among our best men in the army....There are affectionate + faithful

²⁹F. Jay Taylor, ed., Reluctant Rebel: The Secret Diary of Robert Patrick, 1861-1865 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), 165.

³⁰Walbrook Davis Swank, Confederate Letters and Diaries, 1861-1865 (Charlottesville, Virginia: Papercraft Printing and Design Co., 1988), 95.

³¹Dayton, ed., Diary of a Confederate Soldier, 71-72.

³²Jones, Christ in the Camp, 20.

wives at home could the conduct of their husbands be made known to them, they would scorn to notice them + their children would blush for shame. I don't see why they should ever consent to go home, or how God permits them to live."³³ L. L. Polk, disgusted by adultery, believed it shameful both for the individuals involved and their society. Confederate generals contended with great wickedness in their commands, and in no army was vice eliminated. However, through perseverance and an abiding faith in God, many commanders improved the morals of their men by providing a worthy example and by issuing orders strengthening the practice of virtue, and discouraging vice. They believed that such measures strengthened their country's chances for victory because virtuous men meant virtuous soldiers. They also believed that abundant virtuous behaviour would encourage the reception of divine favours which would aid in the South in its struggle for independence. Leonidas Polk also believed that Christian morals would prepare the men for their eventual return to civilian life.³⁴ Confederate generals relied on Christian standards on morality, including the temperance movement in American society, to compel their soldiers to abstain from drunkenness. While these efforts were not entirely successful, they did demonstrate to the soldiers that their commanders were serious about maintaining orderly and sober armies. Confederate generals themselves also relied on the temperance movement's ideals to preserve them from drunkenness and disgracing themselves in front of their men. In contrast to the leadership offered by Union generals, especially U. S. Grant, Confederate generals were remarkably successful in abstaining from alcohol, especially considering the fact that they often lost battles and would eventually witness the subjugation of their country. The fact that religion motivated Confederate generals to keep both themselves and their men from drunkenness should be counted as an advantage religion gave to the Confederate war effort.

Blasphemy filled the air in some regiments, and these words directly challenged one of the Ten Commandments, "Thou shall not take the name of the LORD thy God in

³³Letter of Leonidas LaFayette to his wife, March 26, 1863, Leonidas LaFayette Polk Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

³⁴Polk, Leonidas Polk, II: 215

vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”³⁵ Because of the constant and unnecessary words of wickedness to which he was exposed, one soldier worried that the Lord would not hold the Confederacy guiltless, and would in fact turn against it.³⁶ Confederate general Edward Johnson often engaged in profanity so frequently that a chaplain wished for an opportunity to rebuke him for his words.³⁷ However, it was not only generals and ordinary soldiers whose mouths required a cleaning. A Baptist preacher, serving as a captain in the Confederate army, proved to be a bad example for privates in his company when he began to cuss in their presence. A private reminded him that he was supposed to be a preacher and that such conduct did not become him. The captain replied, ““you don’t have to let that bother you. The Lord has given me a furlough until this damn war is over.””³⁸ Just as the preacher thought he was justified in using foul language, so did soldiers who forged furlough passes and convinced themselves that since they intended to recruit for the army on their illicit leave, they were justified in committing forgery and (temporary) desertion.³⁹

Many individuals maintained a tenuous connection to Christianity, but did not want to abandon the pleasures of the world to which they had become accustomed and addicted. Bell Irvin Wiley has recorded the whole gamut of Confederate soldiers’ sins: gambling, drinking, robbing, swearing, Sabbath-breaking, purchasing the services of prostitutes and contracting venereal disease.⁴⁰ Other authors confirm the prevalence of these vices throughout the armies of the Confederacy.⁴¹ In short, it is clear that the

³⁵Exodus 20: 7.

³⁶Dayton, ed., Diary of a Confederate Soldier, 44.

³⁷Joseph T. Durkin, ed., Confederate Chaplain: A War Journal of Rev. James B. Sheeran, c.ss.r. 14th Louisiana, C.S.A. (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1960), 54.

³⁸David Holt, A Mississippi Rebel in the Army of Northern Virginia (Thomas D. Cockrell and Michael B. Ballard, eds. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1995), 159.

³⁹Nisbet, Four Years on the Firing Line, 83.

⁴⁰Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank, 36-57.

⁴¹Bennett, The Great Revival, 34; Tanner, Stonewall in the Valley, 49; Daniel, Soldiering in Army of Tennessee, 95-100.

revivals which occurred among the armies in 1863 and 1864 were not a result of the presence of thousands of pure Christian boys who just wanted the chance to get together and sing some psalms. Rather the success of the revivals was due to the fact that hard-drinking, whoring, swearing, lewd, gambling men realized they were going to hell if they did not change their ways and find a new way of life and a new Master to follow. Not all soldiers repented of their sins, but in this moral framework of revivalism and repentance, Confederate generals found an opportunity to shape their commands according to a basic Christian morality and thereby improve their commands' efficiency as well as increase their men's chances of salvation. Generals typically left the formal preaching to chaplains and other preachers (with the notable exception of William Nelson Pendleton), but often attended the services and accorded the chaplains respect and opportunities to engage in their evangelization.

Robert E. Lee supplemented his moral example to his men⁴² with positive orders discouraging the consumption of liquor and the pilfering of people's possessions when the army was on campaign, whether in Virginia, Maryland or Pennsylvania. Having served in the Union army before the war began, Lee was well aware of how prevalent the use of spirits was in the field. He implored his son not to fall into the temptation of relying on liquor as a universal balm nor as a means of impressing fellow officers.⁴³ In addition to attempting to suppress drinking in his army, Lee also believed that gambling should be restrained.⁴⁴ Upon seeing multitudes of men playing "Chuck-a-luck" in Longstreet's corps, Lee asked that officer to suppress this form of recreation. Longstreet agreed to look into the matter, but either Longstreet failed to keep his word, or else all of his efforts proved futile, because the men continued to play and gamble their money away.⁴⁵ This episode highlighted two crucial limits on how much morality a general could cultivate in his command. A general's orders, no matter how well meaning, were worthless unless carried out by zealous and like-minded subordinates. The second limit

⁴²Freeman, R. E. Lee, I: 114. Freeman specifies that "Lee neither drank nor swore nor gambled."

⁴³Jones, Life and Letters of Robert Edward Lee, 93-94.

⁴⁴Official Records, ser. 1, vol. 19/2, sec. 28, 721.

⁴⁵Sorrel, Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer, 92.

was that determined soldiers could always find ways to disobey orders, even though their transgressions would eventually be detected. The generals' intent was not to punish offenders, but rather to prevent violations in the first place, and in this object they were frequently thwarted. As the Confederacy had far smaller manpower reserves than the Union, every soldier was needed to fight the Yankees, and each soldier in detention was one less soldier on the line. Although soldiers did not appreciate the efforts of their generals to constrain their behaviour, these attempts at imposing a moral code on the troops marked the generals' unconscious endeavour to foster a father-son dynamic between them and their men. The generals tried to prevent the soldiers in their command from committing sin and getting into trouble. The soldiers usually realized these actions stemmed from the generals' concern about their well-being, and that the generals wanted the best for the soldiers. It was this type of parental control that formed the nucleus of Fishwick's idea of Lee as a father of his men.

Eventually, every general, including Lee and Stonewall Jackson, realized the limits of imposing morality on their men. Despite Lee's resolution that no plundering occur during the Army of Northern Virginia's forays into Union territory in 1862 and 1863, he overlooked instances of plundering on occasion.⁴⁶ Lee's feigned ignorance of plundering likely emanated from the fact that his soldiers were hungry and his compassionate nature sympathised with their empty stomachs.⁴⁷ Stonewall Jackson tolerated his quartermaster's foul language which was reputed to be the worst in the army.⁴⁸

Not all soldiers took advantage of the fact that their generals periodically relaxed the enforcement of their orders. One soldier commended Lee during the invasion of Pennsylvania in June and July 1863 for his order against pillaging, arguing that "...Lee is right. Only thus can he maintain discipline in his army and mitigate the horrors of war.

⁴⁶Woodworth, While God is Marching On, 251.

⁴⁷Opie, A Rebel Cavalryman, 103.

⁴⁸George William Beale, A Lieutenant of Cavalry in Lee's Army (Boston: The Gorham Press, 1918), 181.

He sets an example to the world in not making the wrong of his enemy the measure of his right. Private pillaging soon demoralizes an army.”⁴⁹

Lee’s trustworthy lieutenant, Stonewall Jackson, also provided a consistent example to his soldiers about honesty. When he and his wife were strolling near a neighbour’s apple orchard prior to the war, Jackson refused his wife’s request that they help themselves to the fruit, because the owner’s permission had not been obtained. Even though he knew the man personally, and the man would have gladly allowed the retired major to take what he liked, Jackson’s code of personal honesty was absolute, and prohibited him from taking even a single bite from an illicit apple.⁵⁰ Stories like this one seem to bear the imprint of later mythmakers, including his wife, who wished to accentuate Jackson’s virtues. The point that this story conveys is that Jackson’s adherence to rules he believed in was absolute, and that he expected his soldiers to act in the same way.

J. E. B. Stuart also served as a paragon of honesty for his cavalymen. Although he occasionally allowed his staff officers to have a few drinks, in general he hated liquor, and informed one of his dragoons, John Opie, that if he were able to, he would eliminate alcohol entirely from the Confederacy.⁵¹ On one of those occasions when he allowed his staff officers to indulge before a mission, one of the younger men present, Theodore Garnett, turned down the offer of apple-brandy because of Stuart’s well-known dislike of liquor. Garnett ever afterwards regretted his decision, because upon reflection he believed that the brandy would have kept “‘...the cold out’ during the long and severe ride which lay before us.”⁵² What Garnett may not have considered was that his emulation of Stuart

⁴⁹Susan Leigh Blackford and Charles Minor Blackford, Letters from Lee’s Army: Memoirs Life in and out of the Army in Virginia (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1947), 181.

⁵⁰Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 69. The Biblical imagery evoked by this scene is interesting. Jackson, tempted by a woman by the offer of an illicit piece of fruit, which is usually depicted in paintings as an apple, rejects it, and thereby proves himself superior to the Old Adam, who accepted the fruit, and was consequently cast out of Paradise. The scene might be considered suspect were it not written by Jackson’s wife who inadvertently fell into the role of the temptress Eve.

⁵¹Opie, A Rebel Cavalryman, 281-282.

⁵²Theodore Stanford Garnett, Riding with Stuart: Reminiscences of an Aide-de-Camp, Robert J. Trout, ed. (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania: White Mane Publishing Co., Inc., 1994), 45-46.

may have saved him from losing consciousness or being shot on the ride because of decreased attentiveness due to the alcohol. The fact that he was cold during the mission helped to keep him awake, alert, and ready for action.

Garnett's desire to emulate Stuart's moral code was not unique. When Stuart ordered his men not to disturb any personal property in Maryland in June 1863, they obeyed. Only upon reaching Pennsylvania did they begin to seize horses, and those seizures were explicitly ordered by Stuart and the Confederate high command to supplement the scanty horseflesh remaining in the South.⁵³ In February 1864 Stuart's honesty and sense of justice remained intact, despite the reverses suffered by the Confederacy. He insisted to Major Gilmore that stealing money and watches from prisoners of war was immoral and should stop immediately. He authorized the use of "harsh measures if mild ones are unavailing"⁵⁴ in ensuring that this practice cease permanently.

Stuart's vigilance in watching over his soldiers stemmed from his own strict code of morality. Although he delighted in kissing pretty girls, William Blackford insisted that his chief was pure in heart, and did not go further than giving and receiving kisses from the many Southern belles who flocked to Stuart during his travels.⁵⁵ Not all generals were as scrupulous in their relations with the opposite sex. A. P. Hill, during his period as a cadet at West Point, contracted gonorrhoea, and the effects of this disease caused him to lose a year at the academy. Hill's biographer, James Robertson, suggests that this disease and the incident in which it was contracted was the "...tragedy of his life."⁵⁶ Ultimately, gonorrhoea led to the contraction of another illness years later, which cost Hill his life. However, during the war, Hill had repented of this behaviour, and used the religious revival to quash vice and promote righteous living which proved useful in the ordeals that

⁵³Henry Brainerd McClellan, The Life and Campaigns of Major-General J. E. B. Stuart, Commander of the Cavalry of the Army of Northern Virginia (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1885), 140.

⁵⁴Letter of J. E. B. Stuart to Major Gilmore, February 29, 1864, item 195, Dabney-Jackson Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

⁵⁵William Willis Blackford, War Years with Jeb Stuart (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1945), 155.

⁵⁶Robertson, General A. P. Hill, 11.

Hill's Third Corps in the Army of Northern Virginia endured from mid-1863 until the end of the war. Hill was not swept up personally in the revival, but rather focused on using it as a tool in making his men better soldiers.⁵⁷

Unlike A. P. Hill, who had only engaged in scandalous behaviour prior to the war, some generals continued to sin, or appeared to sin, during the war, giving rise to hostile comment and gossip. R. S. Ewell rivalled Jackson's quartermaster as the most profane man in Confederate service. His skill at profanity was such that one soldier believed it was "...the result of careful study and long practice."⁵⁸ Fortunately for those exposed to Ewell's foul mouth, his conversion to Christianity motivated him to clean up his language. Other soldiers were not so easily converted. Jubal Early's profane utterances rivalled Ewell's in their vehemence and frequency, and he did not hesitate to spout off even in Robert E. Lee's presence. Lee politely indicated that Early should watch his language, but his reproofs were ignored. Lee tolerated Early's behaviour, and referred to him as "My bad old man."⁵⁹ Lee's appellation for this general proved all too accurate when Lee granted Early permission to take the Second Corps into the North in the summer of 1864 to distract the Union armies, threaten Washington, and force the recall of as many Yankee troops from the trenches of Petersburg as possible. However, Early apparently exceeded the scope of his orders when he demanded a sum of money and gold from the residents of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, threatening to burn their town if the ransom was not paid promptly. The officials of the town refused, not taking Early's warning seriously as they believed that Union troops would soon arrive, and that the Confederates would not carry through on their threat since they had not previously acted in such a manner. Early ordered the destruction of the town, and the settlement was quickly consumed by flames. At the time, and until the end of his life, Early believed himself justified in this course of action.⁶⁰ He rationalized the morality of the act through

⁵⁷Robertson, General A. P. Hill, 172-173.

⁵⁸Eggleston, A Rebel's Recollections, 136.

⁵⁹Robert Stiles, Four Years under Marse Robert (New York and Washington: The Neale Publishing Company, 1903), 189.

⁶⁰Jubal Anderson Early, A Memoir of the Last Year of the War for Independence, in the Confederate States of America, Containing an Account of the Operations of his Commands in the Years

a comparison of his actions and the havoc the Union army, in particular Phil Sheridan and the Union cavalry, was causing across the border in Virginia. What Early did not understand was that his actions were more becoming of a bandit than a corps commander under Robert E. Lee. His behaviour in this instance merely caused Northerners to increase their support for the war, and helped demoralize his most principled and reliable soldiers.⁶¹ Early's example also encouraged individual soldiers to believe that common banditry was excusable and therefore permissible. Early's conduct in 1864 is a good example of the limits of a commanding general's ability to constrain the behaviour of his subordinate generals. Although Lee did not authorize Early's actions in demanding ransom from a town and then burning it when the ransom was refused, Early proceeded to do so anyway. As Lee had already known about Early's earlier bad behaviour, it is possible that Lee should be held responsible for Early's conduct. If Lee had wanted to send a general whom he could trust to act according to conventional codes of war, then he should have chosen another general.

Early's questionable behaviour in the eastern theatre of the Civil War was matched by Earl Van Dorn's conduct in the western theatre. Where Early's activities related to public and military decisions, Van Dorn's affairs were more personal, but still damaging to Confederate morale and the respect Civil War soldiers and civilians needed to have for their leading generals. By May 1863 Van Dorn had acquired a persistent reputation as a 'rake' and even a blatant seducer of young women. One Tennessee paper charged him with "...corruption, drunkenness, and licentiousness."⁶² The outcry reached its peak only in mid-1863, but in late 1862 allegations had been made in Mississippi that Van Dorn was an immoral libertine. He wrote to President Davis to defend himself, and insisted that "I never seduced *any* young lady *in my life*..."⁶³ Van Dorn's sister wrote a book defending her brother against all charges of wrongdoing and particularly in regard

1864 and 1865 (Toronto: Lovell & Gibson, 1866), 70-74; Jubal Anderson Early, Lieutenant General Jubal Anderson Early, 404.

⁶¹Some soldiers had no problem with this order and obeyed it without complaint.

⁶²Hartje, Van Dorn, 308.

⁶³Crist, ed., Papers of Jefferson Davis, 8: 537.

to the events leading up to his murder.⁶⁴ Whether or not Van Dorn committed adultery,⁶⁵ even he recognized the impropriety of his actions. He confessed to Davis that he and a “wild frolicksome young lady of Vicksburg”⁶⁶ were guilty of some ‘indiscretions,’ but that their interactions were virtuous and innocent. Instead of learning from his mistakes and focusing on winning the war and avoiding any suggestion of ‘indiscretions,’ Van Dorn simply made the acquaintance of other women. One of these women, Mrs. Peters, had a husband who calmly entered Van Dorn’s office on May 7, 1863, and requested papers permitting him to go through Confederate lines into Nashville, Tennessee. As Van Dorn prepared the passport, the man walked behind the general and then fired a bullet into his rival’s brain. Van Dorn’s life ended as the assassin left the office, mounted a fast horse and sped off to safety.⁶⁷

As news of the general’s murder spread through the surrounding region, journalists commonly ascribed Van Dorn’s death to be a just punishment on a sinful man. More importantly, some of his soldiers experienced an increase in morale as a result of the death of this particular general. In direct contrast to Stonewall Jackson, who died three days after Van Dorn, the alleged seducer was mourned by few and almost no one believed the cause to be severely compromised by the loss of his leadership. One soldier commented that “Yesterday Van Dorn was buried in Columbia having been shot by a Dr. Peters whose wife he had been too intimate with....It may be a great gain to the Confederacy. I do not think it was a great loss.”⁶⁸ The fact that one of his own soldiers

⁶⁴Comrades of Earl Van Dorn, A Soldier’s Honor: With Reminiscences of Major-General Earl Van Dorn (New York, London and Montreal: The Abbey Press, 1902), 249-250.

⁶⁵The ability of historians to examine these matters has been severely hampered by the lack of documents relating to his life, occasioned primarily by his sister’s intentional destruction of numerous letters written to and from Van Dorn and other items of historical significance.

⁶⁶Crist, ed., Papers of Jefferson Davis, 8: 537.

⁶⁷Comrades of Earl Van Dorn, A Soldier’s Honor, 249.

⁶⁸Hartje, Van Dorn, 321. It is proper to note that this particular soldier was “still bitter at his commander because of the general’s refusal to sign discharge papers for him only three weeks earlier.” However, even though some bitterness might have remained, individuals who had good cause to be bitter toward Stonewall Jackson still mourned his passing and readily acknowledged the loss the South had suffered by his death.

believed that Van Dorn's death might have been a 'great gain' to his country is ample evidence that the general's leadership was thoroughly compromised and that soldiers no longer retained sufficient respect for his position or his authority. In short, Van Dorn had already crippled his ability to lead an army long before Dr. Peters ended his life. In other wars, soldiers were content with or even appreciated a general who was a favourite with the ladies. However, in the context of the Civil War, many soldiers believed that their leaders needed to be pure and moral individuals in order to command respect from their men and seek favours from God. Even irreligious Civil War soldiers believed that their generals should focus on chasing the Yankees, and not waste time chasing women. Van Dorn's death is an excellent example of how Confederate soldiers and civilians believed that their generals had an obligation to be good Christians, or at least not offend openly against Christian morality. As religion was used by generals to enforce certain standards of behaviour on their men, so too was religion used by the soldiers and civilians as a yardstick in measuring the effectiveness and righteousness of their generals. Thus religion was a two-edged sword for generals, as they too were expected to adhere to the standards of Christian morality, and if they did not, they would be judged accordingly. When Van Dorn died, some soldiers actually felt relief at his death, and a few even thought his passing would be a blessing for the Confederacy. In few other wars would the assassination of one's own military leaders be received in this manner. In the case of Jubal Early, he was opposed by his own troops when he burned Chambersburg, as at least one officer, Colonel Peters, refused to participate in the devastation. Once again, in most other wars, Colonel Peters would have faced severe punishment for his insubordination. The fact that Colonel Peters could oppose Early's orders and not be severely punished and cashiered from service demonstrates the limits that the Christian standards of morality imposed on generals as well as their men.

Not all sinful behaviour on the part of generals or officers ended with the tragic consequences Van Dorn experienced. Frank Paxton firmly committed himself to remaining faithful to his wife when he discovered the adultery of another officer. He felt disgusted by the behaviour of the married man, returning from "a pleasure excursion up

the road...”⁶⁹ with his new mistress behind him on his horse. Paxton believed that if he himself had committed adultery he “...should feel through life a sense of baseness and degradation from which no repentance or reparation should bring relief.”⁷⁰ Paxton disapproved of the man’s behaviour, and resolved to provide a better example for his troops than his wayward comrade could offer.

Some generals who committed sins with women repented and lived a more chaste way of life in the future. Dorsey Pender wrote casually to his wife about a woman he had encountered and the improper remarks she had made. His wife responded by chastening him for his conduct, and felt “...indignant that any woman should have dared to make such loose speeches to my husband and that he should have encouraged it by his attentions, for you must have gone pretty far for a woman to attempt such a liberty.”⁷¹ Pender’s mortification can only be imagined as he read that humbling letter, and realized how he had damaged his marriage by flirting with another woman. The pain he caused his wife would never fully disappear, but Pender learned his lesson, and henceforth was a model husband and officer. The fact that Confederate generals were themselves sinners granted them understanding and compassion towards their men, and also provided them with insight into how and why their men violated their orders.

Virtually all Confederate generals took advantage of the presence of natural allies, such as chaplains, ministers and priests, in their quest to instil morality, discipline and order in the rank and file. By encouraging their soldiers to attend church, Confederate generals believed that the resulting moral influence would change their men for the better, making them more reverent toward God, more loving toward their neighbours, and more obedient to the orders of their superior officers. It should be noted that generals could only encourage their men to attend services, and not force them to go on a regular

⁶⁹Paxton, ed., Civil War Letters of Frank “Bull” Paxton, 22.

⁷⁰Paxton, ed., Civil War Letters of Frank “Bull” Paxton, 22.

⁷¹Hassler, ed., General to his Lady, 44. Pender’s wife further wrote that “I have forgotten all the anger I felt at first-but I can never forget that letter-nothing you have ever said-nothing you have ever done, nothing you have ever written in this whole of our married life-ever pained me so acutely or grieved me so deeply. I know you are sorry for it now, for you must feel it to be unjust, but it is enough to know that you could, in any mood say so much to pain me....”

basis. As George Rable writes, “Voluntarism had long been a hallmark of American religious life and now meshed with the idea of the citizen soldier fighting for his country. In the army, however, the price of voluntarism ran high because many officers appeared apathetic and attendance at services lagged.”⁷² Braxton Bragg was one of many generals who encouraged his soldiers to attend services.⁷³

Generals also encouraged church attendance by their example. Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard was seen kneeling beside ordinary soldiers at the celebration of Holy Communion.⁷⁴ Stonewall Jackson was a frequent participant in church services, although he often fell asleep during the sermon.⁷⁵ Jubal Early, despite his personal lack of religious faith or strict Christian morality, worked diligently to further the cause of religion among Confederate soldiers by promoting attendance at worship services.⁷⁶ Early’s intent, however, was not to increase the number of souls in heaven, but to fortify the souls in his army and prepare them for battles and marches that shook the constancy of all but the most hardened soldier. His perspective on the usefulness of religion was made painfully clear one Sunday morning when he and his staff attended a church service together. The minister, developing his sermon on the Resurrection, declared ““What would be your feelings at seeing all the dear ones who have gone before rising on that dread occasion? What would be your feelings at seeing those gallant ones who have given up their lives for their beloved country, rising in their thousands and marching in solemn

⁷²Rable, God’s Almost Chosen Peoples, 125.

⁷³McWhiney, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat, 254.

⁷⁴Caffey, Battle-Fields of the South, 196.

⁷⁵Robertson, Stonewall Jackson, 138; H. Kyd. Douglas, “Stonewall Jackson and his Men,” in Annals of the War, 646; Schildt, Hunter Holmes McGuire, 48; John Jones Clopton, The True Stonewall Jackson (Baltimore: Ruths’ Sons, Printers, 1913), 12; Virginius Dabney, “The Immortal Stonewall,” in Lee-Jackson Foundation, Lee & Jackson: Six Appraisals (Charlottesville, Virginia: The Lee-Jackson Foundation, 1980), 11; Frank E. Vandiver, Mighty Stonewall (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957), 378. Clopton argued that Jackson’s ability to focus on abstract subjects with his eyes closed led observers to deduce erroneously that Jackson was frequently sleeping during church services. However, numerous authorities, including Jackson himself, provide irrefutable evidence that, much to his chagrin, he slept in church.

⁷⁶Stiles, Four Years under Marse Robert, 189.

procession?”⁷⁷ As the minister was about to continue, Early bellowed ““I would conscript every damned one of them!”⁷⁸

Early’s profane outburst revealed his disrespect for spiritual realities, and his complete fixation on using every means in his power to fight and win the Civil War. Early callously used religion as a tool to inspire and motivate his men to fight and die for the Confederacy. Of course, religion would be useless if the soldiers adopted the same attitude toward it as did Early. Instead, they would have become scornful of religion and perhaps questioned their role in the war and whether they were willing to risk the only life they would ever know for the Confederacy’s independence. Without an omnipotent and omnipresent God keeping watch over their every action, they might seek an opportunity to sneak off and rejoin their families who, not having a loving and merciful God to care for them, needed their assistance and protection. Many soldiers who heard their commander’s irreverent attempts at humour likely realized Early’s true feelings about Christianity. Early’s use of religion as a means of accomplishing a merely secular objective undoubtedly impaired the furtherance of the Christian religion in the Confederate armies. Despite Early’s callous example, numerous soldiers ardently longed to attend religious services. However, at times soldiers wanted to attend church but were not allowed to go. Robert Holmes thought it unfair to be in such close proximity to the service taking place in the adjacent brigade’s camp, and be denied the privilege of participating in it. A few weeks later he noted in his diary that he was finally able to hear a short sermon.⁷⁹ A. B. Peticolas heard the church bells one Sunday morning during his service in the Trans-Mississippi department, but his superiors forced him to keep moving with his fellow soldiers.⁸⁰ The commanding officers of men like Holmes wanted them to be in their camps at all times in case of an emergency, and felt that too many absentees

⁷⁷Osborne, Jubal, 384.

⁷⁸Osborne, Jubal, 385.

⁷⁹Frank Allen Dennis, ed., Kemper County Rebel: The Civil War Diary of Robert Masten Holmes, C.S.A. (Jackson: University and College Press of Mississippi, 1973), 71.

⁸⁰Don E. Alberts, ed., Rebels on the Rio Grande: The Civil War Journal of A. B. Peticolas (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 145.

would jeopardize the army's security, even on a Sunday morning. Devout generals tried to avoid denying men the right to attend divine worship. Despite Stonewall Jackson's strict rule in February 1862 that only twenty of his soldiers could visit Winchester at one time, he made special provision for church attendance, thus allowing more soldiers to attend worship services.⁸¹

Problems could arise when the soldiers were allowed to go to church. Some travelled to a town to attend a service, but spent so much time enjoying the scenery that they missed the service.⁸² Others believed their appearance was so wretched that it would be improper to enter a church.⁸³ It is unclear whether these soldiers actually subscribed to the notion that only well-dressed individuals could enter a church, or whether they were simply coming up with an excuse to justify their absence at divine worship. If the first possibility was true, then their presence at church was all the more imperative because of their lack of knowledge of the Gospel. Obviously, they were more concerned with cultural mores about wearing good clothes to church than about Jesus's insistence that the body was more than clothing.⁸⁴ Dorsey Pender, before his decision to embrace Christianity wholeheartedly, decided whether or not to attend church on May 19, 1861 on whether or not it rained a lot.⁸⁵ Other soldiers willingly attended church, but would not under any circumstances attend a prayer meeting.⁸⁶

⁸¹Order of February 7, 1862 by command of Thomas Jonathan Jackson, Ashby Family Papers, Mss1AS346a, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

⁸²Nov. 16, 1864, Aristide Hopkins Diary, 1864, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁸³John Kent Folmar, ed., From That Terrible Field: Civil War Letters of James M. Williams, Twenty-First Alabama Infantry Volunteers (University: The University of Alabama Press, 1981), 152; Taylor, ed., Reluctant Rebel, 128-129.

⁸⁴Matthew 6:25. Matthew 6: 28-29 is also relevant: "And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

⁸⁵Hassler, ed., General to his Lady, 24.

⁸⁶Joseph T. Durkin, ed., John Dooley, Confederate Soldier: His War Journal (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1945), 73.

Occasionally generals encouraged and ensured that soldiers attended church, but although their men actually attended services the purpose of their attendance was thwarted because some of the soldiers did not go to worship God. One general, Josiah Gorgas, complained that he endured “a very long & very tiresome sermon this morning...”⁸⁷ at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Richmond. The fact that the clergyman preached over an hour did not impress this officer. Besides the length of the sermon, some soldiers disapproved of its content as well. On another occasion a soldier noted that Generals Jackson, A. P. Hill, Winder and Pender were all in attendance in church one morning, and commented that with such an audience, he considered the minister’s sermon “...very trashy...”⁸⁸ The soldier did not elaborate on what he thought was so inappropriate, but it is clear that he derived little profit from that particular minister’s exposition of the Word of God. In other cases, churches were used outrightly for sacrilegious purposes.⁸⁹ Consequently, simply getting soldiers into a church building did not necessarily ensure their acquisition of Christian morality. Nonetheless, thousands of troops derived real spiritual profit from their attendance at church, thereby confirming and rewarding their generals’ efforts to have them attend such ceremonies.

Church services occurred most often on Sunday, as this was the Christian Sabbath, the day to be set apart exclusively for the worship of God and to rest from all unnecessary labour. Many generals fostered the observance of the Sabbath, believing that men who were given a chance to rest and reflect on God’s mercies would be more able and willing to serve the Confederacy the other six days of the week. Few, if any, Confederate generals, however, refused to march or fight on Sunday, believing that such duties constituted necessary work, and were therefore excusable. At least one Union general, William Rosecrans, refused to fight on Sundays. In one instance, he permitted the Confederates defeated at the Battle of Murfreesboro to escape, because he insisted

⁸⁷Wiggins, ed., Journals of Josiah Gorgas, 109.

⁸⁸Blackford, comp., Letters from Lee’s Army, 97.

⁸⁹Edward A. Moore, The Story of a Cannoneer under Stonewall Jackson In Which is Told the Part taken by the Rockbridge Artillery in the Army of Northern Virginia (New York: Neale, 1907), 268-269. In some cases churches were used to house horses and other animals.

that his army should rest and recuperate on the Sabbath before beginning pursuit.⁹⁰ While no Confederate general was as scrupulous as Rosecrans in obeying the doctrine of resting on the Sabbath day, many of them sought to rest their commands and suspend all nonessential activities. Robert E. Lee, upon learning that some officers were using the Sabbath as an occasion to mount reviews and inspections of the men,⁹¹ issued an order forbidding such misuse of the Sabbath. He insisted that only essential military duties be required of the men on Sundays.⁹²

Despite Lee's attempts to prevent unnecessary work, tasks considered essential were so numerous that he remarked to his daughter "I have taken the only quiet time I have been able to find on this holy day to thank you for your letter of the 29th ultimo. One of the miseries of war is that there is no Sabbath & the current of war & strife has no cessation. How can we be pardoned for all our offenses!"⁹³ Whether Lee considered his continued labouring on that particular Sunday as one of his 'offenses' is unclear, but he seems to have believed that his inability to rest on that day was a punishment for such offenses. When Stonewall Jackson's mapmaker, Jedediah Hotchkiss, received orders from his chief to work on a map on Sunday, the cartographer believed it was a sin, and he prayed that he would be forgiven for it.⁹⁴ Hotchkiss also believed that the disappointing result of Jackson's offensive on a Sunday at Kernstown meant that the Army of the Valley would be well advised to keep the Sabbath as strictly as possible in future. According to his reckoning, of the four major battles that had been fought by March 1862, in every instance the side responsible for initiating bloodshed on those holy days had been defeated.⁹⁵ Hotchkiss evidently believed that those defeats were punishments from God.

⁹⁰Shattuck, A Shield and Hiding Place, 77.

⁹¹Dennis, ed., Kemper County Rebel, 24, 34.

⁹²Jones, Life and Letters of Robert Edward Lee, 466-467.

⁹³Letter of Robert E. Lee to his daughter Annie, December 8, 1861, Lee Family Papers, 1810-1894, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia; Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 90.

⁹⁴McDonald, ed., Make Me a Map, 30.

⁹⁵McDonald, ed., Make Me a Map, 14.

While not every Confederate believed that God regarded attacks or digging trenches on Sundays as sacrilegious, the inability of military personnel to observe Sabbaths properly was a common lament. William Nelson Pendleton thought Sunday, September 28, 1862 was far too hectic for a Sabbath, which was "...yet mentally to me a sacred day. I am resting for an hour or two."⁹⁶ That particular Sunday was not atypical. Pendleton remarked in November of that year how a Sunday had "...been very little like God's holy day."⁹⁷ Ordinary soldiers echoed Pendleton's longing for time to enjoy a Sabbath rest. One soldier felt compelled to work on a report on Sunday in order to send it the next day, even though he wanted to avoid all such labour.⁹⁸ Another soldier was forced to burn brush throughout his day of rest.⁹⁹ At the beginning of the war, a soldier wrote that "Sunday, strange to say, is the day upon which most military movements commence."¹⁰⁰ Other soldiers simply commented that Sunday was treated much like any other day, and that occasionally they did not even realize it was Sunday until late in the day, if at all.¹⁰¹ John B. Jones, a war clerk in Richmond, justified his practice of making diary entries on Sundays by writing that "Fighting for our homes and holy altars, there is no intermission on Sunday."¹⁰² The occurrence of the Sabbath day also reminded him of the presence of 'unholy' men on earth, and it was to combat these individuals that he

⁹⁶Letter of William Nelson Pendleton to his wife, September 28, 1862, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Lee, Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, 228.

⁹⁷Lee, Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, 235.

⁹⁸Taylor, ed., Reluctant Rebel, 98-99.

⁹⁹James Kerr Edmondson, My Dear Emma (War Letters of Col. James K. Edmondson, 1861-1865), Charles W. Turner, ed. (Verona, Virginia: McClure Press, 1978), 11.

¹⁰⁰Blackford, comp., Letters from Lee's Army, 21-22.

¹⁰¹Swank, Confederate Letters and Diaries, 27; Nugent, My Dear Nellie, 166; Daniel, Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee, 116; Dayton, ed., Diary of a Confederate Soldier, 27; Alberts, ed., Civil War Journal of A. B. Peticolas, 70.

¹⁰²John Beauchamp Jones, A Rebel War Clerk's Diary, Earl Schenck Miers, ed. (New York: A. S. Barnes & Company, Inc., 1961), 28-29.

continued some duties on Sundays.¹⁰³ Josiah Gorgas agreed with this attitude of persistence and diligence, believing it necessary to continue labour on Sundays and fast days, as “It will not do to omit any thing now-we must both pray and work.”¹⁰⁴

Although few soldiers were always allowed a complete day of rest, as had been frequently observed prior to the war, many cherished the Sabbaths they were permitted. Soldier Joseph Manson felt grateful for the opportunity to hear the gospel proclaimed and enjoyed the company of Christian friends one Sunday.¹⁰⁵ Frank Paxton was pleased to observe Sabbaths similar to the ones he had practised at home, as the ordinary work and drills were no longer required on Sundays.¹⁰⁶ As a result of Lee’s order and others like it, officers and soldiers alike received and appreciated the opportunity to rest. Jubal Early also issued orders for a more diligent remembrance of the Lord’s Day. His biographer, Charles Osborne, attributes these orders to Early’s strong belief “...in the value of religion in keeping his soldier’s spirits up...”¹⁰⁷ Just as he had encouraged his soldiers to attend church merely as a way of increasing their devotion to the Confederate cause, and not to God, so too did Early encourage rest on Sundays for temporal purposes. Despite the general’s secular intent, his soldiers still had the opportunity to obey God’s commandment and rest from their labours. The importance placed by generals and ordinary soldiers on the importance of observing the Sabbath is evidence of the strong Sabbatarian movement in mid-nineteenth century America. The Sabbath, when observed, offered generals and soldiers alike an opportunity to rest from their labours and reflect on their lives and to worship God. From the available evidence, it appears that the Confederate military effort was not impaired by the observance of the Sabbath, as even Stonewall Jackson believed that battles and marches needed to occur on the Sabbath, and constituted ‘necessary work.’ Instead, the troops were offered a chance to renew their

¹⁰³Jones, Rebel War Clerk’s Diary, 414-415.

¹⁰⁴Vandiver, ed., Civil War Diary of General Josiah Gorgas, 27.

¹⁰⁵Entry of December 5, 1864, Joseph Richard Manson Diary, 1864-1865, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁰⁶Paxton, ed., Civil War Letters of General Frank “Bull” Paxton, 50, 77.

¹⁰⁷Osborne, Jubal, 385.

strength, and in this respect the Sabbath aided the Southern war effort, by not expecting troops to continue to fight and march without interruption, only receiving rest at the whim of their commanding officer.

Stonewall Jackson also insisted that Sabbaths be observed, but in his case God's commandment was the driving force behind his orders. Jackson was notorious for imposing long, hard and fast marches on his troops, and while he usually allowed his men to rest on Sunday, he wanted them moving bright and early Monday morning.¹⁰⁸ His strict observance of the Sabbath was in many ways similar to Rosecrans' respect for the day. Jackson believed that there should be no printing of newspapers on Sundays,¹⁰⁹ and he scrupulously refused to write, read, or post letters on Sundays, or even mail letters that would still be in transit on the Lord's Day. Jackson rejoiced when he knew he was reading a letter that had not travelled through the mail on a Sunday.¹¹⁰ He also believed that God's wrath would be unleashed against the Confederacy if its law requiring the mail to be processed on the Lord's Day was not repealed.¹¹¹ Only in the most pressing military situations did Jackson order letters to be written and mailed on a Sunday.¹¹²

This penchant for paying so much attention to the observance of the Sabbath explains the numerous references to this subject in both contemporary and subsequent accounts concerning Jackson. Two Sabbaths in particular attracted much attention. The first was Sunday, March 23, 1862 when Jackson fought a battle on the Lord's Day, and the second was Sunday, June 29, 1862, when he allegedly allowed his men to rest rather than pursue McClellan's fleeing soldiers. In the first instance, Jackson intended to halt his brigades and allow them to observe a day's rest before they resumed their manoeuvres

¹⁰⁸Letter of Thomas Jonathan Jackson to R. S. Ewell, Polk-Brown-Ewell Papers, 1803-1865, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

¹⁰⁹Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 387.

¹¹⁰Copy of a letter written by Thomas Jonathan Jackson to his wife, January 17, 1863, Dabney-Jackson Papers Series Two, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

¹¹¹Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 389. Jackson's concern for the mailing on letters on Sunday is a typical example of his regard for the holiness of the Sabbath.

¹¹²Vandiver, Mighty Stonewall, 377.

opposite the federal forces in the Shenandoah Valley. However, his cavalry commander, Turner Ashby, informed him that a small detachment of Union soldiers were in a vulnerable position near Kernstown, Virginia.¹¹³ As Jackson's orders were to hold as many Union soldiers in the Valley as he could, he recognized the possibility of using this situation to his advantage. He launched an attack, but suffered a tactical defeat, largely as a result of there being far more enemy soldiers than he expected at Kernstown, and in addition they were already in battle formation when he made his assault. Many historians, especially Southern historians, recognize the strategic gains made by Jackson's attack. He displayed a resolute spirit that led Lincoln to retain Shields's men in the Valley and to send additional reinforcements to trap and destroy Jackson's pesky forces. Lincoln believed that the 6 to 1 numerical superiority he gave his Union generals would be ample to annihilate or, at the very least, negate Jackson's Valley army. However, Jackson overcame the odds and managed to inflict substantial damage on the numerous Union armies sent against him.¹¹⁴

On the morning of March 23, 1862 none of the participants in the fight at Kernstown were aware of these facts. Jackson's mind focused on the moral dilemma he faced. Should he attack the Yankees, trusting that he would win a victory and accomplish his mission, or should he obey the Lord's commandment and rest his troops? Jackson explained his reasons for violating the Sabbath in a letter to his wife:

You appear greatly concerned about my attacking on Sunday. I was greatly concerned too, but I felt it to be my duty to do it, in consideration of the ruinous effects that might result from postponing the battle until the next morning. So far as I can see, my course was a wise one. The best that I could have done under the circumstances, tho' very distasteful to my feelings, + I hope + pray to our Heavenly Father, that I may never be circumstanced again as on that day. I believed that so far as our troops were concerned, necessity + mercy both called for the battle. I hope that the war will soon be over, + that I will never again have to take the field. Arms is a profession that if its

¹¹³The men were part of Union Major General Nathaniel P. Banks's army, commanded on detached service by Brigadier General James Shields. As Banks was not with the army, and Shields was hospitalized, the Union forces at Kernstown were directed by Colonel Nathan Kimball.

¹¹⁴James I. Robertson, Jr., "Stonewall in the Shenandoah," in Battle Chronicles of the Civil War 1862, James M. McPherson and Richard Gottlieb, eds. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company; London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 96-97, 100-101.

principles are adhered to for success, in war, requires an officer to do what he fears may be wrong, + yet according to military experience, must be done if success is [to be] attained - + this fact of its being necessary to success, + being accompanied by with success, + a departure from if accompanied by disaster, suggests that it must be right. Had I fought the battle on Monday, instead of Sunday, I fear our cause would have suffered, whereas, as things turned out, I consider our cause gained much from the engagement.¹¹⁵

Jackson's meaning in this passage, which he deliberately obscured, was that doing God's will sometimes involved initiating a battle on Sunday. Far from repenting, Jackson believed he had been right to fight at Kernstown, because God had blessed his servant with a victory.¹¹⁶ Jackson prayed that he would "never be circumstanced again as on that day" because he would do the same thing over again, and risk renewed criticism from his wife and other Christians. Jackson did not think he would incur the wrath of God for such conduct. Rather, his understanding of the Sabbath led him to believe that since he was fighting God's battles, it was only fitting that they should be fought on the day sanctified to Him. It was the disapproval of his beloved wife and his fellow Christians that Jackson wanted to avoid, because of their strict understanding of the Sabbath. Previously, Jackson had suffered chastisement from his first wife when, on their honeymoon, he attended a military review on Sunday. She was shocked at his behaviour. He repented and agreed that he had been wrong to violate the Sabbath by this unnecessary act.¹¹⁷ Jackson loved both of his wives dearly. As daughters of Presbyterian ministers, they were well suited to tolerate and appreciate his eccentricities and frequent acts of piety. By the time of their marriage, his second wife was already well acquainted with the observance of a strict Sabbath.¹¹⁸ Their appreciation of religion also had drawbacks, since their understanding

¹¹⁵Copy of a letter from Thomas Jonathan Jackson to his wife, p. 18-19, item 47, Dabney-Jackson Papers, Series Two, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia; Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 249.

¹¹⁶Historians and most Union and Confederate critics at the time believed Jackson had been beaten at Kernstown, but Jackson always maintained that he won this battle, despite the fact that he suffered greater losses, failed to drive the enemy from his position, and was forced to withdraw from the immediate area.

¹¹⁷Vandiver, Mighty Stonewall, 98.

¹¹⁸Julia Jackson Christian Preston, Stonewall's Widow (Winston-Salem, North Carolina: Hunter, 1961), 14.

of religious doctrine occasionally differed from Jackson's, and he did not want to disappoint them. Thus he decided to obscure the issue and appear to be contrite when he really believed that he had served God by mounting the offensive, and had in no way committed a sin.

Some of Stonewall Jackson's biographers also disagree with and misconstrue Jackson's understanding of the Sabbath. Frank Vandiver considers Jackson a 'sinning soldier' because of the Kernstown battle.¹¹⁹ Allen Tate goes further than Vandiver and insists that Jackson "...wrote a long piece of casuistry justifying his unrighteous act. He hoped, he said, never to do it again."¹²⁰ Tate is slightly mistaken when he writes that Jackson 'hoped...never to do it again.' Instead, Jackson's hope was that he would never need to do it again, because if similar circumstances occurred, he would again feel justified in attacking on Sunday. James Robertson correctly perceives Jackson's opinion on Sunday battles when he explains Jackson's outlook on his first Sunday battle in the Civil War, First Manassas: "It was fitting that the day was the Sabbath. Fighting for the Father on His day seemed righteous as well as sublime."¹²¹ Ralph Hoppel indicates that Jackson enjoyed fighting on Sundays, as Jackson "...cheerfully engaged the enemy that day if the die so fell."¹²²

An understanding of Jackson's behaviour on March 23 is critical to evaluating his performance on June 29, 1862. E. P. Alexander and James Nisbet believed that Jackson purposefully rested his men on that Sunday, allowing McClellan's fleeing troops to escape. Alexander implied that Jackson thus ruined Lee's plan to destroy the Army of the Potomac because of his obsession with religion and his desire to spare his troops

¹¹⁹Vandiver, Mighty Stonewall, 205.

¹²⁰Tate, Stonewall Jackson, the Good Soldier, 128. The 'long piece of casuistry' Tate mentioned was the reproduced portion Jackson wrote to his wife about Kernstown.

¹²¹Robertson, Stonewall Jackson, 259.

¹²²Ralph Hoppel, Jackson (Richmond: Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 1971), 12. Of course, the decision to fight on a Sunday was not made by the roll of a die, but by a conscious decision on Jackson's part to initiate a battle.

additional casualties.¹²³ Allen Tate and Lenoir Chambers agree with Alexander's assessment of Jackson's behaviour.¹²⁴ However, on another Sunday Jackson promptly pushed his men to endure a vigorous march.¹²⁵ On at least one occasion he substituted Monday morning for the Sabbath when military matters pressed his men into action on the Lord's Day.¹²⁶ Jackson was quite willing to wage war on a Sunday, whether that included marching, fighting, or both. The more likely explanation of why Jackson did not press his men on June 29 was his extreme exhaustion. He obtained little sleep in late June, and his relentless schedule of work, riding to and from meetings with General Lee, and frequent prayer sessions lasting long into the night, sapped his strength and diminished his alertness.¹²⁷ Jackson's strict observance did not impede his pursuit of the enemy on any Sabbath. He believed, as did most Confederate generals, that Sunday was a time to rest when duty permitted because when pressing military matters demanded his attention, Jackson was the first to rush into action and do his duty in earnest, even on the Sabbath day.

Despite the fact that not even Jackson's soldiers could count upon a day's rest on Sunday, the partial observance of the Sabbath in the army did offer soldiers the chance to avoid becoming totally absorbed in earthly matters. Attending church and resting on the Lord's Day helped generals and soldiers to focus upon respecting Christian morality and also to use that morality in improving their performance in battle and on the march. In nineteenth century America many individuals and religious groups advocated the promotion of a stricter observance of the Sabbath day and viewed such observance as a beneficial economic, religious, and social reform.

¹²³E. P. Alexander, Military Memoirs of a Confederate (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), 145, 152; Nisbet, Four Years on the Firing Line, 78-79.

¹²⁴Tate, Stonewall Jackson, 181; Chambers, Stonewall Jackson, II: 17.

¹²⁵Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 254-255.

¹²⁶William Allan, History of the Campaign of Gen. T. J. (Stonewall) Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, from November 4, 1861,...to June 17, 1862 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1880), 81.

¹²⁷Robertson, Stonewall Jackson, 480-481.

Promoting observance of the Sabbath was one key part of Confederate generals' attempts to foster morality in their commands. By trying to restrain their own actions, regulate the behaviour of their soldiers, and promote church attendance, generals hoped that Christian morality would enable their soldiers to prosecute a vigorous and successful war. The encouragement of moral behaviour served both temporal and spiritual purposes. Christian soldiers fought sin, and thereby also aided in the war for Southern independence.

Although Confederate generals believed themselves to be men of principle, there was one overriding issue that had the potential to destroy their efforts at fostering Christian morality. Slavery called into question the underlying basis of Confederate claims to righteousness. Opinions have always varied on whether the South was indeed fighting to preserve slavery and the historiography on this subject is incredibly extensive.

One debate over slavery considers whether or not the Confederacy was established in order to preserve the institution of slavery. William Davis argues that "...secession and the Confederacy's existence were predicated on slavery, on preserving and defending it against containment..."¹²⁸ In Davis' opinion, not only were Confederates adamant that slavery needed to be preserved, but also that it should be spread further from its then-current boundaries, thus avoiding 'containment.' Warren Armstrong arrives at a similar conclusion. He writes that "Secession, then, was the ultimate act to protect the future of slavery."¹²⁹ James McPherson's research on ordinary soldiers convinced him that "Although only 20% percent of the soldiers avowed explicit proslavery purposes in their letters and diaries, none at all dissented from that view."¹³⁰ McPherson also states that only in the last months of the war were any remarks made in Confederate soldiers' letters that could be considered 'anti-slavery.' In contrast to these views formulated by late twentieth century and early twenty-first century historians, some earlier writers, such as Randolph McKim, vehemently argued that the war was not fought

¹²⁸William C. Davis, Look Away! A History of the Confederate States of America (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney and Singapore: The Free Press, 2002), 130.

¹²⁹Armstrong, For Courageous Fighting and Confident Dying, 116.

¹³⁰James M. McPherson, What they Fought For 1861-1865 (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), 34.

for slavery,¹³¹ but rather for states' rights and freedom from the tyranny of the Republican Party. In general, most modern commentators agree that slavery was indeed at the heart of secession, and the Confederacy was built on its maintenance and preservation. Only some historians argue that Confederate leaders wanted to expand slavery into new territory and increase the number of slaves.

What complicates the issue is the fact that Union generals and soldiers, until either September 1862, when the intended Emancipation Proclamation was announced, or January 1, 1863 when the Proclamation came into effect, also served a country that protected slavery. Lincoln's famous phrase that he did not care if no slaves were freed, all of them were freed, or some freed and others left in bondage, demonstrated that the war, in his mind, was not about slavery, but about the Union and its preservation at all costs. Eventually Lincoln came to the conclusion that the abolition of slavery would assist in the destruction of the Confederacy, and so he pronounced that on January 1, 1863, all slaves in the areas still in rebellion at that date would be free. However, in the slave states that still adhered to the Union, such as Maryland, the slaves would remain in bondage.¹³² While some Northerners were ecstatic about the proclamation, others opposed abolitionism. Union general George McClellan, who commanded the Army of the Potomac during most of 1862, firmly believed that slavery should not be impeded, and that the Union should be restored as it was before the secession of South Carolina. Some Northern soldiers agreed with McClellan that they would not fight to end slavery. In an interesting counterpoint to McPherson's research on the letters of Southern soldiers, Bell Irvin Wiley's research on the letters of Northern soldiers led him to discover that "One who reads letters and diaries of Union soldiers encounters an enormous amount of

¹³¹McKim, The Soul of Lee, 140.

¹³²Of course, with the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation virtually everyone in both the North and the South realized that slavery would shortly be abolished in the border states. It was only a matter of time. However, Lincoln's decision to allow some slaves to remain in bondage, while others were theoretically free (in practice the slaves in areas formally under Confederate control would have to escape or await the arrival of Union troops) called into question his commitment to abolitionism. In practice, Lincoln was not an abolitionist, and ironically it was only the secession of the Southern states and their persistent military defiance that led him to believe that abolition was prudent. At the beginning of the war, Lincoln agreed with McClellan that slavery should not be interfered with, but by the summer of 1862 had come to believe that it could only assist in the reconquest of the Southern states.

antipathy toward Negroes....”¹³³ One New York soldier went so far as to write that “‘I think that the best way to settle the question of what to do with the darkies would be to shoot them.’”¹³⁴ The fact that many Northern soldiers were not fighting against slavery is sometimes lost on modern scholars. Jim Downs, in an otherwise well-argued treatise, incorrectly writes that “When soldiers in the North reached for the rifles that hung above the mantles of their front doors and marched off to war, they did so in the name of ending slavery.”¹³⁵ Other historians, such as George Burkhardt, emphasize that only “A tiny minority [of the Northern population] lauded Lincoln’s declaration [the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862].”¹³⁶ Burkhardt continues that “In truth, an overwhelming majority opposed freeing the slaves and enlisting black soldiers. The Emancipation Proclamation mainly reflected Lincoln’s will and the hopes of abolitionists, Northern blacks, and antislavery people.”¹³⁷ Even Sherman, usually willing to use any and all means allowed to defeat his enemies, refused to use black soldiers for at least part of the war “...and candidly admitted, ‘I would prefer to have this a white man’s war.’”¹³⁸ Clearly the fact that many Northerners, including Lincoln, were not fighting primarily to destroy slavery calls into question whether the North, as a whole, fought against slavery. A similar situation existed for the Confederacy. Some Confederates, including Confederate generals, hated slavery, and fought only to protect their states against the incursions of the North. Could it then be said that only part of the South was fighting for slavery? Or does the fact that anti-slavery Southerners did not protest and take active measures against slavery decrease the value of their internal resistance to pro-slavery rhetoric?

¹³³Wiley, Life of Billy Yank, 109.

¹³⁴Wiley, Life of Billy Yank, 109.

¹³⁵Jim Downs, Sick from Freedom: African-American Illness and Suffering during the Civil War and Reconstruction (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 16.

¹³⁶Burkhardt, Confederate Rage, 18.

¹³⁷Burkhardt, Confederate Rage, 19.

¹³⁸Burkhardt, Confederate Rage, 19.

Whether or not the Confederacy was created primarily to preserve slavery, and the fact that in both the North and the South wide differences in opinions existed on slavery, the views of Confederate generals concerning the peculiar institution are relevant, and provide context for their moral beliefs and their reasons for serving the Confederacy. Their attitudes towards African Americans, their personal views of slavery, which could differ from that of the Confederate government or their churches, and their efforts to restrict or preserve slavery, all demonstrate the variety of perspectives they espoused. Among the Southern populace and among Confederate generals, some consciously fought to preserve slavery while others fought only for states' rights and against the tyranny of the North. To what extent should each individual person in the Confederacy be held accountable for its system of slavery? Eugene Genovese writes that "It is dangerous as well as wrong to obscure the genuinely tragic dimension of southern history-the extent to which courageous, God-fearing, honorable people rendered themselves complicit in slavery, segregation, and racism and ended up in defeat and degradation."¹³⁹ Did Confederate generals render themselves complicit in slavery by fighting for a government that was determined to defend slavery against the incursions of the North? Or were only those generals who actually owned slaves inculpated in the acrimonious legacy of African American slavery? While such questions cannot be definitively answered in the scope of a historical narrative, the range of Confederate generals' opinions on African Americans and slavery can be investigated. These differences illustrate the diverse moral beliefs that these men held and invoked to either support, undermine, or evade slavery and its implications for the Confederacy's future as a nation.

Slavery as practised in the United States in the nineteenth century was confined to African Americans, or persons with one or more parents, grandparents or even great-grandparents who were of African descent.¹⁴⁰ Thus, what Confederate generals thought

¹³⁹Genovese, *The Southern Tradition*, xiii.

¹⁴⁰The exact percentage of one's ancestors who needed to be African in order for a person to be considered an African American, and thus eligible for slavery, varied in the Thirteen Colonies and in the different states. This fact helps illustrate the merely abstract quality of the notion of 'race,' and that this notion bears far less witness to physical and genetic realities than it does to mental concepts, constructions and prejudice.

of African Americans provides a useful background and context for their views on slavery. For instance, P. G. T. Beauregard thought African Americans “...naturally inferior, ignorant, and indolent.”¹⁴¹ After the Civil War, he even ventured the notion that by the time three quarters of a century had elapsed all of them would have ‘disappeared,’ along with the buffaloes and the people who subsisted on them. Jubal Early agreed with Beauregard, and firmly believed that “The Creator of the Universe had stamped them, indelibly, with a different color and an inferior physical and mental organization.”¹⁴² Beauregard’s and Early’s opinions were typical of both Southerners and Confederate generals at that time. Stonewall Jackson thought two African American boys “...were pure, unadulterated Africans, and...that if these boys were left to themselves they would be sure to go back to barbarism; and yet he was unwearied in his efforts to elevate them.”¹⁴³ Jackson’s view of African Americans was emblematic of the antebellum South. Left to themselves, Southerners believed African Americans would regress and engage in all sorts of barbaric behaviour that whites imagined Africans practised in their homeland; but with the guidance of noble, Christian patrons, they could emerge further and further from their primitive origins. When and if African Americans would ever cease to be African and be recognized only as Americans, with the same rights, responsibilities and mental attributes as the whites, no Southerner would say. Instead most Southerners were convinced that at the present time, and for the foreseeable future, African Americans needed white guidance and supervision.

One Southern woman spoke for many other Southerners when she wrote that she understood slaves to be slothful, but also reliable and trustworthy.¹⁴⁴ White Confederates of all stations in life agreed with her, and believed that emancipation would damage the

¹⁴¹T. Harry Williams, P. G. T. Beauregard: Napoleon in Gray (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1954), 266. Presumably Beauregard believed that African Americans would die of natural causes. It is unlikely that he meant that they would interbreed with the white population or would be the victims of genocide.

¹⁴²Early, Lieutenant General Jubal Anderson Early, ix.

¹⁴³Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 118.

¹⁴⁴D. Giraud Wright, A Southern Girl in ‘61: The War-Time Memories of a Confederate Senator’s Daughter (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1905), 18.

unity that existed between the two peoples. A Southern man looking back at his childhood before and during the war believed that “With but few exceptions, the two races lived together in perfect harmony.”¹⁴⁵ This view, published in 1908, expressed what Southerners wanted race relations to be, not what they really were. In this fantasy, the antebellum South was a lost civilization where people occupied their proper stations in life, the white as master, and the African Americans as slaves and servants, and virtually everyone was happy.¹⁴⁶ Margaret Mitchell immortalized this myth in her novel Gone with the Wind. The fact that there was considerable friction between master and slave was exactly what made so many Southerners, including most Confederate generals, wary of immediate emancipation. In the minds of virtually all Southerners, and indeed most Northerners at the time of the Civil War, African Americans had been assigned a subordinate status to whites by God and/or nature.

Although apparently all Confederate generals believed African Americans to be inferior to whites, that did not mean that they believed them to be sub-human. Ambrose Powell Hill firmly opposed the practice of lynching African Americans accused of crimes. When a young man was lynched in Hill’s hometown, the fact that the perpetrators were his former neighbours did not assuage Hill’s anger. He insisted that the people responsible be held accountable for their crime. Hill believed that even though the lynched African American had been accused of murdering a white man the accused still was owed respect as a human being, no matter what his ethnicity.¹⁴⁷

These views of African Americans helped Confederate generals to support or else merely tolerate slavery in the antebellum South and in the Confederacy. At one end of the spectrum, there were men like Nathan Bedford Forrest, an ardent slave owner and trader, who believed that African Americans were fit to be bought and sold in any way their

¹⁴⁵Luther Wesley Hopkins, From Bull Run to Appomattox: A Boy’s View (Baltimore: Fleet-McGinley Co., 1908), 15.

¹⁴⁶At least one Southerner believed that former slaves, if armed by the Union government to serve in the Northern army, would then use force to return to their masters and apparently revert to their former servitude. For this extreme view of the loyalty of the slaves, see Jones, A Rebel War Clerk’s Diary, 141.

¹⁴⁷Robertson, General A. P. Hill, 22.

owner deemed appropriate.¹⁴⁸ He did attempt to keep slave families together when they were sold from his slave yard, and one of his biographers writes that his treatment of the slaves was so kind that they asked that Forrest to purchase them. Apparently his “...reputation for kindness and fair treatment”¹⁴⁹ led them to believe that Forrest would ensure that they would receive adequate food and shelter as they awaited their transferral to a new owner. Whether or not the future leader of the Ku Klux Klan ever had a reputation for ‘kindness and fair treatment’ towards African Americans is seriously doubtful. However, it is possible that Forrest realized the advantages of keeping slave families together simply from a utilitarian, rather than a humanitarian, perspective. If families were kept together, they would be happier, and more willing to work for their masters. The threat of being able to separate them from their families could also be used to convince them to keep working. However, if they had already been separated from their families, this threat could no longer be employed, and the slaves would be far more able to run away and try to find their families.

When the Union army destroyed slavery in the South, and the former slaves gained political suffrage, Forrest responded by leading the first manifestation of the Ku Klux Klan. By terrorizing the freedmen, he endeavoured to bring them once again under white control. Since legal ownership was now forbidden, Forrest and his fellow Klansmen sought to control the minds and behaviour of African Americans by providing nocturnal examples of what would happen to anyone who sought to promote full equality among all people in Southern society.

A clandestine organization like the Klan was not needed in antebellum Southern society to ensure the subordination of African Americans to whites. The mere fact that most Southerners considered African Americans as property, a status to which no white could ever be reduced, enabled Forrest and fellow slaveholders to feel relatively secure in their control over their ‘inferiors.’¹⁵⁰ Confederate generals used this fundamental

¹⁴⁸Andrew Lytle, Bedford Forrest and his Critter Company (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1960), 27-28.

¹⁴⁹Henry, “First With the Most” Forrest, 26.

¹⁵⁰Of course, the threat of slave revolts was always a concern in the minds of Southerners, but most believed that these were often caused by outside agitators, and that the slaves were content with their

inequality in race relations to their advantage. A. S. Johnston owned slaves, and when one of them stole his property, he retaliated by selling the man, executing a punishment that a Northern employer could never wield.¹⁵¹ Johnston's treatment of his slaves was not always characterized by such ruthlessness. While his wife occasionally whipped the slaves, he did not, even when severely provoked.¹⁵²

While some Confederate generals were unapologetic slaveholders and readily endorsed the slaveholding system, others like Patrick Cleburne had no stake in the future of slavery, and did not believe it to be an integral part of Southern society. Instead he thought the peculiar institution to be an incidental aspect of the South, one that could easily be discarded, and that its significance in the war was merely its use as a tepid Republican rationale for prosecuting the war. He believed his fellow Southerners would gladly eliminate slavery in order to achieve independence. However, as his biographer Craig Symonds explains, "He [Cleburne] was wrong. Indeed, his misunderstanding of the South's emotional and psychological commitment to the peculiar institution marked him unmistakably as an outsider."¹⁵³ Cleburne, an Irish Protestant immigrant to the South, grew deeply attached to his adopted homeland, but never imbibed many of the racial convictions that permeated Southern society. Thus he was one of the few Southern generals who occupied the opposite side of the spectrum from Forrest, firmly opposed to the maintenance of slavery at the cost of the Confederacy's independence.

lot in life. See for example, Jones, Rebel War Clerk's Diary, 127. Jones wrote on December 2, 1862, that "The negroes are the best-clad people in the South. They have their Sunday clothing, and the half-worn garments of their masters and mistresses, and having worn these but once a week, they have a decidedly fresher aspect than the dresses of their owners. They are well fed, too, at any cost, and present a happy appearance. And they are happy. It is a great mistake of the Abolitionists, in supposing the slaves hail their coming with delight; on the contrary, nearly all the negroes regard their approach with horror." It scarcely needs to be said that I do not believe Jones' descriptions of the past. The real question is whether Jones actually believed this himself, or that he merely wanted to believe it. It should be noted that this was a diary entry written at the time, and not a memoir written years later, when nostalgia clouds a writer's memories of the past.

¹⁵¹Roland, Albert Sidney Johnston, 166.

¹⁵²Roland, Albert Sidney Johnston, 181.

¹⁵³Symonds, Stonewall of the West, 182.

Most Confederate generals held an intermediate position in between the two extremes. They were uneasy with slavery, but did not see immediate emancipation as a viable solution because they thought the slaves unready for the responsibilities of freedom, and unsuitable for the free labour market as a result of their inherent ‘laziness.’ Often they hoped gradual emancipation would solve the problem, although they were never willing to support the adoption of a specific timetable that would free all of the slaves, as had several Northern states in the early nineteenth century. Robert E. Lee was the paramount example of this hesitant toleration of slavery. He wrote about his understanding of the peculiar institution in 1856, and his opinions on the matter changed little until the very end of the Civil War:

In this enlightened age there are few, I believe, but will acknowledge that slavery as an institution is a moral and political evil in any country. It is useless to expatiate on its disadvantages. I think it, however, a greater evil to the white than to the black race, and while my feelings are strongly interested in behalf of the latter, my sympathies are strongly for the former. The blacks are immeasurably better off here than in Africa, morally, socially, and physically. The painful discipline they are undergoing is necessary for their instruction as a race, and, I hope, will prepare and lead them to better things. How long their subjection may be necessary is known and ordered by a wise and merciful Providence. Their emancipation will sooner result from a mild and melting influence than the storms and contests of fiery controversy. This influence, though slow, is sure.¹⁵⁴

Lee believed that it was God’s job to emancipate the slaves, through the exertion of ‘a mild and melting influence’ on human hearts. For example, individual slaveholders could emancipate their slaves at their death. Lee’s father-in-law, George Washington Parke Custis, stipulated in his will that all his slaves were to receive their freedom, and, as executor, Lee eventually freed them within the prescribed five year time limit, at the end of 1862. The fact that Lee’s sympathies remained with the white race explains why he believed that slavery had more evil consequences for whites than the slaves. If his sympathies had been transferred to African Americans, then he might have realized more of the implications slavery engendered in their lives. Sexual exploitation, physical abuse,

¹⁵⁴Jones, *Life and Letters of Lee*, 82-83; Fitzhugh Lee, *General Lee* (New York: D. Appleton, 1894), 69; McKim, *The Soul of Lee*, 20.

inadequate food, shelter, and medical attention, and the constant fear of losing loved ones through sale to another owner were only a few of the evils slavery fostered in the lives of the slaves.

Douglas Southall Freeman contextualized Lee's understanding of slavery by writing: "Lee, in short, was only acquainted with slavery at its best and he judged it accordingly."¹⁵⁵ Thus because Lee ensured that his slaves were fed, sheltered and protected from sexual and physical exploitation, he believed such treatment was typical. However, Lee knew that slaves wanted their freedom, as two of the slaves on his father-in-law's former estate ran away, only to be captured and returned to Virginia to continue their servitude. A story printed in a letter to the editor of the The New York Tribune which stated that Lee administered a brutal thirty-nine lashes to a recaptured slave-girl, when the delegated slave-whipper refused to do so, was fictitious. Lee did however force the slaves to work in order to produce the stipulated monetary legacies in Custis's will for Lee's daughters. He had been compelled to assume the role of master to approximately 63 slaves against his will, and only his dedication to duty convinced him that he had a binding obligation to carry out the provisions in his father-in-law's testament.¹⁵⁶ Lee, believing himself constrained to discharge his duty, also affirmed that slaves needed to perform their duty as well. For some reason God permitted their enslavement, and thus it remained His prerogative to free them in His own time. Few Confederate generals were zealous advocates for the righteousness of slavery. Lee and Jackson in particular seemed ambivalent about the institution, and little or no surviving correspondence from the generals indicates that they endorsed the pro-slavery rhetoric Southern ministers had promoted since 1820. In general, Confederate military leaders believed slavery was a necessary evil, rather than a positive good for Confederate society.

The fact that Lee's spiritual leaders in the Protestant Episcopal Church never declared their opposition to the peculiar institution prior to the Civil War further

¹⁵⁵Freeman, R. E. Lee, I: 373.

¹⁵⁶Freeman, R. E. Lee, I: 373.

reinforced his tolerance of African American slavery.¹⁵⁷ Episcopal clergy agreed with Lee that it was ‘useless to expatiate on slavery’s disadvantages,’ because if they did so, they risked dividing their church, as other denominations had already suffered schisms over the issue.¹⁵⁸ However, as a Christian, Lee was not only bound to obey his church, but also his conscience, as he knew he would stand alone before the judgement seat of the Most High on the Last Day. How could Lee continue to hold his fellow human beings in slavery when he knew and admitted that the system was evil? How could he sell his fellow Christians to a slave trader,¹⁵⁹ uncertain whether their new master would take care of them, and protect them from the abuses inherent in a relationship in which one party holds absolute control over the other? According to Warren Armstrong, the Army of Northern Virginia even captured free African Americans in Pennsylvania in June and July 1863, and brought them back to Virginia to be sold into slavery.¹⁶⁰ While it is unclear whether Lee knew about these abductions, it is certain that he did not intend the invasion of the North in 1863 to be a slave raid. Lee did not believe in enslaving free African Americans, nor did he approve of forcing others to divest themselves of their ‘property.’

It was as property that most Southerners, Confederate generals included, viewed African Americans, and not primarily as human beings with rights. As James Oakes writes in his landmark volume on slaveholders entitled The Ruling Race: “In law and custom, in ideology and practice, the masters did their best to ignore or sidestep the inescapable humanity of their slaves. In so doing they created irreconcilable

¹⁵⁷Conrad James Engelder, “The Churches and Slavery: A Study of the Attitudes Toward Slavery of the Major Protestant Denominations” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1964), 278; S. D. McConnell, History of the American Episcopal Church: From the Planting of the Colonies to the End of the Civil War (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington Limited, 1891), 361.

¹⁵⁸Engelder, “The Churches and Slavery,” 262.

¹⁵⁹James M. McPherson, Drawn with the Sword: Reflections on the Civil War (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 153. In theory a master had absolute control over his slaves (except for the power to kill them with impunity, as even the law codes of the Southern states did not equate slaves with livestock), but in practice slaves did have some ways of ‘negotiating’ with their masters, by engaging in active or passive resistance that would diminish their value to their owners.

¹⁶⁰Armstrong, For Courageous Fighting, 118.

contradictions within their own world, contradictions that were only heightened by the masters' unwillingness and inability to alter their behaviour. Through it all they continued to view slaves primarily as property."¹⁶¹ Oakes makes it clear throughout his work on slaveholders that slavery served to weaken the moral reputation and self-respect of slaveholders. Even Edmund Ruffin, a fire-eating slaveholder who was publicly proud of Southern slaveholding society, privately doubted slavery.¹⁶² The majority of Confederate generals, contrary to popular belief, were not proud purchasers of human flesh. Instead they often felt ashamed and embarrassed of the predicament they encountered in their society. This reality is often denied, and even ridiculed by modern historians, but James Oakes' thorough research bears startling testimony to the inner reality of slaveholders. Oakes even goes as far to say: "The pervasive inner turmoil among the slaveholders is revealed in their startlingly frequent declarations that when they died they would go to hell. Slaveholders questioned the sincerity of their beliefs and bemoaned their lack of faith."¹⁶³ It is possible that this inner turmoil generated by the guilt and uncertainty caused by slaveholding contributed to Lee's own willingness to view death as a welcome escape from the miseries of this life. While Lee's feelings about death will be discussed at length in chapter 5, let it be said at this point that at no time was Lee, or the majority of other Confederate generals, spiritually proud of their slaveholding activities. The image of Confederate generals as gleeful slave raiders into the North is a myth.

Lee's faith in an abiding and merciful Providence taught him to trust in God, not in himself, and that he was unable to fundamentally change the world in which he lived. Instead, he accepted the South as it was, and especially his beloved state of Virginia, sinful slavery and all, as an intermediate stage before the advent of God's Kingdom in Heaven. Henry Alexander White claims that Lee treated his slaves in ways that Lee

¹⁶¹James Oakes, The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders (New York: Knopf, 1982), xiv.

¹⁶²Oakes, Ruling Race, 118.

¹⁶³Oakes, Ruling Race, 114.

himself thought kindly.¹⁶⁴ White is correct in this assertion because Lee believed that living under the direction of a benevolent slave master in America was better than a life in Africa, fraught with peril, idolatry, superstition and barbarism. Scholars today disagree with Lee's perception of life in Africa during the mid-nineteenth century, and therefore disagree with the underlying assumptions of Lee's beliefs. However, historians must attempt to understand what an individual, such as Lee, believed, and not simply study historical facts, such as conditions in mid-nineteenth century Africa, and then condemn Lee for not understanding those facts. Lee never travelled to Africa, and so his ignorance of what African American slaves would have experienced as freemen in Africa must be taken into account when realizing that Lee really did think he was treating his slaves kindly, even though modern sensibilities tell us that, by our modern definitions, it was impossible for a slave master to treat slaves kindly. Lee, as a mid-nineteenth century Southerner, did not recognize the contradiction.

Lee also did not believe in championing abolition or even raising his voice and insisting on a fixed set of deadlines for gradual emancipation. Life on earth was not meant to be perfect, and radical abolitionists who believed differently would only incite bloodshed and death. Lee had the same fatalism that had settled over many of his other countrymen, as Henry Mayer writes: "For most Americans, however, a fatalism had set in that regarded slavery as an immutable feature of the landscape, an unlooked for evil that had been fastened upon them by generations long past and whose resolution had to be left to enlightened generations not yet born."¹⁶⁵

Stonewall Jackson's notions of slavery were quite similar to Lee's. He owned a few slaves during his life, but did not approve of the institution,¹⁶⁶ and only bought some of the slaves he did own because they begged him to purchase them. Jackson allowed one of them to work for wages, and when the slave's purchase price had been accumulated,

¹⁶⁴Henry Alexander White, Robert E. Lee and the Southern Confederacy, 1807-1870 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1897), 28.

¹⁶⁵Henry Mayer, All on Fire William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 52.

¹⁶⁶Richards, God Blessed our Arms, 91-92.

permitted the man to buy his freedom.¹⁶⁷ Jackson thought slavery was “...an economic and social evil and desired its abolition by state legislation.”¹⁶⁸ However, he refused to label it a ‘moral’ evil, and instead believed that the Bible supported the existence of the institution.¹⁶⁹ How slavery could be at once an economic and social ‘evil,’ and yet not a moral ‘evil’ lies in the fact that Jackson’s morality came directly from the Bible. As Jackson understood the Bible to support African American slavery, he could not call it a moral evil, or else he would thereby repudiate the very source of his morality. A recent historian writes that “The Southern defense of slavery depended not so much on a literal interpretation of Scripture as on a superficial one.”¹⁷⁰ And yet Jackson was not given to superficial reading; instead he pored over everything he read, spending hour upon hour digesting it, assimilating it, absorbing it, until at last he reached a full understanding of the subject matter. This technique enabled him to survive and even thrive at West Point, despite his previous lack of schooling. When reading the Bible Jackson’s determination only intensified. The Bible said Abraham had slaves; Abraham was God’s friend; therefore slavery was permitted by God. The Mosaic code laid out provisions whereby slavery was regulated and specified the proper treatment of slaves. Jackson believed that since the Ten Commandments and various other laws still applied to Christians, so did the laws about slavery.

However, some Biblical passages deliberately undermined slavery, and, as Steven Woodworth writes, the Bible “...does set forth stipulations about right and wrong behaviour that, if followed faithfully, would make American chattel slavery impossible.”¹⁷¹ There were also stipulations insisting on the observation of the jubilee

¹⁶⁷Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 114.

¹⁶⁸Edward C. Smith, Thomas Jonathan Jackson: A Sketch (Weston, West Virginia: Society of Historical Engravings, 1920), 28.

¹⁶⁹Smith, Thomas Jonathan Jackson, 28; Roy Bird Cook, The Family and Early Life of Stonewall Jackson (Richmond: Old Dominion Press, 1924), 84-85.

¹⁷⁰Woodworth, While God is Marching On, 16.

¹⁷¹Steven E. Woodworth, Cultures in Conflict: The American Civil War (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000), 35. Paul’s letter to Philemon is a good example of this standard of behaviour. Even though Paul returned Philemon’s runaway slave, Onesimus, to his temporal master, Paul’s implicit

year, to be celebrated every fifty years. The Israelites were told “And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile [sic] unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.”¹⁷² Not surprisingly, the fiftieth year never arrived in the South. There was never a jubilee year because, after the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in 1808, this merciful provision in God’s Law would have ended slavery in the United States once the jubilee arrived. The jubilee was never celebrated because despite what some Southern apologists for slavery argued, American racial slavery was not the slavery system referred to the Bible. Nor was it the slavery system that was practised in the Roman Empire at the time of the writing of the New Testament. American slavery had, as one of its core tenets, the belief that only Africans were suitable for slavery; only occasionally were indigenous peoples of North America forced into slavery. Nowhere in the Bible was such a racial view of slavery discernible. Southern ministers’ attempts to justify slavery by referring to the sin of Noah’s son Ham, and the curse laid upon Ham’s son, Canaan, demonstrate how desperate and futile their efforts were in seeking a Biblical rationale for racial slavery.¹⁷³ They had no viable Biblical arguments to justify why an African American was suitable for slavery, and a person of European descent was not. Instead they had their own racist philosophy, and that was definitely not Biblical in origin. They could refer to Pauline instructions for slaves to obey their masters,¹⁷⁴ but most slaves knew that there were other rules for Christians as well, rules that forbade adultery, rape, and murder, rules that were violated by the same masters who expected their slaves to remain in servitude. Southern theologians who argued for the legitimacy of slavery failed to place the Bible in historical context.

meaning is apparent: Philemon had better free the slave because the master owed his very self to Paul, because the apostle had converted him to Christ.

¹⁷²Leviticus 25: 10.

¹⁷³Genesis 9: 25-27. Southern apologists could not definitively prove that all Africans were descended from Canaan, as they would need to be to fall under the curse that applied only to Canaan and his descendants. In fact, it is unlikely that the Africans were descended from Canaan, as the majority of the Canaanites lived not in Africa, but in the Promised Land which the Israelites occupied after the Exodus.

¹⁷⁴2 Timothy 6: 1-2.

One of the most glaring pieces of evidence which proves Southern legislators knew that racial slavery was not in accord with the divine law was the prohibition against teaching slaves to read and write. Southerners feared that if slaves could read and write, they would be able to communicate over long distances and read newspapers, and thus be better able to ferment mass flight or rebellion. Such laws hindered slaves from reading the Bible. Because the majority of Southerners were Protestants, they held sacred the ability to read the Bible for themselves, as it was one of the key tenets of the Protestant Reformation. Protestants affirmed Martin Luther's belief in everyone being able to read and understand the Holy Scriptures through the Holy Spirit residing within each believing man, woman and child. To forbid a Christian by law from learning to read the Word of Life was a grave sin. It was this sin that Stonewall Jackson refused to sanction. Despite the fact that he firmly believed in obeying all the laws of the state and country in which he lived, he knew that he had to "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."¹⁷⁵ The state of Virginia overstepped its legal and moral authority when it passed this law, and Jackson knew it. In defiance of the law, he openly operated a weekly Sunday school for African Americans in his hometown of Lexington, where he, his wife and other white teachers instructed their students in Scripture, reading and writing. Jackson could have been arrested and prosecuted for his crime, the crime of trying to save the souls of the poor and oppressed to whom the Kingdom of God belonged. The fact that Jackson was not arrested suggested that his neighbours also believed the law was unjust. All the residents of Lexington knew about the school, and some of them sent their slaves to the school for instruction. Although Jackson hesitated in denouncing slavery as morally evil, he trusted that God would bring an end to this social and economic evil at the right time. When that time would come, it was not for Jackson to say. His belief in the Providence of God consoled him that slavery would not last forever,¹⁷⁶ and that it was not the business of men to interfere with the order of things

¹⁷⁵Mark 12: 17b.

¹⁷⁶Offill, "Stonewall Jackson: A Case Study," 58.

created by God.¹⁷⁷ To interfere with the underlying order of God's universe was to challenge His authority, and Jackson believed slavery to be a part of that order. The Presbyterian Church, which he voluntarily joined as an adult, held firmly to the doctrine of the spirituality of the church, which, in theory, prevented church leaders from interfering with earthly matters such as slavery.¹⁷⁸ Once secession occurred, the Presbyterian Church in the Confederacy embraced this doctrine even more firmly than in the antebellum period.¹⁷⁹ Presbyterians in the Confederacy could chastise slaveholders for abuses, but were not to seek abolition, because "...God has not entrusted to His Church the organization of society..."¹⁸⁰ Jackson did not fight to save the peculiar institution for its own sake,¹⁸¹ but if his efforts to preserve the South's constitutional rights also preserved slavery, then he was confident that he had God's approval for his service to the Confederacy.¹⁸²

Other Confederate generals agreed with Lee's and Jackson's decision to minimize the importance of slavery in their rationale for fighting in the Civil War. Lafayette McLaws speculated that it was preferable not to engage in fanaticism on any subject, including slavery, believing that both pro- and anti-slavery activists were alike mistaken in their undue attention to the matter. McLaws did not believe slavery was an evil or a great blessing. Instead it was simply a practical question, one that did not merit much of

¹⁷⁷Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 143; Vandiver, Mighty Stonewall, 110. Jackson regarded American slavery as a divinely instituted institution.

¹⁷⁸David B. Chesebrough, ed., "God Ordained This War" Sermons on the Sectional Crisis, 1830-1865 (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 143-144. Why the prohibition against the interference with slavery was only theoretical was because numerous Presbyterian clergy delivered sermons sanctioning slavery.

¹⁷⁹Ernest Lee Thompson, The Spirituality of the Church: A Distinctive Doctrine of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1961), 29.

¹⁸⁰Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America, Minutes of the General Assembly...1861, 55-56 as quoted in Engelder, "The Churches and Slavery," 255.

¹⁸¹Dabney, "The Immortal Stonewall," in Lee & Jackson: Six Appraisals, 12.

¹⁸²Preston, Stonewall's Widow, 21.

his attention.¹⁸³ Colonel John Mosby enjoyed the company of his father's slaves, and cherished these feelings for many years. Apparently he felt that it would be imprudent to upbraid his father for being a slaveholder, or else the thought did not occur to him, even though long after the Civil War he was grateful to Abraham Lincoln for abolishing the institution.¹⁸⁴ Similarly James Longstreet, while not opposed to slavery before or during the Civil War, endorsed its overthrow in the postwar period. He wished to exercise as much influence over the votes of African Americans as possible, and wanted his former Confederates to join him as a member of the Republican party.¹⁸⁵ Almost all of Longstreet's former friends despised him for joining Lincoln's political party, but many understood his failure to mourn the passing of the peculiar institution.

Leonidas Polk did not survive long enough to witness the elimination of slavery from the South, but probably would have approved of its termination. Although Polk was the bishop of a large diocese and had many clerical tasks to perform, he believed it was his duty to set a good example for his flock by establishing a sugar plantation with his wife's inheritance of four hundred slaves. Even though he and his wife had the choice between the slaves or an equivalent amount of money, Polk believed he could use the slaves to establish and run a plantation that would be a model of race relations for all Louisianans to emulate. In the end, through natural disasters, mismanagement, and his refusal to break up slave families by sale, Polk lost almost all of his property in this venture.¹⁸⁶ Polk expressed his discontent with his role as a slaveholder to a fellow bishop by writing "Talk of slavery those mad-caps at the North [sic] don't understand the thing at all. We hold the negroes and they hold us. They are at the head of the ladder. They furnish the yoke and we the necks. My own is getting sore, it is the same with those of

¹⁸³A portion of extracts of letters from Lafayette McLaws to his wife, dated February 1 - May 1, 1860, Lafayette McLaws Papers, Southern Historical Society, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

¹⁸⁴John S. Mosby, *The Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1917; reprint, Charles Wells Russell, ed., Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959; reprint, New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), 5-6.

¹⁸⁵Wert, *James Longstreet*, 411.

¹⁸⁶Polk, *Leonidas Polk*, 183; Parks, *General Leonidas Polk*, 111.

my neighbours, in church and state.”¹⁸⁷ Why Polk did not remove his neck from the yoke and free his slaves is unclear. Polk believed that gradual emancipation would occur naturally, as the border states became free. It is uncertain whether he believed that slavery in the plantation states like Louisiana would be susceptible to this evolutionary decline.¹⁸⁸ Polk’s rationale for awaiting a gradual emancipation likely related to the prevailing Southern notion which Robert E. Lee outlined to Andrew Hunter in early 1865. Even though Lee thought slavery was evil, he also considered “...the relation of master + slave, controlled by humane laws and influenced by Christianity + an enlightened public sentiment, as the best that can exist between the white + black races while intermingled as at present in this country....”¹⁸⁹ Polk, Lee and Joseph E. Johnston did not believe immediate emancipation would end the problem of race relations in the South. Instead, it merely would change the proportions of the problem by granting a far larger number of African Americans the right to choose where and how they wanted to work, live, worship and marry.¹⁹⁰ Since Southerners regarded African Americans as inherently lazy, they assumed the former slaves would starve, or else steal and plunder in the countryside, while the crops rotted in the fields. While Confederate generals were not eager slaveholders, they were definitely white supremacists, who believed that any African Americans present in the United States needed to be controlled by white men. The notion that people of African descent could become in any way equal to whites, either politically, socially, militarily (in terms of becoming officers in command of whites) or even religiously (allowing an African American to become a minister to a white congregation), was abhorrent to them. Thus Lee and generals like him, though cognizant of the problematic nature of slavery for both African American and whites, looked at the

¹⁸⁷Typed copy of a letter from Leonidas Polk to Bishop Elliott, August 20, 1856, Leonidas Polk Papers, Microfilm Reel 1, University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee.

¹⁸⁸Polk, Leonidas Polk, 179, 223-224.

¹⁸⁹Letter of Robert E. Lee to Andrew Hunter, January 11, 1865, Robert E. Lee Collection, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, The Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia; Letter of Robert E. Lee to Andrew Hunter, January 11, 1865, Robert E. Lee 1861-1865 Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁹⁰Symonds, Joseph E. Johnston, 93.

alternative of emancipation as being much, much worse. Confederate generals believed that African Americans needed to be controlled somehow, and as the system of slavery existed, that was the tool they used to enforce their dominance over those they believed were their racial inferiors.

Dorsey Pender firmly believed that the discipline inherent in slavery was necessary to keep African Americans in line. He thought that slaves needed periodic whippings to keep them obedient, especially young ones like his servant, Joe, who received a 'tremendous whipping' on October 23, 1862.¹⁹¹ Pender did not reserve corporal punishment only for his slaves, for he also believed that his son should be whipped. Like Pender, other Southerners also believed that slavery helped foster discipline. From 1856 until the beginning of the war, Braxton Bragg operated his sugar plantation in Louisiana on the lines of a military establishment. Unlike his fellow general, Leonidas Polk, Bragg's plantation prospered, even though he found it necessary to continue work on Sundays, a practice the bishop refused to contemplate.¹⁹²

The vast majority of Confederate generals believed that it was prudent to tolerate or endorse slavery during the antebellum period. Once the Civil War began they saw no reason to change their prior stance toward the issue. All Confederate generals fought for state's rights. Only some of them, like Braxton Bragg and Nathan Bedford Forrest, fought to protect their rights to own human property. Since this right was one of many states' rights, Confederate generals indirectly fought for slavery by fighting for these rights.

Their beliefs regarding African Americans and slavery were put to the ultimate test when the Confederacy began suffering manpower shortages and calls were made to enlist the slaves as Confederate soldiers. Many Southerners repudiated such ideas because they believed that a gun and a slave was a very dangerous and foolish combination. However, Confederate generals knew first-hand that the Union armies often severely outnumbered their own, and that even without major defeats, simple attrition would destroy the ability of the Confederacy to defend itself. Since slavery was already

¹⁹¹Hassler, ed., General to his Lady, 13, 186.

¹⁹²McWhiney, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat, 142-143.

crumbling in many parts of the South, such as the Shenandoah Valley,¹⁹³ why not enlist these slaves as soldiers, instead of losing them to the Union? Patrick Cleburne prepared such a proposal in January 1864 and sent it to Richmond, hoping that swift action would bring thousands of African Americans into the field in Confederate gray, and help stem the tide of Union victories. In return, all of the slaves would receive their freedom. Cleburne also insisted that no further slaves should be sold, and their marriages be recognized by the law. He and the thirteen other officers who signed the petition believed that their plan "...may be imperfect, but in all human probability it would give us our independence."¹⁹⁴ Cleburne presented his scheme to the high ranking commanders of the Army of Tennessee on January 2, 1864. Generals Anderson, Walker, Bate, J. E. Johnston, Stewart and Stevenson all rejected the idea, but Generals Hardee and Hindman agreed with it. President Davis received the petition and quickly took action. He gave instructions to ensure that the document's existence did not become common knowledge and the public journals did not learn of the idea.¹⁹⁵ Davis was appalled by the suggestion that some of his best generals in the main Confederate army in the Western theatre believed it necessary to recruit slaves as soldiers.

Other Confederate generals became convinced of the proposal's merit by early 1865.¹⁹⁶ One historian argues, however, that without Robert E. Lee's support the idea would not have been seriously considered.¹⁹⁷ Lee was convinced by January 1865 that the slaves should be enlisted and trained immediately. The slaves who served as soldiers would become automatically free, and the remaining slaves would be gradually emancipated. Lee believed that the slaves possessed all of the necessary attributes to be

¹⁹³Phillips, "The Lower Shenandoah Valley," 299-300.

¹⁹⁴Howell and Elizabeth Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General: A Definitive Biography (Hillsboro, Texas: Hill Jr. College Press, 1973), 461.

¹⁹⁵Purdue, Pat Cleburne, 268-272.

¹⁹⁶Walker, Life of Lieutenant General Richard Heron Anderson, 196-197.

¹⁹⁷Andrew S. Coopersmith, Fighting Words: An Illustrated History of Newspaper Accounts of the Civil War (New York and London: The New Press, 2004), 243.

efficient soldiers.¹⁹⁸ His firm belief that slavery was the best possible situation for the South given the contemporary situation, yielded to his dire need for manpower. If drastic measures were not taken immediately, the slaves would be free anyway, and so Lee believed that it was in the Confederacy's best interests that emancipation occur under their direction, rather than at the instigation of the North. Just as the North had adopted emancipation as a pivotal instrument in their war effort,¹⁹⁹ so too could the South. The response of the Confederate authorities to their most renowned general publicly endorsing and acknowledging the need for African American soldiers bears witness to the charges made by historians that the war was fought for slavery.²⁰⁰ Instead of taking immediate action, Davis hesitated, and on March 10 Lee pressed his president to get the slaves trained as soon as possible.²⁰¹ By this time, of course, it was too late, since less than a month later Grant received Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House. With the Confederacy's capitol lost, and its principal army neutralized, no amount of African American soldiers could save the Confederacy.

Despite the wide range of opinions Confederate generals held about slavery, by definition none of them regarded the destruction of slavery as an important objective. Even Patrick Cleburne, the most zealous proponent of enlisting slaves as soldiers, and of complete and immediate emancipation, waited until late 1863 to develop his plan, and early 1864 before presenting it to the authorities. Even at that time the plan's function was not to destroy slavery, but only to use slaves as a means to win the war. Thus Confederate generals either willingly or unwillingly tolerated slavery, believing it an unfortunate but necessary institution for the South, or else as ordained for the development of the American continent and the schooling of African Americans in civilization and Christianity. Few if any generals believed fighting for a cause that

¹⁹⁸Letter of Robert E. Lee to Andrew Hunter, January 11, 1865, Robert E. Lee Collection, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, The Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁹⁹James M. McPherson, Lincoln and the Strategy of Unconditional Surrender (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: Gettysburg College, 1984), 22.

²⁰⁰Eggleston, The History of the Confederate War, II: 4; Genovese, A Consuming Fire, 3.

²⁰¹Freeman, ed., Lee's Dispatches, 373.

championed slavery compromised their efforts at fostering morality among their men. When they encouraged their soldiers to attend church, observe the Sabbath, and refrain from sinful activities, no reference was made to the existence of slavery. Humans existed in a world full of sin, and those Confederate generals who believed slavery was sinful did not believe that its existence prevented them from practising Christian morality. On the contrary, Christian morality was even more essential because of slaveholders' authority over African Americans. Some generals reassured themselves that even if slavery was immoral, then they were not responsible for it. As any effort to free the slaves would result in massive social dislocation and turmoil, it would be immoral to agitate for emancipation. Even though slavery was repugnant to many of them, they could not envision a satisfactory solution to the perceived problem of millions of former slaves living as freed people in the midst of their former masters. And after all, if slavery was such a bad thing, why did God allow it to survive? Surely He would not permit its existence if He hated it? These considerations were intimately tied to the generals' unwavering faith in God's Providence, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Moral considerations had a twofold significance for Confederate generals. Religious precepts, in line with military rules and regulations, (for instance, those inscribed in the Lieber Code,) constrained the actions of religious Confederate generals and gave them basic codes of conduct to foster the blessing of Almighty God upon their war effort. If they trespassed from this prescribed sphere of action (only targeting military personnel, trying not to kill civilians, respecting civilian property when possible) they implicitly and explicitly believed that they would be punished by God both in the present war and in the world to come. Likewise, religious generals believed that obeying God's laws, such as honouring the Sabbath day, would ensure his blessing upon their cause. Generals that were irreligious, such as Jubal Early, are the exception that proves the rule. Generally generals did not act like bandits as Early did in Pennsylvania in 1864. Their moral codes reinforced their adherence to military regulations in abiding by the rules of war. This moral code had limits of course. In particular the moral code was compromised by the South's racist philosophy concerning the inferiority of African Americans. Their philosophy enabled them to condone atrocities such as the massacre of African Americans at Fort Pillow and other locations. In their minds, African Americans were not

legitimate soldiers and so were treated as the Union Army treated ‘war-rebels:’ punishment by death.²⁰²

Morality was also used as a tool to enforce discipline in the Confederate Army. Besides the military codes that enjoined obedience upon soldiers, religious morality was used to shame soldiers into complying with military orders. Generals had limited success with enforcing morality upon the soldiers, and often encouraged soldiers to attend religious services in order to promote faith and improve the moral discipline of their troops. The generals’ efforts were hampered by the lack of chaplains, the lack of suitable venues and the general challenge of combat, travelling and other military duties. Even irreligious generals such as Jubal Early took advantage of Christian services and morality to encourage his troops to serve without complaint. In such cases religion was used cynically as a mere tool to enforce obedience and encourage soldiers to obey orders without question. Early engaged in this practice even when he himself was violating Christian morality by acting like a bandit. Understanding the place of Christian morality in the Confederate army is critical to appreciating the importance religion had in sustaining the Confederate war effort. The interplay between the effects the war had upon morality and the effects religion had upon the war demonstrate the need for in-depth analysis on this topic and refute the practice of many earlier scholars of simply taking the role religion had in reinforcing morality for granted.

Contrary to popular belief about Confederate generals, few were enthusiastic about slavery, and the majority of those who left written records about the institution were ambivalent or hostile towards the institution. While modern scholars may doubt these findings, it is clear that Confederate generals were not convinced by the pro-slavery rhetoric that emerged in the South after 1820. Their beliefs are closer to the feelings of Southerners in around 1800, when Southerners felt that slavery should be maintained, but was felt to be a necessary evil or at least less than desirable. The key reason why Confederate generals were unwilling to move to abolish slavery was due to their deeply ingrained racist beliefs about African Americans. While Lee and Polk were willing to privately complain about the negative influences of slavery upon whites, the horrible implications of slavery for African Americans barely concerned them. Their beliefs about

²⁰²Official Records ser. III, vol. III, sec. 124, paragraph 85.

the incapacity of freed African Americans to look after themselves and their perception of life in mid nineteenth century Africa convinced Confederate generals that African Americans were better off enslaved than the other alternatives. Confederate generals used select Biblical verses to justify their support for the continuation of slavery, and used a simple Providential logic as further support: God created all things that exist; slavery exists; therefore God created slavery and willed its continuance. Although scholars of the twenty-first century would take issue with the Biblical verses used to justify slavery and the logic used to believe that God willed slavery to continue, it is necessary to understand that Confederate generals truly believed these propositions. As mentioned earlier, the vast majority of Northerners also were deeply racist, and while some were anti-slavery by 1861, most simply wanted the slavery problem and African Americans themselves to simply go away. Characterizing the Civil War in a Northern anti-slavery vs. Southern pro-slavery narrative does an injustice to the historical record and does not accord with either Lincoln's decision to fight to regain the South nor Lee's decision to fight against the North. Lincoln used the slavery issue as a tool to win the Civil War, and Lee was ready in early 1865 to end slavery on terms favourable to the South in order to gain its independence. Unfortunately for Lee, many officials, especially the President and Vice-President of the Confederacy, were unable to envision a South without the peculiar institution, and so no African American soldiers were launched into battle in Confederate grey (some were being trained by the end of the war).

Religious doctrines were held in check by racist ideology and thus Confederate generals mirrored Southern society in their willingness to tolerate slavery. The jubilee year never arrived in the South because the South's system of slavery was not the system mentioned in the Bible. Nowhere in the Bible is slavery fixed upon one particular 'race' or class of people. Because the Confederate generals were literal readers of the Bible, and did not place the Bible in historical context, they failed to realize that slavery as practiced in Roman Empire was used as a means of offering 'mercy' to conquered populations. Instead of being totally eliminated when the Romans or other people conquered a people, many were enslaved as a merciful alternative to slaughter. The racial aspect of slavery did not exist, and indeed in the third century a slave was able to ascend through society and become the Roman Emperor. Such social mobility was not possible in the American

republic of the nineteenth century because of the ingrained racist ideology. It was this ingrained racist ideology which informed Southerners' reading of the Bible that was ultimately responsible for Confederate generals' willingness to support the Confederacy and the continuation of slavery. Confederate generals were supported in their efforts to maintain slavery as both an economic and a social system by non-elite whites, including both those who owned a few slaves or none at all. Lower class white Southerners, when given a choice between siding with fellow lower class African Americans, whether slave or free, or with white elite Southerners, preferred to side with elite whites virtually all the time. In other words, 'race' was a greater indicator of belief and behaviour than class. The findings of Aaron Shechan-Dean support this conclusion. In Why Confederates Fought: Family and Nation in Civil War Virginia Shechan-Dean admits that "I anticipated that social conflict, especially between slaveholders and nonslaveholders, played a signal role in Confederate defeat, but the evidence led in another direction. In the case of Virginia, the Confederate military drew wide support, from rich and poor men, from urban and rural men, from Democrats and Whigs, from slaveholders and nonslaveholders."²⁰³ Shechan-Dean argues that "Over time, Virginia soldiers issued clearer and stronger justifications for staying in service in terms of their families and their interests. This perspective ensured that the longer the war lasted, the less likely men were to consider re-joining the Union. Instead, they vigorously defended Southern society, especially slavery and racial hierarchy, in order to protect their families."²⁰⁴ While upper class Southerners, the social class most generals belonged to, had a strong economic rationale for maintaining slavery, lower class whites had an even greater perceived need to maintain slavery: to keep African Americans in line and away from their wives and daughters. The racist stereotype of African males as sexually violent predators who needed to be controlled influenced Southern thinking to such an extent that some lower class whites fought in the Civil War to keep the slaves from obtaining freedom and unleashing their savage lusts. In addition to the perceived sexual threat, Southern whites feared that former slaves would want to gain revenge on their former masters and on whites in

²⁰³Aaron Shechan-Dean, Why Confederates Fought: Family and Nation in Civil War Virginia (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 2.

²⁰⁴Shechan-Dean, Why Confederates Fought, 2.

general. Finally, Southerners believed that African Americans were inherently lazy, and that they would either starve if they were not forced to work, or else would roam the countryside and pillage at will. Southerners were determined to keep African Americans in check, and even after the Civil War, they devised Jim Crow laws, the Ku Klux Klan and even what Pulitzer Prize winning Douglas Blackmon calls “The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans....”²⁰⁵ Thus Confederate generals’ willingness to uphold the Southern social system was characteristic of Southern culture in general, and did not derive from the generals’ generally upper class origins.

²⁰⁵Douglas A. Blackmon, Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II (New York: Anchor Books, 2008), iii. If space permitted, an analysis of this book would substantiate my findings that the Civil War was fundamentally about the preservation of the Union, and not about the destruction of slavery, as far as the North was concerned. When the Union was secured, the North allowed the South to, in Douglas Blackmon’s words, to re-enslave African Americans, through a variety of means, including racist laws, voting disenfranchisement, social discrimination, penal labour and a variety of other methods that perpetuated the dominant racist culture in the South that endured for another hundred years.

Chapter 3 - Providence and Prayer

Of the religious subjects discussed by Confederate generals in their letters, military reports and diaries, few occur as frequently as does the notion of Providence. Providence helped Christians in the mid-nineteenth century, as in many other eras, to understand the world around them and relate it to the Divine Will. Even when afraid or uncertain, they believed that God understood everything, that all events had been accounted for, and that God's plans for humanity would come to their fulfilment at the end of time. Until the world ended, God acted in various ways to ensure that His Will was performed on earth. Some Christians believed everything that happened was God's Will, even wars and crimes.¹ Others regarded such tragedies as a consequence of sinful humanity's wicked deeds, and that God worked around or even through these unfortunate events, attempting to call each human being endowed with free will to repentance, and to a new life in Christ. Despite this difference in perception regarding God's responsibility for everything that occurred or existed, mid-nineteenth century Christians in the United States agreed on the importance of Providence in their lives and in the development of their country. Confederate generals needed an understanding of Providence, as they recognized the difficulty of achieving independence from the North. At the beginning of the war, the North relied on a larger pool of manpower, greater potential naval power and superior industrial facilities for producing war material, while the South had few corresponding material advantages. Many Southern Christians believed that such physical assets were of no consequence when compared to the favour of Almighty God. If God decreed they were to be free, then their independence was assured. All they needed to do was to keep the faith, and be worthy benefactors of God's tender mercies, and the North's attempts to subjugate the South would fail, utterly and completely. By fighting against God's Providence Unionists would simply bring down on themselves the wrath of God. Perhaps God had sent the Yankees as a scourge, to purify the Southern people, and prove

¹Stephan A. Hodgman, The Nation's Sin and Punishment: Or the Hand of God Visible in the Overthrow of Slavery (New York: M. Doolady, 1864), 17.

them worthy of a separate nation. Devout Southerners could not be certain, as God's ways were not their ways, and the inscrutability of God's intentions and designs led them to confess that though God's Providence was sure, it was not comprehensible to mortals. Providence as commonly understood by Southerners entailed a whole range of events, some pleasant, others unpleasant, but all were supposed to be advantageous to the true believer. John Calvin, when creating his theological explanation of Providence, had relied heavily upon St. Paul's letter to the Romans, in which Paul writes "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."² Thus, viewed through a Calvinist worldview, the Civil War was an opportunity for individuals, like the Confederate generals, to rise to the occasion and demonstrate their trust in God, evidence of their position among the elect and the saved people of God.

Throughout the war Confederate generals needed to rely on God's Providence even more than their fellow countrymen, as they were privy to incontestable information demonstrating the odds they faced in their bid for independence. Many Confederate generals believed that God shaped the course of nations and individuals, but their opinions differed as to how much free will individuals possessed in affecting the world around them. They were more united in believing He had specific plans for them and the Confederacy, and that these plans were often unfathomable, and that they must trust in God to realize His plans in His own time. Their varying beliefs affected how they expected to shape their own lives, and whether or not they were able to influence and even alter God's arrangements for their future.

Offering prayers to God helped Christians accept and understand the role of Providence in their lives. They offered such prayers both in public and in private. Many Confederate generals solicited prayers from their loved ones to aid them in their war efforts. They considered the worthiness of the petition, and of the person offering the prayers, often believing that close relatives and pious individuals offered particularly effective prayers. Generals held contrary opinions on the degree to which prayers were sufficient in and of themselves to accomplish objectives. Personal beliefs also influenced whether or not such prayers were even partially effective in entreating God to grant them.

²Romans 8: 28.

Providence and prayer subsisted together in the minds of Confederate generals, each offering different means of support to the generals as they waged war on behalf of the Confederacy.

The conviction that God was shaping the lives of each and every person permeated and strengthened the faith of many Southerners. Sometimes Providence acted through nature, dictating that a severe snow-storm prevent or end hostilities between the soldiers of a certain area.³ On other occasions Providence directed individuals to their death, as they had fulfilled their length of days.⁴ In all of these instances, the importance of Providence in helping soldiers and their families explain the meaning of their lives or deaths and the events they witnessed verifies Steven Woodworth's assertion that the idea of Providence was "...central to the religious faith of a vast number of Civil War soldiers."⁵ Thinking about Providence made these soldiers feel God's presence in their lives. He watched over them, He cared for them, and He was leading them to a future worth living for, and even worth dying for.

Many Confederate generals held the same ideas about Providence as did their soldiers. Even though they had more control over their lives and over military decisions than ordinary soldiers, they still believed that God guided and shaped events. Robert E. Lee felt that God was involved in shaping his life, and "...found solace in the belief that God had ordered best."⁶ Clifford Dowdey alleges that Lee's belief in "...Providence was similar to the beliefs the Constitution makers held in an All Powerful Force which controlled orderly development. While Washington and some of the others were probably Deists (Jefferson certainly was), Lee's religious faith, neither emotional nor evangelical, also essentially submitted to what he conceived as a divine will, or order."⁷ Dowdey was correct in his understanding that Lee, like the Founding Fathers, agreed on the existence

³Jones, A Rebel War Clerk's Diary, 173.

⁴William Spottswood White, Rev. William S. White, D.D., and His Times: An Autobiography (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1891), 177.

⁵Woodworth, While God is Marching On, 39.

⁶Freeman, R. E. Lee, I: 572.

⁷Clifford Dowdey, Lee (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1965), 109.

of a divine will and order in the universe. Unlike the Founding Fathers, many of whom were deists, Lee frequently witnessed the hand of God in everyday events. On one occasion, a Union officer, Colonel Dahlgren attempted to execute an insidious plot to ride into Richmond, release any prisoners there, burn the city, and murder President Davis and all of his cabinet ministers.⁸ Lee was grateful that Dahlgren's "...plans were frustrated by a merciful Providence, his forces scattered, and himself killed."⁹ Lee believed that God intervened frequently, through miracles and through human agents who, by cooperating with divine grace, retained their free will and yet were instruments of God's power.

Lee's faith in a personal God and his merciful Providence was absolute.¹⁰ He did not simply await the future, assured that God had already determined the course of events. Instead he attempted to work with God, and mould Providence into the future he desired. Sometimes he resorted to prayer, entreating a 'kind Providence' to help men like President Davis in the course of his duties.¹¹ In other situations he ordered his men to their posts, expecting them to perform their demanding tasks with diligence, and then hoped that Providence would ensure that their efforts were rewarded.¹² Lee's beliefs in Providence illustrate the fundamental balance in the minds of religious Confederate generals between what God had determined would occur, and how much effect their actions had upon the workings of Providence. Lee insisted to his son Custis that "...the people must help themselves, or Providence will not help them."¹³ In Lee's mind, God's intentions for his chosen people were conditional upon their energetic response to the opportunities they were offered in the course of their lives. If they simply expected God to grant them deliverance while they squandered their time and resources, they were sure

⁸Freeman, R. E. Lee, III: 219.

⁹Jones, Life and Letters of Lee, 327; Official Records, ser. 1, vol. 33, sec. 60, 223.

¹⁰Official Records, ser. 1, vol. 43/1, sec. 90, 558-559.

¹¹Letter from R. E. Lee to President Jefferson Davis, May 20, 1863, Robert E. Lee Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

¹²McDonald, ed., Make Me a Map, 198.

¹³Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 351; Jones, Life and Letters of Lee, 200.

to experience defeat. God's favour was not supposed to rob Christians of the incentive and inclination to persevere in doing good, but rather to encourage them. They were taught that no matter how feeble and inadequate their efforts were, God's grace would supply any and all deficiencies that remained in achieving the intended results. While believers in Providence often acknowledged that they themselves must do their part to serve God and do His Will, the full range of actions available to believers was often circumscribed because of the perceived inappropriateness of certain actions. Thus Providence could be used as an excuse to avoid certain actions because such actions appeared undesirable to the person invoking Providence.

George Rable's study God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War often discusses the notion of providence and largely substantiates my findings in this chapter. For instance, Rable indicates that according to mid-nineteenth century Christians, "Everything-storms, harvests, illnesses, deaths-unfolded according to God's will." Rable also comments that "Such a theology threatened to turn human beings into marionettes manipulated by a sovereign but also arbitrary God." I agree with Rable's assertion that theological opinions can have real effects on human behaviour. This effect of strongly held Calvinist doctrine had a widespread influence on the religious outlook of all Christian believers, not just those in denominations who were formal proponents of Calvinist theology, such as Reformed or Presbyterian. One improvement that could be made in Rable's work, as well as other scholars who write about Divine Providence, is to distinguish between Christians who believed in free will and those who ascribed all human actions to God's direct control. In my study, I attempt to demonstrate the subtle differences between Lee's theology, which is more inclusive of human free will, in contrast to Jackson's total dedication to strict Calvinist predestination precepts. This willingness to conflate Calvinist predestination theology with all forms of Christianity can be found in other scholarly works on the Civil War, including Jason Phillips' Diehard Rebels: The Confederate Culture of Invincibility. Phillips' first chapter is concerned with how religious belief, specifically a belief in Providence, fostered belief in the invincibility of the Confederate armed forces. In his discussion of providence, Phillips seems to wholeheartedly adopt Calvinist predestination as the normative religious position, and then to contrast that position with a non-religious free will attitude.

For instance, Phillips writes “Southern churches nevertheless did not idly wait for deliverance. Theirs was not a blind trust in Providence but a mixture of secular and sacred thinking, a blend of human responsibility and divine guidance.” This dichotomy between a secular worldview that promoted an understanding of human responsibility for events on earth, and a religious worldview that ascribed all events to God, does not accurately correspond to the many Southerners who believed that God gave humans free will to either accept or reject God’s commandments. Therefore, the idea of human responsibility for events on earth is definitely a religious idea, not exclusively a secular one, in the mind of non-Calvinist Christians such as Robert E. Lee. This lack of precision when discussing the idea of Christians’ conception of Providence often fails to address the fact that for non-Calvinist Christians God’s Providence can incorporate human free will. In this theological system, God retains His Omniscience and Omnipotence, that is, God knows all things and can do all things, but does not violate his creatures’ free will, because such actions would violate God’s nature as Love, emphasized in the First Letter of John.

Numerous Confederate generals asserted that they were working with Almighty God to further His providential designs. At the beginning of the Civil War, Braxton Bragg realized the difficulties the South faced in achieving its independence, and informed his wife that they needed to do their duty and rely on Providence to overcome the challenges ahead.¹⁴ R. H. Anderson explained in a military report that Providence allowed the execution of only part of his orders.¹⁵ Anderson’s claim is one possible example of using the concept of Providence as an excuse why certain orders could not be carried out. It must be acknowledged that while many individuals actually believed in the concept of Providence, others just used it as a convenient excuse to justify their action or inaction.

Despite some instances of using Providence as an excuse for personal failures, this theological concept could also be used to encourage individuals to do their best in

¹⁴Letter of Braxton Bragg to his wife, January or June 18, 1861 and April 24, 1861, Braxton Bragg Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹⁵Walker, Life of Lieutenant General Richard Heron Anderson, 212.

whatever circumstances they found themselves. Edmund Kirby-Smith counselled his wife always to remember that they were in God's hands, and that He was able to "...effect great results with small means."¹⁶ Beauregard recognized the workings of Providence in his troops' ability to withstand the onslaught of the enemy and prevent the Confederacy's subjugation.¹⁷ Leonidas Polk believed that Providence called him to relinquish his episcopal duties and use his martial training at West Point to serve the Confederacy. Even though he wanted to serve his flock and be their shepherd during the troubling days ahead, in June 1861, he instead looked to God for the strength needed to re-enter the military and serve his commander-in-chief until the emergency passed.¹⁸ All of these men looked to Providence to sustain them in their course and to guide them in their military duties.

Of the many generals who relied on Providence, none were more single-minded in their reliance on this vision of the future than Stonewall Jackson.¹⁹ While other generals mentioned Providence occasionally, such references permeated Jackson's writings and conversation. For Jackson, the Christian life meant serving and furthering Providence by one's every thought, word and deed. Jackson trusted in Providence, believing that all events occurred as a result of God's Will, and that they were designed by God to benefit His people.²⁰ In Jackson's mind, the secession of the Southern states occurred as a result of God's Providence.²¹ He believed that 'an everkind Providence' would enable him to be with his wife and baby daughter in the winter of 1862-1863.²² Even when Jackson's arm

¹⁶Joseph Howard Parks, General Edmund Kirby, C. S. A. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1954), 176.

¹⁷Stan V. Henkels, The Beauregard Papers..., Catalog 1148 (Philadelphia, 1915), 16-17.

¹⁸Polk, Leonidas Polk, I: 359.

¹⁹Robert E. Lee and D. H. Hill were just as single-minded or nearly so in their reliance on Providence.

²⁰Cooke, The Life of Stonewall Jackson, 270.

²¹Burke Davis, They Called Him Stonewall (New York: Rinehart, 1954), 13; Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 142.

²²Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 403.

was amputated on May 3, 1863, he was convinced that it was God's Will that it was gone.²³ If given the power to restore it, Jackson informed his chaplain, he "...would not dare to do it, unless I could know it was the will of my Heavenly Father."²⁴ This general could not conceive of the possibility that he had been wounded by a mere accident, that the bullets which had torn through his body were fired mistakenly by his own troops, and that God would have preferred events to have taken a different course. Jackson knew that it was his own troops who had shot him, but believed that they had acted according to divine decree.

Whatever happened, whatever did not happen, whatever existed, whatever did not exist, was because of the Will of God. Jackson's ability to see the workings of Providence in every event of his life and in the world around him inspired him to achieve what others considered impossible. Graduating from West Point despite his lack of preparation for advanced studies in mathematics and other subjects; manning an artillery piece in the Mexican War after all its gunners had been shot down; and daring to believe that his flanking manoeuvres in battles like Chancellorsville would bring victory, all stemmed from his conviction that Providence guided him. Jackson believed that all of his actions were divinely inspired. Even when he sinned, his sins were permitted by God for his own good, to teach him how to behave properly in the future and that he was not perfect, and needed to strive for perfection with even greater diligence. George Eggleston indicates that this conviction spread from the general to his subordinates, so much so that "...the officers and men alike were accustomed to think of their orders as the decrees of an all-wise Providence and of themselves as mere instruments set to accomplish the purposes of a higher authority."²⁵ Of course, this belief developed gradually, through the gruelling marches of the Valley campaign and stunning victories like Second Manassas. Jackson's

²³Description of Jackson's Death, written by Maggie Butt, no date, Thomas Jonathan Jackson Papers, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia.

²⁴Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 442.

²⁵George Cary Eggleston, The History of the Confederate War: Its Causes and Its Conduct (Reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1970), 105. Charles Royster agreed with this assessment, and argued that "He [Jackson] succeeded so well that his accomplishments seemed more than they were, just as the celebration of his methods obscured the vulnerabilities his determination had tried to override." Royster, The Destructive War, 77-78.

obsession with Providence marked his whole life and made possible his achievements both before and during the Civil War.

Jackson agreed with the commander of the Army of Northern Virginia that Christians could aid Providence, that mortal human beings had a conscious role to play in the divine workings of salvation history. Jackson's understanding of God's omnipotence, and the fact that He had caused all events to occur before time began, conflicted with Jackson's words and actions which bespoke his insistence on the need to be diligent servants of the Living God. In Lee's theology a balance existed between what God had decreed, and thus was unalterable, and what human beings could do to advance or resist Providence. In Jackson's theology this balance was absent, and God's omnipotence was absolute. At no time could an individual's free will cause something to occur that God did not want. In the case of Colonel Dahlgren's attempted raid on Richmond, Lee believed that Providence had frustrated this plot. Through Jackson's understanding of Providence, God caused the colonel's raid as well as decreeing its failure. While Lee's efforts to aid Providence are understandable, since God permitted human beings a certain range wherein they could exercise their free will, Jackson's efforts to aid God appear paradoxical, and yet it is certain that he did his utmost to aid Providence. Jackson prayed, he hoped, he fought, he implored his superiors, all in the belief that even though God had already decreed the future, his efforts were not meaningless. Like Josiah Gorgas, Jackson trusted that "Providence will help the rightexous [sic] man who puts his shoulder to the wheel."²⁶

Jackson did not reconcile these two beliefs: he maintained them simultaneously in his mind, relying on each of them for strength and direction. On the one hand he knew that God's Will was paramount and that, in John Esten Cooke's words, "...the issues of life and death...were in a mightier hand than man's..."²⁷ On the other hand, Jackson was unrelenting in the performance of his duty and his efforts to further God's plans, whether they involved preaching the Gospel to slaves, or sending Yankee armies reeling back

²⁶Diary entry of August 3, 1862, Diary of Josiah Gorgas, William Crawford Gorgas Papers (1857-1919), Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.; Gorgas, Civil War Diary of General Josiah Gorgas, 11.

²⁷Cooke, Life of Stonewall Jackson, 284.

across the Potomac into Northern territory. By refusing to harmonize these two beliefs Jackson combined divine reassurance with divine stimulus: he knew that God's Will was certain, but acted as if everything depended on him, and that the Southern cause was lost if he failed to perform his duty in the least particular. Few other generals relied so much on Providence, and yet acted as if they had so many opportunities to shape the future.

The contrast between Lee's and Jackson's divergent understandings of Providence resulted from their differing beliefs regarding predestination and free will. Lee was a low-church Episcopalian who, though convinced of God's omnipotence, maintained that human beings possessed free will: the choice to do good or to do evil. Their actions were solely the result of their own inclinations and choices, and although God encouraged them to do His Will, the choice remained theirs, as did the resulting rewards or punishments. Jackson was a deacon in the Presbyterian church, and maintained along with his fellow Presbyterians that God had ordained every action, every word, every thought that would ever exist before the world began. Lee believed that people could accept God's grace, and choose salvation; Jackson asserted that each person had been saved for heaven or damned to perdition long before they were born. During the war, this theological difference separated the two men far more on a theoretical plane than on a material plane. In their behaviour and actions during the various campaigns and battles, Lee and Jackson were united in their efforts to do their utmost to achieve the Confederacy's independence.

Presbyterian doctrine and its exposition by the Presbyterian minister R. L. Dabney fostered Jackson's belief in predestination.²⁸ Presbyterians such as Jackson and Dabney believed that God 'predestined,' that is, determined in advance, which individuals would go to heaven, and which would go to hell. No matter how much a certain individual wanted to be saved, any actions they performed were of no avail in determining whether they went to heaven or hell. Dabney insisted that dodging bullets or shells was pointless,

²⁸A distinction should be made between predestination as professed by Presbyterians and that adhered to by all Christians. Non-Calvinists, such as evangelical Episcopalians and Roman Catholics, believed that human beings made their own choices, and that those choices ultimately brought one to the intimate union with God that is called heaven, or the ultimate separation from God that is called hell. God knew of these choices before He created the world, but did not directly cause them, and instead allowed people to have free will and thus the potential to commit sin.

since the Lord directed each of the projectiles to their target. Dabney reassured his listeners that “...you are perfectly safe where the missiles of death fly thickest until Jehovah permits you to be stricken.”²⁹ D. H. Hill, Jackson’s brother-in-law and fellow Presbyterian, echoed the sentiment of Dabney’s sermon when he reassured his wife that “‘If my work is done, I will fall. If not, all the balls on earth cannot harm me. Never distrust God.’”³⁰

Numerous authors have written that Jackson’s faith in predestination and Calvinism in general made him and many of his co-religionists ‘fatalistic,’ ‘pessimistic,’ ‘gloomy,’ or otherwise despairing of the future and devoid of joy.³¹ It is critical for a student of Civil War religion to acknowledge that Christians who embraced this doctrine derived some benefits from holding this belief. George Rable cites one officer as stating, “‘I am getting to be a believer in pre-destination,’ Lieutenant Colonel William Frank Draper informed his wife. ‘It is the most comfortable belief a soldier can have.’”³² Rable goes on to remark that “Men of quite different religious backgrounds suddenly sounded like Calvinists as they came face to face with the enemy across a field or woods.”³³ For Presbyterians and other Christians, like Jackson and Hill, who believed in absolute predestination, this doctrine was a source of confidence and even exhilaration. They believed that before time began God had determined the paths they were to tread, and because God was loving, merciful and gracious, He had set their feet on the way to joy,

²⁹Romero, Religion in the Rebel Ranks, 64. It should be noted that Episcopal ministers could also use similar language when discussing the ability of God to protect individuals from harm on the battlefield. See for example William Nelson Pendleton to his daughter Rose Pendleton, October 22, 1861, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. “God can and will provide. No ball or weapon can harm us without His permission.”

³⁰Bridges, Lee’s Maverick General: Daniel Harvey Hill, 58.

³¹Smith, Thomas Jonathan Jackson, 10; Eggleston, A Rebel’s Recollections, 134; John Esten Cooke, Stonewall Jackson and the Old Stonewall Brigade, Richard Barksdale Harwell, ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1954), 31-33. James M. McPherson believed that religious fatalism could at times be labelled ‘positive,’ and thus perhaps not always imbued with a negative meaning. See McPherson, For Cause and Comrades, 65-66. Many other authors use the word ‘fatalistic’ in a purely negative context.

³²Rable, God’s Almost Chosen Peoples, 160.

³³Rable, God’s Almost Chosen Peoples, 160.

peace, and eventually, the wonders of heaven. All they had to do was wait and exercise patience, and the future Jesus promised his disciples awaited them. They did not have to worry whether they would stray from the path of righteousness, but could rest, confident that God had made them for everlasting life, while others had been created for the fires of hell. Of course, worried Presbyterians could wonder whether they were among the saved or the damned, but many Presbyterians, like Jackson and D. H. Hill, were quite certain that they would be saved. This attitude, far from deserving the label ‘fatalistic,’ merits the appellation optimistic or even joyous. Jackson believed that nothing that happened was truly bad, as all things had been determined by God. Sarah Randolph explains that “There was no gloom in Jackson’s religion. It shed perpetual sunshine on his pathway through life, soothing his cares and enlivening his joys. His perfect and childlike faith in God’s goodness made him think that nothing could happen except for the best.”³⁴ For Jackson, belief in predestination was a source of consolation and strength. The concept of Providence was an incredibly powerful means of allowing generals and soldiers to feel that they were destined for greatness and that they had the ability and authority to perform certain actions. Thus Jackson considered his wartime achievements as events which pre-existed in God’s Mind before time began. This conviction can be used to avoid a potential mental paralysis which can occur in intelligent individuals when they start to consider everything that could possibly go wrong with a planned operation. Particularly for generals planning military strategy, it is impossible to account for every variable that can upset the planned course of action. In other wars, some generals have relied on a concept of fate to help them deal with the potentially overwhelming knowledge that there are so many potential circumstances that could occur to thwart their objectives. Thanks to Jackson’s absolute adherence to his Calvinist interpretation of Providence, he did not suffer from this mental paralysis, and instead forged ahead, confident that his actions were both blessed and decreed by God Almighty.

Some authors have asserted that Robert E. Lee was a fatalist because at times he yielded his ability to change the course of events by admitting his own powerlessness and that since God controlled everything, there was little use in trying to achieve the

³⁴Randolph, The Life of Gen. Thomas J. Jackson, 45.

impossible. Thomas Connelly and Barbara Bellows assert that “In essence he [Lee] was a nonreasoning individual who abdicated decisions to forces beyond his control.”³⁵ Far from abdicating decisions to God, Lee did everything in his power to affect the course of Providence. He worked hard at trying to defeat the Yankees and to demonstrate that he and the Confederacy were trying to please and serve Almighty God. Thus Lee’s belief in Providence did not divest him of any incentive to affect his future. Instead this belief fostered his decisiveness, as he was confident that any efforts he made would be rewarded by God. Rather than a chaotic universe, devoid of meaning or purpose, Lee saw the world as fixed and orderly. The existence of a loving God assured him that his efforts, no matter how feeble, would be crowned with success.³⁶ The juxtaposition of Lee’s unwavering faith in Providence, and his unrelenting efforts to further God’s plans, emerges in a letter he wrote in July 1863 after the Battle of Gettysburg. He informed President Davis that “I shall therefore have to accept battle if the enemy offers it, whether I wish to or not, and as the result is in the hands of the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe, and known to Him only, I deem it prudent to make every arrangement in our power to meet any emergency that may arise.”³⁷ In this particular case, Lee was retreating from Pennsylvania and knew that in order to avoid the destruction of his army, he would have to fend off any and all attacks, and thus prevent his army from engaging in a disorderly rout. He did not know whether Union Major General George Meade was going to envelop his army and cut off any prospect for retreat, but he was doing his best to avoid being completely defeated. Most military historians of the Civil War would agree with David Goldfield’s assessment of the military situation: “Meade might well have destroyed Lee’s army and ended the war if he had pursued the retreating Confederates.”³⁸ Lincoln believed that Meade had lost an incredible opportunity and wrote a letter stating ““My dear general, I do not believe you appreciate the magnitude of the misfortune

³⁵Thomas L. Connelly and Barbara L. Bellows, God and General Longstreet: The Lost Cause and the Southern Mind (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Pres, 1982), 100.

³⁶Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 69-70.

³⁷Crist, ed., Papers of Jefferson Davis, 9: 266.

³⁸Goldfield, America Aflame, 289.

involved in Lee's escape. He was within your easy grasp, and to have closed upon him would, in connection with our late successes [Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg], have ended the war. As it is, the war will be prolonged indefinitely....Your golden opportunity is gone, and I am distressed immeasurably because of it."³⁹ Meade, however, was new to the command, and did not want to risk turning his victory at Gettysburg into a defeat if he pursued Lee. Lee recognized that although Meade had the power to force Lee to fight, God already knew the result, and could choose to influence it according to His will. Far from being a 'nonreasoning individual,' Lee's reasoning was quite advanced. He combined an understanding that one man's actions were minuscule, in comparison to all of the other influences that affected what happened in the world, with an appreciation that God would ensure no man's good works were performed in vain. In 1857 Lee wrote that "...Providence requires us to use the means He has put under our control."⁴⁰ During the Civil War this belief remained, and Lee aggressively seized upon any such means God provided and gladly used them to further His plans which he hoped and prayed included the independence of the Confederacy.

Lee's belief in his responsibility to use any and all means to serve God by winning the war for the Confederacy had some detrimental influences on the Confederate war effort. Because of his perceived personal responsibility to achieve victory, Lee frequently requested additional troops to supplement his forces in Virginia. It must be acknowledged that there were other reasons why Lee wanted as many troops as possible under his command. One of these reasons was because Lee's primary loyalty was to Virginia, and he did his best to maintain its territorial integrity, even at the expense of vast sections of the western Confederacy. Another reason explaining Lee's desire for additional troops was the fact that generals typically do not enjoy having men removed from their command, and prefer to maintain maximum troop strength to reduce the chances of their particular army being defeated. Lee also had the penchant for mounting offensives, and consequently preferred as many soldiers as possible to launch invasions of the North or to attack Union armies on Virginia's soil. In addition to these other

³⁹Goldfield, *America Aflame*, 289. Although Lincoln wrote this letter, intending to send it to the commander of the Army of the Potomac, George Meade, Lincoln never sent it.

⁴⁰Jones, *Life and Letters of Lee*, 85.

reasons, Lee felt that he was commissioned by God to personally fight the Union invaders, and consequently he had the greatest need of soldiers. Lee felt a compulsive need to do his duty to God and his state of Virginia. When writing to one of his sons, Lee advised “I trust you may be able to get a position and field agreeable to you; and know that wherever you may be placed you will do your duty. That is all the pleasure, all the comfort, all the glory we can enjoy in this world. I have been able to do but little here. Still I hope I have been of some service.”⁴¹ The consequence of Lee’s hoarding of Confederate soldiers was that other areas of the Confederacy were left undermanned, and consequently, the Union armies were better able to overwhelm and destroy those smaller Confederate armies. In particular, Lee’s willingness to invade Pennsylvania in June-July 1863 can be seen as his greatest mistake, as Ulysses Grant was thus able to force Vicksburg’s surrender on July 4, 1863. Had Lee been willing to relinquish enough soldiers to man a relief army, Grant’s siege of Vicksburg might have been broken, and the Union denied access down the Mississippi river. With the loss of Vicksburg, even more sections of the Confederacy were left open to Union attack, and a sizable army was compelled to surrender, losing weapons, supplies, and morale. While religion was not the only factor convincing Lee to retain and indeed call for additional troops to be added to his command, it was a means of convincing Lee that he was morally right, and that he personally was responsible to God for the winning of the war through a series of climatic battles in which God would grant him victory. Lee rarely trusted that another commander would use the troops as wisely as Lee himself would. Instead, Lee’s feeling of religious responsibility strengthened his natural tendency to retain as many troops as possible for himself. During the one instance in September 1863, when a sizable portion of Lee’s army (2 divisions under Longstreet) was transferred to the western theatre, Lee decreased the number of men that were sent, and continually requested that the two divisions be returned quickly.⁴² While it is uncertain that another commander would have used the troops wisely, it is clear that Lee used his immense influence with Jefferson Davis, as

⁴¹Dowdey, ed., *Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee*, 69.

⁴²Thomas L. Connelly, “Robert E. Lee and the Western Confederacy: A Criticism of Lee’s Strategic Ability,” *Civil War History* 15, no. 2 (1969), 129.

well as his position as military advisor,⁴³ to keep as many troops as possible in his Army of Northern Virginia.

Numerous generals and soldiers concurred with Lee's belief that the occurrence of God's providential designs, particularly victory in battles and the war as a whole, were conditional upon the due diligence of Confederate soldiers and the worthiness of the Confederacy. John Pemberton believed God would vindicate the Confederacy if its soldiers were courageous, diligent and industrious.⁴⁴ A common soldier echoed this idea when he wrote to his wife that "I feel when I pray that a merciful Providence is over us and that all things will work together for good if we are only righteous."⁴⁵ Generals and soldiers agreed that God was on the side of the Confederacy, but that His support was conditional upon the righteousness of the Southern people. If they did not persevere in their attempts to avoid sin and become holy, then the usually unspoken consequence was that God would not save them in their time of distress. Few, if any, Confederates believed that God would grant them victory no matter how depraved or unfaithful they were. Frank Paxton spoke both for himself and his fellow Confederates when he wrote that "We have a just cause, but we do not deserve success if those who are here [in the Army of Northern Virginia] spend this time in blasphemy and wickedness, and those at home devote their energies to avarice and extortion. Fasting and prayer by such a people is blasphemy, and, if answered at all, will be an infliction [sic] of God's wrath, not in a dispensation of his mercy."⁴⁶ Diligence, fortitude and devotion were necessary attributes for the Confederacy and its people to receive the Providential blessings they needed to achieve independence. Providence was thus a two-edged sword for religious believers. As long as the believers were convinced that they were in God's favour, they believed that the future would be promising and full of hope. However, if they or their fellow Southerners were sinful, then they might despair of victory because they believed

⁴³Connelly, "Robert E. Lee and the Western Confederacy," 122.

⁴⁴Michael B. Ballard, Pemberton: A Biography, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1991), 78.

⁴⁵Nugent, My Dear Nellie, 63.

⁴⁶Paxton, ed., Civil War Letters of Frank "Bull" Paxton, 82.

that any defeats were God's righteous punishments upon their nation. Such defeats would then be the harbingers of their ultimate subjugation.

In certain circumstances, trusting in Providence had tragic consequences. Some soldiers and generals felt that since God could protect them from harm in battle as easily as anywhere else,⁴⁷ any precautions to protect themselves from harm were totally unnecessary. Stonewall Jackson was one of the worst offenders in this regard, and in fact his death can be directly related to his belief in an omnipotent Providence. He could ride anywhere he chose on the battlefield, because he would only die when God wanted him to die, and not a moment sooner. If Jackson had been concerned for his safety, he would have delegated the reconnaissance on the night of May 2 to his subordinates, or would have at least alerted his troops to his presence in front of their lines. Thus he would have avoided being shot down in the darkness. Instead of evaluating such concerns, he simply rode on fearlessly, and believed the spray of gunfire that hit him and his entourage was all part of God's plan, and not an avoidable accident. Major-General Wm. B. Taliaferro testified to the effect Jackson's belief in Providence had upon his willingness to expose himself to danger.⁴⁸ All Confederate generals realized the role personal feats of bravery had in eliciting respect and loyalty from their soldiers. However, Jackson and others who held an absolute belief in predestination and Providence became so unconcerned about their safety that they placed the Southern cause in jeopardy. Jackson believed in the omnipotence of God, and that any attempts to safeguard his life on the battlefield would be indicative of a lack of faith in Providence. This willingness to court danger was not universal among the Confederate generals, and further illustrated how doctrinal differences could affect the behaviour of individuals who believed in the same basic concept of Providence. Nevertheless, this feeling of invincibility which Jackson, Polk and numerous other generals felt had a detrimental impact on the Confederate war effort. It was one thing to be seen leading troops into battle, thereby proving one's courage and willingness to face danger with one's soldiers. It was recklessness to expose oneself to

⁴⁷Nugent, My Dear Nellie, 46.

⁴⁸Wm. B. Taliaferro, "Some Personal Reminiscences of Lt. Gen. Thos. J. (Stonewall) Jackson), in Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 517.

enemy fire unnecessarily when praying, having a conference with other generals, or personally conducting a night reconnaissance in the line of fire of one's own forces. J. E. B. Stuart's death at Yellow Tavern was arguably not a result of his religious beliefs, but simply a death wish, as he had always wanted to die leading a cavalry charge. However, in the case of Stonewall Jackson, Polk and the deaths and injuries of numerous other generals, their conviction that they would only die on the day appointed by God definitely contributed to their reckless behaviour.

Despite the divergence in opinion over the extent to which human actions could influence Providence, believers in this theological concept shared the conviction that God had specific plans for each person, and for their country as a whole. Whether or not the individuals concerned desired these plans, they needed to be tolerated, as efforts to resist them would be futile and disparaging to God. In August 1861, Stonewall Jackson believed that one of God's plans was to have him commended for his performance at the Battle of Manassas. He confided to his wife that he was willing to exercise patience, knowing that God would see him commended in "...His own good time...."⁴⁹ Not all generals found God's plans to their liking. Shortly after the war, Edmund Kirby-Smith resided in Cuba, waiting for the right time to return to the South. He missed his family, and desired their company, but believed that his absence was part of God's plans. Though he did not revel in his plight, he felt that there was a reason for all he and the South had experienced and that in time God would return him to his family, and vindicate the South.⁵⁰ Even though the war was lost, Kirby-Smith still believed God had a plan for him and for the South. Providence granted believers, including many Confederate generals, the ability to look beyond the temporal misfortunes they had suffered, and look to a day when God's beneficent plans would be made manifest. In other words, when all looked lost, believers knew that the night was darkest just before the dawn.

Later generations would look askance at how Confederate generals and common soldiers invoked Providence to excuse their shortcomings or to explain events that were not fully understood. For instance, in early 1862, Henry A. Wise explained an absence

⁴⁹Jackson, *Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson*, 180.

⁵⁰Parks, *Edmund Kirby-Smith*, 488.

from his command to President Davis by writing that “Providence sharply prohibited my command in person: for nine days, I was prostrated at Nogg’s Head with high fever and a severe attack of pleurisy.”⁵¹ Instead of simply notifying the president that he had been too sick to perform his military duties, Wise had thus informed Davis that the illness had come from God. Obviously it was God’s will that, for some divine reason, he should not be present with his command. Clearly Davis should not blame one of his generals when God had forced him to retire from the field. Whether Davis actually ascribed Wise’s absence to divine intervention or to shortcomings in the general’s physical constitution is unknown. It is known that Davis held similar views of Providence, and might therefore have been sympathetic to Wise. Davis wrote that “It is not for man to command success, he should strive to deserve it, and leave the rest to Him who governs all things, and disposes for the best, though to our short vision the Justice may not be visible.”⁵² Davis was not the only one in the high levels of the Confederate government who professed a belief in Providence. C. C. Memminger, Confederate Secretary of the Treasury, was a firm believer in Providence, and wrote to Leonidas Polk that he should remain in Confederate service as a general. Memminger believed that the Confederate president was “...the minister of God for the State; and when, in the discharge of his office, he calls upon you as best qualified to defend the altar of God and the homes of your people, it seems to me to become an indication of Providence.”⁵³ Indications of Providence could come through prayer, circumstances, or even, as Memminger specified, through the leader of the Confederacy who, by issuing orders to his generals, evidently also displayed the will of God in addition to his own will. Not all generals and soldiers believed that Providence was so intertwined with the dictates of their government leaders. They were, however, in agreement that Providence manifested itself in many ways, and that one needed to be alert and responsive to any and all indications of God’s Will. This need for adaptability in discerning Providence offered religious believers a means of changing their minds about the desirability of certain actions or about the will of God. Since no

⁵¹Crist, ed., Papers of Jefferson Davis, 8: 47; Official Records, ser. 1, vol. 9, sec. 9, 112.

⁵²Crist, ed., Papers of Jefferson Davis, 9: 276.

⁵³Polk, Leonidas Polk, I: 375.

one, including the preachers and ministers, was privy to the fullness of divine Providence, there were always conflicting opinions as to what certain events, such as Stonewall Jackson's death, signified. However, individual believers would often discern particular interpretations of events, and this interpretation could have dramatic effects on their lives and the lives of those around them.

Some generals failed to understand how or why others invoked Providence to explain contemporary events. Jackson's subordinate, R. S. Ewell, was particularly confused. Jackson's firm belief that "all things work together for good that love God"⁵⁴ impelled him to see God's Providence in countless situations which baffled Ewell's understanding of the concept. Jackson believed Providence restored Morgan County, Virginia, and most of Hampshire County, Virginia, to the Confederacy in January 1862.⁵⁵ Later in the spring of that year, Jackson continued to see God's Providence in many different undertakings, including the capture of Union General Milroy's wagon train. When Ewell received a dispatch informing him of this fact, he exploded "What has Providence to do with Milroy's wagon train? Mark my words, if this old fool keeps this thing up and Shields joins McDowell we will go up at Richmond!"⁵⁶ Jackson's frequent references to Providence, and his insistence on giving glory to God for military victories exasperated Ewell. This particular subordinate had come to believe that Jackson's habitual references to divine intervention were indications of insanity. Ewell was unaccustomed to his commanding officer acknowledging the help of God in military operations. Although Ewell and the people of his time were familiar with the Bible's descriptions of God coming to people's assistance, many believed that miracles were confined to the times of the Bible, and that God did not directly intervene in human affairs in the nineteenth century. Ewell believed that Jackson's belief in divine

⁵⁴Markinfield Addey, "Stonewall Jackson": The Life and Military Career of Thomas Jonathan Jackson, Lieutenant-General in the Confederate Army (New York: Charles T. Evans, 1863), 217. This author believed that this belief, derived from Romans 8:28, "furnishes a key to the character of his [Jackson's] religious beliefs."

⁵⁵Letter of Thomas Jonathan Jackson to J. P. Benjamin, January 20, 1862, Item 82, Dabney-Jackson Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

⁵⁶Hamlin, Letters of General R. S. Ewell, 86.

intervention would compromise their military operations and thus allow the Union armies to unite in the Shenandoah valley, destroy Ewell's detached force, and ruin both Ewell's and Jackson's reputations in the Confederate capital. When this pessimistic scenario did not occur, Ewell realized that Jackson was not insane, and that Jackson's religion aided him in his military operations. Even though Ewell converted to Christianity under Jackson's influence, the convert never recognized the actions of Providence as frequently as Jackson, and was more apt to assign responsibility for events to mortals rather than to God.

At times Confederate generals acknowledged their weaknesses, and their inability to achieve the results needed for independence without divine aid. In February 1862, Beauregard confessed that the Confederate position in the western theatre was bleak and lamented that "Providence alone can determine...."⁵⁷ how to salvage the situation. His recent illness convinced him of the necessity of God's assistance, and that without such aid forthcoming, the Confederacy's future was uncertain at best. Even though Beauregard himself could become discouraged, common soldiers like William Nugent trusted in Providence, and believed that this famous general "...will be the instrument in the hands of God, to work out our salvation and redeem us from the polluting treads of our Vandal invaders."⁵⁸ All Beauregard and his soldiers needed to do was to take advantage of the opportunities presented by God, and Providence would deliver their enemies straight into their hands, and then the 'Vandal invaders' would be no more.⁵⁹ Many Confederates believed God's plans included their salvation and their country's independence, but such plans were conditional upon the proper response of generals and soldiers to the opportunities God offered them.

While generals, such as Beauregard, invoked Providence as an explanation, other observers, such E. P. Alexander, believed that the fixation on Providence allowed individuals to shift responsibility for events onto God, instead of taking responsibility for

⁵⁷Letter of P. G. T. Beauregard to Col. R. A. Payon, February 14, 1862, Pierre Gustave Toutant Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

⁵⁸Nugent, My Dear Nellie, 71.

⁵⁹Nugent, My Dear Nellie, 90.

themselves. Alexander, who did not believe in divine Providence, would see Beauregard's words as evidence of an abdication of responsibility for the situation. In this view, since God was not going to intervene to improve the Confederacy's fortunes, and the Union armies were determined to conquer the western theatre, which was where Beauregard was stationed, Beauregard needed to take charge and figure out a solution, or else face certain defeat. Thus a belief in God's Providence could allow generals to shift responsibility for events onto God, and thereby relieve their consciences, but at the cost of abdicating their responsibility and the impetus to attempt to control events as best they could. In other words, in this instance, Beauregard was yielding the initiative to his opponents, which was a fundamental mistake according to conventional military theory. It was considered much better to possess the initiative and force one's opponents to react to your actions, rather than to be reactive.

Believers in Providence generally agreed that the South had much suffering to endure before her eventual triumph. Since God had made His Son "perfect through sufferings,"⁶⁰ many Confederates believed that they and their country must endure ordeals similar to the Passion of their Lord. John Hood felt convinced of this necessity, but did not question that God favoured the Confederacy over the Union.⁶¹ The sufferings imposed by God could be relatively minor, such as missing the rest and rejuvenation of a quiet Sabbath,⁶² or they could be more extensive and far-reaching, involving the loss of numerous battles and important cities, in order for the Confederates to rely only on God, choosing him as their sole source of hope and redemption.⁶³ By February 1862, Robert E. Lee had resigned himself to the fact that the Confederacy had much suffering to endure, and hoped that his soldiers would embrace this suffering and willingly sacrifice

⁶⁰Hebrews 2: 10.

⁶¹Richard M. McMurry, John Bell Hood and the War for Southern Independence (Lawrence: The University Press of Kentucky, 1982), 180.

⁶²Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 144.

⁶³Charles Todd Quintard, Doctor Quintard, Chaplain, C.S.A. and Second Bishop of Tennessee: Being His Story of the War (1861-1865), Sam Davis Elliott, ed. (Sewanee, Tennessee: University Press of Sewanee, 1905; reprint, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), 247.

themselves, thus proving themselves worthy of independence.⁶⁴ Trying to avoid suffering would only prolong the agony, as Lee believed it was God's Will that the Southern people suffer during the Civil War, just as Jesus had suffered on the cross. This idea of providential suffering was not unique to Confederates. One Union chaplain recorded he frequently theorized that God was punishing the United States and its people, and that in order to win the war a specified number of Americans needed to die.⁶⁵ This application of the theory of blood sacrifice came naturally to Christians whose entire religion was based on the belief that Jesus Christ, although perfect, needed to suffer and die on the cross as part of God's plan to achieve the salvation of the human race. If God had planned a gruesome and undeserved death for His own Son, then Union and Confederate believers alike could imagine a similar lot for themselves as they attempted to emulate their Divine Master. God's plans were not always rose-coloured and filled only with happiness and joy. At times, divine plans contained untold suffering for the innocent, the pure, and the most devout. One artillery officer believed that the experience of the war would serve to purify the Confederate people.⁶⁶ Suffering was God's way of purifying people, of making them ready to devote all of their energy to achieving His Will and not their own. Due to the central position of the idea of blood sacrifice in the Christian religion, religious generals such as Lee and Jackson did not hesitate to launch their men into deadly situations that were sure to get many of them killed. While generals in all wars have been more than willing to sacrifice the lives of their men to obtain military victory, in the case of the Confederate generals they believed themselves morally justified in sending their beloved troops to die, because such deaths had a sacrificial and therefore purposeful character. Jackson believed that since God had been pleased with the sacrifice of His own Son, He would also be pleased with the sacrifice of thousands of His Son's followers, as they were doing His Will, which Jackson perceived to be the independence of the Confederacy. Thus Lee's and Jackson's willingness to bleed their army dry through

⁶⁴Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 118, 121-122.

⁶⁵W. Corby, Memoirs of Chaplain Life (Notre Dame, Indiana: Scholastic Press, 1894), 161-162.

⁶⁶John Hampden Chamberlayne, Ham Chamberlayne-Virginian: Letters and Papers of an Artillery Officer in the War for Southern Independence, 1861-1865 (C. G. Chamberlayne, ed. Richmond: Dietz Press, 1932), 69.

vicious and costly attacks was morally justified, in their perspective. Whereas J. E. Johnston safeguarded the lives of his men because he cared for them, Jackson and Lee also cared for their men, but such concern did not make them flinch from sending them to their deaths. Lee's decision on July 3, 1863, to initiate Pickett's charge, is the paramount example of this willingness to feel morally justified in sending men to their deaths.

Although such realizations about God's plans could be distressing, many Confederates found relief in trusting in God's Providence. Even though suffering was a part of God's plans, such suffering always had a meaning, a purpose. In the end, all those who endured everything that afflicted them would find a warm welcome into the kingdom of Heaven. Trusting in Providence allowed Confederate military personnel to make the best of increasingly difficult situations, and still retain hope in their otherwise uncertain and dismal future.

While trusting in Providence granted generals and soldiers hope for the future, it did not deprive them of their ability to prepare various courses of actions, as they were not privy to the fullness of God's omniscience. For instance, in late February 1862, Jackson wrote to D. H. Hill that "If I fall back it will be in the direction of Strasburg. but I trust that God in his all wise providence will render such a movement unnecessary."⁶⁷ Jackson trusted that God would eliminate the need for a retreat, but, as he indicated to his brother-in-law, he had nevertheless conceived a contingency plan in case Providence did not intervene in the way he expected. Although Jackson's hope that a retreat would be unnecessary remained strong, he was ready to make the best of whatever situation presented itself, and in this case he would move back to Strasburg to prevent being overwhelmed by Union forces. At first sight Jackson's preparation of a 'Plan B' appears as evidence of a lack of trust in Providence. However, Jackson tried to strengthen his relationship with God by praying frequently, since he knew that only a few of God's plans were visible to human eyes, and that his knowledge of the Divine Will was imperfect. This explained why Jackson trusted that events would occur in a certain fashion, not that he *knew* they would so occur. He did not pretend to tell the future, but instead relied on God to make everything turn out for the best.

⁶⁷Letter from Thomas Jonathan Jackson to D. H. Hill, February 26, 1862, D. H. Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Many Confederates acknowledged their inability to comprehend God's plans during the Civil War. God's plans were certain, but were often inscrutable to human beings. As Joseph Manson commented in October 1864, "His [God's] ways are not our ways."⁶⁸ Soldier William Stillwell concurred with this thought, when he meditated on the fact that one of his generals, T. R. R. Cobb, was killed within 500 yards of his birthplace. To this soldier, and to many others, it was clear that "...the ways of God are past finding out."⁶⁹ In January 1861, Robert E. Lee was equally perplexed when confronted with the secession of the first few Southern states such as South Carolina. He did not understand how such events fit into God's providential designs, and could only "...trust to the wisdom and patriotism of the nation and to the overruling providence of a merciful God."⁷⁰ Later that spring, when Lee's trust in the 'wisdom and patriotism of the nation' proved vain, Lee focused solely on the 'overruling Providence' of his God. Although Lee did not understand God's intentions, he knew it was fitting to trust and prepare for the future God envisioned for him and his beloved state of Virginia.

During the war Lee's trust in Providence never wavered, even though events constantly reminded him of the enigmatic nature of the divine will. On May 21, 1863 Lee expressed his wish to John Hood that Hood and the rest of Longstreet's First Corps had been with the Army of Northern Virginia earlier that month during the Battle of Chancellorsville, for then, Lee imagined, General Hooker and the Army of the Potomac would have been destroyed. However, Lee consoled himself that "...God ordered otherwise."⁷¹ Lee could have ordered the First Corps to rejoin the rest of the army in April, but instead allowed Longstreet a detached command in south-eastern Virginia near Suffolk in order to collect all the supplies possible, as such food was needed for the

⁶⁸October 28, 1864, p.1, Joseph Richard Manson, *Diary, 1864-1865*, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

⁶⁹Lane, ed., "Dear Mother." 199.

⁷⁰Letter of Robert E. Lee to his daughter Agnes Lee, January 29, 1861, Lee Family Papers, 1810-1894, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

⁷¹John Bell Hood, Advance and Retreat: Personal Experiences in the United States and Confederate States Armies (New Orleans: Hood Orphan Memorial Fund, 1880; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959; reprint, New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), 53.

coming campaign season. When Hooker suddenly advanced, there was insufficient time to recall the First Corps, and so Lee engaged the enemy with only two-thirds of his army. Lee defeated Hooker, but believed the presence of the First Corps would have made the obliteration of the Army of the Potomac possible. Lee also believed that his failure to destroy that same army when commanded by George McClellan in June and July 1862 resulted from God's Will.⁷² The fact that God frequently prevented the destruction of a Union army when He wanted the Confederacy to be independent caused Lee to further mediate on the mysterious nature of Providence.

When that same army, commanded by George Meade, again escaped serious damage in the fall of 1863, Lee's steadfast faith in Providence convinced him that "...we do not know what is best for us. I believe a kind God has ordered all things for our good."⁷³ He reasoned that if God had prevented the destruction of the Army of the Potomac in June and July 1862, May 1863 and November 1863, perhaps it was only to see it destroyed some time in 1864. Lee confided to his son Custis in August 1864 that his only earthly aspiration was that God would "...send our enemies back to their homes."⁷⁴ An unfathomable Providence did gratify Lee's desire, but not in the way he expected. Instead his enemies went home after subjugating the South and smothering any prospect of its independence. If, after the war, Lee considered how God had answered his yearning, he would have found it fitting and in keeping with the inscrutability of God's plans. Modern critics of Lee's generalship might find it appropriate to chastise Lee for blaming God that the enemy, in this case the Union Army of the Potomac, was able to avoid defeat. Modern critics would expect Lee to take sole responsibility himself for not achieving victory. At times, referring to Providence can seem like an individual's way of trying to avoid personal responsibility for the outcome of an event, and instead fixing the responsibility on God. To the extent that this occurred, religion damaged the Confederate war effort, because it demeaned those who engaged in this self-deception, and prevented

⁷²Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 229-230.

⁷³Jones, Life and Letters of Robert Edward Lee, 295.

⁷⁴Jones, Life and Letters of Robert Edward Lee, 306.

them from owning up to their own mistakes, learning from them, and doing better in the future.

God's truncations of Lee's victories were not the only events of the war that Lee found perplexing. As emphasized by Douglas Southall Freeman, the Army of Northern Virginia's generals suffered a horrendous rate of attrition, and Lee was continually at pains to try and replace outstanding officers in order to retain the combat power of his army. As Lee believed that God had given him skilled and talented subordinates, he was mystified when that same God took them from him, leaving him uncertain as to how his army would operate without them. Upon the death of J. E. B. Stuart in May 1864, Lee wrote in his official orders that "The mysterious hand of an all-wise God has removed him from the scene of his usefulness and fame."⁷⁵ Why God removed Stuart at the time when the Confederacy needed him the most, Lee could not explain or understand. Instead, he simply affirmed that God had chosen to end the man's life at that moment, and though God's ways were mysterious, they were not to be questioned. Lee believed, as did all Christians in the Confederacy, that life and death were in God's hands, and an individual's span of life was strictly determined by the Lord. Lee also firmly believed that everyone, even infants, died at the moment when God decided, and that their departure was somehow for the best, both for themselves and for those left bereaved on earth.⁷⁶ The possibility that death came simply as a result of lethal bacteria or the activity of sinful humans, and that God did not want that person to die at that time, did not enter into Lee's mind. Lee's religion allowed the operation of a certain amount of free will, and of interaction with the divine plan, but matters regarding life and death were entirely in the hands of a mysterious God.

Like Lee, Daniel Harvey Hill was fully convinced, that all events were in the hands of God and that "...all will turn out according to His Holy Will."⁷⁷ Hill took this belief to heart so totally that he believed each and every event, even human mistakes,

⁷⁵Garnett, Riding with Stuart, 106; Lee, General Lee, 323.

⁷⁶Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 364.

⁷⁷Letter of Daniel Harvey Hill to his wife, June 7, 1864, Daniel Harvey Hill Papers, 1816-1945, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina.

occurred as a result of God's will and were beneficial to the Southern cause and to him personally. For instance, after the war Hill wrote about the 'Lost Order,' a dispatch which outlined Lee's plans during his invasion of Maryland during September 1862. Union soldiers found a copy of this dispatch wrapped around some cigars at an abandoned Confederate campsite. The order was quickly sent up the chain of command to George McClellan, commander of the Army of the Potomac at that time. Hill believed the order caused McClellan to operate cautiously, and that such hesitancy preserved the Army of Northern Virginia from destruction. According to Hill, it was one more example of how God worked in mysterious ways, so "'...in the inscrutable Providence of God the loss of the dispatch prolonged the Confederate struggle for two more years.'"⁷⁸ Lee, upon learning of Hill's explanation of the 'Lost Order' fiasco, was irritated, and mused that if Hill's reasoning was accurate then another missing order would have brought the South her independence. Despite his firm belief in Providence, Lee did not think the 'Lost Order' was a blessing to the Southern cause, but rather a vexation, and he informed Hill of this belief in a lengthy and unsympathetic letter.⁷⁹ He concluded that although God could and often did intervene in human affairs, He did not cause each and every incident in human life, including acts of plain negligence like wrapping a top-secret military order around some cigars and then leaving it behind at a campsite.⁸⁰ Although united in their belief that God operated in unexpected ways, the two men did not agree on the interpretation of each act of Providence. In this episode, Lee clearly saw the limits of an individual's ability to fix responsibility on Providence for human actions. Lee, while maintaining that God had determined the time and date of each individual's death, did not believe that He had decreed that a Confederate officer leave behind a top-secret military order wrapped around a cigar at a campsite. This unbelievable act of negligence had compromised Lee's military activities, and Lee had no interest in blaming God for his

⁷⁸Bridges, *Lee's Maverick General*, 276.

⁷⁹Bridges, *Lee's Maverick General*, 276.

⁸⁰This 'Lost Order,' Special Orders No. 191, issued September 9, 1862, was one of two copies sent to D. H. Hill. The copy that was sent to Hill from Jackson's headquarters was retained by Hill. The other copy, issued from the general headquarters of the Army of Northern Virginia, was, Freeman believes, the one used by one of Hill's staff officers as a covering for three cigars. Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, II: 363.

subordinate's foolishness. This episode also illustrated the conflicting notions of how far Providence extended in determining what occurred in the world. Thus Providence could serve as a means of deriving comfort from trust in God's plans for humanity, but it also could serve as a convenient excuse for human mistakes. To the extent that Providence served the latter purpose, it severely hampered the Confederate war effort.

The fact that Providence was incomprehensible to human beings often made it difficult for pious individuals to know how to respond to the divine will. William Nelson Pendleton faced such a situation in April and May 1861 when he was unsure whether God wanted him to use his artillery expertise to aid the Confederacy, or stay in Lexington, Virginia and continue his vocation as an Episcopal minister. Because the request for his services was unexpected, and had come after he had prayed for guidance as to what his duty was in the current crisis, he believed that God had called him to accept the command of an artillery company.⁸¹ Pendleton, however, was not fully convinced of his course of action, and throughout the war he was attentive to any sign that God wished him to return to his pastoral duties in Lexington.⁸² In the event, Pendleton served as an artillery officer and subsequently as the brigadier general of artillery of the Army of Northern Virginia throughout the war, only returning to his parish upon the conclusion of hostilities. Pendleton knew that, although Providence was mysterious, it was critical for devout Christians to attempt earnestly to discern God's will and act in accordance with it.

Stonewall's Jackson's death occasioned much grief and many musings about the inscrutability of Providence. In early May 1863 many devout Confederates, both soldiers and civilians, believed that Jackson was God's instrument, and that He would use the general to smite the Yankees and achieve Confederate independence. When he died of pneumonia on May 10, these same believers were bewildered. How could God take away such a pious and successful general when the Confederacy needed him so desperately?

⁸¹Declaration of William Nelson Pendleton, [May 1, 1861], William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Lee, Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, 138-140.

⁸²Letter of William Nelson Pendleton to his wife, November 12, 1862, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Surely Jackson's accomplishments in the Valley, at Second Manassas and at Chancellorsville were only the beginning of his victories. The members of the Stonewall Brigade who met on May 16, 1863, expressed a view common to firm believers in Providence when they concluded that "It has pleased Almighty God, in the exercise of supreme, but unsearchable wisdom, to strike down, in the midst of his career of honor and usefulness, our glorious hero, Lieutenant General T. J. Jackson."⁸³ Why God had chosen to strike Jackson down, the soldiers could not fathom. Surely such wisdom which allowed one of their best generals to be shot by his own men, and die eight days later from pneumonia, was alien to Christians who firmly believed God wanted the Confederacy to win the Civil War. John Esten Cooke, a personal acquaintance of Jackson wrestled with this unseemly reality during the war. Cooke wondered if God had removed Jackson in order to combat the potential for turning Jackson into an idol, by focusing on the instrument, and forgetting the God who wielded it.⁸⁴ Cooke firmly believed that God sent the 'fatal bullet' into Jackson's body, and that it was His will that the hero's life extend no further than 3:15 P.M. on May 10, 1863. The fact that Cooke regarded Jackson's death as a public calamity was irrelevant to his conviction that it was God's will that Jackson's life should be extinguished as the result of an accident.⁸⁵ Mary Anna Jackson shared Cooke's belief that God's plan was incomprehensible. Prior to Jackson's death she believed that he would live through the war, and succeed in achieving the independence of the Confederacy. However, after he died and the Confederate cause perished, she realized that God wanted the Union to win the war. Jackson's death diminished her assurance that the Confederacy would eventually triumph. Only in the spring of 1865 did she fully understand the meaning of her husband's death. Despite her

⁸³Proceedings of the Officers and Men of the Stonewall Brigade, May 16, 1863, Dabney-Jackson Papers Series Two, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia; John Overton Casler, Four Years in the Stonewall Brigade (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Bookshop, 1971), 154.

⁸⁴Cooke, Life of Stonewall Jackson, 272.

⁸⁵Cooke, Life of Stonewall Jackson, 7, 253. Cooke used the words 'fatal bullet' merely as a rhetorical device. Three bullets entered Jackson's body, one of which required the amputation of his arm, but all three contributed to the weakness he experienced subsequent to his surgery, and his inability to combat the pneumonia that killed him eight days after he was wounded.

earlier prayers to prevent a Union victory, after the war she still affirmed that God “...makes no mistakes.”⁸⁶

Not only Confederate generals believed in divine Providence during the Civil War. Even Quakers, committed to peace and forswearing military activities, saw the hand of God in the Civil War. A. Glenn Crothers, in his book Quakers Living in the Lion’s Mouth: The Society of Friends in Northern Virginia, 1730-1865, writes that Quakers in northern Virginia “...interpreted the war as a reflection of God’s will, part of His divine plan to end slavery and redefine the meaning of American liberty. But Friends remained deeply distressed by the violence and suffering necessary to achieve these goals. Their belief in progressive revelation through the inward light had produced a sense of confidence that the ways of God might eventually become knowable to humanity. The war, in contrast, produced an uncharacteristic sense of fatalism in the face of God’s ‘inscrutable will.’”⁸⁷ The views of the Quakers are referenced here to emphasize that the religious doctrine of Providence was widespread in American society during the mid-nineteenth century, and that the generals’ feelings on this matter were not exceptional or different. What is important is the impact their beliefs had on their generalship and on the course of the Civil War. As previously mentioned in this chapter, a belief in Providence supported a general by allowing him to engage in battle, confident that Almighty God would support him in his efforts to gain the Confederacy’s independence. However, there were also numerous detrimental effects to this doctrine as well, in particular that it encouraged recklessness and even virtually suicidal behaviour when exposed to enemy fire. It encouraged one to alternately trust in God’s help or else take action with all available resources, as in the case of R. E. Lee, leaving few military resources, such as manpower, supplies or logistical support, for other generals. Providence could also serve as an excuse to abdicate responsibility for a difficult situation, and instead claim that only Providence could redeem the situation, like Beauregard in February 1862. Thus a belief in Providence, depending on the context in which it was invoked, could alternately improve or worsen the military situation for Confederate generals.

⁸⁶Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 147.

⁸⁷A. Glenn Crothers, Quakers Living in the Lion’s Mouth: The Society of Friends in Northern Virginia, 1730-1865 (Gainesville, Tallahassee, Tampa, Boca Raton, Pensacola, Orlando, Miami, Jacksonville, Ft. Myers, Sarasota: University Press of Florida, 2012).

It is only after a thorough consideration of Divine Providence that Mark Noll's argument that the Civil War constituted a theological crisis can be examined. As mentioned in the introduction, it is my contention that the Civil War did not create or occasion a theological crisis for Confederate generals. While Noll's argument is not limited to the Confederate military, and instead applies to all Americans, for the purposes of the discussion of his work here, his argument will be limited to the question of whether or not the Civil War created a theological crisis for Confederate generals. The fact that the generals were able to integrate the occurrence of the Civil War with their theology testifies to their military background and their acceptance of their role as leaders in battles that entailed thousands of casualties. For Jackson, religion and warfare became so fused that he even claimed that the Bible was an excellent model for writing military reports. He advised one lieutenant to "Look, for instance, at the narrative of Joshua's battle with the Amalekites; there you have one [model military report]. It has clearness, brevity, fairness, modesty; and it traces the victory to its right source-the blessing of God."⁸⁸ When discussing the first centres of Christianity with a theology student, Jackson asked, "Why do you say 'centres of influence;' is not *headquarters* a better term?"⁸⁹ For military officers, especially those with the ambition to become generals, any religious beliefs they possessed or obtained during the war period were mediated through the lens of military service. Thus the fact that a war had occurred, even one as devastating and fratricidal as the Civil War, did not challenge their previous theological beliefs. What it did do, in the cases of Braxton Bragg and Richard Ewell as well as other generals who converted to Christianity during the war, was offer them compelling reasons why they should embrace religion, but the war did not challenge existing religious beliefs because its progress and occurrence harmonized with their religious worldview.

Even generals who were less prone to investing military activities with theological overtones, such as Jubal Early, were able to fit the occurrence of the Civil War into their worldview. Indeed, men who served as Confederate generals, either through their training at West Point or an inclination for the military life, did not experience a crisis as the result of the Civil War. Instead, the Civil War offered them a rare opportunity to prove

⁸⁸Jackson, Life and Letters, 446.

⁸⁹Jackson, Life and Letters, 446.

themselves as successful men who could lead thousands of men into battle and achieve victory. Rather than the Civil War causing them any sort of crisis, J. E. Johnston experienced more of a crisis when he was denied the preeminent spot as the Confederacy's top general, and was instead made the general with the fourth highest level of seniority. As men thoroughly comfortable with military affairs, the Civil War fit all too easily into whatever theological belief system they possessed. Indeed, it was precisely because that the war meshed so neatly with their understanding of themselves, the world around them and the nature of God that the generals appreciated the fact that the Civil War offered them a chance to engage in physical warfare, a conflict that complemented the spiritual warfare that was encouraged in the Bible.⁹⁰ Thus while Noll's argument about the Civil War causing a theological crisis may have applicability to the civilian population of the South or to the North, it has no applicability to the Confederate generals.

Part of the reason why the Civil War did not occasion a theological crisis for Confederate generals was due to the common understanding of Providence currently accepted in mid-nineteenth century America. Calvinism heavily influenced this religious doctrine, even for Christians who firmly believed in free will. Thus the Civil War was often viewed as a trial through which believers must pass, and if people died during the war, then it was because God had decreed it must be so. Because of the religious notions currently in vogue during the 1860's, the Civil War was successfully incorporated into the existing religious worldview currently in place in the South. Robert E. Lee is one of the most famous examples, and, in this way, a representative one, of the South. He believed that the South's destiny was yet to be fulfilled, and that God's plans were mysterious indeed. His religious outlook was barely touched by the war, and this had a decisive impact on how he waged the war, how he conceived of the war, and how he

⁹⁰See for example 1 Timothy 1:18 which reads "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightiest war a good warfare." The preceding quotation is from the King James Version. A modern translation of the same verse, from the New American Bible, is more easily understandable: "I entrust this charge to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophetic words once spoken about you. Through them may you fight a good fight" And again, in 2 Timothy 2:4, it is written "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

decided to lay down his arms. Most Confederate generals, like Lee, remained religiously ‘on course,’ even though defeat made that course rockier than they would have liked.

One reason why the Civil War did not occasion a theological crisis is due to the fact that Christians often accepted the Bible at face value. In the Old Testament many wars occur, including civil wars between Israel and Judah, in which God’s own Chosen People are fighting and killing each other. In the New Testament, Matthew reports Jesus as preaching that, “You will hear of wars and reports of wars; see that you are not alarmed, for these things must happen, but it will not yet be the end. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be famines and earthquakes from place to place. All these are the beginning of the labor pains.”⁹¹ To use a famous analogy from golf, wars and killing are simply ‘par for the course’ in human history. This fact is sad and even pathetic, but it is true. No matter of historical fudging will change this undeniable reality. For the Christian, this is evidence of sin’s presence in God’s creation, and the need for the saving grace of Jesus Christ. For the atheist, these facts can further deepen their insistence on the non-existence of any divine or supernatural forces in the world.

Many forces act on a person’s life, and in the case of the Civil War, patriotism had a huge impact of the decision of soldiers to fight and die for either the Union or the Confederacy. My dissertation looks at how religion either supported or undermined a Confederate general’s decision to wage war, but it does not argue that religion was the sole, or even the most important factor, in encouraging the generals to wage war. The reason why the majority of the dissertation is spent discussing religion is because that is my subject matter. Had “Religious Rebels” been an over-riding narrative of the war, such as James McPherson’s Battle Cry of Freedom, it likely would have more space devoted to discussing patriotism than about discussing religion, because the facts reveal that patriotism was a greater stimulant to engaging in warfare than religion was. What my argument contends is that religion was a critical supplementary factor that needs to be considered, and that in large narratives of the war, such as Battle Cry of Freedom, it has been neglected or even virtually forgotten. My work is an effort to achieve balance in determining religion’s importance in understanding the Civil War. After this discussion

⁹¹Matthew 24: 6-8.

of whether or not the Civil War created a theological crisis, we can now move into an analysis of the role of prayer in the lives of Confederate generals.

A belief in Providence encouraged Confederates to trust in God, despite their ignorance of His specific plans for them. When distressing events occurred in their lives, devout Confederates knew it was for some wise goal that only God understood at the time.⁹² However, Christian generals and soldiers were not content simply to allow Providence to shape their lives without making an attempt to influence it. They believed they had the power to make themselves co-authors of the future with God. The chief way to interact with God was through prayer. By talking to God directly Christians could make their hopes and fears known to Him. Jesus taught his disciples much about prayer. Confederate readers of the Bible drew upon these teachings to understand that prayers offered humbly, persistently, faithfully, and in concert with other Christians could move mountains. Jesus said where two or three gathered in His Name, He was there among them. He encouraged both individual and communal prayer and in both of these settings Confederate generals beseeched the Lord on behalf of their country and their armies. Prayer also allowed Christians the ability to investigate God's Will for them. In the Lord's Prayer, Christians prayed to God that "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."⁹³ By praying, Confederate generals attempted to uncover God's Providential designs for them, while realizing that only God possessed full knowledge of such plans.

Confederate generals offered prayers which included giving praise to God, thanking Him for His many gifts, confessing sins and asking for pardon and petitions on behalf of themselves or others. These prayers were usually offered vocally, but could be made silently, as Jesus had instructed His disciples not to flaunt their piety. Confederate generals also likely employed meditative and contemplative prayer, but the surviving records contain little information on these types of prayer. The vast majority of references to prayer are to the typical vocal prayer, usually focusing on intercessory prayers, petitioning God for aid and assistance, or prayers imploring forgiveness for their

⁹²Hall, Diary of a Confederate Soldier, 131.

⁹³Matthew 6: 10.

transgressions. Confederate generals offered such prayers both in private and during public worship services.

The prayer practices of the generals were in keeping with civilian practice during that time period, however the effect of the generals' prayer life potentially differed from civilians because their piety and hopefulness often inspired their fellow officers and soldiers. Although some generals, like Stonewall Jackson, did not pray for the purpose of stimulating morale, their petitions nonetheless had that effect on their companions and the soldiers in the ranks who heard of their prayers. By examining the recorded instances in which Confederate generals prayed, their estimate of the worthiness of their petitions, the prayers they offered for themselves and for others, the prayers offered on their behalf, and their reckoning of the sufficiency and efficiency of their prayers, it is possible to discern the value many Confederate generals assigned to prayer and its perceived role in furthering the independence of their country.

For many years Albert Sidney Johnston offered prayers to God every night before he went to sleep. These prayers conveyed thanksgiving to his Creator, since Johnston was thoroughly convinced that the blessings he received were such that he could never give enough thanks to God. Johnston did not often petition God for specific needs or intentions, because he was aware of his own ignorance and the limited scope of his perception of the world, and so he thought it best to leave everything in God's hands, asking only that "...his will be done."⁹⁴ Other generals were less reserved with their entreaties. John Bell Hood invoked God's aid in an exchange of letters that he conducted with Union General William T. Sherman. Sherman instructed Hood that they should simply "...fight it out as we propose to do and not deal in such hypocritical appeals to God and humanity."⁹⁵ Hood retorted that "...notwithstanding your comments upon my appeal to God in the cause of humanity, I again humbly and reverently invoke his Almighty aid in defence of justice and right."⁹⁶ Hood spoke for the majority of his fellow generals when he persisted in beseeching God for His assistance in what they believed

⁹⁴Johnston, Life of Albert Sidney Johnston, 182-183.

⁹⁵Hood, Advance and Retreat, 232.

⁹⁶Hood, Advance and Retreat, 235.

constituted ‘justice and right.’ For many Confederate generals, the Civil War was not an event determined solely by men who fought each other, but was a contest between the powers of darkness and the powers of light. They felt that God would intervene and repel the brutal aggressors away from their homeland, and to this end they frequently and devoutly implored for divine assistance in their darkest hours.

William Nelson Pendleton, as befitted an Episcopalian clergyman, fervently advocated prayer. Both as a minister of God and as a brigadier-general he encouraged his fellow officers and men to pray frequently. He informed his son, Sandie Pendleton, who served on Stonewall Jackson’s staff, to

‘Watch and pray.’ If you do not make opportunities for prayer regularly you will spiritually die. Let nothing prevent this. My only sure way for getting a certain time for prayer is to compel myself to awake early, and then employ the first waking hour in steady reflection and prayer. Do this, or something like it, and your soul will live. I find, too, that by dwelling on the several petitions of the Lord’s Prayer until each word impresses on the mind its full force and stirs up feeling, I get more of the spirit of prayer than I have been able to secure in any other way.⁹⁷

Both father and son were well aware of the consequences of allowing one’s relationship with the Lord to suffer as a result of temporal activities, and so they worked together in encouraging one another to maintain their prayer life. Only by making time for prayer could they hope that God would answer their prayers for themselves and for their country.

The Army of Northern Virginia, and eventually all the armies of the Confederacy, had a model example of a man who believed in prayer. Robert E. Lee, from the very beginning of his service to the Confederacy, turned to prayer in order to receive guidance, ask for God’s pardon, and petition his Lord for the specific blessings that his country needed to achieve its independence. On April 20, 1861, Mary Custis Lee heard her husband praying on the second floor of their house at Arlington, Virginia. As she heard him falling on his knees, begging for guidance as to whether or not he should resign from the United States Army, she also offered prayers to God, trusting that they both would be supplied with divine wisdom. After a substantial period of time had passed, Lee rejoined

⁹⁷Lee, *Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton*, 202.

his wife and informed her that the matter was settled. Lee's intense prayer session offered him guidance in his future course and gave him strength to make the decision that changed his life forever. Previously he had served the United States of America to the best of his ability. Once he discerned that the course of the Union and the state of Virginia were separating, Lee severed his martial ties to the Union in order to avoid being forced to lead hostile troops onto the soil of Virginia. Douglas Southall Freeman contends that Lee's decision was the one he was "Born to Make."⁹⁸ He had already composed two letters, one to the Secretary of War, the other to Lee's benefactor and mentor in the army, General Winfield Scott. Both were letters conveying his decision to resign from the army.⁹⁹ Lee felt certain that his chief duty lay with his state of Virginia, and that he could not take up arms to subdue his beloved homeland. Even though Arlington, Lee's plantation, lay within a short distance of Washington, and was certain to be quickly occupied by Union forces, he believed God had answered his prayers, given him guidance, and directed him in the course that he was now undertaking.

After he accepted a commission first from the state of Virginia, and later from the Confederate government, Lee continued praying to his Lord. It was in prayer that Lee obtained the moral certainty that he was duty bound to defend his state of Virginia from foreign invasion, and since it was the United States that was attacking his perceived homeland (Virginia), his military oath to serve and defend the United States did not apply, and indeed was null and void in perpetuity. Although Northerners considered Lee to be a traitor, Lee viewed himself as a patriot. Southerners were eager to compare themselves to the first generation of Americans who were viewed as traitors by Great Britain, but considered themselves as patriots, even though many of them were violating oaths they had taken to the British king.

In August 1861, Lee begged for God to have mercy upon human beings, as he considered the beauty of God's creation, and how ungrateful people were in making war

⁹⁸Freeman, R. E. Lee, 431. Freeman entitled his chapter on this episode in Lee's life "The Answer He Was Born to Make."

⁹⁹Jones, Life and Letters of Lee, 132.

among such natural wonders.¹⁰⁰ Lee's prayers to God only intensified when he took command of the Army of Northern Virginia in mid-1862. Even when he suffered defeat at the Battle of Gettysburg in early July 1863, Lee continued offering prayers. He asked on July 15 that his soldiers "'implore the forgiveness of God for our sins and the continuance of His blessings. There is nothing but his Almighty power can sustain us.'"¹⁰¹ In August of that same year Lee again implored his soldiers to humble themselves before God.¹⁰² He also informed his son of his prayer a year later that God would cause their enemies to return to their homes, forever forsaking their goal of the conquest of the South.¹⁰³ Lee's frequent recourse to prayer was well known by both soldier and civilian alike. When a woman sent a prayer book to Lee, she was probably not surprised when Lee wrote back to her, thanking her for the gift, and informing her that he had read the morning service from it that very day.¹⁰⁴ Lee also believed in attending church on Sundays and on the prescribed days of fasting and prayer.¹⁰⁵ Lee had faith in the power of prayer, and even after the war, still trusted in the efficacy of prayer, and that God would relieve a grieving woman in His own way, and that she might "...bear the sorrows allotted [sic] to us in this world to prepare us for the joys of the next."¹⁰⁶ The seeming failure of his petitions for the success of the Confederate cause did not diminish Lee's firm belief in the power of prayer. The proper estimate of whether the practice of prayer aided or harmed the Southern war effort depends on one's theological beliefs. If one believes that a Deity exists, and responds to human prayer, as does the God of Jewish, Christian and Islamic belief, then it is always beneficial to pray to God for help in

¹⁰⁰Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 62.

¹⁰¹White, Lee and the Southern Confederacy, 323.

¹⁰²Jones, Life and Letters of Lee, 470.

¹⁰³Jones, Life and Letters of Lee, 306.

¹⁰⁴Letter of Robert E. Lee to Miss Laura M. Chilton, December 28, 1860, Robert E. Lee Collection, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, The Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁰⁵Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 118-119.

¹⁰⁶Letter of Robert E. Lee to Mrs. Cora M. Ives, January 25, 1868, Robert E. Lee Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

one's life. Therefore a theist would recognize that the practice of prayer was well-advised. However, if one is an atheist or agnostic, then the prayers offered by Lee, Jackson and other generals are viewed as a waste of time, and detrimental to the Confederate war effort. Stonewall Jackson's nocturnal prayers decreased the amount of sleep he had during the Seven Days battles, and made him sluggish and unresponsive to the military situations he faced. In this perspective, the time and energy Jackson expended in prayer was totally wasted. Similarly, atheists would oppose Jackson's belief that when he undertook certain actions, such as launching a military offensive, that they would be blessed by God. It is impossible to predict exactly which military actions Lee and Jackson chose to perform because they were counting on God for support. However, without this overwhelming confidence in God's assistance, it is quite possible that they would have opted for less demanding tactics that could have conserved Southern manpower.

Stonewall Jackson concurred wholeheartedly with his commander about the role of prayer in a general's life. For Jackson, prayer was not something reserved for church or for a short time before bed. Instead he believed in incorporating it into his entire life, until it was, as John Esten Cooke phrased it, "...like breathing with him - the normal condition of his being."¹⁰⁷ Jackson informed a friend that in almost every act of his day, whether taking a sip of water, or mailing a letter, he had integrated prayer into his life, making such practices habitual.¹⁰⁸ Jackson felt God's compassionate influence during his prayer sessions which were offered in conformity with the Bible.¹⁰⁹ Paul Offill notes that the general's prayer life increased in intensity during the Civil War.¹¹⁰ Immediately before an expedition, he would pray more often, seeking divine guidance and imploring God's blessing on the undertaking.¹¹¹ On the night of June 25, 1862, during the Seven

¹⁰⁷Cooke, Life of Stonewall Jackson, 114.

¹⁰⁸Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 73.

¹⁰⁹Letter of Thomas Jonathan Jackson to his sister Laura Arnold, February 1, 1853, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹¹⁰Offill, "Stonewall Jackson: A Case Study," 81.

¹¹¹Addey, Life and Military Career of Thomas Jonathan Jackson, 47-48.

Days campaign, Jackson did not get any sleep at all, owing to his extensive preparations and his lengthy prayer sessions.¹¹² In battle itself Jackson continued to offer supplication to God, and many of his soldiers witnessed his behaviour and drew strength and courage from it, believing that such a devout and upright man's prayers would certainly be heard and answered.¹¹³ Jackson apparently continued kneeling in prayer even when under enemy fire. On one such occasion, Jackson became the target by a Union soldier who boasted the ability of shooting squirrels with his rifle at a distance of 65 yards. After riding into range of Jackson, and trying to shoot him three times, the soldier rode off, believing that the man could not be killed. The three gun shots did not disturb Jackson, who finished his prayers without acknowledging the enemy cavalryman.¹¹⁴ Modern readers would likely find this story unbelievable, however the main point of the story remains valid. Jackson was a firm believer in both the power of prayer and of divine Providence, and others who witnessed the effects of his beliefs were impressed. While Jackson did not deliberately tempt God by riding into range of Union sharpshooters and offering himself as a target, evidently he was so confident in God's Providence that he believed himself in no danger. Other soldiers also prayed while under enemy fire, but usually from concealed positions, and only because they were under orders to remain where they were.¹¹⁵

Jackson spent much time occupied in prayer both on the battlefield and in the camp. In early 1863, he gathered with his military staff for communal prayer sessions which he or his chaplain led. Jackson prayed not only for victories for his army, but that such victories might lead Southerners to acknowledge God as the Giver of such gifts, to

¹¹²Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 291-292.

¹¹³Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 310, 425, 503; Cooke, Life of Stonewall Jackson, 284; Roger Preston in Memorial Exercises at the Unveiling of Sir Moses Ezekiel's Statue of Stonewall Jackson, Virginia Military Institute, June 19, 1912 (Lexington, Virginia: Rockbridge County News Print, 1912), 69; Opie, A Rebel Cavalryman, 143-144; John Gill, Reminiscences of Four Years as a Private Soldier in the Confederate Army, 1861-1865 (Baltimore: Sun Printing Co., 1904), 65.

¹¹⁴Clopton, The True Stonewall Jackson, 26-27.

¹¹⁵Casler, Four Years in the Stonewall Brigade, 146.

learn to rely more on God and to live in accordance with His commandments.¹¹⁶ Of those who heard Jackson's prayers, many were convinced that he was not speaking to men, trying to reassure or console them by invoking religion, but instead that he was praying to God. As one of Jackson's hosts, Mr. Ewing, explained, "He seemed to realize that he was speaking to Heaven's King."¹¹⁷ When Jackson was asked in November 1862 to pray for peace in concert with others at a certain hour, he informed them that their chief object should not be asking for peace, but rather for God's forgiveness, and that Southerners might become a holy people. If this prayer was answered, Jackson felt convinced that peace would arrive soon after.¹¹⁸ A chief focus in all of Jackson's prayers was his relationship with God, for if this relationship endured, then he could look forward to all of the blessings attendant upon a true servant of God. Mere selfishness did not enter into his prayer life; instead Jackson laid his petitions before God, and trusted that He would answer them in the way that was best in accord with His wisdom and compassion.

Many Confederate officials were of the same mind as Jackson regarding the South's need to implore forgiveness and seek to improve their conduct in God's sight. To this end President Davis, state governors, bishops and army generals ordered the observance of days of fasting and prayer.¹¹⁹ These days encouraged people to humble themselves, acknowledge their failings, beseech God's pardon and peace, and to reform their behaviour in order to be more pleasing to God and better able to win the war. One of these days was set for August 21, 1863, announced by President Davis after the embarrassing reverses suffered at Vicksburg and Gettysburg. Davis implored his fellow Confederates to "...receive in humble thankfulness the lesson which he has taught us in our recent reverses, devoutly acknowledging that to him, and not to our own feeble arms, are due the honor and the glory of victory; that from him, in his paternal providence, come the anguish and suffering of defeat, and that, whether in victory or defeat, our

¹¹⁶Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 405.

¹¹⁷Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 309.

¹¹⁸Copy of a letter from Thomas Jonathan Jackson, November 20, 1862, Dabney-Jackson Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

¹¹⁹Beringer *et al*, The Elements of Confederate Defeat, 39.

humble supplications are due at his footstool.”¹²⁰ General Lee responded to Davis’s appeal for the observance of this fast day with a passionate order, and concluded by imploring his soldiers “...to confess our many sins and beseech Him to give us a higher courage, a purer patriotism, and a more determined will; that He will convert the hearts of our enemies; that He will hasten the time when war, with its sorrows and sufferings, shall cease, and that He will give us a name and place among the nations of the earth.”¹²¹ Although pious Confederates urged others to pray and seek forgiveness, military defeats emphasized this need and encouraged even more widespread observance of such practices.

Many generals, including Robert E. Lee, attempted to ensure that the men in their commands faithfully observed the days of fasting and prayer. In the case of the above mentioned fast day, Jed Hotchkiss reported that it was observed as a Sabbath day in his camp, and that Lee and his staff as well as almost one thousand others joined together to hear Reverend Lacy preach.¹²² Numerous civilians also faithfully observed these days of ritual penance.¹²³ Although not all soldiers were willing to listen to military and civilian authorities when they requested compliance with communal days of fasting and prayer, many did comply, and bespoke the efforts made by generals like Lee and Jackson to foster prayer in their commands and the Confederacy as a whole.

The days of fasting and prayer fostered a sense of community among religious Southerners and encouraged them to view religion as a means of addressing military and political problems. They also served as a public acknowledgement that God only heard the prayers of the contrite and the humble, and that one whose heart was arrogant and conceited prayed not to the Lord, but only to himself. Jesus condemned such hypocrisy

¹²⁰Bennett, Narrative of the Great Revival, 316. Although this fast day did not occur on a Sunday, the expected Sabbath day behaviour (church attendance, decreased labour) was expected on this day.

¹²¹Riley, ed., General Robert E. Lee After Appomattox, 188.

¹²²McDonald, ed., Make Me a Map, 168-169.

¹²³William B. Buck, ed., Sad Earth, Sweet Heaven, The Diary of Lucy Rebecca Buck (Birmingham, Alabama: The Cornerstone, 1973), 175.

when he told his followers the parable of the Pharisee and the publican in the Temple.¹²⁴ Thus for their prayers to be heard, petitioners needed to be humble, aware of their sins, and truly repentant, determined never to commit them again. One soldier felt that the sins of the Southern people had become so extensive that they were acting “...like a dark cloud between us and God...”¹²⁵ He now believed that the once righteous Southern cause had been perverted by August 1863 and that in six months their fate would be decided, and it would not be pleasant. Another soldier believed that Atlanta, Georgia was so filled with corruption that it was worthy of comparison with Sodom and deserved a like fate.¹²⁶

While well aware of the sins of the Southern people, Robert E. Lee did not concur entirely with such pessimistic assessments of the Southern cause. He had less confidence in his prayers than did Jackson, and often doubted if his petitions would be answered. Lee had no doubts about the power of God and His ability to answer prayer, but he was fully convinced of his sinfulness and thus was sometimes unsure of his acceptance by God. In 1860, Lee referred to his prayers as ‘poor,’ and insisted that “...our merciful God...knows better what to give us than we to ask for...”¹²⁷ In November 1861, Lee’s pessimistic view of his entreaties remained, and perhaps had even intensified, as he wrote to his daughters that his prayers were not even worth listening to.¹²⁸ Lee’s self-reproach continued to manifest itself on Christmas Day, 1862. He wrote that he was a ‘poor sinner,’ and that because of his personal sins his beloved Arlington (his wife’s plantation) had been occupied by the enemy and ‘desecrated.’¹²⁹ Lee experienced very few successes during 1861, and considered his inability to restore the situation in western Virginia as evidence that he was being punished by God. Lee was well aware of his personal failings, and this

¹²⁴Luke 18: 9-14.

¹²⁵Lane, ed., “Dear Mother.” 260.

¹²⁶Lane, ed., “Dear Mother.” 321.

¹²⁷Letter of Robert E. Lee to his wife, July 15, 1860, Lee Family Papers, 1810-1894, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

¹²⁸Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 88.

¹²⁹Jones, Life and Letters of Lee, 156.

realization remained with him throughout his life. Even shortly before his death in 1870, he confessed to his wife that he was still uncertain of his acceptance by God.¹³⁰ This profound humility, so characteristic of Lee, made him always feel that his prayers, because they were offered by a sinful and unworthy man, might not be welcomed by God.¹³¹

Of all the devout Confederate generals, Lee was almost certainly the most contrite and humble in spirit, believing that his prayers were not worthy of such a great and loving God. And yet, despite his acknowledgement of his sinfulness, both private and public, he continued to offer prayers to God, frequently, insistently, earnestly. Even though Lee's remarks occasionally reflected a dejected and even depressed individual, he did not allow such humility to prevent him from reaching out to God, and begging for help. If he had truly thought his prayers were worthless, he would not have offered them. Lee was not prone to wasting time and maintaining false pretences. Instead, he knew that he had an advocate in heaven, Jesus Christ. Despite the wretchedness of Lee's own prayers, Christian doctrine professed that when Christ offered those same prayers to His Father, they became pure, pleasing and holy. All Christians knew that alone their prayers were insufficient, and that they needed the Holy Spirit to prompt their prayers, and Jesus to offer their prayers, as He offered Himself, to His Father, and that such prayers would be accepted. Lee's words illustrated an important truth for Confederate generals, as well as for Christians of his age and state in life: they required an intercessor in heaven, a perfect high priest, and He would never allow a prayer voiced in His name to be uttered in vain.

In this spirit of union with Christ many Confederate generals voiced prayers for themselves, for their soldiers, and for their fellow Confederates. They did not trust in their own power, but instead relied in varying degrees on God. Stonewall Jackson prayed unflinching that his army might not just be a Confederate army, but that it might also be "...an army of the living God...."¹³² He knew that if his army really did become God's

¹³⁰Freeman, R. E. Lee, IV: 504.

¹³¹Freeman, R. E. Lee, III: 531-532.

¹³²Copy of a letter from Thomas Jonathan Jackson to his wife, April 7, 1862, Dabney-Jackson Papers Series Two, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

army, its members would not only be sure of entry into heaven, but that it would also be invincible in battle. Every one of his men, if devoted to him and to the Lord God, would never run, never hesitate to charge the enemy, and, as Jackson loved to say, ‘Give them the bayonet.’ They would die fighting to the last man, and do so joyfully, knowing that victory was certain, and that they were bound for Paradise. Jackson wanted absolute and unquestioned obedience from his troops, and not just because life in the army is based on a strict hierarchy. Jackson also believed that his men were serving God by obeying their general, who was in this case Jackson himself. For such an army, lack of ammunition or scarce resources was less important than the execution of Jackson’s orders. If they died executing those orders, so be it. Such soldiers were every commander’s dream, and Jackson wanted to make this dream a reality. His interest in the spiritual welfare of his men and his perception of the needs of the Confederacy had fused together, until it was impossible to separate the actions Jackson performed for spiritual or for secular purposes. All Jackson’s efforts to improve his army both morally and militarily were performed to accomplish God’s Will, which was the independence of the Confederacy. The fact that Jackson’s army never became an ‘army of the Living God’ is certain. At no time were all of its members, or even the majority, as devout, fearless and dedicated to both God and the Confederacy as was its commander. This reality did not discourage Jackson. Instead he simply looked at what could be, not at what was. When Jackson prayed for his soldiers and for his country after the Second Battle of Manassas in late August 1862, he knew that the repulse of Pope’s army did not mean the end of the war.¹³³ It only marked the beginning of what a zealous and fearless army of the Lord could accomplish. The Israelites had once formed such armies, and Jackson firmly believed that emulation of Biblical models was possible. He worked and prayed to make his own army equal or surpass those previous armies devoted to God.¹³⁴ Since God alone granted military successes, Jackson’s most powerful method of effecting such victories was prayer.¹³⁵

¹³³Cooke, Life of Stonewall Jackson, 182.

¹³⁴Robertson, Stonewall Jackson, 234. Jackson believed that since the Bible was full of wars where devout men slaughtered their opponents, the South should follow its example and kill all the Yankees who invaded their territory.

¹³⁵Hunter, Lexington Presbyterian Church, 77.

This, and not an artillery piece, a rifle, nor even the trusty bayonet, was his chief weapon in the fight against the enemy.

Confederate generals also offered prayers to God that did not focus on the preparation of their army for war. In addition to praying for the strength to perform his duty capably, on June 1, 1861, J. E. B. Stuart prayed for grace.¹³⁶ He knew that the war which had just begun was going to challenge him and his fellow Confederates in ways they had never faced before. Only with God's grace could he hope to preserve his humanity in the hatred and animosities that war generated. Although Stuart never forgave his father-in-law for his decision to remain in the U.S. Army, he avoided being consumed entirely by hatred and did not attempt to unleash unrestrained havoc on his enemies during his cavalry raids. Whether this restriction of Stuart's ruthlessness resulted from his prayer to God for grace cannot be known. What is known is that Stuart realized that only God had the power to safeguard individuals and save their souls.

Like Stuart, William Nelson Pendleton did not give vent to his rage and desire the extermination of the North's civilian population. Even though, in October 1861, he believed that the South was quite ready to repel their enemies, he prayed that such bloodshed might be averted, and that the officials in Washington would amend their strategy and acknowledge "...the voice of humanity + reason."¹³⁷ Pendleton perceived that although a series of glorious victories would be a dramatic and gratifying beginning for his new country, it was more fitting for Christians to pray that peace might be restored as soon as possible. Of course, for Pendleton, such a peace required the explicit recognition of the independence of the Confederacy.

Confederate generals also prayed for specific individuals. Leonidas Polk prayed for himself in November 1863, as he prepared for entrance into the Heavenly Kingdom. His wife later reflected that his constant barely audible prayers aimed to improve his soul's readiness for the next life.¹³⁸ Robert E. Lee also offered prayers for a soul close to

¹³⁶James Ewell Brown Stuart to his wife, June 1, 1861, James Ewell Brown Stuart Papers, 1861-1863, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

¹³⁷William Nelson Pendleton to his wife, October 31, 1861, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

¹³⁸Polk, Leonidas Polk, II: 344.

death. One of his brave soldiers, Randolph Fairfax, perished at the Battle of Fredericksburg, in December, 1862, and Lee wrote to comfort his grieving father. He prayed not for the dead, but for the living, for Lee believed that the dead were at peace, and that only the living had suffering still to endure.¹³⁹ Prior to the Civil War Lee had frequently voiced prayers for his children,¹⁴⁰ and during the war these prayers only increased in intensity and frequency, as three of his sons were Confederate soldiers. Lee offered heartfelt prayers for his children, his wife and his country, believing that God would always protect them, and care for them. Lee realized the inherent limitations that even the commander of a country's foremost army faced when it came to protecting his own family. Lee's trust in God allowed him to focus on the difficult task faced by the Army of Northern Virginia, and not experience excessive worry over the welfare of his loved ones.¹⁴¹

Many generals solicited such prayers from others, especially those they recognized as devout and close to God. Robert E. Lee greatly appreciated such prayers, and, in stark contrast to his doubts about the worthiness of his own prayers, asserted "...that they are heard in heaven, & tend to the merciful protection so constantly extended to me by the great God of all."¹⁴² Lee particularly appreciated prayers offered by his wife.¹⁴³ Many other generals including Dorsey Pender, Edmund Kirby Smith, J. E. B. Stuart, Stonewall Jackson, and D. H. Hill, as well as ordinary soldiers, held special regard for prayers offered by their wives on their behalf.¹⁴⁴ Pender believed that the prayers voiced by the just were quite effective, and, as he regarded his wife as a just woman, was

¹³⁹Jones, Life and Letters of Lee, 473.

¹⁴⁰See for example Jones, Life and Letters of Lee, 94.

¹⁴¹Jones, Life and Letters of Lee, 245.

¹⁴²Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 243.

¹⁴³Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 201.

¹⁴⁴Parks, Edmund Kirby Smith, 176; Duncan, Bingham, ed., "Letters of General J. E. B. Stuart to His Wife, 1861," Emory University Publications, I (1943 [1]), 12; Copy of a letter from Thomas Jonathan Jackson to his wife, November 4, 1861, Dabney-Jackson Papers Series Two, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia; Nugent, My Dear Nellie, 55.

eager to know that she was praying for him.¹⁴⁵ A few months after Pender's request, he remarked he occasionally thought that "...my life has been spared thus far to reward the prayers of a Christian wife."¹⁴⁶ D. H. Hill's request that his wife pray for him had special meaning because he had "...more faith in the prayers of our noble women at home than in the arms of the soldiers in the field."¹⁴⁷ Hill relied upon his wife's prayers because he knew that while the results of battles were uncertain, the power of God was sure, and that He listened to those, like his wife, who prayed with a pure and fervent faith. The practice of praying for others served to draw the generals, soldiers and civilians together into a religious community of believers united in their appeals to God. Each believer was aware that others were praying for them, and drew confidence and spiritual strength from this knowledge. This atmosphere of prayer helped decrease the loneliness soldiers could feel when serving far from home, away from their friends and family. It also emboldened soldiers and general to do their duty, and trusted that when they died, God would hear their relatives' cry for mercy on their behalf. In this respect, religion strengthened the Confederate war effort, by making individuals feel that God would hear the prayers of their intercessors and protect them in battle.

Confederate generals also desired the prayers of others whom they felt were particularly close to God and therefore were likely to have their prayers answered. Hill, while prizing the prayers of his beloved wife, also believed that his deceased mother was in heaven interceding for him, particularly during his first engagement of the war at Bethel, where he had been baptized and worshipped God until the age of sixteen.¹⁴⁸ More typically generals requested the prayers of those still alive on earth. Earl Van Dorn yearned for his daughter Olivia's prayers because he believed the petitions of such an 'angel' would always be heard.¹⁴⁹ J. E. B. Stuart asked his brother in late May 1863 to

¹⁴⁵Hassler, ed., General to his Lady, 165.

¹⁴⁶Hassler, ed., General to his Lady, 182.

¹⁴⁷Letters from D. H. Hill to his wife, April 22, 1862, January 22, 1862, and February 1, 1862, D. H. Hill Papers, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina.

¹⁴⁸Bridges, Lee's Maverick General, 29.

¹⁴⁹Comrades of Earl Van Dorn, A Soldier's Honor, 47.

pray for him frequently, both day and night. Stuart urged his sibling to grant him this request by referring to the recently deceased Stonewall Jackson, a close friend of Stuart's, who was such a firm advocate of prayer. Stuart wrote that for him "...no moment on the battle field has ever been too momentous for prayer."¹⁵⁰ He believed that since he, in the midst of gunfire and artillery fire, found time for prayer, so could his brother during his daily routine and before he retired for the night. These generals solicited the prayers of their loved ones because they believed that their family members and close friends could offer the most heartfelt and incessant prayers on their behalf. These individuals were more likely to remember to voice prayers, as they would often be thinking about their husbands, fathers or brothers who were fighting for their country.

Many generals also particularly welcomed the prayers of clergymen on their behalf. Although Leonidas Polk was a bishop himself, he asked Reverend Charles Quintard, the same bold chaplain who had converted Braxton Bragg, to go to a church with him in Harrodsburg. When they arrived, Polk beseeched Quintard to recite the Episcopal litany. Quintard did so, while Polk knelt by the altar railing and wept profusely. Once the two men had finished the prayers, and left the church, the chaplain encountered Edmund Kirby Smith who also desired the minister's services. Quintard devoutly returned to the church, donned the surplice and stole once more, and aided the second general in refreshing his soul at the altar.¹⁵¹ Both Polk and Kirby Smith knew that brute force alone could not win the war, and that they needed a higher power to fight their battles for them. Devout military leaders viewed pious clergymen such as Quintard as an indispensable method of convincing God to aid the Confederacy in its war of independence, and also as an instrument for nourishing the soul and faith of many a weary general.

Jackson solicited the prayers not only of his wife but of all Christians in the Confederacy, which befitted a man who viewed prayer as his chief weapon. Obviously the more prayers that were offered, the more likely they would be heard, and speedily.

¹⁵⁰Letter of James Ewell Brown Stuart to his brother, May 26 and 27, 1863, James Ewell Brown Stuart Papers 1851-1865, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁵¹Elliott, ed., Doctor Quintard, 56.

Jackson drew great encouragement from such prayers and directly attributed battlefield victories to divine intervention.¹⁵² His requests for prayers often received warm welcomes by numerous devout Confederates because, as one man told him, “You are a man that I felt I could pray for....”¹⁵³ Jesus insisted that His followers pray for everyone, including their enemies. Nonetheless, many Christians found it easier to pray for someone they knew was close to God, and who would gladly welcome their prayers and whose behaviour would not cause them to regret commending them to the mercy of God.

P. G. T. Beauregard also received the prayers of a number of devout Confederates who informed him of their petitions, and who firmly believed him to be an agent of God on earth.¹⁵⁴ Thomas Smyth informed Beauregard that a little boy, on hearing a rendition of the general’s exploits up to May 1863, commented that “...God seems to be always where Genl Beauregard is.” While Beauregard’s reaction to this letter was not recorded, he likely drew strength and encouragement from it, as it provided him with firm evidence that he had many eager and devout advocates on his behalf before God.¹⁵⁵

Since not all soldiers valued prayer, it is pertinent to consider whether or not they held their generals in low esteem when these men offered and solicited prayers, thus appealing to a Deity whom irreligious soldiers scoffed at and/or did not accept. Usually such soldiers ignored or made idle jests at their commanders’ religiosity, especially Stonewall Jackson’s, but once their leaders had proven themselves in battle, they usually condoned their commanders’ appeals for supernatural aid. H. B. McClellan was one

¹⁵²Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 312; Letter of Thomas Jonathan Jackson to Doctor [?], July 31, 1862, item 187, Dabney-Jackson Papers Series Two, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia; Copy of a letter from Thomas Jonathan Jackson to his wife, September 1, 1862, Dabney-Jackson Papers Series Two, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁵³Letter of Francis McFarland to Thomas Jonathan Jackson, February 5, 1862, Dabney-Jackson Papers Series Two, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁵⁴Letter of T. [or J.] G. Lamar to P. G. T. Beauregard, April 15, 1864, Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard Papers, Special Collections, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina; Letter of Augusta Evans to P. G. T. Beauregard, March 17, 1863, Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard Papers, Special Collections, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

¹⁵⁵Letter of Thomas Smyth to P. G. T. Beauregard, May 15, 1863, Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard Papers, Special Collections, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

soldier who knew that his commander, J. E. B. Stuart, relied much on prayer, but did not neglect ordinary military considerations in his efforts to achieve victory.¹⁵⁶ Neither Stuart nor any other Confederate general believed that prayer alone would bring victory. All of them conformed to their fellow general Josiah Gorgas's belief that they needed both to work and pray.¹⁵⁷

Many generals recognized prayer to be essential, but knew that alone it was not sufficient. Despite D. H. Hill's reverence for prayer, he informed his wife that it was "...the height of profanity to expect him [God] to work for us + we do nothing."¹⁵⁸ Robert E. Lee readily agreed with this perspective. Lee's combination of trust in God and human effort was vividly demonstrated when he wrote his wife on May 2, 1861 that "We have only to be resigned to God's will & pleasure & do all we can for our protection."¹⁵⁹ If Lee had been a fatalist, and assumed that his prayers alone would save the Confederacy, he would not have added the third clause to his statement. It would seem only natural for the sentence to say simply 'We have only to be resigned to God's will & pleasure.' However, Lee knew that such a sentiment was not in keeping with Christian doctrine. Christ taught his followers to believe, but simply because they believed did not mean that they were exempt from any effort or exertion. On the contrary, they needed to work harder than they ever had before, except for a different master, trading the futile yoke of mammon for the gentle yoke of Christ. Lee professed his willingness to retain the yoke of Christ, since he had trained himself to perform his duty, no matter it was, and no matter what the cost. Lee knew that prayer alone would not win the Civil War, but that prayers undergirded by relentless effort could prove of great assistance.

¹⁵⁶Henry Brainerd McClellan, I Rode with Jeb Stuart: The Life and Campaigns of Major General J.E.B. Stuart, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1958; reprint, New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), 164.

¹⁵⁷Diary entry of March 25, 1863, Diary of Josiah Gorgas, William Crawford Gorgas Papers 1857-1919, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

¹⁵⁸Letter of D. H. Hill to his wife, March 19, 1862, D. H. Hill Papers, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina.

¹⁵⁹Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 18.

Even though Stonewall Jackson placed a huge value on his prayers and those of his relatives and fellow Confederates, he did not simply get down on his knees and expect a battle to be won by saying a prayer. Instead his opinions coincided with those of a common soldier, Louis Crawford, who remarked that “Trust in God is a very good thing in its place, indeed an absolutely essential thing, but it is also a good thing to keep the powder dry.”¹⁶⁰ One of Jackson’s soldiers, James Nisbet, asserted that Jackson did indeed keep his powder dry.¹⁶¹ This constant attention to earthly, as well as spiritual, matters relieved any apprehension less devout soldiers felt about the prayers uttered by Jackson or other Confederate generals.

Before the war, Jackson wholeheartedly believed that prayer could prevent the Civil War.¹⁶² When hostilities did begin, he felt that prayer could result in the arrival of peace.¹⁶³ He believed that God heeded an individual’s prayers for holiness, and that he or she would belong to the Lord and be united to Him.¹⁶⁴ His belief in the power of prayer was so profound that he insisted that chaplains not participate in battles by shooting Yankees, but instead engage only in prayer.¹⁶⁵ By performing such services their efforts would bring far more advantage to the Southern cause than the deaths of a few more enemy soldiers. Such beliefs earned Jackson the admiration of one of the Army of Northern Virginia’s most pious soldiers, William Poague, who preferred Jackson to Jubal Early precisely because of his reliance on prayer. Poague respected Early’s dedication to the cause and his many martial qualities but “...would like him better still if he were like

¹⁶⁰Lane, ed., “Dear Mother,” 103.

¹⁶¹Nisbet, Four Years on the Firing Line, 45.

¹⁶²Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 141; Statement written by Pastor S. White, not dated, item 208, Dabney-Jackson Papers Series Two, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁶³Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 400.

¹⁶⁴Letter from Thomas Jonathan Jackson to his sister Laura Arnold, February 8, 1858, Thomas Jonathan Jackson Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Copy of a letter from Thomas Jonathan Jackson to his wife, August 11, 1862, Dabney-Jackson Papers Series Two, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁶⁵Shattuck, Shield and Hiding Place, 70-71.

Jackson in religion.”¹⁶⁶ Early’s inability to ‘pray as hard’ as Jackson diminished his chances of victory in Poague’s eyes, and thus also in the eyes of the devout soldiers who served under Early in the Second Corps in 1864.¹⁶⁷ While Jackson’s faith in prayer never wavered, one of his officers nurtured the strange and heretical belief that God caused Jackson’s death and brought him to heaven because He “...could not answer his [Jackson’s] prayers...”¹⁶⁸ While Christian doctrine maintains that God is omnipotent and therefore can do anything, the fervour of Jackson’s prayers impressed this man so much that he believed that God either had to answer them or else spare Jackson the sight of the Confederacy’s subjugation.

Other generals besides Jackson were convinced of the efficacy of prayer. In October 1861, William Nelson Pendleton trusted that his prayer for God’s direction and safety in the coming battle would be answered. God “... can keep us from sin, can help us in duty, sustain in Trial, shield in danger, + give success to our resistance of cruel injury.”¹⁶⁹ All of these blessings were available to a Christian through prayer, and Pendleton did not hesitate to offer such petitions, frequently and enthusiastically.

Robert E. Lee also maintained that prayers were effective in supporting the Confederate cause. Such prayers did not need to be voiced only by Christians, but by anyone possessing a genuine faith in God. Lee credited the prayers of a Jewish rabbi, and

¹⁶⁶Poague, Gunner with Stonewall, 142.

¹⁶⁷When Stonewall Jackson died in May 1863, Lee rearranged the Army of Northern Virginia into three corps and abandoned the old two corps model. R. S. Ewell succeeded to Jackson’s Second Corps at that time. When Ewell, who had previously lost a leg in combat, was unable to exercise command due to illness, he was relieved by Early on May 29, 1864. It was then that Early took over temporary command of that corps, and was leading it at the time Poague wrote in August 1864. Although Early’s leadership of the Second Corps was officially temporary, Lee apparently did not believe Ewell would ever be able to exercise field command again.

¹⁶⁸Samuel Dawson Buck, With the Old Confeds: Actual Experiences of a Captain of the Line (Baltimore: H. E. Houck & Co., 1925), 84.

¹⁶⁹Letter of William Nelson Pendleton to “Lel,” October 19, 1861, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

encouraged the man to continue to offer such petitions to the Lord God.¹⁷⁰ He believed that while God always responds to prayer, He does not always respond in the way a Christian may expect or desire.¹⁷¹ Lee's habitual practice of offering prayers centred on the realization that God's will was preferable to his own.

Just as devout Confederate generals relied on Providence to aid in their war efforts, so did they see prayer as an important means whereby they and others received blessings from an attentive and loving God. Their prayers, offered alone and in communion with others, were an effective way of bolstering their efforts to win the Civil War. Not all generals had an active prayer life, and some, like E. P. Alexander, believed that there was far too much praying occurring in the ranks of the Confederate armies.¹⁷² However, some, like Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee and William Nelson Pendleton, were committed to a life of prayer, and firmly believed such petitions essential for the Confederacy. Many other generals offered less frequent prayers, but still asserted that such efforts could only aid their war effort. All generals believed that offering prayers and believing in Providence was only part of what their country needed to gain its independence. Joined to these beliefs was a firm and determined conviction that if they and the South were to prevail, they needed to expend themselves and their soldiers in fulfilling their duty both to God and to their country.

Providential beliefs and practices had a momentous impact on the Southern war effort. Chief among Providence's influences was the inadvertent death of Stonewall Jackson and dozens of other officers who acted rashly and even suicidally in exposing themselves to both enemy and friendly fire in an effort to lead from the front and be capable generals. While contemporary military practice helped to contribute to these deaths and injuries, the belief in Providence as expressed by hundreds of Confederate generals and subordinate officers encouraged them to take unnecessary risks and expose themselves to enemy fire. Calvinist beliefs in predestination, that one's specific time,

¹⁷⁰Letter of Robert E. Lee to a rabbi, name unknown, August 29, 1861, Robert E. Lee 1863-1866 Letters, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁷¹Wayne Whipple, The Heart of Lee (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Company, Publishers, 1918), 197.

¹⁷²Genovese, A Consuming Fire, 45-46.

place and cause of death were predetermined by God before time began combined with ideas of Providence to lead Dabney and other preachers to reassure generals that they were in no more danger on the field of battle than they were sitting in their dining room at home. When one's time had come, it had come, and dodging bullets would not succeed in prolonging one's life. While such ideas strike twenty-first century readers as outlandish, the testimony of hundreds of both Northerners and Southerners attest to these lethal beliefs. George Rable, in his book God's Almost Chosen Peoples, argues at length in support of this dissertation's findings in this regard.¹⁷³ While Rable focuses on the effect of religious beliefs on all of American society, both North and South, this study demonstrates the specific and devastating consequences these beliefs had for Stonewall Jackson, J. E. B. Stuart and many other generals.

Besides the lethal nature of beliefs in absolute predestination, beliefs in Providence prevented generals from analysing events and attempting to avoid mistakes and thus performing better in the future. For instance, when Stonewall Jackson was shot by his own men when personally conducting an unannounced night reconnaissance, he believed that this happened because of the will of God. The idea that it was the result of a tragic and preventable accident was not even considered. If Jackson and his contemporaries had believed in free will, he could have at least provided advice for his successor to avoid such an occurrence in the future. However, Jackson believed that the occurrence was unavoidable, and indeed to try and avoid one's own death was a terrible sin before God. Jackson, like many of his contemporaries, was not willing to embrace the belief that while God, as existing beyond time, was able to know everything at once, and therefore all future actions (future to human beings, that is), and yet had chosen not to determine those actions. Some theologians would argue, both prior to the nineteenth century and after it, that sin cannot exist if human beings are not free to make their own choices. Mid-nineteenth century Americans were unable to see the logical impossibility of God determining everything and the simultaneous existence of sin. If God determined everything, that is, He actively willed everything that occurred, then to say that something was a sin, that is, was contrary to His Will, is nonsense. As sins are actions, thoughts or words contrary to the will of God, that means that some actions must occur

¹⁷³Rable, God's Almost Chosen Peoples, 2.

that are contrary to God's intent, and that therefore He did not intend them to happen. That does not interfere with God's omnipotence, because He had the choice to prevent these actions from occurring, but, because of His Love for His creations, He chose not to override their wills, thereby turning them into slaves and destroying their status as sentient creatures. Although the 'problem of evil' is often mentioned as a major stumbling block for religion, in reality there are far more difficult issues that could be addressed by theologians. In the mid-nineteenth century, however, the providential beliefs of Christians profoundly influenced their thoughts, words and actions, and as a result, directly affected both the tactics and the strategy employed by Confederate generals during the war.

Directly connected to their beliefs in Providence were Confederate generals' beliefs in the efficacy of prayer in sustaining and supporting their war effort. Generals such as Lee and Jackson honestly believed that their prayers, as well as the prayers of pious Southerners, would aid them in their war effort. Twenty-first century readers may find this conclusion doubtful, but it is substantiated by the evidence and by recent work by historians such as Rable's God's Almost Chosen Peoples.¹⁷⁴ Prayer was believed to be of great value in achieving victory, but it was not engaged in alone, but rather in conjunction with diligent effort in bringing the war to a successful conclusion. The knowledge of civilians offering prayers for the army strengthened the morale of both generals and soldiers in the ranks. Generals did not see a conflict between their belief in God's Providence and their belief in the efficacy of prayer. The Christian faith's ability to promote doctrines that outsiders might see as paradoxes, such as the dual nature of Christ,¹⁷⁵ allowed generals to simultaneously believe that God had determined the outcome of every single event before time began and that prayers could still change the course of a battle or otherwise affect the war effort. The wartime situation also altered the ability of Christian generals to pray for their enemies. Even though Christ commanded

¹⁷⁴Rable writes that "Some Southerners believed "the sheer volume of prayers ascending from the ranks ensured a Confederate victory in the next big fight." Rable, God's Almost Chosen Peoples, 314.

¹⁷⁵Non-Christians might believe that the dual nature of Christ is a paradox. According to traditional Christian doctrine, developed at length during the first few centuries of the Church, Christ is both fully man and fully God. He was not part God and part man, but that every part of Him was both fully man and fully God simultaneously, a total fusion of both humanity and Divinity.

His followers to pray for their enemies, Confederate generals had mixed success in attempting to obey this commandment. The role of Providence and prayer in the efforts of the Confederate generals to win the Civil War should not be underestimated and it is argued that the neglect of these topics in earlier studies of the Civil War has created inaccurate impressions of the methods and purpose of the Confederate war effort. Even E. P. Alexander, an anti-religious officer, believed that Davis and many of the generals actually believed in Providence,¹⁷⁶ and that this belief had significant detrimental effects upon the war effort. The Confederate generals were counting on divine assistance in order to make up the difference in the amount of manpower and resources the North could bring to bear against the Confederacy.

¹⁷⁶Rable, God's Almost Chosen Peoples, 8.

Chapter 4 - Duty and Leadership

Confederate generals, as befitted military men steeped in the traditions of West Point or other military schools, such as the Virginia Military Academy, understood the importance of duty as it pertained to regulating their own conduct and that of their subordinates.¹ Duty guided their lives, since only by doing their duty could they fulfil their function as commanders of the Confederate Army and thereby achieve the Confederacy's independence. Devotion to duty marked the lives of most generals, and it is worth examining how this devotion related to their devotion to God. Many irreligious soldiers were dedicated to the performance of their duty and felt no obligation to serve God or to believe in Him. For other Confederate military leaders religion furnished ample reasons and motivation to excel in the performance of such duty. Every general who professed religion drew strength from his faith and used it to help in performing his duty. At times, however, they encountered conflicts between their duty and religion. Even more frequently, their religious duties and their duties to earthly authorities presented them with conflicting obligations. Only with difficulty were such choices reconciled, and the demands of both religion and their country realized.

Confederate generals felt called to lead their countrymen. They regarded their call to leadership as a responsibility entrusted to them by the political authorities of the Confederacy and the various state governments. For many devout generals, this responsibility became a sacred as well as a secular duty, as they believed that God had entrusted to them the lives of their soldiers, and that such a trust needed to be taken seriously. Some of them looked to Christ as a leader, and frequently emulated his method of leadership, convinced that such a model was pertinent not only for religious life, but

¹While not all Confederate generals had attended West Point or another military school, such a large proportion of senior generals had that they were usually persuaded to adhere to the notions of duty as taught in those institutions. If they [non-West Pointers] did not, chances for promotion were scarce and they likely faced transfer to a post where they could do little harm. Faced with such expectations, amateur generals or potential generals, such as colonels, often ranted against the dominance of the West Pointers in the Confederate Army.

also for the military. Their role as Christian commanders committed them to the performance of their duty. Owing partly to this religious influence, duty was paramount in many of their lives. Secular considerations also intertwined with religious incentives to propel them into action on their country's behalf. Although this discussion focuses upon the religious motives behind their conception and performance of duty, no attempt is made to discount or dismiss secular reasons for the performance of their duty. Because both religious and earthly duties were not always exactly the same, Confederate generals faced the challenge of deciding what was their true and highest duty.

John B. Gordon zealously advocated the fostering of the Christian religion in military forces because of the many positive benefits soldiers derived from professing Christianity. He believed that the Christian faith strengthened Confederate soldiers because it "lifted them, in a measure, above their sufferings; nerved them for the coming battles; exalted them to a higher conception of duty; imbued them with a spirit of more cheerful submission to the decrees of Providence; sustained them with a calmer and nobler courage; and rendered them not insensible to danger, but superior to it."² Religion did not absolve soldiers and generals of their earthly duties, but called these men to carry them out not only for temporal rewards but also for treasure in heaven, and to serve an eternal Master. Gordon was not alone in believing the Christian religion capable of transforming military duty from drudgery into service to God. One ordinary soldier, in identical language, echoed Gordon's idea about religion creating "...a higher conception of duty."³ Not all Confederate officers recognized religion's value in fostering devotion to duty in the Confederate Army.⁴ However, many high-ranking generals did see its value, as their own lives bore witness to the fact that religion supported the performance of their duty. Thus Confederate generals recognized the value of religious devotion, and consciously sought to use it to increase their own and their soldiers' devotion to duty, to the goal of killing and dying for the Confederacy.

²John B. Gordon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), 233; Tankersley, *John B. Gordon*, 10.

³Casler, *Four Years on the Firing Line*, 43. Casler cites Gordon's book on the same page as this reference to duty, and thus it is probable that he derived the phrase from him.

⁴Wiley, *Life of Johnny Reb*, 191.

Robert E. Lee was the paramount example of a general whose religion impelled him to perform his duty to the best of his ability. Steven Woodworth writes that “His [Lee’s] devotion to duty was literally religious.”⁵ From Lee’s years as a teenager when his mother taught him self-control and fiscal restraint, he had always prized a devotion to duty as the hallmark of a well-lived life. In 1856, when rumours circulated over who was to be appointed a brigadier-general in the United States Army, Lee informed his wife that “...we have only to endeavour to deserve more, and to do our duty to him [God] and ourselves.”⁶ Instead of clawing after rank, he simply performed his duty, and trusted that God would prepare a bright future, greater by far than what he, as a sinner, actually deserved. Even after the Civil War ended, Lee still maintained that he was content to do his duty, and leave all else in the hands of God.⁷ Lee’s commitment to duty survived his failure as a general and his country’s destruction.

Lee’s mention of ‘our duty to him and ourselves’ is significant. Not only did God deserve such willing servants, but by doing his duty Lee believed he would fulfil his own role in life, a duty he owed to himself. Embarrassed over his father’s financial ruin and lack of self-control, Lee felt very strongly about maintaining his own sense of self-respect. To ensure that her son never emulated his father’s example, Lee’s mother inculcated in him manners of propriety and self-reliance as well as an abhorrence of fiscal mismanagement. While many other Americans of his social class invested in potentially lucrative but unpredictable business ventures, such as canals, Lee shied away from such opportunities and attempted to safeguard his financial resources. Lee relied on these same principles when he instructed his sons and the soldiers under his command. In September 1861, he exhorted his son Custis to perform his duty in whatever position and field he found congenial. Lee further wrote that doing your duty “...is all the pleasure, all the comfort, all the glory we can enjoy in this world.”⁸ When he learned that his son Robert had decided not to return to school but instead to enter the Confederate Army, Lee hoped

⁵Steven E. Woodworth, Davis and Lee at War, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 330.

⁶Lee, General Lee, 66.

⁷Jones, Life and Letters of Lee, 379.

⁸Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 69.

that his child would “...do his duty & make a good soldier.”⁹ As a military advisor to President Davis in March 1862, he found his duties distasteful, but refused to complain and instead tried to perform to the best of his ability.¹⁰

Lee’s extreme dedication to his duty made it difficult for him to understand why others did not perform their duty. While serving as the superintendent of West Point in the 1850’s, he could not fathom why some cadets did not obey the regulations. He had obeyed them punctiliously when he was a cadet, and so his young charges’ misconduct bewildered him.¹¹ During the Civil War his obsession with duty also affected his expectations for his subordinates. When Cadmus Wilcox requested permission to leave the Army of Northern Virginia, Lee bluntly informed him “I cannot consent to it for I require your services here.”¹² He then tried to convince him to stay willingly by stating “You must come + see me + tell me what is the matter. I know you are too good a soldier not to serve where it is necessary for the benefit of the Confederacy.”¹³ Lee believed soldiers should always do their duty, whether they liked it or not, and in so doing find pleasure, comfort and satisfaction. While Wilcox may not have enjoyed living up to his commander’s understanding of a perfect soldier, Lee’s entreaties and example encouraged the supplicant to perform the duty he had been given.

Lee’s willingness to perform his duty cannot be questioned. What caused Lee great mental anguish, however, was reconciling diverging claims over what constituted his duty. On April 20, 1861, Lee decided to forsake his position in the United States Army and retire to private life in Virginia. After intense prayer Lee realized that only by submitting his resignation could he perform his duty to his relatives, his children, his

⁹Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 129.

¹⁰Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 127-128.

¹¹Theodore J. Crackel, West Point: A Bicentennial History (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 120.

¹²Letter from Robert E. Lee to Cadmus Marcellus Wilcox, November 12, 1862, Cadmus Marcellus Wilcox Papers, 1846-87, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹³Letter from Robert E. Lee to Cadmus Marcellus Wilcox, November 12, 1862, Cadmus Marcellus Wilcox Papers, 1846-87, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

native state and his God. He then quickly notified his superiors of his decision. If he remained in the Union Army, he would have been called upon to lead hostile forces into Virginia and dispel any resistance. The men barring his re-entry into Virginia would have been his own family, and the citizens of the state he loved so much. Lee knew that by shooting them down, he would also destroy his own heritage. When the call came for him to defend Virginia, and later, to defend the Confederacy, he reconciled such efforts as merely a defensive measure against an aggressor seeking to subdue his state and consign it to slavery. Because he and other Southerners were familiar with slavery, they did not want to receive what they viewed as legal, political and social enslavement from the North. Even though Lee admitted to Annie Marshall that he felt the call of duty as an American citizen, he could not bring himself to accept the proffered duty as the chief executioner of his fellow Virginians.¹⁴ Instead, he felt morally obligated to heed the call of duty from his state, and draw once more the sword which he wished had been sheathed forever. When Virginia called, Lee believed he had no choice but to answer, as he was a servant of his beloved state and could not deny appeals from her politicians to preserve the commonwealth from devastation. Lee consulted his religious beliefs when considering where his duty lay in the Civil War. He perceived that his religious beliefs authorized his decision, and he then relied on those beliefs for support during the conflict ahead. Thus the relationship between Lee's duty and his religion was reciprocal. In the course of this two-way process, Lee's duty and religion fused together so closely that he was no longer able to separate the two aspects of his personality.

Lee's lieutenant, Stonewall Jackson, was far more eager than Lee to draw his sword on behalf of his native state of Virginia. Once Jackson realized that Providence would not avert the Civil War, he gave the cadets of the Virginia Military Academy some astounding advice. The cadets, believing him only a quiet and unassuming professor, shouted out cheers of approval when he told them on April 13, 1861 "The time for war has not yet come, but it will come and that soon, and when it does come, my advice is to

¹⁴Letter from Robert E. Lee to Annie Marshall, April 20, 1861, Robert E. Lee 1861-1865 Personal Papers Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia. Lee was called to Washington and apparently offered command of the main army set to invade and conquer the state of Virginia. Acceptance of this offer would have meant a great increase in rank and prestige for Lee who was then only a colonel in the United States Army.

draw the sword and throw away the scabbard.’”¹⁵ Jackson took his own advice, and began fashioning schemes that would kill the greatest number of Yankees possible. His duty, as he saw it, was to serve the Confederacy. If God had not wanted the new country to exist, He would not have allowed it to come into existence. Jackson took his duty as seriously as did Lee, and one soldier confirmed that Jackson’s “...well-nigh morbid devotion to duty was his ruling characteristic.”¹⁶ Far from being a morbid devotion, his dedication to duty epitomized the same enthusiastic zeal with which he practised his religion. Jackson’s fellow general, John Gordon, believed the war escalated Jackson’s propensities for religion because it imposed enormous responsibilities on him.¹⁷ Jackson needed additional divine assistance to carry out his duties, and that in turn increased his dependence on God and his trust in Providence. As Jackson’s religion intensified, he obtained additional strength and motivation to carry out his duties. These two pivotal forces in Jackson’s life, religion and duty, fed into each other and impelled Jackson to do everything he could to further the Southern cause. Just as with Lee, religion and duty fused together in Jackson’s mind until the two had become virtually one single aspect of his personality. Jackson’s religion was to do his duty, and his duty was to carry out his religious beliefs, which involved driving out the infidel invaders from his homeland (Virginia).

Prior to the Civil War, Jackson’s devotion to duty was clearly evident. After his brilliant performance in the Mexican War, Jackson reported for duty at a post in Florida with a superior officer named Captain William French. After some time had passed rumours circulated that French had engaged in sexual relations with a servant girl. Even though Jackson was only a lieutenant and such investigations jeopardized his career, he firmly believed it was essential to learn the truth about the matter.¹⁸ In the end, Jackson obtained sufficient information to substantiate in his mind the truth of the allegations. However, as there was not enough evidence to sustain a court-martial, French escaped

¹⁵Robertson, Stonewall Jackson, 210.

¹⁶Eggleston, A Rebel’s Recollections, 133.

¹⁷Gordon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, 98.

¹⁸Vandiver, Mighty Stonewall, 66.

relatively unscathed, while Jackson spent some time under arrest¹⁹ and confined to his military post, Fort Meade. The military authorities simply dismissed all of the charges launched by Jackson and French against each other. Nevertheless, if Jackson had continued to serve in the military, he would have been at the mercy of his commanding officer until transferred to another post. Although he soon thereafter departed for a teaching position at the Virginia Military Institute, Jackson had proved that his devotion to duty came before his own interests. Even prior to the Civil War, Jackson's devotion to doing to his duty, as he perceived it, was obsessive, and damaged his military career.

At the Virginia Military Institute, Thomas Jackson demonstrated once again his incredible sense of duty. He continued to teach even though he possessed no innate abilities as a teacher, and the students often mocked him and even made puppy and other animal sounds in class. Jackson presented the difficult material in one manner only, and if a student protested, insisting that he did not understand the lecture, Jackson would repeat what he had previously said, word for word. Even the man who had recommended Jackson for the position later admitted that the major had no abilities or qualifications for the position.²⁰ Jackson continued in this position because he believed it was his duty to do so, and no matter how uncongenial the occupation was to him, he did the best he could, day after day, until his duty called him to draw his sword once more.

During the Civil War, Jackson's devotion to duty reached its highest peak. Less than a month after he left Lexington to serve in the Civil War, he commented to his wife that he suffered from lack of sleep.²¹ Jackson's vigorous conception of duty compelled him to do everything he could to serve the Confederacy. This sense of duty led him to fight in the war,²² and made him believe that his work was so urgent that he had little

¹⁹Jackson wrote that he had been arrested because of his investigation into French's personal life. Robertson, Stonewall Jackson, 105.

²⁰Jennings C. Wise, The Military History of the Virginia Military Institute from 1839 to 1865 (Lynchburg, Virginia: J. P. Bell, 1915), 79, 87.

²¹Copy of a letter from Thomas Jonathan Jackson to his wife, May 8, 1861, Dabney-Jackson Papers Series Two, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

²²Copy of a letter from Thomas Jonathan Jackson to his wife, August 22, 1861, Dabney-Jackson Papers Series Two, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

time for rest. The importance he placed on his duty led him to refuse to take a furlough during the war, though he loved his wife dearly.²³ Upon the birth of his daughter in late 1862, Jackson did not apply to go home for Christmas, for he believed that it was essential that he stay with his troops and set a good example.²⁴ Because of his strict adherence to duty and his willingness to subordinate his own personal aspirations to those of his superiors,²⁵ he expected his subordinates to adopt a similar standard of behaviour. Jackson was notorious for his strict discipline, both at the time and in subsequent accounts, and at least one author believes "...he was the strictest disciplinarian in the Confederate army."²⁶ When a colonel complained that his men refused to perform the duties expected of them, Jackson responded emphatically. He wrote to the colonel that "It will not do to say, that your men cannot be induced to perform their duty - they must be made to do it."²⁷ Jackson could not tolerate the thought that soldiers were avoiding their duty. His command to the colonel was one he frequently carried out himself when faced with reluctant troops. He made his men do their duty, whether they wanted to or not. When a major requested permission for an extension of his furlough to comfort his family and mourn the loss of a loved one, Jackson was at once both sympathetic and unyielding. He offered the man his condolences, but informed him that

²³Richards, God Blessed Our Arms, 73; Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 183-184.

²⁴Copy of a letter from Thomas Jonathan Jackson to his wife, December 25, 1862, Dabney-Jackson Papers Series Two, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

²⁵Jennings Cropper Wise, The Long Arm of Lee or The History of the Artillery of the Army of Northern Virginia with a Brief Account of the Confederate Bureau of Ordinance (Lynchburg, Virginia: J. P. Bell, 1915), 2: 444. One example of Jackson's willingness to subordinate his desires to those of his superior officers occurred after the First Battle of Manassas. Jackson eagerly wanted to pursue the Union army into Washington, but relented when his superiors, J. E. Johnston and P. G. T. Beauregard, insisted that their army was too disorganized to mount a successful pursuit.

²⁶John Selby, Stonewall Jackson as Military Commander (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand, 1968), 220.

²⁷Letter of Thomas Jonathan Jackson to a colonel [name unknown], February 11, 1862, Dabney-Jackson Papers Series Two, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

“...we must look to the living, and to those who come after us....”²⁸ Duty would admit of no other course than for the major to be at his post in the morning. In fact, the major had been fortunate to get a furlough at all from Jackson. The vast majority of applicants for furloughs received a polite but firm rejection.²⁹ Even chaplains could expect such requests to be refused, for Jackson highly esteemed such men of God, and believed their presence with their men was essential.³⁰ Jackson’s compulsion to force others to do their duty reached even to babies. He directed his wife to teach their five-month-old baby Julia self-control, believing that even infants were capable of being taught to perform their duty.³¹ As is clear from the examples above, Jackson was fanatical about doing his duty, and ensuring that others performed their duty as well. Jackson’s devotion to duty, and his feeling of moral certainty that his duty needed to be performed, came directly from his religious convictions.

Few other generals demonstrated the same commitment as Jackson to teaching everyone, including young children, to do their duty. They did, however, hold similar standards when it came to granting furloughs to their soldiers. J. E. B. Stuart applied and received only one furlough during the war.³² Even when his daughter Flora was dying, he believed that his duty required him to stay at his post, and therefore he refused to ask for a furlough.³³ Likewise he also customarily rejected requests for furloughs when his men were on active service, but in general granted more furloughs than Jackson.³⁴ James

²⁸Letter from Thomas Jonathan Jackson to Major J. A. Harman, William M. Gardner Papers, 1847-1874, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 170.

²⁹Randolph, Life of Thomas J. Jackson, 236-237.

³⁰A. D. Betts, Experience of a Confederate Chaplain 1861-1864 W. A. Betts, ed. (Methodist Episcopal Church, South, date of publication unknown), 31.

³¹Randolph, Life of Thomas J. Jackson, 293-294.

³²Garnett, Riding with Stuart, 32.

³³Thomas, Bold Dragoon, 188.

³⁴Wright, A Southern Girl in '61, 147-148. Confederate generals’ reluctance to grant furloughs stemmed not only from their devotion to duty but also because they usually needed all available manpower to contend with the enemy.

Longstreet was also known to have rejected applications for leave, and at least one aide felt annoyance at the fact that he had not received one during the entire winter of 1862-1863.³⁵ However, even the strictest generals could show compassion for their soldiers and grant them a short furlough. Braxton Bragg, renowned for his devotion to strict discipline, interceded for a private "...to marry his dying sweetheart after his regimental commander had refused."³⁶ While many Confederate generals focused on the performance of their duty, they could still sympathize with their soldiers. Bragg realized this soldier would not have the chance to marry his fiancée after the war ended.

Even those generals willing to take a furlough during the winter season, like Frank Paxton, showed dedication to their duty.³⁷ He informed his wife that he would perform his duty, no matter what the future held in store for him.³⁸ William Nelson Pendleton enjoined the same concept of duty to his son. The Southern cause was "...as just as ever, as righteous as ever summoned men to a life + death struggle...."³⁹ Owing to the manifest righteousness of their cause, their course of duty was crystal clear. Looking to the guidance of the Heavenly Father, Pendleton offered his son an example of an earthly father convinced of the significance of his duty. Leonidas Polk similarly devoted himself to his duty. In April 1863 he regretted wasting many years of his life. The occasion of his fifty-seventh birthday prompted him to hope that in the future God would increase the amount of time he devoted to his duty.⁴⁰

The interaction of religion with one's conception of duty also happened in the lives of the soldiers. One example of religion supporting the performance of military duty occurred 1864 when many soldiers were about to be released from service. Their three

³⁵Goree, Longstreet's Aide, 102.

³⁶McWhiney, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat, 183.

³⁷Paxton, ed., Civil War Letters of Frank "Bull" Paxton, 30.

³⁸Paxton, ed., Civil War Letters of Frank "Bull" Paxton, 61.

³⁹William Nelson Pendleton to his son, Sandie Pendleton, February 19, 1862, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁴⁰Polk, Leonidas Polk, II: 212-213.

year term expired in the spring or summer of 1864, but, as Steven Woodworth argues, the revival environment that prevailed in the Confederate armies encouraged the soldiers to re-enlist for the duration of the war.⁴¹ Even though they had served their country for three long years, many of them, believing in the justness of their cause and the support of God, felt their duty consisted of seeing the war through to its end.

On the rare occasions that Confederate generals were thought to be neglecting their duty they suffered censure and criticism. One such occasion occurred when P. G. T. Beauregard felt unable to continue command of the Army of Tennessee due to a throat illness and severe fatigue. He informed the Confederate government that he was leaving his army and going to Bladen Springs to recover. Beauregard believed that, in his current state of health, he would only be a liability to his army. By leaving it in the hands of a trusted subordinate, Braxton Bragg, he thought he could recuperate faster and then return to duty and soundly defeat the Yankees later in the year. However, President Davis did not approve of Beauregard's abrupt departure. Instead of asking for permission to take a leave of absence from his post, Beauregard simply informed Samuel Cooper, the adjutant general of the Confederate Army, that he was leaving. Davis interpreted such an action as desertion, and, because of previous disagreements, stripped Beauregard of that command, never again allowing him such an important assignment in the war.⁴² Beauregard did not think that he was neglecting his duty, but instead fulfilling it by attempting to improve his health. He informed Cooper that he would return to his post as soon as he was ordered to do so even if his health had not recovered by that point.⁴³ Davis cast scorn on Beauregard's need for rest as the army had been stationary at Corinth for some time after the Battle of Shiloh, fought on April 6, 1862. He could not accept Beauregard's slighting of army regulations. Thus Beauregard's career suffered as a result of this differing

⁴¹Woodworth, While God is Marching On, 278.

⁴²The Army of Northern Virginia was usually the largest army in the Confederacy, and had the prestigious assignment of protecting the country's capital. The Army of Tennessee was the major army in the western theatre and was usually considered the second most important command.

⁴³G. T. Beauregard to Samuel Cooper, June 23, 1862, P. G. T. Beauregard Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

interpretation of his duty.⁴⁴ Davis evidently would have preferred that Beauregard adopt a more religious conception of duty wherein a soldier accepted bodily suffering willingly for the good of his country.

Beauregard's situation was not the only one in which a general's true duty could be difficult to determine. At times, ministers helped to increase the confusion men felt between their duties to their country and their God. One preacher devoted to the South instructed soldiers to pledge their loyalty to the Confederacy unconditionally. The minister's sermon emphatically insisted that soldiers should agree that "If her [their country's or their state's] cause be right, she shall have my free support; if it be wrong, she shall have my unqualified support."⁴⁵ This doctrine was unsuitable for a Christian, for although most Christian denominations enjoined obedience to civil authorities, very few advocated absolute obedience to the point of obeying any order given, even if clearly repugnant to God's commandments. Robert E. Lee informed William Nelson Pendleton on April 7, 1865, that even though he knew the odds of victory were poor, his duty bound him to do all he could because there were "...sacred principles to maintain and rights to defend..."⁴⁶ Lee and many other generals founded their conception of duty on religious precepts of justice and morality. Justice, as understood in a secular sense, also encouraged their adherence to the Southern cause. If their country's leaders ordered them to perform actions that betrayed such 'sacred principles' then duty bound them to refuse the orders, and ensure they were not carried out. Not all Confederate generals would have sacrificed their careers to obey their conscience. Jackson, however, would have made such a sacrifice,⁴⁷ and the generals who continued to serve would have lost their

⁴⁴Crist, ed., Papers of Jefferson Davis, 8: 254.

⁴⁵Chesebrough, ed., "God Ordained This War," 275.

⁴⁶McKim, Soul of Lee, 108.

⁴⁷There is clear evidence that Jackson would have resigned under such conditions, because he actually did submit a letter of resignation when the Confederate Secretary of War began interfering with Jackson's decisions in the field. G. F. R. Henderson attributes the lack of civilian interference with Confederate armies during the remainder of the war to Jackson's refusal to tolerate such behaviour. G. F. R. Henderson, Stonewall Jackson and the American Civil War (New Edition, London, New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902), I: 208.

conviction that God was aiding the Confederacy. In order to be able to sacrifice everything for the Southern cause, many generals needed to believe that both religious and secular considerations of duty alike supported their war effort. William Nelson Pendleton worried about his ‘peculiar position’ in the war, that is being both a brigadier general and a practising minister of religion. He appreciated the compassion of an Episcopal bishop, Bishop Meade, who expressed his acceptance of Pendleton’s decision to combine both callings during the war.⁴⁸ His position would have become untenable had President Davis began giving directives that clearly contravened Christian morality. Most Confederate generals acknowledged the applicability of religious beliefs to their conduct of the war. Unlike in many other wars, the generals believed that individuals were still morally responsible for their actions, even those actions that had been ordered by their superiors. Therefore they were usually careful to stay within the realm of so-called Christian conduct when issuing orders, with the notable exceptions of Jubal Early and Nathan Bedford Forrest. In this refusal to keep their religious beliefs separate from the rest of their life, they were actually supported by Francis Lieber, who firmly believed that morality was not to be excluded from active military service. In other words, an individual claiming that he/she was only ‘obeying orders’ was not a valid excuse to escape punishment for immoral behaviour during wartime, what we would now refer to as war crimes. Lieber wrote that “Men who take up arms against one another in public war do not cease on this account to be moral beings, responsible to one another, and to God.”⁴⁹

Stonewall Jackson shared Lee’s and Pendleton’s need to believe that their duty conformed to sacred principles. Jackson’s devotion to duty caused him to obey orders as though they came directly from God. Although his obedience to his superiors was not as absolute as some scholars claim, it was extreme, and only when convinced of the necessity of a modification of an order would he deviate in the slightest from a superior’s

⁴⁸Lee, Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, 176.

⁴⁹John Fabian Witt, Lincoln’s Code: The Laws of War in American History (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, and New Delhi: Free Press, 2012), 377.

instructions.⁵⁰ During the Mexican War, Jackson received orders to begin an artillery bombardment at the Battle of Chapultepec. When he was informed that his shells would kill women and children, he merely gave the order to fire. Jackson believed that his duty was to obey orders, not to question the morality of the act.⁵¹ Only years later, living as a civilian in Lexington, did he consider what he had done. At that point Jackson came to the conclusion that he would henceforth only participate in a war that he believed morally just, perhaps alluding to a possible concurrence with Ulysses Grant, that the Mexican War was unjust and that the United States had been a wanton aggressor. Prior to that time in the 1850's, Jackson simply viewed his profession in a morally neutral perspective, and believed that an individual soldier's perception of morality was irrelevant in a war. However, after he joined the Presbyterian Church on November 22, 1851, Jackson acknowledged that God's will and the will of a superior officer might not be identical, and thus a Christian soldier could find himself in a moral quandary and ultimately would be unable to comply with the order. Fortunately for Jackson, his superiors during the Civil War, J. E. Johnston and Robert E. Lee, did not order him to perform actions he considered at variance with the Christian religion. On the contrary, Jackson maintained that it was God's will that the Confederacy obtain its independence, and consequently his devotion to duty displayed a religious zeal alien to his service in the Mexican War.

Not all generals dedicated themselves to their duty as earnestly as Jackson. One of his subordinates, A. P. Hill, became upset with Jackson. According to Hill's recent biographer, James Robertson, he deliberately defied an order issued by his commanding officer. Jackson had commanded that the troops were to stop and have a lunch rest period. Hill, seeking possibly to antagonize or show up Jackson, kept his troops marching during the prescribed rest time. Previously Jackson had complained that Hill could not keep his troops marching as fast as Jackson expected. Hill decided that his superior would have no such complaints that day and consequently refused to let his troops pause at all during their prescribed rest period. When Jackson found the troops still marching, he ordered the

⁵⁰Davis, The Cause Lost, 169; See Robertson, Stonewall Jackson, 388, for an example of what the author calls "open insubordination."

⁵¹Offill, "Stonewall Jackson: A Case Study," 38.

officers nearby to stop the men. Hill grew furious at this provocation and challenged Jackson to take his sword if he dared to take charge of his troops in his very presence. Jackson refused the sword, but placed Hill under arrest for these acts of insubordination.⁵² While Hill was quite willing to obey orders properly on the battlefield, he ignored orders he believed to be less important. Thus while many generals felt devotion to their duty, such devotion was not absolute. Generals like A. P. Hill considered battlefield directives more imperative and binding than specific details about rest breaks.

Contrary to such episodes of insubordination, some conscientious generals wanted to carry out their duties but had difficulty discovering what truly constituted their duty. As generals, they had a duty to their country. They were called to fight battles and repel the Northern invaders. As Christians they had a duty to God. They could not simply use all available means to fight the enemy, because Christ insisted that His followers love their enemies, and do good to them. When these two duties combined to send them into battle or on campaign on behalf of both God and the Confederacy, their duty was clear. However, when these two duties were not identical, such generals experienced periods of ambivalence as their minds wrestled with conflicting demands. Confederate generals recognized that various claims of duty, such as to their religion, their state, their family and their personal honour could at times conflict. After this recognition they then attempted to reconcile these competing demands of their loyalty. Typically, they managed to reconcile the performance of their differing duties, whether religious or military, and fuse the performance of these duties together. In other words, when they were performing their military service, they believed that thereby they were also fulfilling their religious duties. While pacifists would argue that the Confederate generals were actually violating their religious convictions, it is apparent from the evidence that the Confederate generals were convinced that they were actually fulfilling their religious duties by performing military service, even in the case of Pendleton and Polk, who served as ministers before the war (and retained their status as clergyman and bishop respectively).

⁵²Robertson, A. P. Hill, 131-132.

In Jackson's life, such ambivalent periods lasted for only very short intervals. If faced with a seeming conflict between his duty to the Confederacy and his duty to God, he would pray about the issue until the matter was resolved. These occasions occurred infrequently for him because he believed his military duties were a form of service to God, and thus usually believed that his military orders constituted his legitimate duty.⁵³ Charles Royster argues that because Jackson thought the Confederacy was "...the next step in Christian history..."⁵⁴ he needed his new country just as much as it required his services.⁵⁵ When his superiors ordered him to destroy the property of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, Jackson felt sadness at the destruction of such fine equipment. Nonetheless, he promptly executed his orders, always believing that "...my duty was to obey."⁵⁶ Clearly for Jackson, duty superseded all other human feelings.⁵⁷ His wife and his position at the Virginia Military Institute were important to him, but his duty to serve the Confederacy was paramount. George Junkin, Jackson's first father-in-law, abhorred secession and believed it was evil. He pitied Jackson, and professed that Jackson served the Confederacy as the result of an erroneous belief, that of the authority of the individual states to retract their allegiance to the Union whenever they so desired. Junkin stated that before Virginia seceded, Jackson earnestly supported the Union. After that time, however, Jackson "...felt it to be duty to go with her [Virginia]. We [Junkin and his fellow Unionists] think they were wrong, but they were conscientiously wrong."⁵⁸ Even though Jackson still loved his first father-in-law, a noted Presbyterian minister, he could not allow personal feelings to stand in the way of the performance of his duty. His relationship with his sister also suffered as a result of the war, as the two siblings never

⁵³A Wilson Greene, Whatever You Resolve to Be: Essays on Stonewall Jackson (Baltimore: Butternut and Blue, 1992), 175.

⁵⁴Royster, The Destructive War, 68.

⁵⁵Royster, The Destructive War, 68.

⁵⁶Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 167.

⁵⁷Robertson, Stonewall Jackson, 517.

⁵⁸David Xavier Junkin, The Reverend George Junkin, D.D., LL.D.: A Historical Biography (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1871), 556.

communicated again after the spring of 1861. Jackson's love of duty even superseded his relationships with his fellow Confederates. When an officer begged Jackson for time to go home to say farewell to his dying wife, Jackson refused. The man insisted, and Jackson retorted "Man, man, do you love your wife more than your country?"⁵⁹ The officer then realized the depth of Jackson's devotion to duty, and the fact that his commander also held his subordinates to that same unflinching standard. The officer's wife passed away, denied a final glimpse of her spouse, and the man never forgave Jackson for his cruelty. The officer believed Jackson refused to show a dying woman mercy, and was thus heartless in the extreme. Jackson did not believe his actions showed a lack of charity, but that he was obeying God by doing his duty and forcing others to perform their duty as well. It would not have mattered to Jackson had the man forgiven him; the general was convinced of the righteousness of his course and did not regret his behaviour.

Robert E. Lee's devotion to duty equalled that of his subordinate Stonewall Jackson. On April 20, 1861, Lee faced two irreconcilable duties, one to the Union which he served as a U.S. Army colonel, and one to the state of Virginia, which Lee considered his homeland. He knew that if he made the wrong choice, he would compromise not only his earthly prospects but also his chances for eternal salvation. After an evening of intense prayer, Lee believed that he had found the duty that God wanted him to perform. His love of Virginia⁶⁰ overruled his American citizenship. Steven Woodworth argues that Lee's decision that night did indeed involve a struggle between Lee and his conscience, and that when Lee resigned from the Union army, "...his conscience lost..."⁶¹ In this respect, I must disagree with Woodworth. The existing evidence demonstrates that Lee honestly believed that his duty to his state of Virginia superseded that of his duty to the United States. Thus Lee did not fight with his conscience, and 'his conscience lost.' If one accepts, as Woodworth does, that Lee's oath to protect and defend the United States of America was valid, and even paramount over all other loyalties, Lee did not

⁵⁹Robertson, The Stonewall Brigade, 47.

⁶⁰Freeman, R. E. Lee, I: 177-178.

⁶¹Woodworth, Davis and Lee at War, 16.

necessarily ‘defeat’ his conscience. Instead Lee’s conscience could have been improperly formed, and therefore his moral choices may have been honestly made, but made by a deformed conscience. Therefore, in moral theology, there is insufficient evidence to accuse Lee of violating his conscience. First, one would have to prove that his conscience was correctly formed in the first place.⁶² Randolph McKim feels that Lee’s abandonment of his home, career and fortune proves that Lee did not forsake his conscience, but that he renounced earthly considerations in order to accept the duty that God had given him.⁶³ Certainly duty was the keystone of Lee’s life,⁶⁴ and he believed that he was following it when he wrote his letters of resignation. Furthermore, he felt that he was acting in good conscience by refusing to command the Union army which would assemble and attempt to subjugate Virginia. Lee’s Adjutant-General of the Army of Northern Virginia, Walter Taylor, maintained that such an offer did not even tempt his commander, and only the many years that Lee had devoted to service in the U.S. Army caused him to weigh carefully such a momentous step.⁶⁵ Marshall Fishwick suggests that Lee entered the war with a sense of guilt because Lee believed secession and slavery were evil.⁶⁶ Although Lee did not like the idea of secession, he did not feel that it was an evil in and of itself. Lee did, however, believe that slavery was evil, but at the beginning of the war both the Union and the Confederacy supported slavery. Only in September 1862 did Lincoln

⁶²Christians believe that God has given each human being a conscience, that is, a moral compass, as it were, to direct him or her throughout their life and to make good moral choices. That is why Christians expect sinners to feel remorse for their sins when those sins have been pointed out to them (at revival meetings, for instance). However, it is also possible for a conscience to be ‘deformed,’ that is to be improperly formed, and thus the conscience distorts the normal perception of wrongdoing. These deformations can occur through culture or through personal actions. A moral theologian could point to an individual growing up in a slave society, and suggest that a person’s conscience had been deformed through witnessing acts of brutality towards African Americans as a young child, whereas an outsider entering that culture for the first time (assuming that their conscience had not also been deformed) should recoil from the treatment African Americans received.

⁶³McKim, The Soul of Lee, 26.

⁶⁴Jones, Life and Letters of Lee, 436; Edward A Pollard, Lee and His Lieutenants (New York: E. B. Treat & Co., 1867), 37.

⁶⁵Walter Herron Taylor, General Lee: His Campaigns in Virginia, 1861-1865, with Personal Reminiscences (Norfolk, Virginia: Nusbaum Book and News Company, 1906), 19-20.

⁶⁶Fishwick, Lee After the War, 207.

announce the implementation of the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863, and this attack on slavery occurred not because the peculiar institution was evil, but because Lincoln thought such a measure necessary to the preservation of the Union. Although Lee did feel guilt during the war, it was not because of secession, but because he believed he was a sinful individual and needed God's peace and forgiveness. Lee never repented of the decision he made on April 20, 1861, believing to the end of his life that he had ascertained and then performed the duty God had assigned him. Although he allowed his sons to follow their own consciences, and did not wish them to be guided by his example, he firmly believed he had made the right and ethical decision.⁶⁷ Many generals wrestled with their consciences over what constituted their duty, but once they had ascertained what their duty was, they were true to it, and rarely reproached themselves over past decisions. Lee's decision to resign from the U. S. Army was one such case.

Leonidas Polk and William Nelson Pendleton provide two prominent exceptions to this rule. Both men left ecclesiastical positions vacant while they served in the Confederate Army. Both would frequently pause and reflect during the course of the war, trying to ascertain their true duty. Although unwilling to resign his bishopric, Polk also believed that he should not exercise any of his clerical functions during the war. So strictly did he hold himself to this policy, that from the time of his entrance into the Confederate Army until his death, he only performed a total of four ecclesiastical functions, two of which were the baptisms of Generals J. E. Johnston, Hardee and Hood.⁶⁸ Leonidas Polk's son, William, author of the first major biography of his father, maintained that "it was impossible for a man of Bishop Polk's education [at West Point] and character to take sanctuary behind the precedents which govern men of his sacred calling in quieter times."⁶⁹ Evidently the bishop himself justified his course of action along the same lines, as Leonidas Polk occasionally compared himself to a dutiful man who sees his neighbour's house on fire. He had a duty to make every effort to extinguish

⁶⁷Lee, General Lee, 97. All three of his sons served in the Confederate Army.

⁶⁸Elliott, ed., Doctor Quintard, 84. The author evidently counted the baptisms of J. E. Johnston and Hardee as one ecclesiastical act because they were performed during the same ceremony. John Hood was baptized a few days before his two fellow generals.

⁶⁹Polk, Leonidas Polk, I: 351.

the blaze, and only when the fire was out would he return to his normal duties in his own household.⁷⁰ The difference between the imaginary analogy and Polk's life was that while a house may burn for several hours, the Civil War lasted four long years. Polk only survived long enough to witness three of them.

Polk did not relish his change in status. When an acquaintance commended him on his 'promotion' to major-general, the bishop issued a sharp reprimand. He retorted that being a bishop was the most elevated office on earth. On another occasion he insisted that he was not repudiating his clerical vocation, but instead buckling "...the sword over the gown."⁷¹ Once the sword was no longer needed, it, and not the gown, would be thrown away, and the bishop would joyfully return to Louisiana to resume his episcopal functions.

Polk's hopes that he could return to Louisiana after only a few months of military service proved vain. On November 6, 1861, and January 30, 1862, he asked Davis for permission to return to his bishopric.⁷² Polk believed at the beginning of the war that his service would only be temporary, a stopgap measure designed to provide the Confederate Army with an acknowledged and respected man of the community who could command respect from the troops and the populace and who also had military training. According to his son, the fact that Polk's "...natural bent of mind and character was rather that of a soldier than that of a priest..."⁷³ also motivated him to use his natural talents on behalf of the Confederacy. Years before, Polk had become a clergyman rather than remain a soldier because he felt an ecclesiastical calling from God. This calling constituted a sacred duty, and, if he ignored it, he would thereby imperil his salvation. Thus when a call of duty came for him to return to the military, he felt it only natural to heed such a call, as it was

⁷⁰Polk, Leonidas Polk, I: 362; Walter Lord, ed., The Fremantle Diary: Being the Journal of Lieutenant Colonel James Arthur Lyon Fremantle, Coldstream Guards, on his Three Months in the Confederate States (London: Andre Deutsch Limited, 1956), 114.

⁷¹Polk, Leonidas Polk, I: 362.

⁷²Crist, ed., Papers of Jefferson Davis, 7: 398; Polk, Leonidas Polk, I: 372-373; Leonidas Polk to Jefferson Davis, January 30, 1862, Leonidas Polk Papers 1828-1871, Sec. A, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

⁷³Polk, Leonidas Polk, I: 353.

similar to that which had drawn him out of the military decades earlier. After much prayer and reflection, Polk firmly believed that he could not forgive himself if he rejected such an urgent plea from the president for his services. He received the rank of major-general on June 25, 1861, and the command of a western military department, with his base in Memphis, Tennessee.⁷⁴ After several months of command, Polk presumed that the initial emergency had passed, and that he could return to his bishopric. However, Davis disagreed, and after the fall of Forts Henry and Donelson in early 1862, Polk found himself even more firmly fixed in his role as a general. Both Davis and the Secretary of the Treasury, C. C. Memminger, wrote him letters urging him to remain in the field. Davis argued that Polk's presence was responsible for improving the 'moral effect' in the military, which could mean both improving the morale of the Western armies, and bringing a heightened sense of morality to camp life. Davis even begged his friend to remain in the service, imploring him to renounce any intention of resignation for the time being.⁷⁵ Polk acknowledged on January 31, 1862, a week before he received Davis's letter, that if compelled, he would perform his military duty. Since Davis rejected both appeals, and was so emphatic about the necessity of Polk's presence, Polk's adherence to duty left him no choice but to remain in the army.⁷⁶ Polk valued Davis as a personal friend and respected him as the leader of his country. He could not disregard Davis' requests.

Polk's decision to serve as a general met with harsh criticism both during and after the Civil War. Some clerics viewed Polk's decision as '...a lapse from duty...'⁷⁷ which was the very thing Polk did not want to commit. Authors of articles in The Church Journal in 1861 strongly disapproved of Polk's decision, but mourned his death three years later, noting his earnest prayers in the church at Harrodsburg, and trusting that a

⁷⁴Polk, Leonidas Polk, I: 357-358.

⁷⁵Crist, ed., Papers of Jefferson Davis, 8: 39.

⁷⁶Polk, Leonidas Polk, II: 73.

⁷⁷Pollard, Lee's Lieutenants, 587.

merciful God would welcome the penitent sinner.⁷⁸ A common soldier believed that Polk was a far better bishop than a general.⁷⁹ One of Polk's commanding officers harboured a similar opinion, at least as far as it concerned Polk's abilities as a military commander. Braxton Bragg wrote to Jefferson Davis that Polk, "...though gallant and patriotic, is luxurious in his habits, rises late, moves slowly, and always conceives his plans the best- He has proved an injury to us on every field where I have been associated with him...."⁸⁰ Historian Richard McMurry agreed with Bragg's assessment, believing Polk was "...the least admirable of all the subordinate western generals...."⁸¹ Others, notably President Davis, considered Polk a skilled and able general. Whatever Polk's merits as a general, he served his country out of a profound sense of religious and civil duty, firmly believing that, for the time being, he was called to wield the sword. Only after his duty as a soldier had ended did he expect to preach the Gospel and wield not the sword of man, but the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.⁸²

Unlike his clerical colleague and fellow Episcopalian, William Nelson Pendleton firmly believed in wielding both swords at once. So closely did he unite both his clerical and martial vocations, that when he preached, he donned a surplice over his military uniform.⁸³ He felt called to "...do my duty, honor God, and do what good service I can in the double capacity of soldier and minister of Christ."⁸⁴ Few other generals possessed a clerical vocation in addition to their commission. Pendleton acknowledged the seeming contradiction between his two vocations, realizing that taking part in what he called

⁷⁸William Parker Snow, Southern Generals, Who They Are, and What They have Done (New York: Charles B. Richardson, 1865), 420-421.

⁷⁹Nisbet, Four Years on the Firing Line, 197.

⁸⁰Crist, ed., Papers of Jefferson Davis, 9: 405. It should be noted that Bragg was notorious for having problems with his subordinate generals.

⁸¹Richard M. McMurry, Two Great Rebel Armies: An Essay in Confederate Military History (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 114.

⁸²Ephesians 6: 17.

⁸³Lord, ed., Fremantle Diary, 197.

⁸⁴Lee, Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, 143.

“...the dreadful work of death...”⁸⁵ seemed to be in direct opposition to his service to the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. However, he would not stand idly by while his country was ravaged, his wife and sisters threatened with rape, and his male relatives exposed themselves to constant danger for the sake of liberty.⁸⁶ Pendleton decided to enter military service only after much prayer and reflection. He believed, like Polk, that his education at West Point should not be squandered when such training was in high demand, especially his knowledge of artillery. A commission as colonel, and later, brigadier-general, superseded his role as chaperone of the young men of the Rockbridge Artillery but he still hoped to exert a moral influence over that particular unit and many others by continuing to preach whenever the opportunity occurred.⁸⁷

Like Polk, Pendleton regarded the offer to enter Confederate military service as a duty to God. He did not want others to think that the Gospel turned once brave soldiers into cowards, unwilling to aid their countrymen in their time of need.⁸⁸ In August 1862, the vestry of his church in Lexington, Virginia, wrote imploring him to return to his parish or else vacate the position, so they could hire another minister to tend to their spiritual needs. After Pendleton’s departure the church had basically closed down, and only occasional services were held there. Pendleton retained his position as pastor of Grace Church because he hoped that the war would soon end, and that he could return to his congregation. Upon receiving this letter he replied that he was unwilling to resign, and hoped to return as soon as possible. Until that time, he would attempt to find someone willing to offer services in the church. The letter from the vestry likely pained him, since the vestrymen informed him that “...the Congregation is scattering, + the labor

⁸⁵Lee, Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, 142.

⁸⁶Lee, Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, 142. Pendleton sincerely believed that some wanton Union invaders would rape women at will, even though such incidents occurred with far less frequency in the Civil War than in many other wars.

⁸⁷Lord, ed., Fremantle Diary, 197.

⁸⁸Statement of William Nelson Pendleton, [May 1, 1861], William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Lee, Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, 139.

of many years in building up this little parish, is in danger of being sacrificed.”⁸⁹ In other words, the vestry charged their minister with neglect. Pendleton was well aware of the Biblical image of the Good Shepherd. Jesus cared for his sheep, and protected them from the ravages of predators. In Biblical terms, Pendleton risked being considered a ‘hireling,’ one who did not truly care for the sheep, and instead allowed evil forces to ravage and scatter them. He was torn by his incompatible duties to both his parish and his country. Was Pendleton not fighting to defend his sheep from predators by serving in the army? Was he not willing to lay down his life for his sheep, as had Jesus Himself?⁹⁰ Pendleton responded to the vestry by reassuring them that he would return as soon as possible, and in the meantime efforts would be made to supply them with pastoral care. He refused to sever the tie between them, and continued to offer his prayers on their behalf.⁹¹ Pendleton insisted on performing both his clerical and martial duties. Unlike Polk, who suspended virtually all exercise of his clerical activities, Pendleton relied on God for supernatural assistance to fulfill both callings simultaneously. Grace Church simply needed to wait for his return, while he arranged for a minister to perform occasional services in that church. He did not intend to acknowledge his failure as a pastor and resign from his position. Such a resignation would be an acknowledgement of a failure of duty. Pendleton’s sense of duty impelled him to be, as St. Paul was, all things to all people, that he might by all means save some. Pendleton trusted that with God’s aid such diverse tasks could be accomplished by one man. Very few Confederate generals attempted to perform duties both secular and clerical, but, like Pendleton, most had a sense of responsibility which impelled them to perform their duty faultlessly, diligently and devotedly. Many also shared his sense of duty as a sacred obligation to God. This conviction emerged from their religious beliefs, and this zealotry often inspired those generals considered

⁸⁹Letter of the Vestry of Grace Church to William Nelson Pendleton, August 4, 1862, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁹⁰John 10:11.

⁹¹Letter of William Nelson Pendleton to the vestry of Grace Church, Lexington, Virginia, August 14, 1862, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

irreligious, like Jubal Early. Both Polk and Pendleton firmly believed that they were serving God and their new country by remaining clergymen, and yet also engaging in military duties. They felt that to ignore the call to military service would be a sin, a violation of God's will, and therefore they were morally obliged to serve as Confederate generals. Once again religion and secular military duty became fused together in the minds of these two generals, similar to the process previously observed in Lee and Jackson. The evidence indicates that although there was consideration of the possibility that they were violating their duty as clergymen, these doubts were overwhelmed by the fusion of military duty and religion in their minds.

James McPherson insists that a sense of duty and a feeling of personal honor were critical motivating forces for those who fought in the Civil War, and this is true of virtually all Confederate generals. Generals ranging from Leonidas Polk, to J. E. B. Stuart, to J. E. Johnston, all believed their duty lay with their respective states, and so they willingly heeded the call of duty.⁹² McPherson believes that duty had to play such an important role, because "...some other traditional reasons that have caused men to fight in organized armies had little relevance in the Civil War. Religious fanaticism and ethnic hatreds played almost no role."⁹³ Although 'religious fanaticism' rarely occurred during the war, religious devotion prompted many Confederate generals to focus on their duty and the importance of its successful performance. Duty called them to a challenging and exciting vocation, and by performing such duty they believed themselves to be fulfilling their vocation and enacting their role in the foundation of their new country. For devout Confederates commanders, such as Stonewall Jackson and D. H. Hill, they were also partaking in the drama of salvation history, accomplishing the mysterious purposes of God. Such men eagerly sought to further God's plan for humanity and bring it to fruition through their unrelenting dedication to their duty.

One of the most prominent aspects of a general's duty was his role as a leader. Of course, differing levels of rank entailed a corresponding number of men to command. A

⁹²Polk, Leonidas Polk, I : 385; Symonds, Joseph E. Johnston, 94; John Esten Cooke, "General Stuart in Camp and Field," in Annals of the Civil War, 675.

⁹³McPherson, Cause and Comrades, 5-6.

brigadier general in one of the two major armies of the Confederacy, the Army of Tennessee or the Army of Northern Virginia, commanded a brigade, which consisted of several regiments led by colonels or lieutenant colonels. In turn a brigadier general obeyed the orders of a major general, who commanded several brigades, which were grouped into a division. After the creation of the position of lieutenant general in late 1862, a major general and his division would in turn belong to a corps, of which the Army of Northern Virginia had two from late 1862 to mid-1863, when a third corps was established. The commanders of the corps, the lieutenants generals, would then report to the head of the army, who possessed the rank of a full general. These full generals could serve under each other, or be directly accountable to the Adjutant General of the Army, Samuel Cooper, and to President Jefferson Davis. All generals, whether a newly commissioned brigadier general or a full general commissioned early in the war, needed to obey the directives of someone higher in authority than themselves, and thus did not have absolute control over their forces.⁹⁴ However, while they operated under specific parameters, they each had a significant amount of authority, and the responsibility to provide leadership to their men. Generals imbued with religious feeling felt this responsibility strongly as they sought to lead their men in both a secular and a religious sense.

William Nelson Pendleton gladly used his authority to provide martial leadership with a religious spirit to the men under his command. He began his service in the Civil War as a captain of an artillery company. Parents of potential soldiers sought him out specifically for this position because of his proven ability to offer Christian leadership as a pastor. When he later realized he would be commanded by a young and “raw” graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, he appealed to the governor of Virginia for a promotion in rank.⁹⁵ Baffled by the clergyman’s request, Governor Letcher replied that he was under

⁹⁴Even Robert E. Lee, when his title of Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the Confederacy was authorized by the Senate in early 1865, accepted the position but insisted that he would continue to obey the orders of the constitutionally appointed commander of the Confederate armies, President Jefferson Davis.

⁹⁵Letter of William Nelson Pendleton to Governor Letcher, May 20, 1861, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

the impression that rank did not matter to Pendleton.⁹⁶ Evidently Pendleton did believe rank was important, and in August 1861 Pendleton received the rank of colonel.⁹⁷ Later in the war he became a brigadier general and commanded the Reserve Artillery of the Army of Northern Virginia. Pendleton felt it his duty to lead the Rockbridge Artillery, and later to provide Christian leadership to a larger body of men. When he left his company, numerous parents of the soldiers who had enrolled in the unit expressed concern over whether or not their children would be commanded by an avowedly Christian officer. Originally, Mrs. Philip Williams and other parents had encouraged their sons to join the unit because a respected clergyman would have the young men under his ‘personal influence.’ This particular parent wanted to know if Pendleton would be able to keep an eye on them as he performed his duties as a colonel, and also inquired whether the new captain was a practising Christian or not. Mrs. Williams was only one parent among many who experienced disappointment because Pendleton would not be in close contact with her son, and therefore not directly able to ensure that the new soldiers abstained from sin.⁹⁸ Pendleton, however, felt himself called to a higher rank and a greater opportunity for furthering the Gospel and serving his country by leading a larger number of men with increased authority. Pendleton either harboured ambitions or else simply could not serve a man far younger and with a less distinguished education than himself. He also recognized the possibilities of influencing a larger number of individuals which a colonelcy or the rank of brigadier general would allow him. Pendleton did not believe he had failed in his mission to provide leadership to the young men of the Rockbridge Artillery, but that he would provide such moral leadership to that unit in addition to many others.

⁹⁶Letter of Governor Letcher to William Nelson Pendleton, May 24, 1861, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁹⁷Letter of William Nelson Pendleton to Major S. Crutchfield, August 14, 1861, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

⁹⁸Letter of Mrs. Philip Williams to William Nelson Pendleton, August 25, 1861, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Moral leadership meant not only exhibiting Christian morality by refraining from sins such as drunkenness, but also demonstrating virtues, such as fortitude, to a heroic degree. James McPherson writes that all officers in the Civil War, both North and South, needed to demonstrate their unswerving courage and refusal to succumb to fear. Indeed, “The ultimate test of leadership was combat. No officer could pass this test unless he demonstrated a willingness to do everything he asked his men to do.”⁹⁹ Virtually all Confederate generals demonstrated their ability to pass such a test, and did not worry that such displays of bravado would occasion their death or deprive their commands of their experienced leadership during a critical battle. Leonidas Polk passed this test of leadership many times. However, this ordeal also cost him his life. J. E. Johnston witnessed an artillery projectile pass through the middle of Polk’s chest, and knew that the man who had welcomed him into the Christian faith had just entered the presence of God. As he reflected on Polk’s death years later, Johnston felt certain that it was the bishop-general’s “...characteristic insensibility to danger...”¹⁰⁰ that had caused him to remain exposed on that hilltop, even though the Union artillery battery opposite had already found their range. Johnston had been discussing the Army of Tennessee’s position with Polk, and had just started to leave the exposed position when Polk stayed for a final view of the enemy’s position. That a group of the highest ranking generals in the Army of Tennessee were together in full view of Union artillery demonstrates not only Polk’s ‘insensibility to danger’ but that Confederate generals as a group did not consider their personal safety of high importance, and routinely seemed to tempt the enemy to kill or capture them. Even President Davis occasionally rode around some of the battlefields of the Army of Northern Virginia, forcing generals like Stonewall Jackson to order him to withdraw and not endanger himself needlessly. This willingness to expose themselves to danger guaranteed Confederate generals esteem in the eyes of their men, but also ensured a high turnover rate of commanders, occasionally placing men inexperienced in commanding such large bodies of troops in authority in the middle of

⁹⁹McPherson, Cause and Comrades, 58.

¹⁰⁰Joseph E. Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations during the Late War between the States (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1874).

important battles. The disregard for rifle and artillery fire that Confederate generals displayed was beyond any need to demonstrate courage in front of their soldiers. Instead, in the case of Jackson and Polk, the insensibility to danger constituted a virtually suicidal disregard of death. Their trust that their God and Saviour would preserve them from any threat to their lives led them to commit acts which, in military terms, were inexcusable, and constituted a grave threat to the Confederate cause. Thus their role of Christian leaders actually helped compromise their roles as military leaders. As Christians they were supposed to demonstrate absolute trust in God, and this meant demonstrating that God would take care of them in all circumstances, including when they were under direct artillery fire. In Polk's case, he knew that the Union artillery crew had already found his range, and yet he still remained there, looking around.

Stonewall Jackson was one of the worst offenders in this regard. Prior to the incident that led to his demise, he had frequently courted death, believing that he would die only on the day appointed by God. His behaviour originated not only from his belief in Providence, and his exhibition of fortitude, but also because he thought that a leader needed to experience danger and hardship with his men. W. W. Blackford confirms the effect Jackson's fearlessness had upon him and his fellow officers and soldiers in the Army of Northern Virginia. Officers and soldiers alike agreed that "No matter how hot the fire, Jackson was always at the front."¹⁰¹ Even off the battlefield, Jackson willingly endured the lot of the common soldier. On the march and at night he frequently experienced the same privations as his men.¹⁰² One of Jackson's soldiers awoke from his sleep to find himself wet from his thighs down to his feet. He had been sleeping on low ground without a tent or other shelter, and consequently had been exposed to the elements and the vagaries of the local topography. He then began to curse and swear, lamenting his state in life and his current predicament. A man sat up a few yards away and looked at the soldier. The drenched soldier returned the gaze, and suddenly stopped swearing. His

¹⁰¹Blackford, War Years with Jeb Stuart, 79.

¹⁰²Even though Jackson rode a horse to facilitate his movement among the troops, he often did not partake of the 10 minutes an hour he allowed his men to rest, instead working diligently to ensure the success and speed of his 'foot cavalry.'

sleeping companion was none other than Stonewall Jackson.¹⁰³ Although modern readers will likely doubt the authenticity of this story, its basic gist is confirmed by many different accounts: Jackson did not expect or demand better treatment than his men. He expected his men to make sacrifices for the cause, as on the Romney expedition, and in turn he would endure equal privations in his own life. As he stated in a letter to Secretary of War J. P. Benjamin, Jackson felt justified in imposing such sacrifices on his soldiers and on himself when the good of the Southern cause required it.¹⁰⁴ Jackson's commitment to ensuring that he himself suffered the same privations as his men could well have damaged the Confederate war effort. While soldiers should receive proper food, sleep and clothing, if a general does not receive these essentials, he may make wrong decisions that cost the lives of thousands of his soldiers. In particular, Jackson's willingness to undergo suffering and lack of sleep likely compromised his leadership in the Seven Days battles in June 1862. While some scholars have alleged that Jackson delayed movement of his army because he was trying to avoid violating the Sabbath day, instead Jackson was suffering a chronic sleep deficit that impaired his ability to think clearly and operate effectively. In short, Jackson's willingness to suffer, as his Lord and Saviour had, risked damaging the war effort through poor or delayed decision-making.

Like the man who complained of the poor sleeping conditions in Jackson's army, other soldiers bewailed the lot of a soldier's life.¹⁰⁵ On numerous occasions soldiers, especially during the Valley Campaign, made their frustration and anger with Jackson public knowledge. However, as Robert Krick confirms, "Confederates relished Jackson's religious devotion and his stoic acceptance of the hardships he shared with the troops obeying his stern dictates."¹⁰⁶ Just as Jackson pushed himself to the limit, so did he push his men, believing that they were capable of performing arduous and gruelling marches and winning battles though outnumbered by the enemy. He had especially high

¹⁰³Riley, "Stonewall Jackson" a thesaurus of anecdotes, 65.

¹⁰⁴Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 219-220.

¹⁰⁵Moore, The Story of a Cannoneer, 44.

¹⁰⁶Robert K. Krick, Conquering the Valley: Stonewall Jackson at Port Republic (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1996), 10.

expectations of the Stonewall Brigade, believing that it should bear a larger share of the most difficult duties since it had been his old command before his promotion to major general. One soldier in that brigade, John Casler, maintained that Jackson treated his namesake unit in that manner to demonstrate that he was not prone to favouritism.¹⁰⁷ Despite being assigned the most arduous tasks, the soldiers of his old brigade loved him and cheered wildly when they recognized him. Instead of basking in the adulation, Jackson took off his cap, as a simple acknowledgment of their acclaim, and galloped away.¹⁰⁸ Jackson did not raise himself above his men, believing that he was too good to engage in manual labour. Instead, he dismounted from his horse and helped his men in common tasks. On one occasion he kept a wagon wheel from sliding back, determined to aid his army's advance in every way possible.¹⁰⁹

Jackson experienced many difficulties in dealing with his immediate subordinates, such as A.P. Hill.¹¹⁰ Despite such conflicts with his senior officers, his no-nonsense leadership style helped him to react to the situations he encountered. When one officer asked to be allowed to pull his command back from the enemy, as his troops' guns were wet and consequently useless, Jackson retorted that if the Confederates' guns were wet, so were the guns of their enemies. The officer needed to hold his position.¹¹¹ Jackson felt no remorse about issuing difficult commands or forcing men to do their duty. As he told one soldier reluctant to continue performing difficult marches and other uncongenial duties, "It's for your own good, sir!"¹¹² By doing their duty, Jackson believed soldiers would grow in moral stature and become more like Christ. The Four Evangelists reveal that during His Passion, Christ asked His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane, if it were possible, to spare Him the cup of suffering and death. He then asked that His Father's

¹⁰⁷Casler, Four Years in the Stonewall Brigade, 58.

¹⁰⁸Casler, Four Years in the Stonewall Brigade, 92.

¹⁰⁹Casler, Four Years in the Stonewall Brigade, 63.

¹¹⁰Robert K. Krick, "Introduction," in Greene, Whatever You Resolve to Be, xii.

¹¹¹Buck, With the Old Confeds, 58.

¹¹²Moore, Story of a Cannoneer, 44.

will, not His own, be done.¹¹³ Jackson expected the same degree of obedience and submission from his soldiers. Of course they could have a human desire to avoid unnecessary suffering as did Jesus Himself. However, once the necessity of such suffering revealed itself, Jackson insisted that he, his officers and his men do their duty, no matter what the cost.

Robert E. Lee fully concurred with Jackson's belief in a person's responsibility to do their duty. Christians needed to use whatever talents God gave them to benefit both the cause of religion and their country. After the First Battle of Manassas occurred in July 1861, Lee regretted that President Davis had insisted upon his presence in Richmond. Lee yearned to assist his countrymen in their struggle on the fields of battle and was consequently "...mortified at my absence..."¹¹⁴ from Manassas. He hoped that a position would soon be found for him in field command, since he wished to utilize his God-given talents to the fullest. Even though he believed that he could not have achieved a greater victory at First Manassas than did the Confederate commanders of that engagement, J. E. Johnston and P. G. T. Beauregard, he thought he could at least have helped in the struggle for his beloved Virginia. Lee had written to his wife a year earlier that "After making use of all the means he [God] gives us for our benefit, the rest I confidently leave in his hands."¹¹⁵ Throughout the war, Lee firmly subscribed to putting into action both clauses of this sentence. He believed that as a leader he needed to utilize all the means in his power to achieve victory. However, once those means had been employed, he was convinced that his proper role was to wait and pray. Subsequently historians disapproved of this willingness to leave all else in God's hands. Even Lee's most renowned biographer, Douglas Southall Freeman, argues that the general's willingness to allow God to work through his subordinates was too extreme. He also maintains that at Gettysburg, Lee was at fault for not exercising more control over the battle, insisting that "It is scarcely too much to say that on July 2 the Army of Northern Virginia was without a

¹¹³Mark 14: 35-36.

¹¹⁴Letter of Robert E. Lee to his wife Mary, July 27, 1861, Lee Family DeButts-Ely Collection, 1749-1916, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹¹⁵Letter of Robert E. Lee to his wife, July 15, 1860, Lee Family Papers, 1810-1894, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

commander.”¹¹⁶ Lee himself perceived the matter quite differently. He maintained that once he had brought his army into battle, it was up to his subordinates to do their own duty and engage the enemy as appropriate.¹¹⁷ His subordinate generals could consult him, and he would offer suggestions, but on the whole Lee did not interfere with their scope of activity. This style of leadership originated from both Lee’s religious faith and from the seven major lessons he had learned from fighting in the Mexican War. Just as Winfield Scott had not fought battles in detail, neither would Lee.¹¹⁸

In order for such a command style to function properly, Lee attempted to ensure that quarrels among his subordinates did not occur, as hostility between high-ranking generals would inhibit successful coordination of movement and engagement.¹¹⁹ Lee tried to allow his subordinates free rein within a battle to make the most of the inherent possibilities that arose spontaneously on the battlefield. In 1864 and 1865, some Confederates thought that Lee should usurp the federal government and become a dictator. Lee, believing his leadership role to be very circumscribed and delineated, found this idea impossible to consider. According to George Eggleston “...the wish that General Lee might see fit to usurp all the powers of government was a commonly expressed one, both in the army and in private life, during the last two years of the war.”¹²⁰ Such comments reflected frustration with the Confederacy’s increasingly challenging military and economic predicament, rather than an actual belief that such a seditious act could

¹¹⁶Freeman, R. E. Lee, III: 150.

¹¹⁷Piston, Lee’s Tarnished Lieutenant, 58.

¹¹⁸Freeman, R. E. Lee, I: 295-297. The seven lessons Lee learned from Mexico, as conceived and explained by Freeman were: audacity, not to fight a battle in detail if he was the overall commander, “value of the development of a strategic plan,” importance of reconnaissance, “strategic possibilities of flank movement,” willingness to expose his communications, and “the value of fortifications.” Many other generals on both sides of the Civil War used some of these lessons to wage war.

¹¹⁹Freeman, R. E. Lee, I: 298. Walter Taylor believed that his chief paid too much concern to the feelings and vanity of his fellow officers. See Taylor, Four Years with General Lee, 146. Freeman identified this same concern during Lee’s campaign in Western Virginia in 1861 and remarked that Lee’s concessions to the vanity and peculiarities of his subordinates “...was more than a temporary obstacle to success. It was a threat to his future as a soldier.” Freeman, R. E. Lee, I: 575.

¹²⁰Eggleston, Rebel’s Recollections, 169.

somehow revive the country's fortunes. Lee's fidelity to his duty prevented him from even considering such a step. Just as his duty mandated that he serve his home state of Virginia, equally so did it mandate his obedience to government officials, even though he fundamentally disagreed with them on basic matters of strategy.¹²¹ His conception of duty heavily influenced his style of leadership, and just as religious ideals permeated his notion of duty, so did they guide and animate his method of exercising command.

For Confederate generals such as Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, leadership in the Civil War was a sacred trust bestowed on them by God. On Judgement Day He would call them to render an account of their handling of the resources they were issued.¹²² Lee knew that as God was well aware of his faults and mistakes, there was no point in attempting to fix blame on others. Instead, he willingly accepted all the blame for his army's failures,¹²³ especially after the defeat at Gettysburg.¹²⁴ In August 1863, Lee asked Davis that he be relieved, and that the fine Army of Northern Virginia be given a better leader, "...one that would accomplish more than I could perform and all that I have wished."¹²⁵ Davis replied that if Providence presented a more capable and qualified leader he "...would not hesitate to avail of his services."¹²⁶ However, Davis knew of no such replacement, and was convinced that Lee, despite the disappointment occasioned by Gettysburg and the retreat back into Virginia, remained the proper leader of the Army of

¹²¹Lee was far more willing than President Davis to concentrate the forces of the Confederacy and use them in a decisive manner to achieve a local superiority. Davis, being responsible for the entire country, felt obligated to provide forces to attempt to defend all sections of the country, even though the Confederacy's forces could thus be defeated in detail. Davis did allow substantial concentrations of troops at times, but he did not consent to allow the denuding of substantial portions of the Confederacy early in the war in order to allow massive concentration of force. State governors, in particular, had much influence over the movements of troops from their states, and logically they would not eagerly consent to seeing their states entirely overrun by Union forces in order to give a Confederate commander a better chance at winning a major battle in Virginia or in the North itself.

¹²²Luke 19: 12-26.

¹²³Crist, ed., Papers of Jefferson Davis, 8: 345.

¹²⁴Fishwick, Lee after the War, 16; Hopkins, A Boy's View, 111.

¹²⁵Taylor, General Lee, 220; Crist, ed., Papers of Jefferson Davis, 9: 327.

¹²⁶Crist, ed., Papers of Jefferson Davis, 9: 338.

Northern Virginia. Davis finished his reassuring letter with a reminder of the duty entrusted to Lee by God. Davis refused to relieve his friend and confidant, and as Lee would not surrender the duty and trust delegated to him, the Army of Northern Virginia would live or die under Lee's leadership. Lee and Jackson's religious convictions strengthened their ability to command during the Civil War by convincing soldiers that they were honourable and God-fearing men, and therefore it was morally acceptable to serve and die under their command. In addition, Lee and Jackson never questioned the fact that they were ordering thousands of men to their deaths. They believed they possessed the unquestioned moral authority to do so, not only because of their military training, but because of their religious convictions.

Just as Lee and Jackson viewed their call to leadership as something sacred, so they in turn believed that their soldiers owed their country absolute loyalty and committed service. Confederate generals genuinely cared for their men, and worked to ensure that their basic needs were met. They performed such actions not only because their soldiers would thereby fight more effectively, but also because they deserved fair treatment as human beings. Shortly after the war Edward Pollard spoke of Lee's concern for his men as 'paternal.'¹²⁷ Late in the war a common soldier wrote to his father that he believed J. E. Johnston appreciated "...the life of a man,"¹²⁸ and that it would be best if all commanders expressed as much compassion. Because Johnston placed such value on his soldiers' lives, in April and May of 1865 he made the difficult decision to admit that the war was lost. He consequently refused to obey the orders of his government to resist to the bitter end.¹²⁹ This same concern for his soldiers had caused Johnston to fall back constantly before Sherman, as he thought that engaging the enemy without a reasonable expectation of victory was wasteful of human lives. He willingly bore the disgrace incurred from losing his command of the Army of Tennessee in a deferential manner.¹³⁰

¹²⁷Pollard, Lee and his Lieutenants, 118.

¹²⁸Lane, ed., "Dear Mother," 344-345.

¹²⁹Mark Grimsley, "Learning to Say "Enough:" Southern General and the Final Weeks of the Confederacy," in Mark Grimsley and Brooks D. Simpson, eds., The Collapse of the Confederacy (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 75.

¹³⁰Wright, A Southern Girl, 185.

Lee too believed in the need to save the lives of his soldiers, although he was more willing to engage in battle than J. E. Johnston.¹³¹ Even Stonewall Jackson tried to promote the well-being of his men. Many soldiers questioned whether Jackson cared whether they lived or died after the abortive Romney expedition, which some considered “...a huge blunder, causing some loss, and terrible suffering.”¹³² During that expedition, many officers of Brigadier-General Loring’s command, which was under Jackson’s supervision, wrote to Loring entreating him to seek permission from the Confederate authorities to leave Romney and find shelter from the elements.¹³³ Combined with Jackson’s treatment of General Garnett over the latter’s conduct at the Battle of Kernstown, many officers and men felt that Jackson’s leadership direly needed improvement. However, after the Valley campaign, when those same individuals witnessed the power of Jackson’s faith in the midst of overwhelming odds, confidence and reverence largely replaced suspicion and distrust.¹³⁴ Jennings Wise insisted that by the time of Jackson’s death he had “...achieved complete moral ascendancy over his men...”¹³⁵ by means of the prestige he gained during the numerous campaigns they had waged together. Such prestige led many cadets to resign or simply leave the Virginia Military Institute after Jackson’s death in order to join the army and so avenge their fallen leader.¹³⁶ Indeed, the soldiers had come to love Jackson,¹³⁷ and gladly executed his orders in the belief that the directives of such a leader would bring them not only victory but also independence.

¹³¹Crist, ed., Papers of Jefferson Davis, 8: 225.

¹³²Nisbet, Four Years on the Firing Line, 29.

¹³³Thomas M. Rankin, Stonewall Jackson’s Romney Campaign (Lynchburg, Virginia: H. E. Howard, 1994), 126-127.

¹³⁴McHenry Howard, Recollections of a Maryland Confederate Soldier and Staff Officer under Johnston, Jackson, and Lee (Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins Company, 1914; reprint, Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Bookshop, 1975), 81.

¹³⁵Wise, Long Arm of Lee, 106; Wise, Military History of the Virginia Military Institute, 219.

¹³⁶Wise, Military History of the Virginia Military Institute, 233.

¹³⁷Selby, Stonewall Jackson as Military Commander, 220.

Jackson, as well as his fellow Confederate generals, preferred their soldiers to serve voluntarily, eagerly serving their country during its time of need. However, because some soldiers were either unwilling conscripts, had become disillusioned with their life as a soldier or simply desired a break from campaigning, punitive measures encouraged faithful service and discouraged desertion. The ultimate penalty for desertion was death by firing squad. Robert E. Lee was not eager to recognize the problem of desertion. Just as he had hoped that there would be no traitors to the Southern cause,¹³⁸ so did he hope that all of his soldiers would be as dedicated to their duty as their leader. On that score, he experienced grave disappointment. Many soldiers deserted from the Army of Northern Virginia, particularly after its return to Virginia following the defeat at Gettysburg, and also during the last year of the war. In July and August 1863 Lee forced himself to address the growing problem of the disappearing soldiers. Desertions typically increased after each battle in which the Army of Northern Virginia suffered massive casualties.¹³⁹ Lee advised President Davis on August 17, 1863, that desertion needed to be severely punished. He insisted that “...nothing will remedy this great evil which so much endangers our cause except the rigid enforcement of the death penalty in future in cases of conviction.”¹⁴⁰ Although Lee did not always hold to this absolute standard, he did believe that shooting deserters “...will be found to be truly merciful in the end.”¹⁴¹ At the end of the war, letters from home received by dedicated and morally upright soldiers became a major cause of desertion. These men faced the agonizing choice of continuing to serve their country or heading home and trying to protect their families from marauding Union soldiers and the threat of starvation. Eventually many loving fathers and husbands made the choice to risk death by firing squad in order to help their families.¹⁴² Lee sympathized with the plight of his soldiers, but still upheld the principle

¹³⁸Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 34.

¹³⁹Piston, Lee's Tarnished Lieutenant, 64.

¹⁴⁰Freeman, ed., Lee's Dispatches, 124.

¹⁴¹Freeman, ed., Lee's Dispatches, 157.

¹⁴²John Henry Cammack, Personal Recollections of Private John Henry Cammack (Huntington, West Virginia: Paragon [1921]), 112.

that a soldier's first overriding duty was to the army, and that the families of the soldiers would be best served by a quick and victorious end to the Civil War.

Stonewall Jackson administered justice with greater severity than Lee.¹⁴³ As a deacon in the Presbyterian Church and a soldier, Jackson committed himself to the highest standards of loyalty and devotion to duty.¹⁴⁴ He carried out his orders zealously, and in return, expected his soldiers to carry out their duties in the same fashion. He did not derive perverse satisfaction from causing pain to others, and even abolished brutal corporal punishments, such as flogging, when the newly enlisted men resisted such discipline.¹⁴⁵ However, if a man deserted from Jackson's army, then the deserter faced almost certain death if caught. James Robertson explains that "Anyone who ran away from his [Jackson's] 'army of the living God' was not only in violation of duty but also in sin against the Almighty."¹⁴⁶ Other biographers of Jackson agree on his willingness and even enthusiasm in executing deserters.¹⁴⁷ According to one of his biographers, Jackson even assaulted an impertinent chaplain and ejected the man from a tent. The minister had insisted that some deserters receive a commutation of their death sentences, but Jackson refused to relent. If the men had deserted, then they deserved death. No amount of arguing, even by a minister of God, could persuade him otherwise.¹⁴⁸

At times Jackson's religious views could provide a transgressor with a chance to escape death. On one occasion, Lee ordered a soldier's death because the man had stolen a pig. However, in a re-creation of the medieval trial by ordeal, Jackson instead gave the man one possibility of survival. The offender was placed at the most dangerous point in the Confederates lines where the Federals had an excellent opportunity to shoot him, and Jackson decreed that if the thief lived, he was free of punishment for his crime. The man

¹⁴³Selby, Stonewall Jackson as Military Commander, 72.

¹⁴⁴Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 59.

¹⁴⁵Robertson, Stonewall Jackson, 334.

¹⁴⁶Robertson, Stonewall Jackson, 542.

¹⁴⁷Vandiver, Mighty Stonewall, 439; Selby, Stonewall Jackson as Military Commander, 149.

¹⁴⁸Tate, Stonewall Jackson: The Good Soldier, 129.

made the most of the occasion, performed bravely, and survived the battle.¹⁴⁹ Even though some soldiers received mercy from Stonewall Jackson, overall he merited his reputation as a strict disciplinarian.

Other generals resorted to capital punishment in their quest to exercise leadership over their soldiers. J. E. B. Stuart believed in such punishments, and when faced with a calm and unperturbed deserter who admitted that he had not only deserted but also served with a Union army, Stuart decided that the man deserved to die. He directed that the punishment take place at once. Stuart barked ““Hang him on that tree!””¹⁵⁰ Once the cavalryman pronounced the sentence of death the man finally realized his predicament, and began gasping and trembling. Stuart consequently sent him to Lee for a final verdict. Other generals were more eager than Stuart to exercise their authority over their soldiers. Grady McWhiney insists that “There was reason to fear Bragg for he never hesitated to shoot deserters.”¹⁵¹ Just as Bragg was despised because of his strict discipline, J. E. Johnston received the admiration of his troops because of his reputation as a man who cared for his soldiers. However, Larry Daniel argues that Johnston was just as uncompromising in his treatment of deserters and other disciplinary matters as Bragg.¹⁵² Daniel also suggests that executions of deserters had a marked effect in trying to restore order in the Army of Tennessee.¹⁵³ At one point, Johnston insisted on the execution of a soldier who attempted to murder an officer, even though the military court responsible for the verdict unanimously recommended mercy.¹⁵⁴ If a soldier breached a major rule of military protocol, he could hope for mercy, but could not expect to receive such clemency

¹⁴⁹Selby, Stonewall Jackson as Military Commander, 149.

¹⁵⁰Thomas, Bold Dragoon, 159.

¹⁵¹McWhiney, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat, 259.

¹⁵²Daniel, Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee, 112. Many soldiers in the Army of Tennessee hated Bragg because of his strict discipline, but Daniel insisted that Johnston, who received the admiration of the soldiers, did not compromise on discipline to achieve such popularity.

¹⁵³Daniel, Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee, 114.

¹⁵⁴Garland R. Quarles, et al., eds., Diaries, Letters, and Recollections of the War between the States (Winchester, Virginia: Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society, 1955), 15.

as a matter of course. Simply because many high-ranking generals were noted for their piety and devotion to religion¹⁵⁵ did not mean that justice would be neglected in the interests of charity. Instead, generals exercised charity at their own discretion. Some generals feared that such acts of charity would become customary, and thus soldiers would cease to fear the consequences of desertion or other major infractions of military law. Because of this, Confederate generals felt they had no choice but to forswear mercy and attempt to retain as many soldiers in their armies as possible by providing them with visual evidence of the consequences of desertion. Thus, they forced regiments to march around the bullet-ridden corpses of deserters, to demonstrate their insistence upon loyal and dedicated service to the terms of enlistment. Religious ideals of mercy and charity did not prevent generals from carrying out brutal punishments upon soldiers guilty of desertion or violations of military law. Indeed, religious generals such as Lee and Jackson used religion to justify their strict application of military law, only occasionally allowing mercy to prevail.

Lee, Jackson, Stuart, Bragg and J. E. Johnston believed themselves to be exercising a sacred trust of leadership when they insisted on the execution of deserters. Soldiers differed in their opinions as to the effectiveness of the death penalty in such cases. One man, though sickened by the sight of three of his fellow Confederates' execution, approved of the practice. He believed that such examples were necessary on occasion.¹⁵⁶ Another soldier thought that men deserting in the face of the enemy, and who shouted ““we are flanked”” should be executed on the spot because such outbursts could demoralize the entire army.¹⁵⁷ John Casler firmly opposed the shooting of deserters because he felt that executions only encouraged further desertions, and instead of heading home, deserters sought shelter from the enemy, where they could not be followed and apprehended.¹⁵⁸ Despite the questionable effectiveness of these punishments, most

¹⁵⁵Jones, “Morale of General Lee’s Army,” in Annals of the Civil War, 195-196.

¹⁵⁶Morgan, Personal Reminiscences, 157.

¹⁵⁷Buck, With the Old Confeds, 128.

¹⁵⁸Casler, Four Years in the Stonewall Brigade, 190.

Confederate generals did not have moral reservations in executing deserters.¹⁵⁹ In fact, Jackson's religion prompted him not to show mercy, but instead to carry out the executions all the more zealously.¹⁶⁰ These generals, and Jackson in particular, believed that the lives of their men had been entrusted to them by God, and that they needed to take care of them and supervise them. If they committed a major breach of military discipline, such as desertion, then secular and divine justice demanded that offenders be subject to the death penalty. This conviction did not prevent occasional episodes of clemency, but it did ensure that Confederate generals rarely, or never, in the case of Jackson, experienced feelings of remorse for ordering the death of their own men. According to Confederate military regulations, commanders had choices regarding what penalties to inflict upon soldiers convicted of desertion. Although generals were prohibited from whipping transgressors, death, imprisonment, hard labor and other penalties were all possible punishments. The appropriate regulation specified that "All officers and soldiers who have received pay, or have been duly enlisted in the service of the Confederate States, and shall be convicted of having deserted the same, shall suffer death or confinement in penitentiary, with or without hard labor, for a period not less than one year, or more than five, or such other punishment, not inconsistent with the provisions of this act, as the court-martial or military court may determine."¹⁶¹ Although the legal text specifies that a 'court-martial' or a 'military court' would determine the appropriate penalty, in reality high commanders such as Lee had immense influence in specifying exactly what punishments were appropriate in cases of desertion. For Lee and Jackson, an offender usually could look forward to a quick death by firing squad. While the Confederacy offered different options for the punishment of deserters, the Union Army prescribed death for desertion if the deserter had entered the military service of an enemy nation.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹E. P. Alexander's decision to help one deserter escape, referred to in chapter 1, is an obvious example of an exception to this rule.

¹⁶⁰Offill, "Stonewall Jackson: A Case Study," 89.

¹⁶¹Lester and Bromwell, eds., A Digest of Military and Naval Laws, 113-114.

¹⁶²Officials Records ser. III, vol. III, sec. 124, paragraph 48.

Letters sent to the Confederate generals underscored their feelings of responsibility for their men. One major wrote to William Nelson Pendleton that he had a willing recruit ready to serve in the general's best company: his oldest son. The letter informed Pendleton that the young man was a gentleman, a member of the Episcopal Church, and was "...ready to die on principle, prepared to die by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁶³ Presumably the recruit's father did not want his son to die, but he also did not flinch at such a possibility. The father also wanted to know how soon Pendleton could muster the boy into service, evidently wishing to speed up the process as much as possible. When soldiers' parents placed such implicit trust in generals, their responsibility for human lives was clear and unmistakable.

Soldiers themselves also demonstrated a marked degree of trust in their military leaders. One soldier remarked in June 1863 that he found arguments propounding the desirability of an invasion of the North unconvincing, since he believed the Army of Northern Virginia was not large enough to prosecute such an offensive. However, he was willing to dismiss his own ideas and instead place his confidence in General Lee for he was "...satisfied with his [Lee's] plans be they what they may."¹⁶⁴ In retrospect, given the outcome of the invasion of Pennsylvania in June and July of 1863, historians could argue that the soldier was correct, and that Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania in mid-1863 was too risky. However, the soldiers' reliance on Lee's leadership gave the Army of Northern Virginia cohesion, and allowed it to continue to resist until early April 1865. By placing their confidence in Lee, and similarly in other Confederate generals, soldiers laid a moral burden on their leaders. Generals were thus bound to attempt to win the war, and preserve their soldiers' lives not only for the purpose of retaining their army, but also to safeguard the lives entrusted to them. Earl Van Dorn testified to this trust in his report on the action at Corinth, Mississippi, fought in early October 1862. Although he admitted that perhaps he had tried to achieve too much in his failed assault on Corinth he insisted "... that if the

¹⁶³Letter of Major Franklin Ruffrie [or Ruffrin] to William Nelson Pendleton, February 10, 1862, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

¹⁶⁴Letter from a soldier to his father [names unknown], June 15, 1863, Blackford Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

spirits of the gallant dead, who now lie beneath the batteries of Corinth, see and judge the motives of men, they do not rebuke me, for there is no sting in my conscience, nor does retrospection admonish me of error or of a reckless disregard of their valued lives.”¹⁶⁵ Later historians, such as Albert Castel, disagree with Van Dorn, arguing that the general’s decision to engage an approximately equal number of troops who were protected by fortifications and closer to supplies of water and ammunition was foolhardy.¹⁶⁶ In military terms, an attack on a fortified position with the equal number of troops as are being attacked is not only morally wrong, but also suicidal. With the rifles being used in the Civil War, which had an accuracy of up to three hundred yards, charging fortifications would severely deplete one’s manpower until one had significantly fewer troops than the defender, who also would be more rested, having not had to charge up to and over the fortifications. Once the surviving attackers had reached the fortifications and ‘gone over the top,’ the defenders would slaughter them easily, and then shoot down any attackers who tried to retreat. Clearly Van Dorn needed to develop better tactical options before committing his men to this militarily foolish plan. However, Castel’s and my opinions, similar to that of many Confederates of that time, did not matter to Van Dorn as much as his belief that he had done the right thing. He had not deliberately sent his troops on a futile attack, but honestly had thought they might succeed and that the advantages of capturing Corinth and destroying the Union army were worth the risk. Van Dorn believed that he had taken care of his men. Such a belief reassured him as he lived in disgrace, having been stripped of his command and as he suffered social censure because of his relationships with married women. The soldiers never loved Van Dorn as much as Lee,¹⁶⁷ and indeed some of them believed his death might even have benefited the Confederacy.¹⁶⁸ However, it was important to Van Dorn, as to all Confederate generals, to believe honestly in their own minds that they had not squandered the lives of the men

¹⁶⁵Comrades of Earl Van Dorn, A Soldier’s Honor, 147.

¹⁶⁶Albert Castel, “Victory at Corinth,” in McPherson, ed., Battle Chronicles, 1862: 271.

¹⁶⁷George Baylor, Bull Run to Bull Run; or Four Years in the Army of Northern Virginia (Richmond: B. F. Johnson, 1900; reprint, Washington, D.C.: Zenger Publishing Co., 1983), 331.

¹⁶⁸Hartje, Van Dorn, 321.

entrusted to their charge. Of course, what Van Dorn believed in his own mind did not always correspond with reality. Nevertheless, individuals, such as Confederate generals, who had assumed responsibility for other human beings, would be called to account for their actions, and for the care they had exercised as leaders on Judgement Day as the ‘gallant dead’ watched the ultimate manifestation of justice.

The two Confederate generals whose style of leadership reflected religious ideals most prominently were Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee.¹⁶⁹ Both knew of Jesus’ reply to the request of James and John to have the chief places of honour in Jesus’ kingdom. Jesus informed the two sons of Zebedee that “Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”¹⁷⁰ This Biblical passage, in addition to Jesus’ washing of his disciples’ feet on the evening before His crucifixion,¹⁷¹ forms the fundamental definition of Christian leadership and serves as the ultimate model for the leaders of any organization in Christianity, whether secular or sacred. Of course few leaders have ever claimed to embody such a model, and both Lee and Jackson did not pretend to have achieved the fullness of Jesus’ call for servant-leaders. However, they realized that Christians, whether possessing military, civil or religious authority, should endeavour to be humble, loving and eager leaders. Such servant-leaders did not lord it

¹⁶⁹Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson’s writings and recorded discussions provide much evidence of Christ’s influence on their understanding of leadership. It is difficult to discover how many other Confederate generals were similarly influenced by religious doctrine and imagery. In order to provide contrary examples, for instance, demonstrating that a particular general was not influenced by Christ’s model of leadership, necessitates positive evidence of such a lack of religious influence. Short of discovering a general participating in devil worship, such evidence does not exist. A general might be internally influenced by religion in their leadership style, and yet give no certain outward evidence of such. Because a historian must argue from evidence that does exist, and not from evidence that does not exist, this discussion of leadership is valid but must be considered as only possibly indicative of other generals, and that Lee’s and Jackson’s religious leanings were only partially shared by other Confederate generals.

¹⁷⁰Mark 10: 42b-45.

¹⁷¹John 13: 5-16.

over those in their charge, but instead served them, seeing to their needs, caring for them, guiding them, helping them to perform any necessary tasks, and also leading them on the way to Heaven.

One concrete example of a Christian leader also being a servant is in regard to food and clothing. Often people vested with much authority abused their position to ensure that they received the best food and clothing available. Lee and Jackson believed their high rank did not entitle them to better treatment than their men. One soldier complained that while he and his fellow soldiers went hungry, their commanding officers lived comparably well, as they were supplied with generous amounts of flour and bacon.¹⁷² Lee realized how such complaints generated ill-feeling between the rank-and-file and their superior officers, and so insisted that his personal mess be served no better than that of the common soldiers. Visitors to Lee's quarters in 1864 and 1865, expecting a decent meal, if not a lavish feast, experienced surprise and disappointment when invited to give thanks for a small and unappetizing meal. Soldiers in the Army of Northern Virginia did not have any cause to complain of their commander living well at their expense.

Whereas Lee attempted to look decently clad, Stonewall Jackson chose to wear simple and often dirty apparel. On one occasion his troops received quite a surprise when he donned a dashing uniform given to him by J. E. B. Stuart. Jackson noticed their concern over his change in appearance, and he returned to his simple and characteristically worn and dusty jacket and cap. Instead of using his position to lord it over his men, Jackson chose to make sacrifices of his time and comfort to ensure his men's safety. The chief way he did this was by interceding with God on his soldiers' behalf, often at the expense of much needed rest.¹⁷³ Major-General Lafayette McLaws believed that because of Jackson's renowned adherence to the Christian faith, and his ability to achieve success "...even in the most desperate enterprises, the impression prevailed that he [Jackson] was favored by the Almighty, and this added confidence to

¹⁷²Alberts, ed., Rebels on the Rio Grande, 56.

¹⁷³Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 291-292.

the brave hearts under him; giving additional dash and determination in their charge.”¹⁷⁴ Soldiers knew that Jackson’s goal was not to further his own glory, but to seek the furtherance of God’s glory. Religious soldiers believed that God accepted such a man’s prayers, and when Jackson led his men in prayer in the camp, many assembled around him,¹⁷⁵ waiting, and hoping that God would hear their leader’s prayers. His men knew that he was not perfect, as his notorious problems with his immediate subordinates proved.¹⁷⁶ However, after the Valley campaign, they went to great lengths to live up to Jackson’s expectations, even, according to one of his foot cavalymen, marching while asleep.¹⁷⁷ While the literal accuracy of this statement is much in doubt, the fact that Jackson pushed his troops to the limit is certain. The devotion and piety Jackson inspired in both his men and the Confederate civilian population led one commentator to compare Jackson’s charisma to that of Christ Himself.¹⁷⁸ A soldier qualified such a high assessment of Jackson by writing that while a certain ‘magnetism’ existed about the general, it was not personal. Instead the man’s deeds and determination seemed to bind the men to him.¹⁷⁹ Jackson knew that Christ was perfect, and that as a sinful mortal Jackson’s efforts to emulate Him were sure to fall short of His perfection. By trying to embody the model of leadership Christ espoused to His followers, Jackson hoped to become more like his Master, and thereby reflect his own future salvation in Heaven in addition to that of the temporal salvation of the Confederacy on earth.

¹⁷⁴Lafayette McLaws, “Personal Recollections of General Jackson,” in Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 574.

¹⁷⁵H. Kyd Douglas, “Stonewall Jackson and his Men,” in Annals of the Civil War, 649-650.

¹⁷⁶Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 70. Once a man lost Jackson’s trust, then it was very rare for such a transgressor to ever regain his stature in Jackson’s eyes. Such a practice helped to ensure that problems between him and his subordinates were not resolved and instead festered and became more divisive as time passed.

¹⁷⁷Andrew Davidson Long, Stonewall’s “Foot Cavalryman” (Austin, Texas: Walter E. Long, 1965), 13. Whether Long meant this comment literally or simply exaggerated remains unclear.

¹⁷⁸Offill, “Stonewall Jackson: A Case Study,” 93.

¹⁷⁹Blackford, comp., Letters from Lee’s Army, 115.

These devotions as practised by both Lee and Jackson served to increase the respect and reverence paid to them by the Confederate population. Such esteem eventually became so strong, that one historian labels it as nearly idolatrous.¹⁸⁰ Although Jackson did not engage in idolatry, he did have a profound admiration for Lee. One historian has argued that Jackson believed “Lee was God’s champion on earth.”¹⁸¹ Apparently Jackson was not alone in this belief, as numerous Confederates and historians ascribed to Lee a special status that elevated him above his contemporaries. Private William Nugent believed “...Lee is a tower of strength...”¹⁸² Many Confederates looked to Lee as an excellent model of Christian devotion and godly virtues. According to Steven Woodworth, Lee’s personal characteristics were used by Southerners “...as proof of the rightness of their cause.”¹⁸³ Gary Gallagher confirms that Lee’s religious faith strengthened the belief of Southerners in their status as God’s chosen people.¹⁸⁴ In early April 1865 one woman understood Confederate soldiers’ reasons for deserting as they had fought so hard and endured so much, but she “...could not help despising them for giving up while Lee was still there.”¹⁸⁵ Lee stood as a beacon of hope, a true leader for his people in their hour of desperation. Some of Lee’s later biographers seem to be, if anything, even more devoted to him than his contemporaries. John Hobeika grants Lee the accolade of “...the most perfect of mortals.”¹⁸⁶ Clifford Dowdey argues that Lee “...was the perfected product...”¹⁸⁷ of antebellum Virginia. Even Lee’s fatal flaws were

¹⁸⁰Paul D. Casdorph, Lee and Jackson: Confederate Chieftains (New York: Paragon House, 1992), 123.

¹⁸¹Davis, The Cause Lost, 171.

¹⁸²Nugent, My Dear Nellie, 189.

¹⁸³Woodworth, While God is Marching On, 280.

¹⁸⁴Gallagher, Lee and His Generals in War and Memory, 7.

¹⁸⁵McDonald, A Woman’s Civil War, 232.

¹⁸⁶John E. Hobeika, Lee, the Soul of Honor: An Appreciation by an Orientalist With Additional Facts (Boston: The Christopher Publishing House, 1932), 15.

¹⁸⁷Dowdey, Lee, 275.

also his virtues. Charles Roland believed that Lee's excessive loyalty to the state of Virginia constituted his greatest flaw. This loyalty led Lee to resign from the United States Army and take up arms in his state's defence.¹⁸⁸ Among Southerners and a majority of Lee's biographers, he has certainly been accorded a leadership style in keeping with that of Christian ideals. Although some historians have claimed that Lee's status as an exalted Southerner occurred in the post-war period, and was central to the Lost Cause mythology, it is evident that Lee's perceived character as a Christian leader caused many soldiers and civilians to trust in his leadership, and actually believed that he was a military leader beloved by God. Lee used this status to wage campaigns and did not contradict the idea that he was a military leader chosen by God to protect the Confederacy, just as Joshua had waged campaigns in the Old Testament with God's authority.

Lee retained the esteem of his fellow Southerners into the postwar period. Marshall Fishwick writes that Lee played the role of both God and a demi-god to his people during the war. According to this author, after the conflict had ended, Lee "...grew tired of playing demigod."¹⁸⁹ Fishwick believes that Lee's leadership role over tens of thousands of soldiers in the Army of Northern Virginia allowed him some sort of divine authority over the men.¹⁹⁰ Lee did not see his position in those terms (as a demigod) at all. Instead he recognized and accepted the burden of leadership that had been entrusted to him, and did not tire of performing his duty as a commander during the war, or as a paradigm for his conquered people in the Reconstruction era. He detested excessive shows of admiration, and wished others would desist from according him so many accolades. His role as a Christian leader both during and after the war came naturally, since he understood the necessity of trying to be a good example for others. Although less enamoured of Lee's personality than Fishwick, Thomas Connelly and Barbara Bellows

¹⁸⁸Charles P. Roland, Reflections on Lee: A Historian's Assessment (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 1995), 1.

¹⁸⁹Fishwick, Lee After the War, 167.

¹⁹⁰Fishwick, Lee After the War, 208.

agree that he became "...a Christ-symbol for the defeated Confederacy."¹⁹¹ Douglas Freeman provides evidence that Lee's efforts to render Christian leadership to his people ultimately succeeded because the hardships of the war "...were worth all they cost him [Lee] in the example they gave the South of fortitude in disaster and courage in defeat."¹⁹² Lee's humility prevented him from approving of the praise issued to him by his fellow Southerners. Nevertheless, such tributes and his refusal to accept them bear witness to his dedication to the concept of leadership as preached and practised by Jesus Christ. Lee's followers believed that he had succeeded in his role as leader, even though the Confederacy had lost the war. To lead a people in victory was easy in comparison to leading them in defeat. Few blamed Lee for the outcome of the war, believing that he had done his best, which was all that could be asked of any leader. Instead they remembered his heroic leadership, and that of his fellow generals, some of whom had embraced the Christian faith in the latter years of the war.¹⁹³ By converting to Christianity either during or after the war many generals recognized their need for leadership from Jesus Christ, Master of both generals and common soldiers alike.

Religion was not the sole factor that influenced the leadership of Confederate generals, nor did it override notions received at West Point or from military tradition. Instead it served as one strand among many that shaped and conditioned the leadership style, both in its conception and fulfilment, of many generals. Lee and Jackson particularly displayed religious elements in their exercise of command, but this observation also applied to many others, including Stuart, Pendleton, Polk, Bragg, and Van Dorn. Christianity helped them to recognize their responsibility as leaders of soldiers in their new country's bid for independence. It gave them an idealized understanding of the sacred trust of human lives committed to their authority. It also provided a perfect model of leadership, that of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which Lee and Jackson emulated in some respects. The leadership of Confederate generals proceeded naturally from their conception of duty as ordained by God. Such duty drew strength from religion,

¹⁹¹Connelly and Bellows, God and General Longstreet, 28.

¹⁹²Freeman, ed., Lee's Dispatches, xxvii.

¹⁹³Nugent, My Dear Nellie, 179-180.

and though conflicts could arise between secular duties and religious duties, in most cases generals soothed their consciences by believing that through prayer and faith in God they had managed to discern their true duty and balance the demands of the spirit and the secular world. Their devotion to duty and their call to leadership girded them for the challenges they faced in their country's bloodiest war.

Lee and Jackson's conception of duty and their religious conviction fused in their personalities so completely that each aspect automatically reinforced the other, and that it was virtually impossible to separate these two aspects of their personalities. This fusion allowed Lee to exercise a notable influence over the soldiers in the Army of Northern Virginia as well as the other armies of the Confederacy. Once Lee had proven himself in the Seven Days battles, his influence was not only social, but also religious, because Southerners believed that God would bless only a righteous man with victory. Jackson's religious convictions also propelled him to perform his duty, and the performance of his duty consoled him that he would be blessed in heaven for his achievements. This fusion occurred in these two men's personalities as a result of the cultural and military atmosphere they found themselves, as well as a conscious exercise of their will. Whether or not the two men could have willingly separated these two aspects of their personalities is questionable. It is likely that once their devotion to duty and their religious convictions had merged together they were inseparable, and henceforth whatever military activity they performed would be evaluated in moral terms and then engaged in with whole-hearted religious zeal, as they believed God wanted them to perform such actions.

In the case of Polk and Pendleton, the fusion of duty and religious beliefs was complicated by their status as clergymen. Nevertheless, both of these men believed that they were called by God to serve as leaders of soldiers during the Civil War, and that this position did not in any way compromise their spiritual duties or authority as minister or bishop. In these two men duty and religious conviction also became fused, but because lingering doubts remained about their course of action, frequent prayer was needed to dispel these doubts and enable them to remain committed to being generals.

Lee and Jackson were conscious of Christ's example of Christian leadership, and they actively sought to emulate his example of humility, compassion for their soldiers and Southerners in general, and His dedication to serving God the Father. Jackson's

attempt to emulate Christ's leadership style made his zeal readily apparent to observers. Through his command of troops, Jackson believed he had not only the authority of his president, Jefferson Davis, but also the authority of God. My research confirms the findings of James Robertson that Jackson believed that soldiers who deserted from Jackson's army were committing sin, that is, violating the will of God. Jackson responded by punishing them accordingly, often with death. Although other generals also executed deserters, most through secular motives, the fact that Jackson used religion as a justification for executing his fellow Southerners, as well as slaughtering Yankees, is worthy of notice, and is significant in that it substantiates Mark Schantz's findings in Awaiting the Heavenly Country. Schantz argues that "...Americans came to fight the Civil War in the midst of a wider cultural world that sent them messages about death that made it easier to kill and to be killed."¹⁹⁴ In Jackson's case, he nurtured religious beliefs that made it both easier for him to kill others, and to act in reckless ways that got himself killed. Lee also considered getting killed by deliberately riding in front of enemy soldiers. This propensity of Confederate generals to willingly sacrifice their lives in battle was prompted in some ways by Christ's death on the Cross, as the best leaders were always willing to sacrifice their lives for the cause they served.

¹⁹⁴Mark S. Schantz, Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The Civil War and America's Culture of Death (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008), 2.

Chapter 5 - The Morality of War and Mortality

Confederate generals served their country by trying to win battles and achieve the independence of the Confederacy. In short, their duty was to win the Civil War. Their religious beliefs largely strengthened their convictions about the necessity and propriety of their duty, and their obligation to perform it, but these beliefs also affected how they could carry out their duty. Instead of being able to enact whatever measures they believed necessary or beneficial to winning the war, they knew and accepted that the Christian religion circumscribed their range of action in waging war.¹ The goal of this chapter is to examine how religion affected Confederate generals' willingness to kill others and how religious notions of mortality influenced their understanding of death. Christianity's influence on the way Confederate commanders conceived and conducted their war for independence helped to determine their affection or distaste for fighting, as well as the religious restrictions on their war effort.

Intimately linked to thoughts about warfare were religious views of death. The primary method of winning a war was to cause the deaths of one's enemies. In all wars, this includes the deaths of soldiers and other military personnel. Depending on the mentality of those engaged in a particular war, such deaths can also include that of non-combatants, including political leaders and common civilians, men, women, children and even babies. In the Civil War, custom and official policy on both sides dictated that only military deaths were the goal of military campaigns. However an obvious consequence of firing rifles and artillery in the proximity of towns, cities and other human habitations was civilian casualties.² As stated in the Lieber Code of 1863, "Military necessity admits

¹Most, if not all, Union generals also accepted the fact that Christianity and American customs circumscribed their methods of waging war against other whites.

²The Civil War was fundamentally different from World War II in which both the Axis and the Allies deliberately targeted and killed millions of civilians in the belief that such deaths would weaken the morale of their enemies, as well as diminish their ability to manufacture war material.

of the destruction of life or limb of armed enemies, and of other persons whose destruction is incidentally unavoidable in the armed contests of the war...”³ The death of one’s own soldiers and compatriots inevitably accompanied warfare. Just as the South killed Union soldiers, in return the North killed Southern soldiers. Although the previous statement might seem too obvious to require comment, Joanna Bourke has found that in studies of the two world wars and Vietnam “...human slaughter was at the heart of military strategy and practice. This fact is glossed over by most military commentators and denied by others. Accounts of the ‘experience’ of war prefer to stress the satisfaction of male bonding, the discomforts of the frontlines, and the unspeakable terror of dying. Readers of military history books might be excused for believing that combatants found in war zones were really there to be killed rather to kill.”⁴ Bourke’s comments are also applicable to scholarly treatments of the Civil War. Too frequently the heroism inherent in the famous battles is remembered, and not the brutal and callous ending of human lives.

The reality of death existed as an issue of key importance to Southerners, and to Confederate generals in particular, since it occurred both because Confederates died and because they killed others. As leaders of thousands of soldiers, they needed to provide the means and the guidance to kill the enemy most effectively and efficiently. As the war continued, some generals and many soldiers believed in the inevitability of death. Certain soldiers feared death, whereas others viewed it in theological terms as a sacrificial offering. A few generals even desired death as a means of entering heaven, thereby demonstrating the manifest connection between death and religious ideals in the minds of Southern generals. In general, Confederate thoughts about death help provide insight into what they believed about life, both their temporal life, and eternal life.

Southern ideas about life directly influenced Confederate reservations about enjoying engaging in war and about killing other human beings. Southerners generally accepted that as war was a necessary evil and should be hated and abhorred, and yet Confederate generals professing Christianity could find the thrills of war a serious

³Official Records Series III, Vol. III, S#124, Section 1, Paragraph 15.

⁴Joanna Bourke, An Intimate History of Killing: Face-to-Face Killing in Twentieth-Century Warfare (New York: Basic Books, 1999), xiv.

temptation. Some of Stonewall Jackson's biographers argue that he hated war,⁵ refused to revel in it,⁶ and believed that it was "...the greatest of evils..."⁷ Jackson himself affirmed that he did not enjoy engaging in warfare and desired in August 1861 that no more battles occur, provided the South attained her independence.⁸ However, if the North had allowed the South to separate peacefully after First Manassas, Stonewall Jackson's famous Valley campaign, and his achievements at Second Manassas and Chancellorsville would never have occurred. With only First Manassas to his credit, Jackson would have retired to Lexington once more as the eccentric and pathetic professor of mathematics who was belittled and mocked by students. Instead of being referred to as 'Stonewall,' new generations of students would call him, as had previous students, 'Old Fool Jackson.' The fact that major victories awaited him assured that his old nickname was retired forever, and that his memory in the South and in the nation as a whole lived on for generations.

While Jackson's Christian soul realized the horrors of war and recoiled from them, his mind, so imbued with military precepts and maxims, found a congenial outlet for its operation during the Civil War. Jackson, although ill-equipped for teaching, possessed the requisite faculties for planning both tactics and strategy. John Gittings confirmed Jackson's interest in this subject, and explained that "...for although a devout, humble Christian, he was essentially a military man and took delight in military affairs, and was a student of the campaigns of history."⁹ Jackson's eagerness to win victories belied his desire that the war end quickly and peacefully. His mind hungered for the challenges posed by tactical difficulties, and the munificent praise he gave to God after a successful battle proved how much he valued such encounters. Jackson did not refer to his battles as horrible, wasteful, and foolish engagements made necessary only by the

⁵Richards, God Blessed our Arms, 79.

⁶Hoppel, Jackson, 12.

⁷Vandiver, Mighty Stonewall, 436.

⁸Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 185.

⁹John George Jackson Gittings, Personal Recollections of Stonewall Jackson and Other Sketches (Cincinnati: Editor, 1899), 63.

obstinacy of the Union government. Instead he referred to his victorious battles as ‘great,’ lauding his troops for their performance, and praying for similar victories in the future.¹⁰ Of course, Jackson’s motive in achieving these victories was the recognition of the Confederacy’s independence. Once that was granted, his succession of victorious battles would end, with his blessing. Although Jackson struggled to resist the lure and thrill of battle, his passionate nature and his will to win tempted him to enjoy fighting and the war in general. As John Esten Cooke, who served with Jackson and knew him personally confirmed: “Nothing is better established than the fact that Jackson loved danger for its own sake....”¹¹ No matter how hard he prayed, Jackson’s love of danger proved a most challenging attraction that he struggled to resist. Jackson’s religious beliefs, even though clearly condemning the enjoyment of killing, were not sufficient to eliminate Jackson’s love of warfare. Instead of preventing Jackson from enjoying the thrill of war, the religious beliefs allowed him to pursue it more fervently because he believed that his warfare was willed by the power of Almighty God. If God had commanded him to slaughter the Yankees, then who was Jackson to disobey the Living God? Thus Jackson’s religious beliefs did not restrain him from enjoying battle, but instead prompted him to engage it all the more readily because he believed that he was thereby obtaining merit in heaven and pleasing his Heavenly Lord.

Jackson was not the only Confederate tempted to enjoy combat. Numerous other Confederate generals also felt the thrill of battle. The most famous phrase uttered by a Confederate commander during the war illustrated both the exhilaration of battle and the understanding that such a feeling was not suitable for a moral and civilized individual. During the Battle of Fredericksburg, on December 13, 1862, Robert E. Lee and James Longstreet stood together watching a Union assault on a Confederate position. If the Yankees successfully captured that position, the battle was in danger of being lost. Suddenly, scattered groups of fleeing Union soldiers came staggering out of the wooded position, and as the Rebel yell continued to sound, Lee’s soldiers began pursuing their opponents down the slope, exultant with victory. The Union Army of the Potomac’s most

¹⁰Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 177, 326; Cooke, Life of Stonewall Jackson, 299-300.

¹¹Cooke, Life of Stonewall Jackson, 109.

recent charge had failed completely. Lee then turned to Longstreet and exclaimed “‘It is well that war is so terrible-we should grow too fond of it!’”¹² In the heat of battle Lee found the thrill and excitement of war intoxicating, and, as he knew the horrible realities of war, sought to qualify his statement by saying ‘It is well that war is so terrible.’ It is pertinent to note that Lee said ‘too fond of it,’ not only ‘fond of it,’ because apparently he believed that he was allowed to be at least somewhat fond of it, but not completely enamoured by it. In less dramatic circumstances Lee despised the realities of war. In a letter written less than two weeks after the events at Fredericksburg, Lee condemned war for its effects on humanity and the world in general. He informed his wife that “...what a cruel thing is war; to separate and destroy families and friends, and mar the purest joys and happiness God has granted us in this world; to fill our hearts with hatred instead of love for our neighbours, and to devastate the fair face of this beautiful world!”¹³

Lee had become well acquainted with the hideous sights and smells of a battlefield during the Mexican War, and did not relish viewing such grisly spectacles again.¹⁴ And yet, despite his realization of the horrors of war, he found it difficult to control the excitement warfare stirred in his mind and in his soul. Edward Gordon, who knew Lee when he was the President of Washington College, wrote that Lee “...loved excitement, especially the excitement of war. He loved grandeur. But all these appetites and powers were brought under the control of his judgment and made subservient to his Christian faith.”¹⁵ Lee wrestled with his earthly nature which exulted in the glories of war, seeking to ensure that his spiritual nature, his calling to spiritual perfection in Christ, reigned supreme in his soul and mind. Both Jackson and Lee found such a struggle difficult to win because their aptitude for war enabled them to plan battles, coordinate

¹²Freeman, R. E. Lee, II: 462. Although this famous statement could be dismissed as only a single offhand remark made in passing, Freeman believed that it “...revealed the whole man [Lee] in a single brief sentence...” Lee’s most famous biographer thus credited the utterance as indicative of both Lee himself and his attitude toward warfare.

¹³Lee, General Lee, 227.

¹⁴Freeman, R. E. Lee, I: 246.

¹⁵Edward Clifford Gordon, “Recollections of General Robert E. Lee’s Administration as President of Washington College, Virginia,” in Riley, ed., General Robert E. Lee, 100.

troop movements, and engage in other activities that could achieve success both in individual battles and in the war as a whole. Their duty to serve their country as soldiers and win battles made it extremely difficult for them to deny themselves the thrill of battle. However, they sought to suppress manifestations of their excitement, exhilaration and the exultation that naturally followed a successful battle. Although comments like Lee's remark at Fredericksburg and the burning fire often seen in Jackson's eyes as he planned a decisive counter-stroke witnessed to their continued enthusiasm for warfare, for the most part they attempted to suppress their excitement when waging war. Lee, like Jackson, also exulted in warfare, and recognized its destructive power. In Lee a struggle was waged between his love of war and the peace which Christ wanted His followers to embrace. In theological terms invented by St. Paul, the 'natural' man warred against the 'spiritual' man in Lee's soul. Historians are not competent to judge which 'man' was successful in winning this battle in Lee's soul, and according to Christian theology, this determination will be revealed by God on Judgement Day. What can be said with the historical evidence available is that Lee was conflicted in his role as a general, and this inner turmoil would continue until he surrendered to U. S. Grant in April 1865.

Other generals demonstrated open jubilation about their part in the war. Frank Paxton informed his wife that July 21, 1861, the day of the Battle of First Manassas, was the "...happiest day of my life, our wedding day not excepted."¹⁶ Whether his wife felt insulted that Paxton derived more enjoyment from a battle, which included killing his fellow human beings, than from marrying her was not recorded for posterity. It is clear however, that as Paxton did indeed love his wife very much, his love for battle must have been very great indeed. When Paxton wrote these words he believed that the war would soon end and therefore felt pride in being able to take part in the fighting before it ended. However, like many other participants in the war, eager at the beginning to indulge in battle and test their manhood, Paxton learned that First Manassas was not the final battle in the Civil War, but only one of many that eventually claimed approximately 620,000 lives. Although Paxton felt the most exultation during his first significant engagement, he still continued to feel and relish the same adrenaline rush until his death on May 3, 1863

¹⁶Paxton, ed., Civil War Letters of Frank "Bull" Paxton, 11.

at the Battle of Chancellorsville. Paxton desired to serve Christ, but also loved the thrill of battle. He evidently combined both earthly and heavenly motives in his admiration of the Confederate performance at First Manassas since he referred to it as “...the sacred work of achieving our nationality and independence.”¹⁷ Perhaps Paxton believed the earthly ecstasy battle provided was morally justifiable when experienced in accomplishing God’s work. Religious beliefs seemed to have no effect in taming Paxton’s love of battle. Instead, his natural love of warfare was allowed to rule unchecked by religious scruples.

J. E. B. Stuart also seemed to love battle. John Mosby firmly believed that his fellow cavalryman “...felt intensely the joy of battle, and he loved the praise of fair women and brave men.”¹⁸ Men in the ranks also thought their dashing commander loved his profession, and that he enjoyed engaging in daring raids upon the enemy. When a bugler mentioned this common impression to Stuart himself, the cavalryman denied it, saying “I don’t love bullets any better than you do. It is my duty to go where they are sometimes, but I don’t expect to survive this war.”¹⁹ Stuart realized that the thrill war provided came with a dreadful price: in order to feel the true adrenaline rush battle provided, one had to be at such risk that’s one life was in grave danger. Stuart believed from the start of the war that he would not survive it. Even with this premonition of his own death in his mind, Stuart still took pleasure in the thrill of battle. Despite his dislike for bullets, his love for danger was very real. Such a love encouraged him to lead his troopers from the head of the column, exposing himself to shot and shell, some of which finally brought him down at Yellow Tavern in mid-1864.

The hesitancy with which Lee, Jackson, and Stuart all experienced the thrill of battle occurred even more prominently in the lives of generals who were called to serve

¹⁷Paxton, ed., Civil War Letters of Frank “Bull” Paxton, 11. It is fitting that Paxton believed the battle helped achieve not only Confederate ‘independence’ but also their ‘nationality.’ Paxton bears witness to the key importance battles have played in the establishment of American identity. Such battles have included Saratoga, New Orleans, Gettysburg, and many others.

¹⁸John S. Mosby, Stuart’s Cavalry in the Gettysburg Campaign (New York: Moffat, Yard & Company, 1908), 60.

¹⁹Garnett, Riding with Stuart, 61.

the Prince of Peace as clerics prior to the war. William Nelson Pendleton admitted that he felt out of place on the battlefield, amidst the bullets and the bloodshed. He continued that

It is a strange position for a servant of the Prince of Peace and a minister of the Gospel of Peace. But as I do not delight in war, and would not hurt the hair of the head of any human being save under the conviction of public duty; as by prayer, pleadings, and expostulation I have earnestly tried for peace, so I trust the blessing of the peace-maker will not be denied me, though as a soldier of the Cross I follow the example of old Abraham in endeavouring to defend my kindred against cruel outrage.²⁰

By completely resisting the thrill other men felt in war, Pendleton justified his presence on the battlefield as both a general and a clergyman. He realized that as a man of God, he was forbidden to delight in war. Such conduct would be detrimental not only to his own salvation but also to that of others for whom he served as a spiritual role model.

Pendleton also helped to soothe his conscience by adapting Paul's analogy of a Christian being a soldier. Paul spoke figuratively of a Christian soldier, and included a description of a Christian's weapon and armour, such as a helmet, shield, and sword. The Christian's sword, for instance, was the Word of God, Sacred Scripture. Pendleton's adaption of this imagery to allow for a literal interpretation of a Christian 'soldier' demonstrates how his modification of Paul's analogy allowed him to feel more at ease with his 'strange position' as both minister and general. In Pendleton's mind, however, he firmly drew the line when it came to delighting in war. He knew that if he crossed that line, and began to enjoy the thrill of battle, his chances at obtaining the 'blessing of the peace-maker' would be slim or even non-existent. Consequently few, if any, moments occurred during the war in which Pendleton clearly enjoyed partaking in battle. Clerics, such as Pendleton, realized that even though they believed that killing was necessary to defend the Confederacy from subjugation, rejoicing in killing was anathema to true believers, and certainly to men of the cloth.

Men who enjoyed killing prior to the war expressed fewer reservations about delighting in battle than did clergymen like Pendleton. Wade Hampton enjoyed wide recognition as a hunter in his native South Carolina, in addition to being a successful

²⁰Lee, Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, 236.:

plantation owner and statesman. According to his biographer Manly Wellman, Hampton successfully killed eighty bears throughout his career as a hunter. Not all avid hunters were also killers of their fellow human beings. However, the same thrill of battle Hampton experienced in the forests of South Carolina he experienced on the battlefields of Virginia. Douglas Freeman asserts that Hampton had "...the manner of one to whom war was not a frolic or an adventure but a grim, bitter business to be discharged as quickly as might be with determination and without relish."²¹ Hampton's conduct in the war suggested otherwise. He had allowed bears a fair opportunity to fight him without using firearms or another unfair advantage. Just so did he allow at least one human opponent an equal opportunity. After encountering a Yankee sniper, and seeing that his weapon was unloaded, he indicated to the man that he would await the loading of his weapon. Hampton wished to engage the man on equal terms, testing his mettle and skill against that of a worthy opponent. After Hampton patiently waited for the man to reload his weapon, the two men proceeded to perform their improvised duel. They fired their guns, and Hampton emerged victorious, hitting his target, and shattering his opponent's wrist.²² The most logical and wisest course of action in Hampton's situation would have been to ask the Union soldier to surrender, and, if the man refused, shoot him to death. Only a man who loved danger, or who had a death wish, allowed a prone enemy sniper to load his weapon and then risk an exchange of gunfire with a man who only a few minutes before had been at his mercy. On this occasion Hampton was obviously indulging his love for battle and the thrill of danger.

Since Christianity as practised by most Southerners sanctioned the just war theory and did not fully suppress the thrill of battle felt by many combatants, it did not prevent wars. It did however serve to regulate them. Christian principles of charity and compassion, especially toward the poor and helpless, still applied in wartime. Many Confederates believed that religious ideals and precepts possessed greater importance in wartime than in times of peace. One of these individuals, John Miner, was "...very solicitous that our people should be guilty of no outrage, however provoked, which may

²¹Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, I: 94.

²²Wellman, Giant in Gray, 115.

alienate the favour + kindness of Heaven, and don't [sic] bear with patience, the sentiments of old women in pantaloons + petticoats, and of other non-combatants,...the "no quarter" outcry, the mal-treatment of prisoners."²³ Miner likely understood the motivation behind the desire of his compatriots to exact vengeance upon the enemy, especially upon the prisoners who fell into Confederate hands. However, such actions would serve to alienate God, and perhaps lead the Almighty to aid the Union in its invasion of the South. Such blood-lust was both unChristian and detrimental to the Southern war effort.

Since the South desperately required God's help to win its independence, God's laws needed to be obeyed in order for such divine assistance to materialize. In addition, such moral laws, if obeyed, ensured that the conflict did not denigrate into brutal savagery, with massive destruction of property and substantial civilian casualties, and no way to end hostilities until one side was totally annihilated. To prevent such destructive wars the ancient Greeks established the principle that diplomatic ambassadors should be protected from retaliation because if the opposing army killed them, there would be no means to end the war. By allowing individuals from different factions safe passage to meet and discuss the matter, a peace treaty could be arranged to end the war. Of course, Christian morality in times of war went far beyond this simple principle. Such principles attempted to limit the effects of a war in scale, extent and duration. Frank Paxton felt relieved that such principles existed. In March 1862 he wrote his wife that

I am glad they [Northerners] indicate their purpose to carry on the war on the principles of civilized warfare, as it exempts the women and children left at home by our soldiers from the savage barbarities of their vengeance. If the fate of war brings my own home within their lines, it will be some consolation to know that you, my dearling [sic] wife, and our dear little children are not subjected to insult and injury at the hands of the invaders.... It is utterly impossible to defend every section.²⁴

²³Letter from John B. Miner to Lew Miner, November 26, 1861, Blackford Family Papers, 1861-1865, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

²⁴Paxton, ed., Civil War Letters of General Frank Paxton, 42-43.

Paxton took comfort in the knowledge that while he was fighting the Yankees in Northern Virginia or in the North itself that other Union soldiers would not be raping, looting and killing his neighbours and his own family. He also acknowledged the strategic advantage such principles of warfare offered the South. Since it was indeed 'impossible to defend every section,' the Confederacy could hope to achieve local manpower superiority in critical areas of the continent and attempt to force the North to realize the futility of its invasion. Especially owing to the overwhelming naval power possessed by the North, the Confederacy did not have enough troops to protect its long coastline as well as the extensive land border it shared with the United States. No matter how successful Southern generals were, substantial tracts of Southern territory (along with the Confederates living there) would inevitably come under Union control. If the soldiers fighting in the Confederate armies knew that their families were safe from harm, they would be willing to serve their country and repel the invader in other areas. However, if such men knew that their wives would be raped, their children butchered, their houses burned, and their towns and cities destroyed, then they would be far less willing to serve in an army hundreds of miles away from their homes. Instead they would choose to defend their own families as best they could. On the national level, President Davis also felt more justified in allowing some territory to fall into Union hands when he knew the inhabitants would not be butchered.²⁵ These rules of war were codified by Francis Lieber and published in April 1863. Although the Confederacy never endorsed the Lieber Code, many of its provisions were familiar to them through time-honoured customs of how war should be conducted. Of course, the components of the code that Southerners particularly rejected were related to the treatment of slaves and African American soldiers.

²⁵As it was, Davis did attempt to defend many sections of the Confederacy. However he did not strip the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of Tennessee of most of its soldiers in order to recover each and every acre of Southern land because he knew its inhabitants did not face extermination if they were not rescued immediately. In one example, when New Orleans fell into Union hands, General Butler issued a notorious proclamation that any woman who insulted a Union soldier would be treated as a 'lady of the streets,' that is, as a prostitute, and therefore his men could do what they liked with her. This order was met with derision by the Confederacy, and few Union generals emulated his example. However such treatment depended on the behaviour of each individual women. Butler, nor any other Union general, made no attempt to round up Confederate civilians and execute them wholesale.

At the beginning of the war, prior to the publication of the Lieber Code, many Union generals realized that these principles of civilized warfare operated mainly in favour of the South. Since Southern civilians were safe from harm, male relatives of military age would prove more willing to serve in the army, and thus the South would be able to prolong its resistance. Some of them sought to nullify this advantage by changing the customary rules of ‘civilized war’ and instead making civilians suffer and even starve. William Tecumseh Sherman, convinced that such tactics were necessary, said that “‘...I have made war vindictively...war is war, and you can make nothing else of it....’”²⁶ His march across Georgia in 1864 served to impress upon Southerners the reality of war, and that if they resisted, they would suffer. While Sherman did not slaughter people indiscriminately, he did deprive them of food and draught animals, as well as allow his troops to plunder and loot those who opposed the Union. Sherman’s goal was to intimidate Southerners, and in this endeavour he was successful. Sherman compared his army to that of some barbarians which had invaded and devastated the Roman empire. Although fewer civilians were killed during his invasion than in Alaric’s barbarian invasion, the purpose was the same: to bring both a country and a people to its knees in submission.²⁷ In this objective Sherman and his fellow Union generals ultimately succeeded.

In accomplishing this objective, Sherman did not mind violating agreements made with Confederate generals. The truce arranged on April 18, 1865 between the armies of Sherman and Joseph E. Johnston stipulated that both armies would observe the status quo until both governments ratified the surrender. While Johnston kept his word, Sherman did not. Instead the Union general perfected his communications and built useful railway lines, ensuring that if Johnston did not receive permission to sign the surrender documents, and consequently wished to renew hostilities, his position would be even more pathetic than prior to the truce.²⁸ Sherman did not care about the words ‘status quo,’

²⁶John F. Marszalek, *Sherman: A Soldier’s Passion for Order* (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 286. Sherman uttered this statement in a conversation with the Episcopal Bishop of Arkansas Henry C. Lay, in 1864.

²⁷Marszalek, *Sherman*, 262.

²⁸Johnson, ed., *Memoir of the Life and Public Service of Joseph E Johnston*, 228-229.

nor about signed documents. ‘War is war,’ Sherman thought, and he was determined to win it even if that meant violating solemn agreements.

Many Confederate generals’ ideas about war contrasted with Sherman’s philosophy of warfare, especially at the beginning of the conflict. Moral considerations prompted Patrick Cleburne “...to propose no invasion of the North, no attack on them, and only ask to be let alone.”²⁹ Although Cleburne likely reversed his position on the propriety of Southern offensives into Northern territory as the war lengthened from weeks to months to years, he retained his belief the Golden Rule’s applicability to warfare. Cleburne’s thought resembled one of Jesus’ instructions to His disciples: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”³⁰ This ‘Golden Rule’ helped Christians understand that if they wanted decent treatment, so did their fellow human beings. Because Cleburne did not want to suffer invasion, he believed it only just that he and his fellow Confederates not invade the North, as the Northerners did not want to suffer invasion either. Even though this ‘rule’ limited the options open to Southern generals, it allowed them to believe they operated on a higher moral plane than their opponents and therefore added credence to their arguments that God was fighting for the Confederacy and against the North.

Leonidas Polk also sought to establish limitations on the conduct of the war with Ulysses Grant in November 1861. During their negotiations, Polk “‘discussed the principles on which I thought the war should be conducted; denounced all barbarity, vandalism, plundering, and all that, and got him to say that he would join me in putting it down.’”³¹ Polk hoped that the war in the western theatre could be fought by sacred principles and that immoral behaviour on both sides could be prevented. Unfortunately Polk’s forecast for a civilized war never materialized. Instead, only a few months after his interview with Grant, slayings, hangings, marauding and other guerrilla activities

²⁹Purdue and Purdue, Pat Cleburne, 75.

³⁰Matthew 7: 12.

³¹Polk, Leonidas Polk, II: 48.

occurred in Missouri and elsewhere in the west.³² Despite the good intentions of most Confederate generals, the very nature of war overstepped the constraints leaders sought to place on it, and through the actions of individual human beings began to escalate out of control. At times it might be a mid-level officer who encouraged his men to shoot some prisoners because he wanted revenge for the death of his family members, and at others it might be simply a local civilian of an occupied town taking a shot at a Union soldier walking by. It did not matter that such guerrilla activity did not benefit the Confederate war effort. As Herman Hattaway and Richard Beringer write, “The guerrilla activities had a rather small effect in determining the war’s outcome, however. In the East, particularly, they never occurred on nearly a large enough scale to produce decisive results. And especially in the West, the Confederate government was never really able to control the guerrillas. They were simply carrying out criminal activities, not effectively augmenting the general military effort.”³³ Guerrillas acted independently, and often sought to achieve their own objectives over those of the Confederacy as a whole. The worst problem with Confederate guerrilla activity was that it simply invited reprisal by the Union armies. Confederate generals such as Polk genuinely wanted to conduct the war according to Christian ‘principles,’ and would have preferred that the war had been fought in this way. They wanted this more civilized type of warfare to occur due to their religious beliefs, as well as their own self-interest, because far more Southern civilians were vulnerable to attack from Union forces than were Northern civilians in danger from Confederate armies.

Daniel Sutherland, in his book A Savage Conflict confirms this impression of guerrilla activity in the Confederacy. He argues that the guerrillas were one reason the Confederacy lost the war, and indicates that the guerrillas damaged the war effort in two ways. “First, they forced Union commanders to alter their military strategies and occupation policies. Both rebounded on the Confederates. Second, the guerrilla war contributed to the erosion of Confederate morale and unity. This resulted partly from

³²Herman Hattaway and Richard E. Beringer, Jefferson Davis, Confederate President (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 165.

³³Hattaway and Beringer, Jefferson Davis, 336.

destruction wrought by Union strategy and policy on Southern communities, but it came also from weaknesses the guerrilla war exposed in the Confederate government.”³⁴ In particular, Union leaders looked with disfavour upon the activities of Colonel John S. Mosby. He launched attacks on “...scouts, patrols, and pickets...”³⁵ and this practice infuriated Union generals. In response, they informed the leading citizens of Middleburg, Virginia in early 1863 that if such attacks did not cease, their town would be burned and all the property therein destroyed. The town leaders correspondingly wrote to the guerrilla leader, asking him to desist from such attacks. Mosby refused to comply, explaining “My attacks on scouts, patrols and pickets, which have provoked this threat, are sanctioned both by the custom of war and the practice of the enemy; and you are at liberty to inform them [the Northern generals] that no such clamor shall deter me from employing whatever legitimate weapons I can most efficiently use for their annoyance.”³⁶ Mosby was tame compared to other guerrillas who killed and murdered civilians, torturing them unmercifully. He only made war on armed soldiers. Nonetheless, his reference to the ‘legitimate weapons I can most efficiently use’ illustrates two important points. He, like other Confederate leaders, also set limits on what ‘weapons’ he used, employing only those tactics he considered ‘legitimate’ and did not fully unleash the possibilities of war against his foes. The second point is that he used weapons that could be used ‘efficiently.’ In other words, he employed those weapons because he lacked better options. He did not command an army of tens of thousands of men that could simply march up to the Union occupiers of Virginia and drive them out at bayonet point. Instead, he was outnumbered, outgunned, and outsupplied, and the only way his tactics could bring victory was by wearing down the resolve of the Union armies, Northern political leaders, and the electorate of the United States. However, if the occupying power’s determination to retain its hold on the occupied territory was absolute, as was Abraham Lincoln’s, then without outside intervention such guerrilla activities

³⁴Daniel E. Sutherland, A Savage Conflict: The Decisive Role of Guerrillas in the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 277.

³⁵John Singleton Mosby, The Letters of John S. Mosby ([Richmond]: Stuart-Mosby Historical Society, 1986), 29.

³⁶Mosby, Letters of John S. Mosby, 29.

could not succeed. Not only that, but such activities, in the context of the South, served to weaken the Confederates' belief that they were waging a holy war against unholy invaders. If Southerners behaved as bushwhackers, murdering people for a thrill and for their possessions, then few of them would believe the claims of preachers and the various levels of government to be fighting on behalf of the Lord. Guerrilla activities annoyed and distracted Union armies, and caused hundreds of casualties. However, they also generated anger and resentment in the Northern population, convincing them that the South was fighting an unjust war, and simply ensured that the fallen Union soldiers would be replaced with additional reinforcements.

Not all Confederate generals wanted to ensure that the war was fought in the least destructive way possible. Instead, Nathan Bedford Forrest and Stonewall Jackson alike wanted to 'raise the black flag,' take no prisoners, and kill as many Yankees as possible. These two men, so different in so many ways, both believed that every Yankee who crossed into Southern territory had thereby earned himself a death sentence. No quarter would be asked, and none given. If the Yankees wanted to conquer the South, then they would die, each of them, before accomplishing their objective. Forrest wanted to kill, quickly and abundantly, viewing "...the raising of the black flag as the most economical and merciful way of ending the war."³⁷ By prosecuting the war in such a deliberate and unrestrained manner, he speculated that the Yankees would quickly lose heart and admit the impossibility of subduing the South. This method was also the most economical, because it meant the South would not have to feed captured prisoners, or operate camps for them to live in. Instead, they would only have to dig their graves.

At the beginning of the war Stonewall Jackson firmly believed that the 'black flag' idea was both the most efficient way of winning the war and the most moral way of doing it. Just like Forrest, Jackson thought the North would cringe at the numbers of men its armies were losing, and would agree that the war was costing too many lives. John Esten Cooke explained Jackson's seemingly heartless motivation by writing that Jackson aimed "...to make him [the foe, every enemy soldier] feel the horrors of war, amid his

³⁷Bennett H. Young, Confederate Wizards of the Saddle: Being Reminiscences and Observations of One Who Rode with Morgan (Boston: Chapple Publishing Company, 1914; reprint, Nashville: J.S. Sanders & Company, 1999), 5.

own homes, and thus impressing upon the people of the North the atrocious nature of the contest, compel an early peace.”³⁸ Not only could such an idea occasion an early peace, but Jackson also ascribed righteousness to his plan. By prosecuting the war in such an unrestrained manner, it would end in a short period of time, and thus fewer people on both sides would die as a result. Jackson told his brother-in-law, Rufus Barringer, that

‘I always thought we ought to meet the Federal invaders on the outer verge of just right and defence, and raise at once the black flag, viz., ‘No quarter to the violators of our homes and firesides!’ It would in the end have proved true humanity and mercy. The Bible is full of such wars, and it is the only policy that would bring the North to its senses. But...I can see now clearly enough the people of the South were not prepared for such a policy. I have myself cordially accepted the policy of our leaders.’³⁹

In the second year of the war Jackson reluctantly abandoned his advocacy of the black flag policy,⁴⁰ realizing that as a general he owed allegiance to political authorities, such as Jefferson Davis. Thus his duty compelled him to execute their his superiors’ orders, and he alone had no authority to implement such a policy. Some authors deny that Jackson advocated such a policy, citing the authority of Hunter Holmes McGuire, Jackson’s doctor.⁴¹ Even though McGuire did not believe Jackson supported the black flag policy, he did provide insight into Jackson’s preferred response to the many wrongs Confederate men and women suffered at the hands of the Yankee invaders. Jackson’s response was “‘Do?...do? why shoot them’.”⁴² If his men ran out of bullets, then the

³⁸Cooke, Life of Stonewall Jackson, 196.

³⁹Jackson, Life and Letters, 310. It is important to note that this quotation and the chapter from which it are taken are from the first edition of Mary Anna Jackson’s memoirs of her husband. The only major change made to the text of the manuscript from this first edition to that of the second, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, was the removal of Chapter 16, entitled “Raising the Black Flag.” Evidently it was thought that Jackson’s views on this subject were best left undiscussed in the second edition of the book, as many Northerners would be less enamoured of the Southern general if informed of his black flag policy. In the second volume a number of additional reminiscences were added in addition to Mrs. Jackson’s narrative.

⁴⁰Robertson, Stonewall Jackson, 514-515.

⁴¹Riley, "Stonewall Jackson" a thesaurus of anecdotes, 98.

⁴²Riley, "Stonewall Jackson" a thesaurus of anecdotes, 98.

bayonet would suffice as a means of dispatching the enemy. Even though bayonet fights rarely occurred during the war,⁴³ Jackson loved to rely on this simple, yet deadly weapon, and often voiced his desire to “Give them the bayonet.” His religious conviction did not moderate Jackson’s bloodlust, but instead intensified it, as he referred to the authority of the Bible and the fact that the Bible is full of bloody conflicts in which thousands of people are killed. Jackson’s religious profession definitely encouraged him to slaughter as many enemies as possible. It was only his government’s orders that restrained him from carrying out his ‘black flag’ policy.

Contrary to what McGuire believed, Jackson did indeed support and advocate the adoption of the black flag policy.⁴⁴ Even though his superiors rejected such a policy, he still concluded that the Yankee invasion could be solved by the use of deadly force on each and every Union soldier. When his subordinate, Richard Ewell, wanted a gallant Union cavalryman riding a white horse to be spared a death in battle, Jackson was appalled. He retorted that all of his men were to “Shoot the brave officers and the cowards will run away and take the men with them.”⁴⁵ Jackson was not about to confuse Christianity with chivalry. He bore no malice toward his enemies, but would not pass up an opportunity to cause them harm, and damage their war effort. Jackson was correct, because killing an army’s best officers severely impaired its fighting efficiency and morale. Sparing such gallant opponents might have been appropriate in the Middle Ages, but in a war for the survival of the Confederacy, these romantic concepts needed to be discarded. In only one circumstance did Jackson relent from his purpose in killing every Yankee soldier possible. He did not agree with the senseless shooting of sentries on duty.⁴⁶ With that exception, Jackson ordered his men to shoot any Yankee soldiers that dared to resist them. For those individuals, such as Mennonites and other pacifists, who could not bring themselves to shoot other human beings, Jackson simply used them in

⁴³Von Borcke, Memoirs of the Confederate War of Independence, I: 64.

⁴⁴Royster, Destructive War, 40.

⁴⁵McGuire and Christian, Confederate Cause and Conduct, 209.

⁴⁶Riley, "Stonewall Jackson" a thesaurus of anecdotes, 170-171.

staff departments and as teamsters.⁴⁷ Such jobs had to be performed by someone anyway, and Jackson wanted men eager to shoot and kill the enemy instead of reluctant and unwilling soldiers.

James Longstreet shared his fellow corps commander's determination and endorsed bloodshed as a way to end the war. However, he did not enter the war fired with religious zeal and an eagerness to destroy the enemy like Jackson.⁴⁸ Instead he simply wanted to perform the actions necessary to achieve independence and convince Lincoln that the Confederacy deserved its freedom. He proposed in May 1863 to enter the North with a large army, about one hundred and fifty thousand men, and challenge "...Lincoln to declare his purpose. If it is a christian purpose enough blood has been shed to satisfy any principles. If he intends extermination we should know it at once and play a little at that game whilst we can."⁴⁹ Thus, Longstreet would fight on Christian principles as long as he knew his opponents were fighting on those same principles. If he believed that Lincoln intended simply to exterminate the Southern population, by refusing to renounce his attempted conquest of the South even when faced by an enormous army, then the rules for both sides would change. As Longstreet coyly mentioned, he 'would play a little at that game whilst we can,' in other words, kill off some of the Northern population when the Army of Northern Virginia was in the North. Longstreet's patience was wearing thin at this point in the war. Although he did not want to employ such savage tactics, he might consider them if Lincoln would not grant the South its independence in any other way. Longstreet's familiarity with religious concepts encouraged him to respect the boundary between soldiers and civilians as long as he was not provoked, but once Lincoln would not relent from his subjugation of the Southern, then Longstreet was prepared to start retaliating.

Longstreet, usually operating as a corps commander under the close supervision of Robert E. Lee, needed his superior's consent to begin to play a 'game of extermination.' One of his fellow corps commanders, Jubal Early, was also usually under

⁴⁷Jackson, *Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson*, 252.

⁴⁸Wert, *General James Longstreet*, 205-206.

⁴⁹Wert, *General James Longstreet*, 244.

the supervision of Lee. However, in the summer of 1864, the Second Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia departed for a special mission: Early would operate in the Shenandoah Valley and in the North, trying to distract and lure as many troops away from Grant's Army of the Potomac as possible. Grant had forced Lee's army into a permanent defensive position defending the critical city of Petersburg. Both sides had built trenches. Lee knew that the daily attrition his army suffered in trench warfare would eventually weaken and destroy it. If Lee could force Grant to detach a large number of troops to defend Washington and otherwise protect the North from Early's invasion, he hoped to launch an offensive against the Army of the Potomac, break the deadlock, and defeat Grant. Early eagerly invaded the North, and came close to entering Washington itself, but then withdrew, believing that he did not have enough troops to capture it. Instead he went to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, where he demanded an immediate ransom of "\$100,000 in gold or \$500,000 in greenback"⁵⁰ from the town officials. When they refused to pay, he burned the town,⁵¹ and never regretted doing so. In fact, when writing of this incident in 1866, he emphatically insisted that "Notwithstanding the lapse of time which has occurred, and the result of the war, I am perfectly satisfied with my conduct on this occasion and see no reason to regret it."⁵² Because Union soldiers had burned towns and country houses in Virginia, and some of the Northern population had approved of it, Early considered that the time for revenge had arrived. He would retaliate, using the same methods as his opponents.⁵³ It did not matter to Early that such tactics seemed to justify the Union Army's use of similar practices in Virginia, or that his actions would anger the Northern population, especially those in Pennsylvania, inciting them to ever greater support of the Union war effort. Nor did it matter that he acted like a pirate, in demanding a ransom from unarmed townspeople, and seemed to be concerned less with independence and more with how much loot he could steal or coerce from his helpless victims. Early had used religion as a tool to inspire his men. When such a tool

⁵⁰Phillips, "Lower Shenandoah Valley," 397.

⁵¹Gilmor, Four Years in the Saddle, 209-210.

⁵²Early, Memoir of the Last Year, 74.

⁵³Early, Memoir of the Last Year, 71.

did not seem to work anymore, he simply discarded it and ignored its existence. Jesus Christ did not endorse 'eye for an eye' retaliation, and Early knew that. For him the Civil War was not about Christ or his teachings. It was about power, and death, and revenge. He thirsted for revenge against the North, and the flames rising from the town of Chambersburg sated his thirst slightly. If Lee had permitted it, Early gladly would have fully satisfied his desire for vengeance.

To Early's disappointment, Lee did not grant such permission. In fact, Lee had not authorized Early's actions at Chambersburg, and expressed shock at his subordinate's behaviour. John Gordon confirms that Early's actions at Chambersburg were "...so directly in contravention of General Lee's orders, and so abhorrent to the ideas and maxims with which he imbued his army, that a high-spirited Virginia soldier flatly refused to obey the order when directed by his superior officer to apply the torch to the city. That soldier [Colonel Peters] whose disobedience was prompted by the highest dictates of humanity, deserves a place of honor in history."⁵⁴ Although Lee did not believe Early's actions were justified, in time some of his soldiers, looking back on the war, agreed with Early. John Opie, a cavalryman in the Army of Northern Virginia, concluded that "A man must not carry his religion or his humanity to war with him, he must subordinate, and, if necessary, sacrifice, the individual to the general good."⁵⁵ Lee never subscribed to such notions. Instead he believed that men needed their religion and their humanity most when they went to war, because without these assets, the war, though dangerous to the body, would certainly kill the soul.

Lee, rather than order his men to carry out acts of retaliation on Northern civilians, did his utmost to prevent such incidents from occurring. He never subscribed to the theory of retaliation,⁵⁶ both because of its non-Christian character and because it did not work. Such retaliation only invited a reciprocal response, and since the Union armies had control over more of the South than the Confederate armies ever had over Northern territory, Southerners would certainly experience more brutality than Northerners. Even if

⁵⁴Gordon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, 305.

⁵⁵Opie, A Rebel Cavalryman, 216.

⁵⁶Freeman, R. E. Lee, III: 210.

such retaliation worked, it is very unlikely that Lee would have resorted to that method anyway. He did however resort to threatening retaliation. On October 8, 1862, Lee directed J. E. B. Stuart to raid Pennsylvania and capture federal or state office holders so that they could be threatened with execution if Southern hostages of like rank in Union custody were harmed.⁵⁷

Lee prided himself on the Christian conduct of the Army of Northern Virginia, and sought to avoid any depredations both in the South and during his invasions of the North. During the invasion of Pennsylvania in 1863, Lee personally replaced a fence which his soldiers had dismantled, and enjoined the arrest of men who had violated his orders concerning private property, as well as their officers.⁵⁸ During his invasion of Maryland, he ordered the execution of a soldier who had brazenly stolen a pig in direct defiance of standing orders.⁵⁹ In his General Orders No. 73, issued on June 27, 1863, Lee adamantly condemned plundering and retaliation by insisting that

There have been, however, instances of forgetfulness on the part of some that they in keeping the yet unsullied reputation of the army, and that the duties exacted of us by civilization and Christianity are not less obligatory in the country of the enemy than in our own. The Commanding General considers that no greater disgrace could befall the army, and through it our whole people, than the perpetration of the barbarous outrages upon the innocent and defenceless, and the wanton destruction of private property, that have marked the course of the enemy in our own country. Such proceedings not only disgrace the perpetrators and all connected with them, but are subversive of the discipline and efficiency of the army, and destructive of the ends of our present movements. It must be remembered that we make war only upon armed men and that we cannot take vengeance for the wrongs our people have suffered without lowering ourselves in the eyes of all whose abhorrence has been excited by the atrocities of our enemy and offending

⁵⁷Webb Garrison, Civil War Hostages: Hostage Taking in the Civil War (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania: White Mane Books, 2000), 220. Whether or not Lee ever ordered the execution of the men captured by Stuart on this raid is unknown, but that outcome does not seem likely given his advice to President Davis concerning retaliation.

⁵⁸J. William Jones, "The Morale of the Confederate Armies," in Evans, Confederate Military History, 12: 145.

⁵⁹Gordon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, 306. This man was placed by Jackson in the most deadly spot in the next battle and performed so bravely that Jackson forgave his transgression. It is unknown whether Lee authorized this act of mercy.

against Him to whom vengeance belongeth, and without whose favor and support our efforts all prove in vain.⁶⁰

When Early took such vengeance a year later he did so because he did not believe in the precepts of the Christian religion, especially the maxim that vengeance belonged to God, and that on Judgement Day He would exercise His divine prerogative to exact vengeance. Lee did believe in God and His right over vengeance, and did not dare usurp that right. In few other instances were the consequences of one man's religious faith, and another's lack of it, so directly connected to their conception and conduct of the Civil War. It should be noted that Lee's commitment to employ Christian charity towards civilians did not extend to African Americans, some of whom were enslaved when Lee entered Maryland in 1862 and Pennsylvania in 1863.

Lee's religious ideals did not allow him to approve of the execution of enemy prisoners. When Davis suggested such a policy in 1864, Lee did his utmost to dissuade the President from it. Lee informed his friend and Commander-in-Chief that "I think it better to do right, even if we suffer in so doing, than to incur the reproaches of our consciences and posterity."⁶¹ Previously in mid-1862, Davis considered such a policy as well, and although he rejected the option at that time, he reserved his right to resort to it in the future if necessary.⁶² When urged by members of his cabinet to execute a Union soldier for each Confederate soldier that was hanged, Davis refused. He believed, like Lee, that he could not execute prisoners taken on a field of battle and "...hang them like convicted criminals."⁶³ Lee's firm moral stance on this issue helped his President resist the temptation to resort to retaliatory killings, which would not stop the Union war effort and would only serve to anger the Lord.

On April 8 and 9, 1865, the Army of Northern Virginia was finally brought to bay. The Army of the Potomac had surrounded it, deprived it of its supplies and worn out

⁶⁰Jones, Life and Letters of Lee, 399-400.

⁶¹Jones, Life and Letters of Lee, 327.

⁶²Crist, ed., Papers of Jefferson Davis, 8: 310.

⁶³Hattaway and Beringer, Jefferson Davis, 302.

much of its fighting strength and manpower. As Lee considered his options, officers close to him, like E. P. Alexander, suggested that the war was not yet over. The army could scatter to the winds, and engage in guerrilla warfare, seeking to prolong their resistance until every Southern soldier was dead or the South's independence assured. Lee rejected such an option. He replied to his friend that

‘General, you and I as Christian men have no right to consider only how this would affect us. We must consider its effect on the country as a whole. Already it is demoralized by the four years of war. If I took your advice, the men would be without rations and under no control of officers. They would be compelled to rob and steal in order to live. They would become mere bands of marauders and the enemy's cavalry would pursue them and overrun many wide sections....We would bring on a state of affairs it would take the country years to recover from.’⁶⁴

Just as Lee's religious faith had guided him to recognize his duty to enter the war, so that same faith forced him to acknowledge that, for him and for his army, the war was over. He could mount a vain last stand, watching the Army of the Potomac quickly shoot and shell his men to death, while he sat astride his horse Traveller, waiting for his end to come, and smiling, knowing he had done his duty and that he was going to meet his God. Lee willingly sacrificed thousands of men for the Southern Cause, and even risked the lives of his three sons in the war. Yet he would not order them to sacrifice their lives for his pride and vanity. The Army of Northern Virginia had fought its last battle. Lee's religion allowed him to admit defeat, swallow his pride, and save the South from years of bushwhacking, savagery and brutality.

Lee's fellow generals and soldiers did not all share his religious views, even though such concepts were central to their commander's life. Some advocated looting and frequently took advantage of any prospects for gain they encountered. John Mosby had no qualms about looting his dead opponents. After he shot a Union soldier, he and his friend then proceeded to search the man's body, finding twenty-six dollars and fifty cents, and a beautiful gold pen and its holder. Mosby wrote a letter to his 'Dearest Pauline' with the pen, and observed casually that his bullet had gone straight through the previous

⁶⁴McKim, *Soul of Lee*, 109; partially quoted in Fishwick, *Lee after the War*, 211.

owner's head.⁶⁵ Since the man had no need of money or a pen with which to write letters, Mosby figured he and his friend deserved to claim them as prizes of war. W. W. Blackford occasionally looted houses with his friend J. E. B. Stuart, although Blackford "...always felt reluctant about actually committing the deed, and generally got one of the men to get for me what I wanted."⁶⁶ Stuart, who always tried to gallop boldly toward his enemies, and then when necessary trot away,⁶⁷ exhibited similar confidence when appropriating needed materials from private houses.

According to John Hennessy, at the very first major engagement of the Civil War, First Manassas, warfare in the United States "...reached a higher, infinitely more awful level, a level not foretold by anyone. And while most Confederates reveled in victory, some foresaw that such a decisive defeat could only mean still more horror on a greater scale."⁶⁸ In short, fighting the Civil War entailed Southerners killing thousands of enemies, and in turn suffering similar numbers of deaths of their comrades or of themselves. In addition, thousands of wounded suffered lifelong injuries as a result of their service in the war. Veterans missing arms, legs, or eyes survived for decades after the war. Thousands of men endured imprisonment on both sides, some of whom did not receive adequate nourishment. Allegations were made after battles, including after First Manassas, that Confederate soldiers brutally murdered Union prisoners for sport.⁶⁹ While these allegations of murder in George Strong's diary were likely rumours that had little or no foundation in fact, this type of tragedy was endemic to warfare.

In light of such tragedies, and others associated with engaging in warfare, Southerners needed to face the possibility of death. The prospect of death became particularly strong for those who served in the armies, including common soldiers and

⁶⁵Mosby, Letters of John S. Mosby, 18.

⁶⁶Blackford, War Years with Jeb Stuart, 107-108.

⁶⁷Thomas, Bold Dragoon, 72.

⁶⁸John Hennessy, The First Battle of Manassas: An End to Innocence, July 18-21, 1861 (Lynchburg, Virginia: H. E. Howard, 1989), 129.

⁶⁹George Templeton Strong, Diary of the Civil War, 1860-1865, Allan Nevins, ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 170.

high ranking officers who frequently courted death both to perform reconnaissance missions and to inspire their troops. Some of them thought that death was inevitable. At the beginning of the war J. E. B. Stuart maintained that the South would win the Civil War but that “...very few of us will see the end. All I ask of fate is that I may be killed leading a cavalry charge.”⁷⁰ Eggleston’s memoir was written ten years after the end of the Civil War, and so the exact wording of Stuart’s utterance may not be perfectly historically accurate. However, given the preponderance of available evidence, including Stuart’s actions and surviving correspondence, the gist of this statement is correct. Stuart believed in the inevitability of his own death, but was not disturbed by it. He merely desired to die a glorious and quick death, leading the men who followed him devotedly, riding a handsome steed. In this case Stuart’s ability to prophecy the future is debatable at best. Since he was deliberately engaging in suicidal behaviour at Yellow Tavern in 1864, his words should not be counted as an accurate prediction because this was an event that he deliberately facilitated.

Frank Paxton displayed a similar understanding of the inevitability of death, and, like Stuart, did not fear his approaching demise. Paxton was willing to take and drink the cup of suffering Jesus Himself had consumed on Good Friday. In March 1863, he wrote that “Sooner or later I must drink it, and if it be God’s will that it be now, I am content. Sooner or later I must die, and, if prepared to die, my life can never be given to such a cause as that in which it is now staked.”⁷¹ Two months earlier, the extended duration of the Civil War had led him to agree with Stuart that few soldiers would see the end of the war. Paxton did not eagerly anticipate his approaching demise, but remained confident that the next life was worth experiencing, and that God’s Will must be done.⁷²

Few soldiers began the war ready to die. Instead, most Southern officers and men, even those harbouring a strong Christian faith, had a sincere horror of death. One captain revealed the close affiliation in Southern culture between death and religion when he admitted “Death is appalling to my senses. I have earnestly asked help of Him who has

⁷⁰Eggleston, Rebel’s Recollections, 117.

⁷¹Paxton, ed., Civil War Letters of General Frank Paxton, 79.

⁷²Paxton, ed., Civil War Letters of General Frank Paxton, 71.

passed through death & who has promised to lie with me always.”⁷³ Even after witnessing many deaths in countless battles over three years of war, a hardened soldier like Joseph Manson still recoiled from death. In one way Manson’s aversion to death was a healthy sign, indicating the remarkable resilience of human beings to retain human sensibilities in the midst of the carnage of war. The Christian religion did not require its members to revel in death, or to be comfortable around human body parts or mangled corpses. Manson had no desire to learn more about the innards of his fellow human beings. Faced with such gruesome realities, Southern soldiers often relied on Jesus Christ, Who had died, to preserve them from death. They believed that the power of Jesus’ Resurrection permitted no trace of death to linger about Him. Although He bore the wounds of the cross, He had conquered death, and would never die again. In the Gospel of John, after the death of His close friend, Lazarus, one of the deceased man’s sisters approached Jesus and remarked that if He had been with them when her brother was sick, Lazarus would not have died. John the Evangelist reveals that Jesus then boldly asserted: “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”⁷⁴ A Christian’s faith had the power to connect him or her with Christ, the source of resistance and ascendancy over death. Christians like Manson and Buck still felt the repulsive spectre of death when they were in its presence, but remained firm in their belief that Christ was completely in control of death, that He had mastered it, and that its sting and power had been nailed to the cross. Although unpleasant, death could not overwhelm those who trusted in the One who was both the Resurrection and the Life. Christian soldiers had frequent mental recourse to such passages of Scripture as they confronted the horrors of death during the war. Religious beliefs definitely had a major role in encouraging generals to engage in reckless activities that led to their deaths. The promise of eternal life, as well as the promise of earthly renown esteem, combined to encourage officers, and especially generals, to put themselves in danger in order to be the best general

⁷³Entry of February 6, 1865, Joseph Richard Manson Diary, 1864-1865, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

⁷⁴John 11: 25-26a.

possible, as well as to either consciously or unconsciously facilitate their own deaths. Of course, in conventional military terms, a dead general is no use at all to a war effort, and so their propensity to risk or suffer death was a major detriment to the Confederate war effort.

For devout Christians death was gruesome, but not overpowering.⁷⁵ Christ had conquered death, and through Him, so would they. J. William Jones, in his ministry to Confederate soldiers on the battlefield, claimed to have witnessed the effects of such humble trust in God. Jones claimed that on the faces of many stricken soldiers died resigned to their fate, trusting that they would rise again to eternal life one day.⁷⁶ Drew Gilpin Faust, in her book This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War, explains in detail that mid-nineteenth century Americans, both Northerners and Southerners, had a very detailed conception of what she calls the ‘Good Death.’ Faust writes that “letter writers understood the elements of the Good Death so explicitly that they could anticipate the information the bereaved would have sought had they been present at the hour of death: the deceased had been conscious of his fate, had demonstrated willingness to accept it, had shown signs of belief in God and in his own salvation, and had left messages and instructive exhortations for those who should have been at his side.”⁷⁷ While letter writers and chaplains like Jones likely invented details of the ‘Good Death’ for relatives, Faust argues that soldiers often chose to use their last ounce of strength to experience as good a death as possible. Although some modern readers may question whether or not it was possible to experience a ‘good death,’ Faust, in her award-winning study, eagerly accepts such statements as fact. She writes “Wounded or sick soldiers who knew they had not long to live were explicit about being prepared, articulating their acceptance of their fate.”⁷⁸ While I would not accept all of the evidence Faust presents at face value, her argument in this section of her book is convincing, that Americans were indeed convinced of the possibility and the desirability

⁷⁵McPherson, Cause and Comrades, 68.

⁷⁶Jones, Christ in the Camp, 16.

⁷⁷Faust, This Republic of Suffering, 17.

⁷⁸Faust, This Republic of Suffering, 20.

of a ‘Good Death.’ It is possible to introduce more nuance into Faust’s argument, and emphasize that individuals’ religious beliefs influenced the characteristics associated with a good death. For instance, some individuals wanted to die a martyr’s death, while J. E. B. Stuart wanted a quick and heroic death leading a cavalry charge. Stonewall Jackson professed to be ready to suffer any death that was consistent with the Will of God.

In other respects Faust’s study coincides with the findings of this dissertation. Faust notes differences between some soldiers who had to overcome ingrained resistance to killing other human beings,⁷⁹ and others who wanted to kill and enjoyed it.⁸⁰ For African Americans, killing whites served as an act of empowerment, and a means of liberating themselves not only politically and physically, but also mentally from slavery. If African Americans could kill white Southerners, then they showed themselves as the white man’s equal, and that they would never submit to slavery again.⁸¹

Irrespective of soldiers’ notions of a good death, they all had recourse to techniques that helped them endure the terrors of battle. Thoughts of their family name, of their personal honor, and of the men around them, charging beside them with the rebel yell thundering from their mouths all helped them charge into the ‘very jaws of death.’⁸² Soldiers with a steadfast faith in Jesus Christ also adopted ways of coping with the horrors of death. Ham Chamberlayne, after witnessing the deaths of hundreds of his fellow soldiers, confessed in October 1864 that “In these times we bury our dead, arise & eat & forget them - the mind, were it otherwise, would sink under accumulated grief.”⁸³ Although Chamberlayne, along with his fellow Christian officers and soldiers, trusted in God that the fallen would rise again to new life, the sheer number of men lost to their cause and their fellowship impelled him to ‘forget’ his former companions. Otherwise the combined sorrow of their tragic deaths would impede his performance in the war, and perhaps even undermine his commitment to a cause that necessitated the deaths of so

⁷⁹Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 32.

⁸⁰Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 36.

⁸¹Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 55.

⁸²Buck, *With the Old Confeds*, 62.

⁸³Chamberlayne, ed., *Ham Chamberlayne*, 277.

many young men. Robert E. Lee also felt the same horror over the sheer number of deaths as did Chamberlayne. Nancy and Dwight Anderson contend that the prolongation of the war led Lee to cling to the living,⁸⁴ and to let God look after the dead.

The fact that so many Confederate officers and generals were killed in battle had a noticeable effect on the morale of soldiers. Richard Holmes claims that “During the American Civil War, Confederate officers were profligate with their lives. No less than 55 per cent of Confederate generals were killed or wounded in battle: 6 of them fell in a single charge at Franklin in 1864.”⁸⁵ While in other wars, such as the First World War, the loss of superior officers caused a loss of morale, during the Civil War such valour being displayed by generals caused the men to feel more attached to their cause and to believe in the worthiness and the importance of their war effort. The expectation that generals would lead from the front was so profound that “Colonel George Grenfell told a foreigner that ‘the only way an officer could acquire influence over the Confederate soldier was by his personal conduct under fire...every atom of authority has to be purchased by a drop of blood.’”⁸⁶ While morale received a net gain from the willingness of generals to risk and sacrifice their lives for the cause, the Confederate war effort was seriously damaged by the loss of operational, tactical and strategic skills possessed by these deceased general officers. Generals who had obtained months and even years of combat experience could be suddenly killed, replaced by subordinates who were unprepared for the responsibilities of commanding brigades, divisions and even entire armies. One example of this phenomenon was when Richard Ewell was promoted to the command of the Second Corps in Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia upon Jackson’s death. Even though Ewell had demonstrated competence at lower levels of command, few historians would argue that Ewell was as competent in leading the Second Corps as was Stonewall Jackson. Thus while maintaining morale and establishing the respect of the rank-and-file for their commanders was important, religious beliefs and notions of valour

⁸⁴Nancy Scott Anderson and Dwight Anderson, The Generals: Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), 274.

⁸⁵Richard Holmes, Acts of War: The Behaviour of Men in Battle (New York: The Free Press, 1985), 349.

⁸⁶Holmes, Acts of War, 349.

combined to rob Confederate armies of many experienced generals because of their foolhardiness and willingness to court danger.

Despite the fact that during the Civil War disease caused at least twice as many deaths as combat, generals and soldiers frequently concerned themselves with battle-related casualties in their writings. Earlier conflicts, such as the Mexican War, witnessed a far higher proportion of deaths due to disease than to combat. In the war with Mexico, approximately seven American soldiers died of disease for every one man who died in battle or who was mortally wounded in combat. During the Civil War, the sheer killing power of rifles and artillery made a greater impression on its participants even though two Union or Confederate soldiers died of disease for every one killed as a result of combat.⁸⁷ Compared to twentieth century conflicts, such as World War I, the Korean Conflict, and the Vietnam War, the level of disease related deaths during the Civil War was incredibly high. James McPherson writes that “The Civil War was fought at the end of the medical Middle Ages.”⁸⁸ The war began shortly prior to the discovery and dissemination of key scientific theories by Louis Pasteur, Joseph Lister and other researchers in Europe. Civil War physicians did not have access to these new ideas, especially in bacteriology. Unfortunately for these doctors, “The medical revolution came too late to benefit them. They were not aware of the exact relationship between water and typhoid, between unsterilized instruments and infection, between mosquitos and malaria. The concept of asepsis and antisepsis in surgery had not been developed. Doctors could not conceive of antibiotics because they scarcely had a notion of biotics.”⁸⁹ This ignorance explained why a Civil War soldier was ten times more likely to die of disease than an American soldier in World War I.⁹⁰

One reason why generals and soldiers referred more frequently to death by combat than to death by disease resulted from the fact that most inhabitants of mid-

⁸⁷James M. McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 485, 487.

⁸⁸McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, 486.

⁸⁹McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, 486.

⁹⁰McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, 485.

nineteenth century America had considerable experience with common diseases such as yellow fever and malaria. While disease related deaths occurred frequently, thousands of men dying from bullet wounds and artillery shells in a single day, such as at Sharpsburg on September 17, 1862, did not. The day of the Battle of Sharpsburg witnessed the highest number of casualties in the Civil War. Hundreds of other engagements added to the death toll, and as bullet wounds and artillery shells facilitated the entry of hostile microorganisms into the body, and thus death by disease,⁹¹ death in combat retained a far greater hold on the imagination of Confederate generals and soldiers than did sick men lying in beds, slowly coughing up their life's blood.

Yet disease could still have profound effects on the human psyche. Ironically for James Longstreet, it was not disease occasioned by the war that changed his life, but the typical diseases that ravaged the civilian population. When scarlet fever claimed three of his beloved children within a single week, his outlook on life and death changed forever. A staff officer who knew Longstreet personally insisted that the loss of his children led him to "...become very serious and reserved and a consistent member of the Episcopal Church."⁹² As time passed he regained his sense of humour, but his willingness to engage in 'dissipation' had vanished. The horrors of death, so common in a time of war, were accented by the continuing deaths on the homefront that did not abate when a war began. Instead, the Civil War simply added an entirely new dimension to the suffering and misery of life in nineteenth-century America, forcing both Northerners and Southerners to confront the ultimate questions of life and death.

Some Southerners lived their lives in fear of death. Others did not. Of all the Christian soldiers and officers in the Confederacy, few feared death as little as Stonewall Jackson. The unflinching religious faith that dominated his life ensured that death held no

⁹¹It is sometimes difficult to classify whether or not a death occurred because of combat or through disease. Stonewall Jackson died of pneumonia eight days after three bullets entered his body. As well, one of his arms was removed a few hours after he was wounded. Thus it can be argued that Jackson died of disease, in that it was pneumonia that eventually killed him. However, it is almost certain he would not have contracted pneumonia, and been unable to resist the infection, had he not been shot three times on May 2, 1863.

⁹²Sorrel, Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer, 38.

horrors for him.⁹³ Jackson believed that he would survive the war, lead his troops to victory, and return home to Lexington to spend the rest of his life with his family. When it became clear on May 9 and 10, 1863 that he would not recover, and that his death was certain, Jackson submitted to the divine will. He said his final words and breathed no more. Even at the end of his life death had no power over him. Jackson never experienced the horror of death, but ironically his death caused others to feel such a horror. Many Confederates felt their spirits soar when the Valley Army defeated numerous Union armies, and then joined forces with the Army of Northern Virginia to win battles at Second Manassas, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. They had anticipated that Jackson, such a willing participant in Lee's aggressive offensives, would lead the Confederacy to its independence. His death shattered those dreams. Many, but not all Confederates, became worried and distraught over the future of their country after such a mighty leader had fallen. Heros Von Borcke mourned not only the loss of a great soldier but also that of a dear friend whom he greatly admired.

Confederates in the Shenandoah Valley, who were under the occupation of the Union Army, felt particular concern about their situation. With Jackson gone, who would rescue them from the power of the enemy?⁹⁴ Although one woman in the occupied valley thought that Confederates should be willing to accept God's will that Jackson belonged in heaven, she did not deny that "...it was a bitter day for the South when he [Jackson] left us."⁹⁵ John Esten Cooke substantiated the profound effect Jackson's death had upon the entire nation.⁹⁶

A few recognized Jackson's death as "...the harbinger of the downfall of the Confederacy."⁹⁷ Since this author wrote years after the war, it is uncertain whether he believed Jackson's death was such a portent at the time of his death or whether Opie

⁹³Gittings, Personal Recollections of Stonewall Jackson, 56.

⁹⁴McDonald, A Woman's Civil War, 147-148.

⁹⁵McDonald, A Woman's Civil War, 150.

⁹⁶Cooke, Life of Stonewall Jackson, 270-271.

⁹⁷Opie, A Rebel Cavalryman, 144.

came to this conclusion in the light of subsequent events. It is clear that some Confederates shared this viewpoint as early as May 1863. James Longstreet commented in his memoirs that after the death of his fellow corps commander, "...we seemed to face a future bereft of much of its hopefulness."⁹⁸ For these individuals, Jackson's demise did indeed generate a horror of death. Although not all Confederates had the opportunity to see Jackson's body lie in state in Richmond before his burial, the horror of death, and its significance as a reminder of the transitory nature of the world, challenged the South. Daniel Stowell argues that "Jackson's death was not simply another of war's misfortunes; it was a message from God."⁹⁹ God was telling Southerners that their preoccupation with earthly matters was overshadowing their preparation for the next life. Perhaps increased piety would regain God's favour. Perhaps God had already decreed the destruction of the Confederacy. Whatever the exact details of the divine message, it had an unmistakably negative tone. Jackson's death was perceived to have multiple religious meanings, all of which helped to focus believers' attention on the importance on both the war effort and the afterlife. Jackson's death at this point at the war helped prepare Southerners for their eventual defeat, as many believed that if God removed Jackson from the earth, then perhaps Southerners' true home was in heaven. This earth was merely a place of exile, a valley of tears, and thus this legendary Confederate general served as a beacon lighting Confederates to their true home.

On May 9, 1863, Dorsey Pender fervently prayed that his fellow general would recover from his wounds and lead the Second Corps into battle once more.¹⁰⁰ He knew the tactical and psychological importance of Jackson's recovery. When Jackson did not recover, a gloom pervaded the lives of many Confederates. Naturally, the men in the Army of Northern Virginia who had known and served with him on many battlefields felt

⁹⁸James Longstreet, From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs of the Civil War in America (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1895), 332.

⁹⁹Daniel W. Stowell, "Stonewall Jackson and the Providence of God," in Miller, Stout, and Wilson, eds., Religion and the American Civil War, 190.

¹⁰⁰Hassler, ed., General to his Lady, 236.

intense grief.¹⁰¹ However, given Jackson's remarkable success on the battlefield and his commitment to the Confederate cause, virtually the entire Southern population also mourned his loss.¹⁰² One young man even believed that "Perhaps it is not extravagant to say that as the tidings reached the people all over the South that their idol was dead, more sorrow was expressed in tears than was ever known in the history of the world at the loss of any one man."¹⁰³ Southerners were justified in expressing their extreme sadness over the loss of a man who had done so much for their cause and who had challenged them to reach beyond the fleeting pleasures of this world and embrace a life filled with the love of God. In keeping with Jackson's wishes, one soldier noted that while he had witnessed 'deep sorrow' in the Army of Northern Virginia, he had not "...seen any despondency."¹⁰⁴ Only a minority believed that Jackson's death was the death knell of the South's war effort. However, after the defeat at Gettysburg, and as the South lost more and more territory to the Union armies, many Southerners began to recognize Jackson's death as a pivotal moment in the defeat of the Confederacy. But clearly at the time of his death there were far more individuals who regarded the event as a sacrifice, and like Christ's sacrifice on the cross, believed his suffering and death had not occurred in vain.

Christianity was founded on the central belief that Jesus suffered, died and rose from the dead in order to save human beings from their sins. The blood that He shed on the cross served to cleanse them of all their past transgressions, and enabled them to enter into a new and loving relationship with God. Without this blood sacrifice, Christians would have remained perpetually alienated from God. Thus death was not exclusively an object of loathing for Christians, but rather a means and a method by which they were purified from sin. This conception of death as expiratory sacrifice permeated Southerners' understanding of the Civil War and its accompanying deaths. J. E. B. Stuart consoled a grieving mother that her son had not died in vain, and instead was a

¹⁰¹James Dabney McCabe, The Life of Thomas J. Jackson, by an Ex-Cadet (Richmond: James E. Goode, 1864), 190.

¹⁰²Daniel, Life of Stonewall Jackson, 271.

¹⁰³Hopkins, A Boy's View, 86-87.

¹⁰⁴Lane, ed., "Dear Mother," 241.

“...sacrifice upon the alter [sic] of Patriotism, and duty.”¹⁰⁵ Stuart informed the soldier’s mother that God had required the sacrifice, and that her son’s willingness to yield up his spirit so gracefully had left his family a name unsullied and a sacred memory. Evidently Stuart expected the mother to rejoice for her son, not to mourn his passing. By dying the young man had served both his nation and his God. His death was not a tragedy, but a cause for celebration.

Stuart did not offer his words as an idle attempt to console a distraught mother. He firmly believed them himself, and wrote to his wife in December 1861 “...that if I fall I leave in the sacrifice thus made a legacy more to be prized by my children & you Dearest than 10 years of longer life...”¹⁰⁶ In Stuart’s mind, not only did a soldier and his country stand to gain from his death, but also the man’s wife and children. Even though they would no longer have a husband and father on earth to provide for them, the glory and fame attached to their surname would more than compensate for such financial and material hardships. In Stuart’s conception of death as sacrifice, his earthly and heavenly ambitions were totally intermixed, as his phrase ‘sacrifice on the altar of Patriotism’ reveals. A soldier’s death served God, in that it offered a Christian the chance to exhibit virtues such as faith and fortitude. It also served his country by demonstrating that he was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to win his country’s freedom. Devotion to country and to God both necessitated the many blood sacrifices offered by Stuart’s soldiers in the war, and when his turn came to die in 1864, he resigned himself to that same ‘altar of patriotism.’ All he needed to know was that he had done his duty to his country, and when President Davis informed him that he had, he knew the time had come to offer himself as a sacrifice, just as so many of his officers and men had done over the past three years. Although Stuart expressed a wish that he could speak to his wife once more before his death, he resigned himself to God’s will.¹⁰⁷ Stuart’s wife was delayed, and before she

¹⁰⁵Letter of J. E. B. Stuart to “Madam,” [name unknown], November 29, [1861?], Stuart Papers, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, The Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁰⁶Duncan, ed., Letters of J. E. B. Stuart, 23.

¹⁰⁷Pollard, Lee and his Lieutenants, 437-438; McClellan, I Rode with Jeb Stuart, 417.

could arrive the dashing cavalryman departed for his final journey, his spirit riding off into the presence of God.

In December 1861, Stuart had reassured his wife that he had “...no idea of sacrificing myself rashly...”¹⁰⁸ At that time he also disapproved of the behaviour of some subordinates who unnecessarily exposed themselves to enemy fire. He thought such actions tempted Providence.¹⁰⁹ By mid-1864 his own eagerness to ascend the sacrificial altar had increased markedly. On the day he received his fatal wounds, Stuart had indeed ‘rashly’ exposed himself to enemy fire, and was shot at for some time before he was finally struck down.¹¹⁰ H. B. McClellan insisted that even when Stuart was repeatedly warned by Confederate infantry officers to stop making himself such an inviting target, he paid them no heed, and continued to lead his troops with an even more blatant disregard of danger.¹¹¹ Even though McClellan’s testimony was published years after in a memoir, his testimony seems credible because it is substantiated by numerous other witnesses and draws upon memories that McClellan, or any soldier, likely would be able to recall years later. While being carried from the field of battle, Stuart called out to those he saw fleeing the action. He exhorted them to do their duty, just as he had done his, and the country would be safe. He also cried out that ““I had rather die than be whipped...””¹¹² In the end, no matter how greatly the Yankee forces outnumbered Stuart’s troops (and at Yellow Tavern the Confederate cavalry were greatly outnumbered), he refused to contemplate surrender. The opportunity to offer himself as a sacrifice was fortuitous for Stuart, and it is even possible that his unusually reckless behaviour was an unconscious way of making that sacrifice possible. Perhaps by offering himself to God, Stuart hoped to further the cause of the Confederacy by being both a noble example to other soldiers, and an acceptable sacrifice to God.

¹⁰⁸Duncan, ed., “Letters of J. E. B. Stuart,” 23.

¹⁰⁹Official Records, ser. 1, vol. 51/1, sec. 107, 50.

¹¹⁰By a private of the Sixth Virginia Cavalry, “The Death of General J. E. B. Stuart,” in Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, IV: 194; McClellan, I Rode with Jeb Stuart, 409.

¹¹¹McClellan, I Rode with Jeb Stuart, 409.

¹¹²Thomas, Bold Dragoon, 293.

Even those soldiers who knew the cause was lost still adhered to the concept of death as an advantageous sacrifice. General Robert F. Hoke, in addressing his men upon their surrender to the Union government during the spring of 1865, instructed them to teach their children that the proudest day of their army career was that on which they entered the service. On that day, Hoke believed they had all entered "...a holy brotherhood whose ties are now sealed by the blood of your compatriots who have fallen..."¹¹³ Even though the South had lost the war and the thousands of blood sacrifices offered to God had not convinced Him to grant them victory, such sacrifices still had meaning. Instead they served to bind all Confederate soldiers together, both the living and the dead, into a 'holy brotherhood' that was sacred and everlasting. Those who survived had a duty to educate generations not yet born about how they had fought, suffered and died for the cause of Southern independence. Even though their country was lost, their sacrifices lived on in the memory of the South, and for Hoke, that was enough to justify all the blood that had been shed. The Christian imagery of humans serving as willing blood sacrifices was used by generals to justify the death of their soldiers in battle. Thus Christianity was used as a rationalization to excuse the loss of soldiers, generals, battles and even the war itself, because these 'sacrifices' were claimed to be pleasing to Almighty God. Whether one believes this state of affairs actually to be the case depends on one's theological understanding of blood sacrifice and the existence of God. What all need to acknowledge is that nineteenth century generals were eager to use religion to justify their deaths and the deaths of their men.

The association between death and blood sacrifice became especially clear for three generals in the wake of Leonidas Polk's death. J. E. Johnston, who was present at his subordinate's passing, considered Polk's death a worthy sacrifice. He exhorted his troops in a general order issued on June 14, 1864, that the bishop-general had "...neither lived nor died in vain. His example is before you - his mantle rests with you."¹¹⁴ Polk's

¹¹³General Hoke's Farewell Address to his Division, Robert F. Hoke Papers, 1864-1896, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina.

¹¹⁴General Field Order No.2, June 14, 1864, issued by J. E. Johnston, Gale and Polk Family Papers, 1815-1895, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

example as a soldier and a Christian held particular importance for Johnston as the bishop had just baptized him a few weeks before dying. In addition, Johnston received a religious tract that Polk had been carrying on his person at the time of his death. This pamphlet, which Polk had intended to give to Johnston, provided the neophyte Christian with useful religious instruction designed to guide the convert in his relationship with Christ. Perhaps the most edifying part of the pamphlet was not its written content, but instead the substance that covered it. The substance was Polk's blood. In a powerfully symbolic act, the pamphlet, along with two others, had not been thrown away or buried with the general, but instead the pamphlets were sent to their intended recipients upon their discovery on the general's body. This final reminder of his subordinate and friend clearly touched Johnston and reminded him of the blood-sacrifice that he had personally accepted in baptism just a short time before. Johnston replied to the major who sent him the 'relic' by writing that he would always treasure such an appropriate 'souvenir' of his friend.¹¹⁵

Both John Hood and William Hardee each received a pamphlet saturated with Polk's blood.¹¹⁶ As Hardee had also been present with Polk and Johnston on the hilltop where Polk died,¹¹⁷ the reception of such a graphic reminder of the costs of the war surely forced him to consider increasing his devotion to both God and his country. Just as he had received baptism from Polk a few weeks earlier, this pamphlet now reminded him of the cost of serving in the army and the blood sacrifice that God might call upon him to make in the near future. Even though many later historians did not consider Polk an excellent commander, Thomas Connelly identifies him as the Army of Tennessee's most cherished general, and labels his death as a definite loss "...of morale and experience."¹¹⁸ Private William Nugent assessed Polk's death in a similar manner. However, he qualified his

¹¹⁵Polk, Leonidas Polk, 387.

¹¹⁶Polk had four of these pamphlets in total with him when he died. One was for himself, and the other three were for his fellow generals.

¹¹⁷Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, Jr., General William J. Hardee: Old Reliable (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), 210.

¹¹⁸Thomas Lawrence Connelly, Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 358.

remarks about the tragedy by reassuring his wife that “Still some new man always rises to the surface ready to step in a fallen man’s shoes. Such is war!”¹¹⁹ Polk’s departure proved detrimental to the Southern cause in one way. In losing Polk the South lost an experienced leader, but many believed that it also gained an advocate in heaven, and Polk’s willingness to die in the service of his country was an example for all those who remained. With Nugent’s confidence that ‘some new man’ would arise to replace Polk, surely the bishop-general’s transition from earth to heaven could be considered a net gain for the Confederacy.

In addition to the notion of death as sacrifice many Southerners interpreted the death of soldiers as martyrdom. In particular some believed that the Union artillery had deliberately targeted General Polk, knowing that he was a bishop, and therefore his death constituted martyrdom.¹²⁰ Gardiner Shattuck explains that “The Civil War provided a channel of grace for America, and in death soldiers became bearers of that grace. The willingness to fight and die was seen as an impulse worthy of a Christian martyr; it brought redemption to both the soldier and the nation for which he fought.”¹²¹ Shattuck does not say that soldiers were martyrs, but rather that their ‘willingness to fight and die’ was ‘an impulse worthy of a Christian martyr.’ Their willingness to die certainly resembled that of martyrs, but their willingness to fight did not. Traditionally martyrs (the most famous of which suffered in the Roman persecutions that occurred from the beginning of Christianity until the accession of Constantine) did not fight their persecutors, but instead offered themselves willingly unto death. Some martyrs awaited death so earnestly that they leapt into the flames prepared for them, or else encouraged their executioners to hurry in performing their task. Such martyrs were so convinced that the Christian religion was true that they eagerly longed for death. Although Christianity forbade suicide, Christian theology attested that dying as a martyr guaranteed instant access to heaven, because by shedding one’s blood he or she obtained both forgiveness

¹¹⁹Nugent, *My Dear Nellie*, 183.

¹²⁰Martyrdom refers to the willing suffering and/or death of a Christian for his/her faith. Martyr comes from a Greek word meaning ‘witness.’ By dying a Christian bears supreme testimony to their faith in Jesus Christ and His power to raise him or her from the dead.

¹²¹Shattuck, *Shield and Hiding Place*, 15.

and complete absolution of sins, with no need to suffer in Purgatory to reach spiritual perfection.¹²² Martyrs also provided a great service to their fellow human beings, since by dying they bore supreme witness to Almighty God, and encouraged others to embrace Christianity, even if it cost such new converts their lives. Numerous soldiers and jailors who encountered such willing witnesses for Christ perceived the truth of their beliefs and consequently embraced the faith they had formerly persecuted.

Soldiers who died serving the Confederacy, or the deceased soldiers of any nation that engaged in warfare, did not automatically qualify as Christian martyrs. Martyrs needed to die in witness to Christ, not because they opposed the subjugation of their homeland by the Union government. If the United States had banned all churches, and forbidden the practice of Christianity, stating that all who did not renounce that religion would be put to death, then dead Confederate soldiers would indeed have a valid claim to martyrdom. However, the Union government merely insisted that the Southern states cease their armed resistance of federal officials and that Confederates take an oath of allegiance to the United States. They did not attempt to abolish Christianity as a whole or even individual denominations. Thus, according to the traditional theology of all Christian denominations, soldiers who died serving their country could not be accurately considered martyrs. Such an identification was heretical and not in accord with the Gospel.

Nevertheless, many Southerners, both lay and clerical, came to espouse the view that dead soldiers were indeed martyrs. Steven Woodworth identifies this phenomenon in both Northern and Southern sources, and asserts that some individuals' belief in the Civil War as a holy war had led them, since the virtual beginning of the conflict, to refer to deceased soldiers as martyrs.¹²³ Eugene Genovese correctly identifies the source of many

¹²²Early Christians, as well as modern Roman Catholics and some Protestant Christians, such as C. S. Lewis, believed in an intermediary state between earth and heaven called Purgatory. Sinners went to this place to be purified of their remaining imperfections before they could be admitted into heaven. These individuals had already received forgiveness of their sins, and were sure to go to heaven once they had reached perfection. However, they had not performed enough penance on earth in order to purge (hence the word Purgatory) themselves of their tendency to commit sin. Martyrs, by their supreme self-sacrifice, had proven themselves worthy in Christ and were ready to live totally for God, not merely for their own selfish pleasures.

¹²³Woodworth, While God is Marching On, 141-142.

of these mistaken references to dead soldiers as martyrs. Many clergymen "...wishing to console the bereaved, slipped into the blasphemy of speaking of the Confederate dead as martyrs for Christ."¹²⁴ Because the Confederacy was only an earthly country, it could not offer bereaved families much condolence upon the death of their loved ones. Once a soldier died, he ceased being a Confederate, and therefore the country could do little to help him, other than to grant his body a decent burial, preserve his memory and assist his family. Instead, the dead soldier needed the mercies of God to forgive him his sins and admit him into the joys of Paradise. However, as Southerners well knew, only those who had faith in Jesus Christ would be saved. Those who renounced or ignored Christ were damned to hell. Rather than consider that men who had sacrificed so much for their country could endure the fires of hell, some sought to proclaim that all dead Confederate soldiers were martyrs, and therefore would certainly be admitted into heaven.¹²⁵ One man, trying to console his family about the death of a young relative, informed them that "His death was that of a willing, glorious martyr..."¹²⁶ Instead of believing that their beloved soldiers faced cold graves and uncertain prospects for salvation, the dead could be considered martyrs, reigning with Christ in glory. Some Confederates reasoned that these soldiers died for Him, and thus their reward in Heaven would be exceedingly great. Thus, those who spoke of the dead soldiers as martyrs sought to change posthumously their reason for fighting. In this reconstruction of events, the soldiers fought to preserve the Christian faith in addition to their country's independence. Consequently, the nature of their reward was not earthly, but heavenly. By proclaiming that the dead were martyrs, erring clergymen at once announced the holiness of the Southern cause, and diminished the risk that these men's sacrifice might be offered in vain, if the Confederacy did not achieve its independence. In light of these considerations, the practice of many preachers who made reference to the Confederate dead as martyrs in their sermons may be understood, if not condoned.

¹²⁴Genovese, Consuming Fire, 66.

¹²⁵The Confederate veteran who cried "God will never send an old Confederate soldier to hell!" demonstrated this belief. Morgan, Personal Reminiscences, 13-14.

¹²⁶Swank, Confederate Letters and Diaries, 63.

While Stonewall Jackson did not die as a martyr, Confederate soldiers and civilians still interpreted his death as both a witness to the holiness of the Southern cause and an example to others of the righteousness and the nobility of the Christian faith. William Nelson Pendleton felt gratitude, not sadness, over Jackson's death. He regarded the passing of his friend as a "...triumphant departure."¹²⁷ Pendleton was grateful for Jackson's friendship and for his inspiring Christian example, both in how he lived and in how he died. He knew that he was not alone in finding the general's death edifying, and that his example "...will be mighty in animating alike commanders and men...."¹²⁸ Pendleton's prediction that Jackson's example would animate both commanders and men proved accurate. Many of Jackson's former cadets at the Virginia Military Institute joined the army immediately following his death, believing that they owed their country the same service their former professor had provided.¹²⁹ Artillery officer Ham Chamberlayne felt that Jackson's death was a significant loss to the Confederacy, but was grateful for the services he had rendered in 1862 and 1863, as Chamberlayne commented that "...we can spare him better now than we could have done before the battle of Kernstown."¹³⁰ Instead of looking into the future and believing that victory would be impossible without Jackson's leadership, Chamberlayne looked to the past, recognizing and cherishing all that the beloved general had done for his country. Numerous Confederate generals believed that their death would strengthen the war effort, and, in the case of Stonewall Jackson, his death prompted numerous enlistments and fortified the remaining soldiers for the cause. He proved willing to die for his country, and the news of his death encouraged others to fight on. Thus although his death was a severe blow in terms of command ability and experience, his death temporarily increased morale in the ranks.

¹²⁷Letter of William Nelson Pendleton to his wife, May 14, 1863, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

¹²⁸Lee, Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, 272.

¹²⁹Wise, Military History of the Virginia Military Institute, 233.

¹³⁰Chamberlayne, ed., Ham Chamberlayne, 181.

On May 12, 1863, the inhabitants of Richmond, Virginia had a special opportunity to recognize and pay tribute to their fallen general. In honour of Jackson and to permit those who wished to pay their final respects to him at the Capitol building where his body lay in state, the military departments and businesses closed their doors for most of the day. John Jones witnessed the profound grief present in everyone he met. Many considered the Battle of Chancellorsville a calamity because of Jackson's death. General Josiah Gorgas, knowing the details of how many Yankee soldiers had been killed, wounded, and captured, believed that Jackson's demise "...would more than counterbalance a victory ten times as decisive."¹³¹ Yet Jones had not lost hope that the Army of Northern Virginia would still prove a mighty host in battle. He commented that "Yet there are other Jacksons in the army, who will win victories - no one doubts it."¹³² Gorgas too continued to watch the movements of the Confederate armies. The Confederate cause had suffered a blow when Jackson departed, but other commanders remained who might yet prove worthy successors.

The example Jackson left his fellow generals did not always prove to be positive. At times, the generals who remained after his death attempted to emulate his tactics, but since their circumstances differed and they did not possess the same abilities as Jackson, their operations were not always successful. In fact, Charles Royster argues that "Emulation of Jackson's methods after his death hurt the Confederates more than it helped."¹³³ While it is difficult to determine when a commander explicitly emulated Jackson's example in an engagement, rather than simply employing his own ideas, it is certain that applying Jackson's strategies to different situations was fraught with risk, as Jackson himself might have created novel methods of engaging the enemy in those circumstances. Nonetheless, such emulation illustrates the significant impact Jackson had upon Confederate armies, particularly the Army of Northern Virginia, after his death.

Jackson's example inspired civilians as well as military personnel. Even before his death Confederate civilians like Cornelia McDonald believed that he was a faithful

¹³¹Vandiver, ed., Civil War Diary of General Josiah Gorgas, 39.

¹³²Jones, A Rebel War Clerk's Diary, 207.

¹³³Royster, Destructive War, 76.

Christian, "...ready to meet his God; his lamp is burning, and he waits for the bridegroom."¹³⁴ When Jackson died, McDonald as well as others knew that Jackson had kept his lamp burning, and that consequently God welcomed him into the Heavenly Kingdom. Jackson's good example would help inspire others to assume his place in leading the different units of the Army of Northern Virginia. One Southerner lamented Jackson's loss but believed there were others left to meet the Yankees in battle.¹³⁵ Ann Jones, a member of a family who resided in the Shenandoah Valley, accepted Jackson's death as a reminder from God that they must not trust in men exclusively, making them mere idols, but instead look to their Creator as the true origin of their mighty works. She believed that Jackson had fulfilled his mission, both in its military and in its spiritual dimensions, since his piety caused others to look on him as an exemplar of Christian faith and a model of Christian morality in the military.¹³⁶

Another civilian, Lucy Buck, also experienced profound sorrow when she learned of Jackson's death. At first she refused to believe the reports, as false rumours often circulated among the populace.¹³⁷ Two days later on May 15, 1863, she finally allowed herself to admit the truth when she read the same details in the newspapers. The terrible news stunned and disheartened her as well as her neighbours.¹³⁸ However, after a month had passed, her hope revived. On June 15 she wrote that "I guess they find that although our Jackson is ascended his mantle has fallen on a man most worthy to be his

¹³⁴McDonald, A Woman's Civil War, 90. McDonald referred to the parable where Jesus described the activities of five foolish virgins and five wise virgins. The wise virgins had an ample supply of oil with them to keep their lamps trimmed and burning, while the five foolish virgins did not, and consequently missed the bridegroom when he arrived. They were shut out of the wedding feast, while the five wise virgins entered the feast. Jesus thus instructed His followers to be ready for His second coming. Matthew 25: 1-13.

¹³⁵[Catherine Cooper Hopley], "Stonewall Jackson." Late General of the Confederate States Army: A Biographical Sketch, and an Outline of his Virginian Campaigns (London: Chapman and Hall, 1863), vii.

¹³⁶Colt, Defend the Valley, 249, 57.

¹³⁷An example of such rumours was the one that circulated on September 21, 1862 in Richmond that reported "Jackson and Longstreet killed and 40,000 of our Army killed and captured!" Vandiver, ed., Civil War Diary of General Josiah Gorgas, 16.

¹³⁸Buck, ed., Sad Earth, Sweet Heaven, 185.

successor.”¹³⁹ The Fleet family of Virginia felt the same emotions about Jackson’s departure as Lucy Buck but trusted that God would “...raise up another Jackson in his place.”¹⁴⁰ Even though most Southerners greatly missed Jackson, Biblical precedent reassured them that God had the power to raise up worthy successors to continue his work on earth.

In addition to being an inspiring example and a moral lesson, Major-General S. G. French believed Jackson’s death was also an efficacious blood sacrifice. French maintained that “Providence denied the enemy to make the sacrificial offering that was that day required to be made as the price of victory.”¹⁴¹ This Confederate officer believed that God decreed that the honor of executing Jackson should fall not to the Yankees, but to Jackson’s own Confederate soldiers. Jackson, as a sacrificial victim, needed to die in order to obtain the victory of Chancellorsville. In French’s theology, the Blessed Trinity became a Deity that only granted victory if a satisfactory offering, a high-ranking and pious general, for example, was offered to appease Its anger or to feed Its hunger for human flesh. In the mind of this officer, if Jackson had not died, then the Battle of Chancellorsville would have been a Union victory, with perhaps calamitous results for the Army of Northern Virginia. By dying, Jackson saved his army and country from destruction, just as Christ saved sinners by His death on the cross. Although such an explicit understanding of Jackson’s death as a necessary sacrifice for the victory at

¹³⁹Buck, ed., Sad Earth, Sweet Heaven, 197. Buck and many other Confederates later changed their estimation of the worthiness of Jackson’s successor, Richard Ewell, when he did not act with the audacity characteristic of his predecessor at the battle of Gettysburg.

¹⁴⁰Betsy Fleet and John D. P. Fuller, eds., Green Mount: A Virginia Plantation Family during the Civil War: Being the Journal of Benjamin Robert Fleet and Letters of his Family (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1962), 229. Jackson was an incredible asset for the Southern cause just as Elijah had been for the nation of Israel. According to the Second Book of Kings (2 Kings 2: 1-5), when Elijah entered into heaven, his disciple Elisha received a double portion of his spirit in order to carry on Elijah’s work of cleansing the kingdom of Israel of sin and of doing God’s work.

¹⁴¹S. G. French, “Jackson, ‘The Hero,’” in Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 568. It is relevant to note that this author also believed that Jackson went to ‘Valhalla’ where he may have encountered ‘the shades of Havelock’ and ‘Chinese Gordon,’ all of whom were ‘kindred spirits.’ It is possible that French was merely using a metaphor for the afterlife, and did not actually believe in the existence of the ‘Valhalla’ of Norse mythology where great warriors gather to eat, drink and celebrate their victories upon the earth.

Chancellorsville was not universal among Confederates, French's theory demonstrates the connection in Southern minds between death and blood sacrifice. Theology had a strong influence on how the death of generals, as well as soldiers and civilians, was perceived by the majority of Southerners. While these theological reflections shared some common features, each reflection embodied the individual's understanding of his or her relationship with God and the Divine Nature. For instance, French's perception that Stonewall Jackson's death was actually necessary to achieve the Confederate victory at Chancellorsville, says much about his perception of God's Personality.

Thus, death could be viewed as inevitable, horrifying, or a useful example and sacrifice to God. However, some individuals, prompted by their strong faith in the resurrection, believed that death was desirable in and of itself. By dying, they could forsake the world and its transitory pleasures, and enter the eternal kingdom of God. These people passionately maintained that in Heaven they would be reunited with their loved ones, and would see Christ as He is. No sorrow, tears, or mourning occurred there. Instead infinite joy and love supplanted everything. Paul the apostle revealed that even faith and hope could not be found there, for people in Heaven no longer needed to believe in God or hope for salvation. Instead, God was present before their eyes, and all their hopes were realized. They did not believe in God: they knew Him and saw Him face to face. They did not hope for salvation: they possessed it. Only charity remained the same; only it had increased from a small amount to a virtue of infinite power in each child of God. In short, these Christians felt as Paul did, that to die was gain. Only by taking into consideration such metaphysical beliefs can one understand numerous Confederate generals' and soldiers' desire for death. By wanting to die, they were not running away from the world, as does a person when they commit suicide. Instead, they were running to something, or rather, to Someone. They believed that God waited for them with open arms and a loving embrace; all they had to do was to travel through the door of death, and they were home.

Robert E. Lee yearned to be reunited with his loved ones in Heaven as early as 1853. In the spring of that year, the death of his mother-in-law led him to consider his eventual death as advantageous, since it would allow him to be with her and other

relatives who had died before him.¹⁴² Three years later, when his youngest sister, Mildred, died, Lee's grief diminished as he prayed in the hope that "...her life has but just begun...."¹⁴³ Lee trusted that God had chosen the perfect time to welcome Mildred into His heavenly kingdom, and her departure into bliss reminded Lee and his family that they needed to live pure and blameless lives in order to join her when they died.

In 1857, while serving with the Second Cavalry regiment in Texas, Lee expressed his belief that an infant's death at only twelve months old was a merciful event for both the child and the parents. The child's death preserved the little one from sin, and provided the parents with a powerful incentive to do God's will, and thus ensure their own entry into heaven and their reunion with their beautiful baby boy. Lee apparently did not inform the grieving sergeant of his views at that particular time because of the man's distraught state. Lee suffered anguish over having to read the funeral service and witness the father's weeping. He wanted to be faithful to his religious beliefs by avoiding excessive mourning rituals which called into question the grieving individual's belief in the resurrection of the dead.¹⁴⁴ As Paul said, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."¹⁴⁵ Lee fervently believed that those who slept in Christ would attain eternal life.

At the dawn of the Civil War, when Lee began to be surrounded by death, he continued to believe in the desirability of leaving this world and being with Christ. After the death of his beloved grandson Lee wrote to his wife that although he was grieving, he felt they should rejoice because of the child's "...great gain by his merciful transition from earth to heaven...."¹⁴⁶ He believed so strongly in the benefits of death that he wrote to his daughter later that same year, counselling her that they should rejoice at the death

¹⁴²Anderson and Anderson, The Generals, 116.

¹⁴³Lee, General Lee, 65.

¹⁴⁴Jones, Life and Letters of Lee, 84.

¹⁴⁵I Thessalonians 4: 13.

¹⁴⁶Letter of Robert E. Lee to his wife, June 10, 1862, Lee Family Papers, 1810-1894, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia; Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 189.

of her daughter (Lee's granddaughter), as she had been received into the loving arms of her Creator.¹⁴⁷ One Confederate woman agreed with Lee's opinions about the benefits of death, and reassured her husband that their two dead children were better off in heaven. In addition, she believed "...it was for our good that they were taken, to draw us nearer to our blessed Savior..."¹⁴⁸ Whether Mr. Armstrong agreed with his wife's reasoning is unknown. Nevertheless both she and Lee firmly believed that at least some children, for their own sake and that of their parents, belonged not on earth, but in the presence of God.

When Lee's daughter-in-law Charlotte died in December 1863, Lee felt that her death was beneficial, and that it was a "...glorious thought...that she has joined her little cherubs [her two dead children] and our angel Annie [his daughter] in heaven!"¹⁴⁹ Even though his son had lost his wife and both of his children, and was being held as a prisoner of war, Lee still ascribed such events to the mercy of God, and praised Him for welcoming his loved ones into heaven. After so much death had occurred in Lee's family, his army, and the Confederacy as a whole, his desire to join the departed grew ever stronger. He wrote that "Thus is link by link of the strong chain broken that binds us to earth, and smoothes our passage to another world. Oh, that we may be united in that haven of rest, where trouble and sorrow never enter, to join in an everlasting chorus of praise and glory to our Lord and Saviour!"¹⁵⁰ As more and more people died, Lee's desire for death grew in intensity, as well as his willingness to inform others of the benefits of this transition.

¹⁴⁷Letter of Robert E. Lee to his daughter Mildred, November 10, 1862, Lee Family Papers, 1810-1894, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁴⁸Letter of Mrs. Armstrong to Mr. Armstrong, November 1, 1861, James Trooper Armstrong Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

¹⁴⁹Lee, General Lee, 309. Lee had previously written his wife that when one of his son's (G. W. C. Lee) children had died that child was "...a bright angel in Heaven, free from the pains & sorrows of this world. I feel much for the father & mother but hope they will bear their loss as Christians." Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 364.

¹⁵⁰Lee, General Lee, 309.

Lee even felt willing to give the same advice to those outside his immediate family circle. When Wade Hampton's son died in battle, Lee sympathized with his friend, but still dared to ask the grieving father to look at the advantages of the young man's death. He insisted that Hampton "...think of the great gain to him [Hampton's dead son], how changed his condition, how bright his future....He is now safe from all harm + all evil, + nobly died in the defence of the rights of his country."¹⁵¹ Other messages received by the Hampton family during the same time period did not echo Lee's beliefs. Both Joseph E. Johnston and Heros von Borcke, one of Stuart's aides, offered their deepest sympathies to the grieving parents, but absent from their letters was any mention of what Lee called 'the great gain' to Hampton's dead son.¹⁵² Evidently Johnston and von Borcke saw little or no gain in the death of a man so young, and although they considered death in defence of one's country a noble sacrifice, they would have preferred if the young man had survived and continued to assist the Confederacy in its bid for independence. Although Lee's avid appreciation for the state of death was not unique, few individuals, either in the army or the civilian population, matched the depth of his sentiment. Lee's comments about the benefits of death for children should be also placed in the social parameters of nineteenth century life, when such sentiments would be expressed to console the grieving parents.

The depth of Lee's belief in the desirability of death is evident from his willingness to inform mothers and fathers, grieving the recent loss of their children, that he felt joy over their children's deaths. He also told them that he felt sorrow for their loss, but made no apology when he thought even infants were better off dead than alive. Although he deeply cared for others and for their feelings, his willingness to make such potentially provocative comments resulted from his absolute conviction in the existence of heaven and the resurrection of the dead. Even though the bodies of their loved ones were indeed corpses rotting in their graves, Lee believed that when the trumpet sounded

¹⁵¹Letter of Robert E. Lee to Wade Hampton, October 29, 1864, Hampton Family Papers, 1862, 1864, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁵²Letter of J. E. Johnston to Wade Hampton, October [?] 31, 1864, Hampton Family Papers, 1862, 1864, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia; Letter of Heros von Borcke to Wade Hampton, November 6, 1864, Hampton Family Papers, 1862, 1864, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

on Judgement Day, the bodies would rise, restored not just to life, but to a new life. The souls of the dead, previously residing in heaven, would be reunited with resurrected bodies, and in this state would journey to heaven to live there forevermore. Lee did not rejoice in bloodshed or misery, but adhered firmly to the Apostle's and Nicene Creeds. The resurrection of the dead was not just a possibility, but an absolute certainty. Such certainty in the resurrection led him to cherish the advantages of death, because Christian theology clearly taught that once someone died in a state of grace, they went to heaven, and were no longer at risk of going to hell or suffering damnation.

Lee also began to envy the dead the peace and rest they enjoyed, as he found his duties in the Civil War to be unending and tiresome. When informed of an infant's death in November 1861, Lee commented to his daughter Mildred that the dead child was a "Happy little creature to be spared the evil of this world."¹⁵³ Not only did death usher one into the joys of heaven, but it also insulated the dead from the sorrows and misery of their former life. Previously Lee had focused on the advantages of heaven, but after the commencement of the Civil War, he increased his attention to the fact that death rescued an individual from earthly cares. Lee recognized the existence of a fundamental separation between the living and the dead, and knew that only death could remove this barrier.¹⁵⁴ Even before the Civil War, and especially during it, Lee was ready to die when God so commanded.

Some twentieth century historians are confused by Lee's religious conception of death. Two such authors write that Lee's "...simple Christian faith in hopes for a more satisfying life after death was transformed into a nearly morbid sense of otherworldness, that man's lot on earth was doomed to unhappiness."¹⁵⁵ The authors then refer to Lee's letter to his wife in 1857, about the deceased child who was better off in heaven. In considering Lee's religious opinions, the authors are indeed correct when they state that Lee believed that 'man's lot on earth was doomed to unhappiness.' Lee recognized the existence of sin and evil in this world, and since a faithful Christian could not tolerate or

¹⁵³Dowdey, ed., Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee, 86.

¹⁵⁴Freeman, R. E. Lee, I: 368.

¹⁵⁵Connelly and Bellows, God and General Longstreet, 103.

welcome such influences, every Christian needed to feel such ‘unhappiness,’ and realize that they did not belong to this world, but to the world to come.¹⁵⁶

Lee ardently desired to receive his call into his heavenly home. Indeed, Lee seriously considered facilitating his own death on April 9, 1865, several hours before his appointment with Ulysses Grant, during which he would surrender himself and the Army of Northern Virginia to the Union authorities. One week earlier, A. P. Hill had died in battle. When Lee considered his corps commander’s fate on that Palm Sunday morning, he wished he could join Hill. Lee expressed this wish in the words, “‘How easily I could be rid of this, and be at rest. I have only to ride along the line and all will be over...’”¹⁵⁷ By riding his horse Traveller in full view of Union sharpshooters Lee would be shot at, and if he remained in their sights long enough, eventually one of their bullets would kill him. While Lee did not fear death, and had even attempted to lead some Texan troops into battle in 1864, himself at the front of their advance, never before had he seriously considered offering himself intentionally as a target for enemy fire. In Lee’s mind, and in Christian theology, such a death was suicide. Lee knew his duty, and he knew that it was not God’s will that he die on a suicidal ride, and so he swallowed his pride, and went to the meeting with Grant. Lee desired a death similar to Stonewall Jackson’s, J. E. B. Stuart’s, and A. P. Hill’s. But God did not grant him one, and so he rode off a few days after the surrender to rejoin his family in Richmond and to live, somehow, until the heavens opened and welcomed him home.

Lee’s acknowledgement that his Army of Northern Army was conquered was not the only instance in which a Confederate reflected on the desirability of death. Some commentators have suggested that A. S. Johnston wanted to die at the Battle of Shiloh. Gideon Pillow indicated that Johnston informed him the night before the battle that he would either win the battle or else die upon the field. Historian Shelby Foote in particular maintained that Johnston “‘...behaved like a man in search of death.’”¹⁵⁸ Charles Roland cites these views in his biography of Johnston, but does not agree with them, and argues

¹⁵⁶John 15: 19; John 17: 16.

¹⁵⁷Fishwick, Lee after the War, 15.

¹⁵⁸Roland, Albert Sidney Johnston, 343.

that “...neither his [Johnston’s] mood nor the situation indicated suicide.”¹⁵⁹ Whether or not Johnston intended to die on that April afternoon he did not hesitate to court death in order to achieve victory. For many Confederate generals, death was not something to be feared. Instead, as D. H. Hill believed, God would take care of each of them, in death or in life, in the hazards of battle or in the safety of their own homes.¹⁶⁰ When Leonidas Polk died, even his son, at least in retrospect, seemed to accept the death of his father as something wonderful and sacred. William Polk wrote that as his father took his final look at the enemy position from the hilltop, “...a cannon-shot crashed through his breast, and opening a wide door, let free that indomitable spirit.”¹⁶¹ Polk’s spirit could then soar to heaven. Although his fellow generals and his soldiers deeply regretted his departure, Polk had girded himself spiritually for the journey months earlier.

Some pious Confederates considered the death of their own children with feelings of ambivalence. As William Nelson Pendleton pondered the fate of his son Sandie, he strove to come to terms with the contradictory feelings he experienced. He knew that his son had sustained terrible injuries, and that his life hovered on the brink of death. In a letter to his wife and surviving children, Pendleton wrote that ““If it be the Lord’s will to take him, never will my heart cease to feel the sorrow that on earth I shall see him no more, but not then for an instant would I wish him back....””¹⁶² He knew that God’s plan was infinitely more complicated than mere mortals could understand. If God wanted his son to die, then Pendleton would accede to that verdict, praising God for the time that he had been granted with the boy, and for the ‘priceless blessing’ that was his son. Pendleton did not desire death for Sandie, but if it was God’s will, then Pendleton still desired that God’s will be done.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹Roland, Albert Sidney Johnston, 344.

¹⁶⁰Bridges, Lee’s Maverick General, 117.

¹⁶¹Polk, Leonidas Polk, 374.

¹⁶²Lee, Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, 371.

¹⁶³Lee, Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, 371. As Pendleton wrote this letter to his family, the members of his staff had already learned of the death of his son, but could not bear to tell him.

Stonewall Jackson, like Pendleton, endured the loss of a beloved child. In 1853, his first wife, Ellie, gave birth to a stillborn son and then died an hour after childbirth. Profound grief overwhelmed Jackson. Earlier in the year he had written his sister about how he desired to depart from the earth and instead “...to shine like a star in the firmament forever and forever...”¹⁶⁴ With the death of his wife and child, Jackson’s desire for death increased markedly.¹⁶⁵ In February 1855 he longed to leave his body and enter the presence of God.¹⁶⁶ In November 1855, he wrote that he wanted to trade places with his cousin who was near death. Jackson looked “...upon death as being that moment which of all other earthly ones is most to be desired by a child of God.”¹⁶⁷

In time he recovered from his loss, and after meeting and falling in love with his second wife, Mary Anna, the intensity of his longing for death diminished, yet still remained. In late 1862, Jackson knew that he was destined for heaven, and that he would “...rejoice in the prospect of going there to-morrow.”¹⁶⁸ He explained to his friend that he was not sick or depressed, and that although he dearly loved his children and his precious wife, he believed that heaven called to him, and when God allowed it, he would depart “...without trepidation or regret, for that heaven which I know awaits me through the mercy of my heavenly Father.”¹⁶⁹ Jackson’s longing for death, though subdued by the many blessings in his life, still burned in his mind and heart.

Even before his conversion to Christianity, Jackson did not view death as something fearsome and terrifying. Jackson believed that in the midst of a painful and agonizing death, as endured by the first martyr, Stephen, God had the power to reveal heavenly mysteries to the victim and infuse his or her death with a glorious and

¹⁶⁴Letter of Thomas Jonathan Jackson to his sister, Laura Arnold, June 6, 1853, Thomas Jonathan Jackson Papers, 1845-1941, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

¹⁶⁵Robertson, Stonewall Jackson, 163.

¹⁶⁶Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 84-85.

¹⁶⁷Cook, Family and Early Life of Stonewall Jackson, 79.

¹⁶⁸Randolph, Life of Gen. Thomas J. Jackson, 263; Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 394.

¹⁶⁹Randolph, Life of Gen. Thomas J. Jackson, 263; Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 394.

triumphant meaning that made death desirable, not abominable.¹⁷⁰ Jackson longed for such a death, and while previously he had wished that he could be a martyr in some foreign country as he proclaimed the Gospel, he also longed for any kind of death that would allow him to leave this world and enter into the heavenly kingdom. Certainly the fact that he did not fear death at all permitted, if not encouraged, his practice of praying in the midst of a battle, sitting “...upon his horse in the hottest fire, oblivious to the existence of danger....”¹⁷¹

Ironically, when Jackson finally received his opportunity to experience death, he did not recognize it. Instead, he fervently believed until only hours before his death that he would recover and lead the Second Corps in battle yet again. He thought that he still had a role to play in the preservation of his country, and that his death, while desirable, would not occur for some time.¹⁷² Dr. Hunter McGuire and other physicians amputated Jackson’s left arm in the early morning of May 3, fearing their patient’s arm would develop gangrene. Despite the loss of his arm, and the fact that he soon caught pneumonia, his lungs continually filling with fluid, Jackson felt certain that he would recover. He believed the South would be free and that he would be present to rejoice over its independence.

On May 10, 1863, Mary Anna Jackson informed her husband that before the day had ended he would be with Jesus. Jackson replied that ““It would be to me infinite gain to be translated.””¹⁷³ He then dozed for a brief period, and when he awoke, his wife again informed him that before the sun went down he would be dead. Jackson still held out hope for recovery, and tried to comfort his distraught wife. However, once his wife and Dr. McGuire assured him that there was no hope for recovery, Jackson accepted his death with ease. Although he wished to lead his country to independence, he was even more willing to do God’s Will. He felt particularly grateful that the Lord had allowed him to

¹⁷⁰Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 193.

¹⁷¹Opie, A Rebel Cavalryman, 143.

¹⁷²Jackson, Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson, 444; Hoppel, Jackson, 42.

¹⁷³Narrative of Mrs. Jackson, p. 3, item 221, Dabney-Jackson Collection, 1861-1865, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

die on the Sabbath. Shortly before he died, Jackson uttered the phrase ““Let us cross over the river, and rest under the shade of the trees.””¹⁷⁴ According to McGuire, “...then, without pain, or the least struggle, his spirit passed from earth to the God who gave it.”¹⁷⁵ Jackson, the renowned Confederate general, was dead. He had finally obtained the death he had desired for over ten years.

Christian theology infused the Southern conception and conduct of the Civil War. Prominent generals, especially Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, derived from it a just war theory, and Christian sensibilities affected the extent to which such men enjoyed or detested engaging in warfare. Religion placed limits on the conduct of the war, and in turn the Civil War affected religious practice in both the army and the civilian population. By its end, the war had brought death into every community, as well as most families. Considerations of death as something inevitable, horrifying, or desirable, as well as the understanding of death as a sacrificial offering and example, all fused with religious doctrine to have a discernible effect on the behaviour of many generals, soldiers, and civilians. Confederate generals’ understanding of these matters differed, and only a select group of fellow Christians shared Lee’s and Jackson’s strong belief in the desirability of death. Nevertheless the beliefs of Confederate generals had a major impact on not only their own lives but also their country. Their willingness to allow Christian ethics a voice in determining military operations was a potential liability for religion once the war ended in surrender. Had not the Southerners obeyed God’s laws, and tried to do His will? If so, would not victory be a more fitting reward for their piety and their obedience? Only with time could devout Southerners come to terms with the religious ramifications of their defeat. Such Christians knew the war and its accompanying deaths had taken an enormous toll on the South, not only physically and financially, but also psychologically and spiritually. It remained to be seen in May 1865 whether Southerners’ faith in God could survive the tragedy of defeat, and not give way to despair and religious apathy.

Confederate generals felt constrained by the dictates of religious morality, as well as by the customs of war. Religious generals, such as Robert E. Lee and Stonewall

¹⁷⁴McGuire and Christian, The Confederate Cause, 228-229.

¹⁷⁵McGuire and Christian, The Confederate Cause, 228-229.

Jackson, gladly accepted these restrictions, as they believed that by adhering to their moral code, God would be pleased and would bless their war effort. They believed that violations of the moral code would unleash the wrath of God upon them, causing them to suffer defeat and even subjugation. In exchange for compliance with their moral code, Lee and Jackson received a corresponding boost to their war making activities by feeling that they were justified in their actions, and they were authorized by God to resist the Yankee invaders. Lee was occasionally stricken with an awareness of his sinfulness, but still believed his army to be blessed by God and authorized to kill Yankees. Stonewall Jackson was convinced that he was chosen by God to inflict as much damage as he could, earning merit for his conduct in heaven. Other religious generals also exhibited a belief in their feeling of being authorized by God to inflict righteous punishment upon their enemies. Generally the more devout a general was, the greater his feeling of certainty that he was morally justified on waging war on the Confederacy's and God's behalf. Irreligious generals, such as Jubal Early, sought opportunities to escape the restrictions of the Christian moral code, and correspondingly did not exhibit the religious zealousness characteristic of their religious fellow generals. Thus men who served in the Confederate high command were morally constrained from engaging in forbidden types of warfare, but also felt morally justified in inflicting as much damage upon their enemies as was morally allowed. Religion served to increase the violence unleashed by generals in ways authorized by the religious moral code.

Religious beliefs decreased Confederate generals' fear of death and even encouraged them to facilitate their own deaths through reckless and even suicidal behaviour on the battlefield. The notion of death as a sacrificial offering encouraged men like J. E. B. Stuart to strive for the glory that came with dying in a cavalry charge. Although religious beliefs were not the only impetus to suicidal behaviour, they could reinforce pre-existing notions of the desirability of gaining glory through dying for one's country. Although Civil War soldiers expected their generals to share their own hardships, the degree to which Confederate generals exposed themselves was made possible because of their religious beliefs about the desirability of death. Lee probably would have died on the battlefield as well, but his troops refused to have him lead a charge against the enemy in 1864. In this theological aspect of the war, religious beliefs

definitely had a negative impact on the Confederate war effort, as religion encouraged generals to seek out opportunities to offer themselves up to God as a sacrifice on the battlefield. This argument is not in opposition to the commonly held notion that generals needed to lead from the front in order to motivate their troops and earn their respect. Instead, their religious beliefs intensified this need to prove and demonstrate their courage, and took it beyond any logical or prudent level to the point where Confederate generals were acting in a reckless and even suicidal manner. To do otherwise, in their opinion, was to doubt Christ's promises about the Resurrection, and to lose a chance to suffer what some Confederates believed was a martyr's death.

Conclusion

In the wake of the fall of Richmond, the surrender of the major Confederate armies, and the capture of President Jefferson Davis, the future of the South looked bleak indeed. The Confederacy was dead. Whether the South had died with it remained to be seen. Since many Confederates had trusted that God would save their country from subjugation, it is worthwhile to examine the reaction of those same people when their prayers were not answered, or at least were not answered in the way they hoped. That there was demoralization and even despair in the South is beyond doubt. Thomas Connelly and Barbara Bellows believe that “The greatest calamity was the absolute shock of defeat. A nation that worshiped success was spiritually unprepared for the trauma of being the loser.”¹ This trauma was widespread in the South. One Confederate, who had served in the Army of Northern Virginia as a captain, learned of Robert E. Lee’s surrender immediately after attending a Good Friday church service in April 1865. When Wayland Dunaway heard the news his “...heart sank within me. My fondest hopes were crushed. The cause for which I had so often exposed my life, and for which so many of my friends had died, had sunk into the gloomy night of defeat.”² The soldiers still serving in the armies, including those present in the Army of Northern Virginia at the time of its surrender, had great difficulty accepting that the end had finally come. After Lee returned from the fateful meeting with Grant, soldiers offered to engage the enemy once more. Lee rejected their offer. He had given his word to Grant, and so the army’s fighting days were over. The soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia were to perform a few final tasks, including parading in front of the victors, depositing their arms and battle standards in piles, and awaiting the preparation of the parole forms. Grant was willing to immediately parole the remaining forces in the Army of Northern Virginia because he trusted Lee’s word as a gentleman, and believed that the war was soon going to be over. According to

¹Connelly and Bellows, God and General Longstreet, 10.

²Dunaway, Reminiscences of a Rebel, 126.

the Lieber Code, “Release of prisoners of war by exchange is the general rule; release by parole is the exception.”³ Grant was a commander who did not bother to obey regulations, but, as Lincoln greatly appreciated, he broke through regulations to get the job done. In this case, Grant’s actions specifically violated the Lieber Code: “No paroling on the battlefield; no paroling of entire bodies of troops after a battle; and no dismissal of large numbers of prisoners, with a general declaration that they are paroled, is permitted, or of any value.”⁴ Grant may have felt justified in his action because he wanted to promote good will between the defeated and their victors, and because he was the head of the Union’s Army, second only to President Lincoln, the Commander-in-Chief. After taking advantage of Grant’s forbidden parole, the army would disperse, each man to his own home, on a furlough that would last forever. When the soldiers finally realized their war was over, many wept bitter tears, openly displaying their sorrow and anguish.⁵ Another soldier, Johnny Green, experienced these same feelings when he learned that his command had surrendered in late April 1865. He stated simply that “This was the blackest day of our lives. A great gloom settled over the command; all was lost & there seemed to be no hope for the future.”⁶

Only a few die-hard Confederates indulged in the final and ultimate reaction to the loss of their country: suicide. One of these individuals, Edmund Ruffin, could not accept the Union victory. On June 17, 1865 he wrote in his diary of his deep hatred of the Union government and all Yankees. In a final memoranda to his son and namesake, he proclaimed his “...unmitigated hatred to Yankee rule-to all political, social & business connection with Yankees, & to the perfidious, malignant, & vile Yankee race.”⁷ After

³Official Records ser. III, vol. III, sec. 124, paragraph 123.

⁴Official Records ser. III, vol. III, sec. 124, paragraph 128.

⁵Benson, ed., Berry Benson’s Civil War, 201.

⁶Kirwan, ed., Johnny Green of the Orphan Brigade, 195.

⁷William Kauffman Scarborough, ed., The Diary of Edmund Ruffin (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), III: 949.

writing these lines, Ruffin “...blew his brains out.”⁸ He had contemplated the act for over two months, desperately searching for some Biblical justification for his act. He could find none. He insisted that once his family found his body that they would hold no “...religious or church or clerical ceremonies-which would now be improper, even if available & desired.”⁹ Ruffin, although dedicated to unorthodox religious ideas in addition to his acceptance of suicide,¹⁰ knew that he would go to hell. That belief did not disturb him. His chief goal in life after the Union victory was to escape the domination of the invaders. He believed himself justified in terminating his own existence to accomplish that mission. William Scarborough maintains that “...in his final moment on earth, Edmund Ruffin accomplished that which forever eluded his cherished Confederacy. He took command of his own destiny.”¹¹

For Christians, God prohibited such control over one’s own destiny, and required them to trust in Him to guide them through life and through death. No matter how horrible their existence, Christians needed to trust in their Saviour. And throughout the devastated South, among the shattered landscapes, with burned houses, butchered farm animals and corpses lying in shallow graves, that is what many Christians did. They trusted in God, and praised Him for His tender mercies and His abundant blessings. John Daly writes that the end of the war did not destroy the South’s belief “...in their moral superiority or the justice of their cause. Indeed the war strengthened these convictions.”¹² In addition, Southerners looked “...more to heaven for their reward.”¹³ Eugene Genovese attests that “The people of the South have suffered defeat in war, have seen the collapse of their fondest expectations, and have accepted it all as God’s will.”¹⁴

⁸Fishwick, Lee after the War, 56.

⁹Scarborough, ed., Diary of Edmund Ruffin, III: 948.

¹⁰Scarborough, ed., Diary of Edmund Ruffin, III: xxii.

¹¹Scarborough, ed., Diary of Edmund Ruffin, III: xxx.

¹²John Patrick Daly, When Slavery was Called Freedom: Evangelicalism, Proslavery, and the Causes of the Civil War (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 136.

¹³Daly, When Slavery was Called Freedom, 136.

¹⁴Genovese, The Southern Tradition, 103.

Daniel Stowell maintains that Southerners regarded their defeat not as divine judgement, but as a method of chastening them, and encouraging their future obedience to Him.¹⁵ Southerners believed that just as Jesus had risen from the dead on Easter Sunday, so too would they and their fellow Southerners recover after their humiliation and defeat at the hands of the Union armies. Although the Confederacy was gone forever, the South, and its people, would rise again.

A number of former Confederate generals also continued to hope. Many of them trusted that God had his own plans for the future of the Southern people. In a postwar interview with a correspondent from the New York Herald, William Hardee stated that “I accept this war as the providence of God. He intended that the slave should be free, and now he is free. Slavery was never a paying institution.”¹⁶ Even though Hardee’s wife had previously owned approximately one hundred slaves, the former general believed that slavery was inefficient and that its elimination benefited the South. He acknowledged that many older men like himself would find it difficult to make a living, as they were too old to begin a new career, but as long as decent terms were given to the former soldiers, they would henceforth be law-abiding and peaceful Americans. The correspondent further questioned Hardee about the possibility of guerrilla warfare. The former general was adamant on this issue. He proclaimed that if guerrilla warfare erupted he would participate in the fight against it. He stated that if any guerrillas began waging war on the United States “...I am willing and ready to fight to put an end to it...”¹⁷ Hardee believed that the war ended when the Confederate armies surrendered. To him, any person who continued to resist was not a Confederate patriot, but simply a criminal. He professed his willingness to join forces with Union troops and crush any such resistance, even though they might be former members of his own regiments. At the time of the interview in early May 1865, Hardee had already mentally adjusted to the South’s new situation. He saw in the conclusion of the war God’s wise and beneficent Providence, ridding the South of an inefficient institution detrimental both to slaveholders and slaves.

¹⁵Stowell, “Stonewall Jackson and the Providence of God,” in Religion and the Civil War, 202.

¹⁶Hughes, General William J. Hardee, 297.

¹⁷Hughes, General William J. Hardee, 297.

Fellow general Josiah Gorgas did not adjust as quickly. During those same early days in May 1865, he experienced bewilderment at the fact that only a month prior the Confederacy had "...money, armies, and the attributes of a nation..."¹⁸ while by May 4 almost all these attributes had vanished. Gorgas confessed that "The calamity which has fallen upon us in the total destruction of our government is of a character so overwhelming that I am as yet unable to comprehend it. I am as one walking in a dream, and expecting to awake."¹⁹ Gorgas was not in a dream, nor was he able to awaken to a world where the Confederacy had won the war. Instead, he was consigned to living in that 'dream,' which most Confederates considered a nightmare, for the rest of his life. He could have used a musket similar to the one used by Edmund Ruffin to end his 'dream' and escape the domination of the Union government, but Gorgas did not resort to suicide. Instead, he resorted to prayer and to living for God. In August 1865 the shock of defeat still remained in his mind. He struggled to accept the seeming futility of his fellow countrymen's sacrifices. At the end of that month an election occurred to select members of a convention that would arrange for his state's readmission into the Union. He proclaimed that it was "...an end to our great hopes! Is it possible that we were wrong? Is it right after all that one set of men can force their opinion on another set? It seems so, & that self government is a mockery before the Almighty. He permits it or refuses it as seems good to him. Let us bow in submission & learn to curb our bitter thoughts."²⁰ Ruffin's object of worship had been his country. After the destruction of that idol, he had nothing left to live for. Even though his son and his family wanted his guidance and wisdom through the difficult months and years ahead, Ruffin ended his own life. Gorgas, though a staunch Confederate, recognized a higher allegiance, and a truly Almighty God. Even though he could not understand why God had permitted the Confederacy to die, he 'bowed in submission' to the divine will. Gorgas maintained that God had His own reasons for how He directed the course of history. Gorgas did not know them, but he did

¹⁸Wiggins, ed., Journals of Josiah Gorgas, 167.

¹⁹Wiggins, ed., Journals of Josiah Gorgas, 167; Gorgas, Civil War Diary of General Josiah Gorgas, 183-184.

²⁰Wiggins, ed., Journals of Josiah Gorgas, 186.

know that God wanted humble servants, willing to ‘curb their bitter thoughts.’ Unlike Ruffin, Gorgas did not claim to be the master of his own destiny; he was called to be a servant to the Living God.

William Nelson Pendleton fully agreed with Gorgas’ belief that Confederates needed to bow in submission to the will of God. After the Army of Northern Virginia disbanded, Pendleton returned to his home in Lexington, Virginia. There, he waited on God. He firmly believed that God’s Providence would manifest itself in due time, and that he and his family had “...many mercies left and above all access to God...”²¹ Later that month, Pendleton wrote of his certainty that all the virtues displayed “...by our countrymen these four years will not be wasted, or reckoned as crimes by the Holy One. Nor will all the atrocities of our assailants be accepted as virtues or overlooked by Him. The result may not come in our day. We can however wait + trust.”²² Pendleton retained his belief that God had not forsaken the South, and that in due time His purposes would be revealed. Thousands of Southern boys, including his own son, had not died in vain. Their deaths, though offered at the time for Southern independence, had been accepted by God for some other divine reason. Pendleton firmly believed there was a reason, a purpose, for the sacrifices made. He trusted that God would reveal what that purpose was on Judgement Day.

Of course, modern scholars, looking back on Pendleton’s beliefs, likely feel sadness at the clergyman’s ardent and fervent hopes for the South’s vindication. In the prevalent modern view of warfare, made possible by the ghastly sacrifices made in twentieth century wars, especially the First World War and the Vietnam War, sacrifices made by Pendleton and others were fruitless, totally barren and pathetic efforts that constituted a horrendous loss of lives, resources and energy. In this view, there was no ‘reason,’ no ‘purpose’ for the countless sacrifices made by the South during the Civil

²¹Letter of Mrs. Pendleton, with an addition by William Nelson Pendleton, to one of their children [name unknown], June 7, 1865, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

²²Letter of William Nelson Pendleton to Reverend ? [name unknown], June 27, 1865, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

War. While Northerners can now look back and appreciate the fact that the Civil War killed slavery (but not racism) as well as preserved the Union, the Southerners have no such corresponding achievement. All they have is the myth of the 'Lost Cause,' and, while space does not permit the total devaluation of this chimeric concept, it seems like a poor trade for the hundreds of thousands of Southern men who were lost to slaughter. Pendleton's hope that the death of so many Southern men, including his own beloved son, were not in vain, was founded directly upon his religious faith.

Pendleton further speculated that God had allowed the Confederacy's destruction to eliminate his and his fellow Virginians' reliance on the rich legacy of their state and their status as freemen. By living under 'foreign domination' Pendleton and his fellow ex-Confederates would learn to be "...content to live without a country, having hearts engrossed with that better land where no sin enters, and where peace and charity prevail forever. Our Saviour and the apostles lived thus under foreign domination. So lived many of the martyrs. And surely we may well follow their example in giving our affections to that better country of which, by God's grace, no earthly malice or power can despoil us."²³ The Confederacy's destruction did not shake Pendleton's faith in the slightest. Losing the Civil War only made his dependence on God more absolute and his hope in the future more dependent on spiritual realities, and less on earthly ones.

Pendleton retained his belief in Providence even when he encountered adversity under Union authority. He admitted to a Union general that Providence had directed that the United States have authority over the former Confederate states. Consequently Pendleton planned to take the oath of allegiance to the Union government and apply for executive clemency "...on the earliest fit occasion..."²⁴ Pendleton recognized that God had ordered the destruction of the Confederacy, and the reestablishment of Union authority. Pendleton believed that since Jesus commanded His followers to render what was Caesar's unto Caesar, the clergyman obediently indicated his willingness to take the oath and forever disavow any allegiance to the Confederacy. On August 3, 1865

²³Lee, Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, 415.

²⁴Letter of William Nelson Pendleton to an unnamed Union general, July 28, 1865, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Pendleton took the oath of allegiance even though a few weeks earlier he had discovered a Union soldier desecrating the grave of his son by urinating near the gate of the cemetery.²⁵ Such actions probably only solidified his conviction that the Yankees were indeed barbarous, and that, in time, they would receive due punishment. All Pendleton needed to do was to be faithful, to wait and to pray.

Not all generals trusted in God's providential plan for the South. Jubal Early fled the South upon the conclusion of the war, seeking refuge in various countries, including Mexico, Cuba and Canada. He commented in December 1867 that only by a special act of Providence could the South avoid being totally ruined by the Reconstruction legislation then being passed by the United States Congress. Early then confessed "...I have not much faith in Providential interferences in the affairs of this world."²⁶ He had watched pious generals, such as Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee, pray for the success of the Confederate cause, and to his disappointment their prayers seemed unanswered. Devoted to the memory of Jackson, and to Lee, Early believed that if God answered anyone's prayers, He would have answered theirs. Early's agnosticism deepened because he had not seen the Providential interventions so desperately needed by his countrymen materialize.

Many high-ranking former generals did not emulate Early's conduct or hold the same beliefs about the North. Overall they managed to come to terms with the Southern states' reincorporation into the Union. Some accepted this state of affairs easier than others. James Longstreet was notable for becoming a Republican and accepting patronage appointments from the party that had prosecuted the war so vigorously against the South. Most of his former Confederates despised his perceived opportunism, and remained staunch Democrats, spurning the Republican Party to the end of their days. However, like Longstreet, they adapted to the postwar situation, and made the best of their new

²⁵Letter of William Nelson Pendleton to the commander of the Federal troops near Lexington, Virginia [name not mentioned], July 14, 1865, William Nelson Pendleton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

²⁶Letter of Jubal Anderson Early to unknown correspondent, December 11, 1867, Jubal Anderson Early Papers, 1846-1889, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

circumstances. In time, they reconciled themselves to the stars and stripes, while always retaining in their minds a fine appreciation of their now defunct Confederate flag.

And then there was Lee. Robert E. Lee, victor at Second Manassas, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, the white knight of the Confederacy, remained in Virginia. He did not have a perfect war record, and he had lost more battles and more men than the Confederacy could easily afford, but he continued to be a major source of inspiration and hope for his fellow Southerners. When the future appeared bleak during the war, soldiers and civilians alike had looked to him to provide reassurance and confidence. Now that the Confederacy was dead, Lee remained as the hope and paragon not only of his native state, but for the entire South as well. Randolph McKim believes Lee was “...even more glorious in defeat, as human as he was heroic, giving glory to God in the hour of triumph, bowing submissively, though with a breaking heart, to the will of God in the hour of overwhelming disaster.”²⁷ Just as Lee had refused to court death in front of Union sharpshooters prior to his surrender, so after the surrender he believed that it was his “...duty to live...”²⁸, to continue on, to be a model for his former soldiers and for his state. He wrote to his cousin Martha Williams on May 2, 1865, that “All is done for our good & our faith must continue unshaken.”²⁹ Lee fervently believed that Virginia needed her native sons more than ever after the surrender, and that only they could “...sustain + recuperate her....There is much to be done which only they can do.”³⁰ Far from despairing about his state’s fate, Lee trusted that, through the mercy of God, Virginia’s future was secure. Experiencing defeat had increased, not diminished, Lee’s “...belief in God’s mercy and submission to His will...”³¹ Although Lee did not know what the future held for him after Appomattox, he knew that God would take care of him.

²⁷McKim, The Soul of Lee, 131.

²⁸White, Robert E. Lee and the Southern Confederacy, 423.

²⁹Avery O. Craven, ed., “To Markie:” The Letters of Robert E. Lee to Martha Custis Williams From the Originals in the Huntington Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), 61.

³⁰Letter of Robert E. Lee to Walter H. Taylor, June 17, 1865, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, The Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia.

³¹Freeman, R. E. Lee, IV: 297.

Despite his great disappointment over the defeat of the Confederacy, he did not despair.³² Instead he looked to a future created not by himself or his fellow Southerners, but one created by God, a future interwoven into a universal Providential design that only God could fathom and make a reality.

When Lee received an offer in the summer of 1865 to assume the Presidency of Washington College located in Lexington, Virginia, he regarded it as a mission from God.³³ His days as a soldier were over, but he could use all of his martial training and leadership skills in moulding the future leaders of Virginia. Lee inculcated both secular wisdom and sacred learning in his students. His greatest concern was for their Christian faith and character. By relying on God and His plan for the South's future, ideally Lee's young charges would shun disreputable activities that would besmirch both Washington College and themselves. Lee's willingness to remain in Virginia and accept the offer of the trustees of Washington College demonstrated his devotion to his native state and his belief that God still loved the South. When M. F. Maury wrote to Lee, asking him whether he would emigrate to Mexico, Lee politely refused to consider that alternative. He preferred "...to struggle for its [Virginia's] restoration + share its fate, than to give up all as lost."³⁴

Years after the war, Lee remained confident that the South's future was blessed by God. He wrote in March 1869 that the South's struggle for state's rights and constitutional government had failed, "...but in the good Providence of God, apparent failure often proves a blessing. I trust it may eventuate so in this instance."³⁵ Lee continued to provide leadership in the postwar South not only for his college students, but also for his fellow generals. When P. G. T. Beauregard wrote to Lee about the chaotic

³²Freeman, R. E. Lee, IV: 333-334.

³³McKim, The Soul of Lee, 183.

³⁴Letter of Robert E. Lee to M. F. Maury, September 8, 1865, Robert E. Lee Collection, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, The Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia.

³⁵Letter of Robert E. Lee to Geo. W. Jones, March 22, 1869, Robert E. Lee Collection, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, The Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia; first part of quotation; Freeman, R. E. Lee, IV: 401-402.

condition of the South,³⁶ Lee replied with honest but reassuring words. He commented on the difficult situation of many Southerners who were nonetheless enduring their trials “...with Roman fortitude. no words of complaint are heard, unless from those who betrayed the cause of the South or deserted their colours. Glory be to such a people. their destiny is yet to be fulfilled.”³⁷ Lee did not know what future God had planned for the South, but he believed and trusted that it would be in keeping with the merciful and loving kindness of God.

Many flattering accounts have been written about Lee’s wartime and postwar example for the South. Marshall Fishwick observes that “If one checks the steps of canonization, he will find that Lee has moved far along the road to ultimate acceptance.”³⁸ Numerous other writers agree with Fishwick that Lee was nearly the equivalent of a Southern Protestant saint. Whether or not one agrees with such an elevated status for Lee, his ability to hope in God defined the enduring trust devout generals and Confederates had in Providence. While not all of his fellow former generals completely followed his example, almost all of them, even Jubal Early,³⁹ embraced a portion of Lee’s hope for the future.

Lee learned much about Providence as a result of the Civil War. He wrote that “The march of Providence is so slow, and our desires so impatient, the work of progress so immense, and our means of aiding it so feeble, the life of humanity is so long, and that of the individual so brief, that we often see only the ebb of the advancing wave, and are thus discouraged. It is history that teaches us to hope.”⁴⁰ History had taught Lee that lesson well. Less than three months before his death, Lee commented on the Franco-

³⁶Letter of P. G. T. Beauregard to Robert E. Lee, July 30, 1867, Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard Papers, Special Collections, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

³⁷Letter of Robert E. Lee to P. G. T. Beauregard, January 21, 1868, Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard Papers, Special Collections, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

³⁸Fishwick, Lee after the War, 228.

³⁹Lee’s hopefulness was transferred to Jubal Early largely in the unrelenting efforts with which the latter man dedicated his last years to the propagation of the myth of the Lost Cause.

⁴⁰Genovese, Southern Tradition, 103.

Prussian War, insisting to his cousin Martha Williams that he was by no means “‘...glad that the Prussians are succeeding.’ They are prompted by ambition & a thirst for power. The French are defending their homes & country. May God help the suffering & avert misery from the poor.”⁴¹ The fact that the Prussians won that war, no more than the fact that the North had won the Civil War, could not dissuade Lee from his belief in God and His overruling Providence. Hope sprang eternal in his heart, as it did in the hearts of many of his fellow former generals, because they believed their hope sprang from the eternal God.

Lee and many of his fellow generals continued to hope primarily because of their religious faith. Just as their religion had undergirded their war effort, it also supported their efforts in the postwar South. Faith, hope and charity served as the basis of their religious behaviour. Religious faith helped them to believe in themselves and in their cause, and that God supported their efforts. Generals used religious instruction to spread the Gospel and military precepts such as discipline, sacrifice and loyalty. Frequently the religious faith of the generals was imperfect, as some generals nursed a tepid faith or else allowed the vanities of the world to tempt them. On the whole, however, high ranking generals used their faith to support their war-making activities and encouraged their subordinates to do the same. The virtue of hope functioned in the same manner as did faith. Generals used their religious hope to undergird their hopes for independence, for personal advancement, and for peace. At times religious conceptions of hope vied with secular notions of this virtue to achieve dominance in the minds of specific generals. Overall, hope increased generals’ devotion to their cause, and gave them strength even when they thought that they would not personally survive the conflict. Generals like J. E. B. Stuart believed that they would go to heaven while their sacrifices ensured the fulfillment of their earthly hopes, especially the establishment of the Confederacy. Hope did not totally prevent the onset of despair in certain generals, but usually managed to endure in the minds of religious generals. Their understanding and practice of the virtue of charity helped sustain the war making efforts of Confederate generals as well as provide them with a larger perspective and a perceived elevated moral position vis a vis

⁴¹Craven, ed., “To Markie,” 90-91.

their Union counterparts. Being kind to their subordinate officers, their soldiers and civilians paid dividends in maintaining their war effort. However, the need to exercise charity also hampered their war effort in the sense that it prohibited certain actions that might have increased their chance for victory. Charity and custom prevented Confederate generals from even considering the pursuit of 'total war,' or waging war as did William T. Sherman and his Union subordinates. On occasion certain generals, for example Jubal Early, performed actions, such as the burning of Chambersburg, that violated this practice of charity, but the infrequency of these deeds supports the validity of this conclusion. Overall the analysis of the three theological virtues serves as an excellent introduction to the study of religion's impact on Confederate generals and their war effort. Only by understanding the importance of these three primary Christian principles can the Confederate generals' religious activities and ideas make sense as a totality and not only as isolated beliefs or actions.

Confederate generals' morality, in addition to their military training, gave them discipline during the war years, and helped them turn untrained volunteers into willing, able soldiers. Their belief in the usefulness of religious precepts led them to use Christian morality to improve their commands' discipline and performance. Many generals encouraged church attendance and Sabbath observance as a means of fostering religion, resting their units, and mentally preparing them for future ordeals. Confederate generals often used religion as a justification for discouraging gambling, whoring, excessive drinking or other actions considered sinful by Christian morality. Moral considerations led few, if any, generals to oppose slavery actively during the war. Instead, their religious convictions about slavery operated in various contrasting ways to support or ignore the peculiar institution, usually without decreasing their confidence in the worthiness of their cause. Most generals viewed African Americans as culturally or racially inferior, and contended that slavery provided certain benefits to the enslaved. While some generals, such as Patrick Cleburne, came to the conclusion in late 1863 that slavery should be sacrificed in order to save the South, other generals, such as Robert E. Lee, waited until early 1865 to relent in their opposition to using slaves as soldiers. Other generals never condoned the idea of freeing a portion or all of the slaves and allowing them to fight for

the South's freedom. The interrelated issues of morality and slavery demonstrate the powerful influence religion exercised in the minds of many Confederate generals.

Confederate generals frequently referred to Providence in order to explain events in the Civil War. Their understanding of Providence gave them confidence in the power of their armies even when outnumbered by the enemy. Pious generals believed that God controlled the universe and ensured that events transpired according to His Will. Generals differed in their understanding of free will and predestination. Presbyterians such as Stonewall Jackson and D. H. Hill thought that God had determined each and every event before the world began. Robert E. Lee and most Episcopalians believed that while God retained His Almighty Power, He allowed mortals to exercise free will, acting as efficient secondary causes of certain events. All Christian generals, however, agreed that God shaped the course of nations and individuals according to divinely ordained plans, which human beings rarely understood or appreciated. Providential manifestations might seem disheartening at first, but all such occurrences promoted the welfare of God's people and tended to their salvation. When discussing Providence generals usually indicated that it was a personal and beneficent force, and referred to it as either a manifestation of God or seemingly as a synonym for God Himself.

In order to interact with God and influence the course of Providence, most Confederate generals offered prayers in worship services and in private. Many of these men thought that these prayers influenced the course of the war and their lives. Although no general relied exclusively on prayer to win battles or achieve success in the conflict, many believed such petitions essential to their war effort. Even generals such as Albert Sidney Johnston, who did not ask God for specific favours, used prayer as a means to express thanks to the Creator of the Universe for the many blessings he received. Pious generals solicited prayers from their loved ones as they believed these petitions markedly affected the war effort. They themselves also offered prayers for the spread of the Christian faith and for the success of the Southern cause, both for the Confederacy as a whole, and for the individuals who fought for its independence. Many generals demonstrated a notable belief in and even reliance on supernatural aid in their war against the Union government.

Confederate generals performed their duty not only through a sense of civil obligation but also through a sense of religious mission. Many of these men, especially Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, believed that God required them to perform military duty in the Civil War even though such duty meant fighting against the Union Army, an organization to which they had previously belonged. Religious precepts reinforced the practice of duty, and generals used these precepts to encourage and compel their soldiers and subordinate officers to perform required tasks. In the case of clergymen who returned to military service, namely William Nelson Pendleton and Leonidas Polk, conflicts between secular duties and religious duties became pronounced. Other generals experienced similar confusion and difficulty in reconciling the conflicting demands of their superiors and their personal religious beliefs. Over time, however, most generals used religion to reconcile themselves to their required tasks, believing that the Confederate government and their states constituted the legitimate source of authority in the South and that by obeying their governments they served God as well.

Confederate generals performed their most conspicuous duty when they led their men in battle, sometimes even in the midst of the battlefield itself. Some generals, particularly Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, exercised leadership modelled on the example of Jesus Christ. By adapting Christ's leadership model from its original context, they sought to emulate useful characteristics from their Saviour and apply them to their current situation, thus obeying God's commandments and serving as a role model for their soldiers. The majority of Confederate generals believed they had a responsibility to lead. This responsibility, which mainly derived from the fact that they had accepted a commission in the Confederate Army, also possessed religious overtones. In short, the religious nature of their military service demonstrates the fundamental association between religion and leadership in the minds of many of these leaders.

The morality of waging war and religious ideas about mortality figured prominently in the thinking and writings of Confederate generals during the Civil War. Many of these men allowed religion to guide them in deciding which actions were acceptable to perform to win the war. Although cultural mores occasioned some hesitancy on the part of Confederate commanders in adopting what they perceived as less civilized methods of waging war, the case of the burning of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

helps prove the role of religion in encouraging Robert E. Lee to reject such tactics, while less pious generals such as Jubal A. Early embraced them. Religious precepts also encouraged many generals to resist the attraction war possessed for them. Christian doctrine prompted devout generals to resist impulses to exult in warfare, even though the possibility for glory, excitement, comradeship, and personal fulfillment encouraged them to welcome the challenge of combat.

Religious notions of mortality reinforced their ambivalence toward fighting in a war. Some generals, such as J. E. B. Stuart, believed from the beginning of the war that their death was inevitable. Later in the war many common soldiers came to share this belief. While some of these men performed noteworthy service in battle they, like Stuart, also exposed themselves to unnecessary risks as they no longer feared death. Other soldiers viewed death with horror, and many of their generals shared their belief, including Leonidas Polk. However, for generals such as S. G. French, death in battle constituted a sacrificial offering to God, one which benefited the deceased and his country. A few of these leaders, in particular Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee, believed that death was desirable, because it offered individuals the chance to depart from a world infected with sin and enter into a realm of eternal light and indescribable joy. Christian doctrine and imagery had a great effect on the Southern perception of death, and this reality influenced both generals' and common soldiers' understanding and conduct of the war. Many generals died fighting not only for their country, but for their God. Those who remained were well acquainted with death. Although not all Southern generals were committed Christians, religion had a major effect on many of them, and a smaller but still important influence on the rest of these leaders. Only by examining their religious beliefs and opinions can one learn the full extent of religion's effect on Confederate generals' conception and conduct of the Civil War.

Over the course of the preceding narrative, I have emphasized the influence of religious beliefs and practices in the Confederate generals' conception and conduct of the American Civil War. This work is significant because it attempts to analyse the influence of religion on Confederate generals as a group, something which has been done for Confederate and Union chaplains, but not for Confederate or Union generals. My dissertation addresses the considerable scholarship on Stonewall Jackson and R. E. Lee's

religious beliefs and integrates this analysis with each other and with the religious beliefs of their fellow generals.

My work connects to the growing historiography of religion and the Civil War by referring to books such as Steven Woodworth's While God is Marching On, which focuses on the religious worldview of all soldiers, both Confederate and Union. Through a narrow focus on generals, my study attempts to discern the specific effects and consequences religious belief had for the Confederate military and the Confederacy as a whole through the decisions of the generals, the military leaders of the South. My dissertation agrees with Woodworth's book in his contention that a religious worldview had a momentous impact on the soldiers and officers involved in the American Civil War. "Religious Rebels" also substantiates the findings of Mark Schantz's Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The Civil War and America's Culture of Death. Schantz argues that

Americans came to fight the Civil War in the midst of a wider cultural world that sent them messages about death that made it easier to kill and to be killed. They understood that death awaited all who were born and prized the ability to face death with a spirit of calm resignation. They believed that a heavenly eternity of transcendent beauty awaited them beyond the grave. They knew that their heroic achievements would be cherished forever by posterity. They grasped that death itself might be seen as artistically fascinating and even beautiful. They saw how notions of full citizenship were predicated on the willingness of men to lay down their lives. And they produced works of art that captured the moment of death in highly idealistic ways. Americans thus approached the Civil War carrying a cluster of assumptions about death that, I will suggest, facilitated its unprecedented destructiveness.⁴²

My research confirms Schantz's thesis that the beliefs the Civil War participants possessed eased their transition from a country at peace to a country filled with war. The religious beliefs the Confederate generals had about death and the afterlife encouraged them to act boldly, and even recklessly, as they believed that a better country, a heavenly country, awaited them. The prospect of earthly glory after they had died also encouraged them to risk, and even seek, death in the Civil War.

My study helps address the deficit Robert Miller identified in 2007 concerning the dearth of studies of religion in the Civil War. Like Miller's study, my work takes

⁴²Schantz, Awaiting the Heavenly Country, 2-3.

seriously the theology of the participants and attempts to discern the links between an individual's theology and their behaviour. Although this process is challenging, and needs to be qualified by the limits of what is possible for scholars to understand of a person's faith life, it is essential for scholars to address this pivotal aspect of mid-nineteenth century personalities. My study offers a beginning to this process, which could be expanded to include Union generals, and possibly the religious beliefs of Confederate and Union politicians, to understand the full dynamics of how religion affected the war's origin, conduct and termination. George Rable, who wrote God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War insisted that his work was only one possible religious history of the war, and that many more religious studies of the war could be completed. My study is but one component of a larger study of how leaders used religious beliefs and practices to wage the Civil War. Although this method may seem like 'top-down' history, in that leaders are given special prominence, this approach is really a means of opening up the discussion about how religion influenced everyone in the Civil War, including soldiers, civilians alike. Once scholars have studied how different groups, such as political, military and religious leaders, affected ordinary individuals in the war, studies concerning those groups, such as members of specific church denominations and ethnic groups, can be studied to analyze their response to the demands placed on them by their leaders.

My study also seeks to place religious influences in the proper perspective, while still acknowledging the influence of patriotism or culture in affecting behavior. In particular, I disagree with C. C. Goen's thesis, at least as far as it pertains to the Confederate generals, that the example of the Christian churches which split into Northern and Southern factions is partly responsible for the secession of the Southern states. As far as the generals were concerned, it was loyalty to their respective states which commanded their allegiance, and not to their churches which had previously split away from the North. I argue that it was cultural and social considerations that were responsible for both the ecclesiastical divisions of the churches and the political division of the nation, not a religious cause of the political separation.

"Religious Rebels" addresses the question Mark Noll raised in his 2006 book The Civil War as a Theological Crisis. For the Confederate generals, the Civil War was more

of a theological opportunity, rather than a theological crisis. The Civil War offered religious generals such as Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson an opportunity to grow in their faith and respond to the opportunity presented to them to embrace the role they believed Providence insisted that they embrace. Other generals, such as Leonidas Polk and William Pendleton, were faced with the challenge of balancing their ecclesiastical duties with their perceived proficiency as military commanders. Other generals, such as Braxton Bragg, J. E. Johnston, and John Bell Hood, became formal Christians as they confronted the challenges of the war. Religion as it existed in the 1860's met the demands placed upon it by the Confederate generals by a reliance on traditional liturgies, the reading of the Bible and an invitation to converse with Almighty God through prayer. Although the Confederate generals never claimed to understand the full meaning of God's Providence, they typically trusted in their religious beliefs to guide them in their behaviour and to make sense of the carnage around them. Of course, some generals, such as Jubal Early and E. P. Alexander, had little use for religion, except to use as a tool to enforce morality upon their men. However, they did not experience a theological crisis, and instead made a conscious decision to reject the religious doctrines Christianity offered them.

This dissertation substantiates the decisive role death played in Civil War society, emphasized in Drew Gilpin Faust's work *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*. Although differing in minor details, "Religious Rebels" illustrates the validity of Faust's thesis as it pertains to Confederate generals. I agree that death had a momentous impact on the mental world of its participants. I also argue that religious beliefs and practices helped mediate the impact of death, and actually encouraged individuals like Jackson and Lee to acknowledge death's benefits, in terms of an opportunity to offering pleasing sacrifices to God and a means of reaching Paradise. My dissertation opens the discussion of how religion allowed Confederate generals to look at death not only as a negative force, but also as a transformative one, and that this viewpoint helped make the carnage of the Civil War possible.

My work mirrors the approach David Rolfs uses in his study *No Peace for the Wicked: Northern Protestant Soldiers and the American Civil War*, in that we both use Scripture to understand the religious perceptions and sensibilities of our subjects. Both

Rolfs and I do not share all of the specific religious beliefs of the individuals being studied, and yet we take their views seriously and seek to place them in historical and Biblical context. As Biblical criticism had little impact on the South in the 1860's, it is critical to understand the importance of the King James Bible in the lives of Christians.

David Goldfield's recent overview of the war, [America Aflame: How the Civil War Created a Nation](#) puts religion front and centre in his analysis of the conflict, and even made it central to his underlying thesis. Goldfield's assertion that evangelical Christianity made the Civil War inevitable indicates that religion, far from being marginal to the conflict, deserves intense study to understand its influence on the war. My study examines how religion served to sustain the Confederate generals' war making effort, even for those generals who were irreligious, but who still relied on religious doctrine and morality to keep their troops in line. Religious beliefs, particularly the concept of Providence, were relied upon to sustain the Southern war effort, as well as to sidestep the moral problem of slavery. My dissertation challenges assertions that the Confederate generals were eager defenders of slavery, and focuses on their willingness to fight for the institution and their perceived need for white supremacy in Southern society. Thus "Religious Rebels" seeks to create a nuanced approach to understanding the role religion played in the lives of Confederate generals, and their use of it in their conception and conduct of the American Civil War.

In conclusion, religious beliefs and practices had a profound influence upon Confederate generals' waging of the Civil War. In brief, the concepts of faith, hope and charity strengthened their war effort, and helped them believe in God, hope that their cause would prevail despite all opposition, and practice charity that endeared them to their troops and encouraged the civilian population to trust that certain Confederate generals, such as Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, would bring God's blessing upon their war effort. The concept of faith made Confederate generals feel connected to God and fellow believers. This connection allowed generals to feel that they were not alone in their effort to wage war, but instead had the spiritual support of God and their fellow believers through prayer. This religious faith did not distract the generals from their primary objective of winning the Civil War because only especially militant individuals were selected to become generals. This selection process ensured that the generals were

not pacifists or otherwise likely to oppose the concept of defensive warfare to preserve their newly established country from subjugation. Instead, Confederate generals derived justification for their actions in the war from their religious faith, which operated in tandem with their patriotism and loyalty to their respective states and to the newly established Confederate States of America. The generals' commitment to winning the war had the effect of modifying certain previously held beliefs, exemplified by Pendleton's perceived need to glory in the destructive work of the Merrimac rather than bemoan the loss of lives occasioned by the war.

The generals derived much of their hope for victory from the promises of the Christian religion that stipulated that God would lead them to a brighter future, both on earth and in the afterlife. This hope allowed generals to often overlook temporary defeats, or else to trust that God had His own reasons for afflicting the Confederacy. Confederate generals also chose to hope in the promise of earthly glory, and these temporal ambitions often encouraged the generals to trust that their actions were ordered by God both for the success of the war effort as well as to achieve God's holy purposes.

The exercise of Christian charity aided Confederate generals in feeling that they were obeying Christ's commands, and thereby ensuring God's favour for the South, as well as endearing them to the civilian population. Lee in particular became well known for his concern for his soldiers, and this common understanding served Lee well, in that many soldiers remained in the army, serving under his command, even though by 1864 the Confederate cause was looking more and more hopeless. Even though many deserted, Lee still continued to resist until April 1865. He had the option of continuing the struggle through guerilla warfare, but his understanding of civilized conduct, combined with his religious sensibilities, persuaded him that it was time for him to lay down his arms. His understanding of religious faith, hope and charity helped lead him to this conclusion, and he still served as a beacon for the South during the beginning of the Reconstruction period. Even at the end of the war, he still believed that the South's future was yet to be revealed by a mysterious and loving God.

Confederate generals found Christian morality a useful means of instilling loyalty in their commands. By giving them the spiritual authority to proscribe drunkenness and other activities disruptive to the exercise of military life, these military leaders recognized

the usefulness of Christian morality. Christian morality was even used by Jubal Early as a tool to enforce discipline in his command, despite his open mockery of Christian worship. This study demonstrates that Confederate generals used the means provided to them by the contemporary temperance and Sabbatarian movements to cultivate a useful piety in their armies. Although their efforts to enforce morality were never entirely successful, they did help in imparting an aura of respectability to their forces that helped many civilians to believe that their armed forces were worthy of God's blessings. In this respect, Christian morality assisted generals in their war effort, and gave the Southern armies a certain spiritual cohesion that would endure into the postwar era.

Religious beliefs about slavery also assisted Confederate generals in fighting to defend the Confederacy which was founded on the maintenance of slavery. Although Confederate generals' religious beliefs were not indicative of the pro-slavery rhetoric produced since 1820, it did serve to justify the continued existence of the institution. It did so because of the specific Southern context in which the Confederate generals practiced their religion. Since the world itself contained sin, slavery was merely part of a fallen world, and therefore should be accepted as part of God's intended order of things. Since Confederate generals believed that God had created slavery, it was therefore inappropriate for man to attempt its abolition. While modern readers familiar with the Bible will search in vain for Scriptural passages detailing how God created slavery, as opposed to merely regulating it and limiting it, Southerners accepted the existence of slavery as part of the natural order of things, and did not believe that they had the power to make the world better by eliminating it. One reason why they did not imagine eliminating it was because of their deeply seated white supremacist beliefs, which were so ingrained that their religion did not have the ability to disrupt or challenge these prejudices. Lee and Jackson, although acknowledging the imperfections of slavery, also could not conceive of a better means of controlling the African Americans who already lived in the Southern states. It was this deep seated prejudice that prevented Lee from demanding African American troops from President Jefferson Davis until it was too late to bring them into action. Had Lee demanded the troops earlier, the South would have possessed a better chance of victory.

The concept of Providence was the most notable feature in the effects religion had on the Confederate generals' war effort. Their adherence to this concept was quite typical of both Northerners and Southerners in this time period, and even Quakers saw God's Providence in the occurrence and the outcome of the Civil War. What was distinctive in Confederate generals' belief in Providence was the role their belief played in their conduct of the war. While a civilian farmer who believed in divine Providence might believe that the fact that his calf had died was a warning or a punishment from God, a general who lost a battle, as well as thousands of men, had a much greater impact on the war effort if this general did not learn from this experience and earnestly endeavor to fix his mistakes and improve his performance for the next battle. This concept had certain broad characteristics that many generals accepted, in particular the view that God had particular plans for humanity and that these plans would be carried out in due time and would serve to enlighten and benefit God's people. However, within this overarching framework of belief, various schools of thought existed which attributed more or less of events on earth to God's direct influence. For instance, most Christians believed that God had decreed the exact moment of each person's death. Strict Presbyterians, such as Stonewall Jackson, believed that they would not die until the moment God dictated. This absolute confidence in God's control over events led men like Jackson to take incredible risks, and eventually led to his death. Thus Providence acted as a two-edged sword for the Confederate war effort. It allowed both generals and soldiers to charge into battle, confident that no bullet would strike them down until the instant God had determined since before the world began. The generals and men could thus act as if they knew no fear. However, this attitude also caused an excessive number of generals to be killed or wounded in battle, and disrupted the effective command of brigades, divisions, corps and even armies because of the high loss rate of its leaders. While current military practice was at fault for placing these leaders in places of grave danger, religious beliefs accentuated the danger, and prompted generals to take far more risks than were absolutely necessary.

The mid-nineteenth century view of Providence also damaged the war effort by impeding logical analysis of mistakes, by attributing the cause of many circumstances to God. If God had decreed that a certain event take place, there was little a believer could

do to change it. In fact, any effort to change such an event would be an attempt to thwart God's will, and therefore would be doomed to failure as well as a serious sin. Providence could also be used as an excuse for those who wished to blame 'Providence' for their own mistakes or inaction. These abuses of the concept of Providence caused some irreligious generals, such as E. P. Alexander, to scoff at the notion of Providence, and instead focus their efforts at achieving their own objectives, rather than discerning God's purported objectives in the war.

The practice of prayer, both by and for Confederate generals, illustrates the mid-nineteenth century Christian belief in the power of prayer. The habit of praying for the war effort did not forestall other temporal means of achieving victory. Instead, prayer helped generals focus on their military objectives, and believe that these objectives were worthy of being achieved. Such prayers also inculcated the belief that their prospects for success were assisted by their belief in God. Whether or not prayer assisted in the Confederate war effort depends upon one's theological viewpoint. If one believes in the existence of a Deity, and that this Deity answers human prayers, as in the Jewish, Christian and Islamic religions, then prayer was a boon to the Confederate war effort. God, in His Omnipotent Knowledge, would answer these petitions from Southerners according to His Divine Will. In the minds of Southerners, they believed that He would bless their war effort. If, on the other hand, one does not believe in the existence of a supernatural power, then prayers were a detriment to the Confederate war effort. In this view, time and energy were wasted making requests that would never be answered. Instead, in an atheistic universe, humans need to rely on themselves alone for guidance and support, and act accordingly. Confederate generals, especially Lee and Jackson, launched offensives on the belief that God would help them when the need arose. Lee firmly believed that he had an obligation to do everything in his power to effect success, and when he had done everything he could, God would do the rest. If Lee did not have a God to actually rely on, then his tactical and strategic offensives were ill-advised, as he did not have access to the Divine assistance which he was counting on. Lee and Jackson were two of the generals who relied most on the power of prayer, but many other generals, such as D. H. Hill, Pendleton, Polk and many others believed that God heard and answered prayers. Thus the reader must decide for himself/herself based on one's

theological beliefs whether the Confederate war effort derived benefits or not from the practice of prayer.

The concept of duty as practiced and understood by some Confederate generals was fused with religious devotion. Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson performed their military duties with religious zeal, and their religion was characterized by martial understandings of what it meant to be a Christian. Other generals also developed their understanding of religion through their status as senior military officers. This religious devotion to duty granted Lee and Jackson a thorough commitment to the cause for which they fought, and a perceived moral certainty that they were doing the morally justified course of action virtually all of the time. This fusion of duty and religious belief, most evident in Jackson and Lee, but also in various other generals and soldiers, granted the Confederate war effort determined military leaders who were renowned for their military attributes as well as their religious sensibilities. In this sense, the fusion proved beneficial for the war effort, in that these generals were committed to achieving victory in any way consistent with what they believed to constitute Christian warfare. However, this sense of zealotry in performing their duty also caused them to be unable to reconsider their beliefs and actions once they were performed. For instance, Lee never repented of his decision to renounce his allegiance to the United States Army, and serve his state of Virginia in the Confederacy. He always believed that the decision he made on April 20, 1861, was the one he was duty bound to make. By praying and asking God for His wisdom, Lee believed himself certain that he was morally justified, and even morally obliged, to take this course of action. Thus this religious devotion to duty had the side effect of blinding those who engaged in it to alternative courses of action. Once a specific interpretation of duty was chosen, an individual like Lee cannot in good conscience review his previous decisions and consider that perhaps he had been previously mistaken. Such considerations would be a violation of accepting and performing what he believed to be his duty. Thus I argue that religion served as a strengthening mechanism that individuals like Lee and Jackson used to ensure their own moral rectitude and devotion to duty. Rarely, if ever, was religion used to challenge their existing patterns of thought with alternative, and perhaps contradictory, interpretations of what might constitute their true duty. Their training as military officers at West Point was central to this fixation on duty,

but religion served as a moral justification to ensure personal compliance with what was perceived as their duty to win the war for the Confederacy.

The fusion of military duty with religion can also be seen in the decision of William Pendleton and Leonidas Polk to retain their status as clergymen and serve in the Confederate Army as generals. Even though these two men engaged in more soul searching than either Jackson or Lee, they still were able to convince themselves that they had a moral duty to wage war on behalf of their new country, in addition to proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. This ability of generals to fuse religion with military duty is indicative of the martial interpretation of Christianity commonly found in the United States of this era. Although some believers, such as Quakers, disdained the use of violence to solve political problems, even from their ranks emerged individuals willing to serve the Union when forced to make a choice between their witness to antislavery principles and their witness to peace.⁴³ Again, Confederate generals' use of religion as a means of aiding them in performing their military and civic duties was not exceptional in this time period, but knowledge of this reality helps us understand the total devotion individuals like Lee and Jackson could give to the Confederate cause, and the example they provided to their troops.

Lee and Jackson also drew upon Christian precepts to establish their roles as leaders in the Confederate Army, and indeed for the Confederacy as a whole. The notion of a sacrificial and caring leader caused Jackson and Lee to want to emulate these attributes for their soldiers, and thereby offer pleasing service to God. This leadership style assisted Lee and Jackson in obtaining adulation from the troops, so much so that many observers believed that the South had trusted too much in the arm of flesh (their military leaders, such as Lee and Jackson) and not enough in the Arm of the Lord. The idea of a leader as one who sacrificed himself for the cause also encouraged Confederate generals like Jackson, Stuart and Polk to engage in dangerous practices that ultimately led to their unnecessary deaths. While the deaths of these leaders were regretted, the soldiers and civilians of the South were not completely demoralized by their passing because Christian leaders were expected to serve as pleasing sacrifices to God. Some believers even devised strange theories that Jackson's death was necessary for God to grant the

⁴³Crothers, Quakers Living in the Lion's Mouth, 268-270.

South the victory at Chancellorsville. Although most believers scorned such beliefs, their familiarity with Christian theology made the death of leaders seem natural and even justifiable from a religious point of view.

Confederate generals were constrained by the limits of what Southerners considered acceptable Christian conduct in war. The laws of war, which would be codified by Francis Lieber in April 1863, were generally accepted by these generals, but their religious beliefs justified their adherence to these standards and devout believers were demoralized when these standards were not upheld, such as when Early burned Chambersburg in 1864. Southerners believed that God would only bless a war effort that abided by His laws, and when generals stepped outside of those parameters, devout civilians became concerned that God's wrath might be unleashed upon them. These restrictions, imposed by both their own consciences and the consciences of their fellow citizens, may seem a detriment to the Confederate war effort. However, given the fact that the Union Army was more than willing to respond with retaliation to any additional aggressive and brutal tactics that the Confederacy employed, it is unlikely that such tactics would have aided their war effort. Entering the North, plundering, raping and slaughtering at will would not have persuaded the Northerners to vote for the Democratic candidate, McClellan, in the presidential election in 1864.⁴⁴ Instead, any violations of the laws of war would have produced a reciprocal response that would do more damage to the South than to the North. Thus the religious requirements that helped convince generals to remain within moral limits aided the Confederate war effort. In some instances, massacres did occur because of Confederates' deeply ingrained white supremacist views, and their horror at seeing African American soldiers facing them in battle. In this case, some Confederate generals and soldiers did not think the laws of war applied, as they believed they were justified in using the harshest brutality to suppress what they believed to be a race war.

⁴⁴Some southerners held out hopes that the former General McClellan, the Democratic candidate for president of the United States, would win the election and make peace with the Confederacy. Whether or not that would have been the case, Abraham Lincoln, the Republican candidate, won the vote decisively, and so any hope of a negotiated peace was gone forever. The Northern electorate had ratified Lincoln's conduct of the war effort, and so Lincoln knew it was only a matter of time before his top general, U. S. Grant, brought the South to its knees in defeat.

Finally, Confederate generals had much of their understanding of death derived through a religious lens of what it meant to die. In this respect, religious beliefs had a decidedly negative impact on the Confederate war effort. Both Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson had voiced their appreciation of death's benefits before the war started, and especially after it began, each of them claimed to understand the great benefits death offered to the believer. The idea of death as a beneficial sacrifice, the central tenet of the Christian religion, served to convince Lee and Jackson that death was a means of pleasing God. Although suicide was forbidden, laying down one's life for God in martyrdom was Jackson's dream, and dying on a battlefield for one's country was conceived of as an acceptable alternative. The prevalent notion that death was not only an end to human existence, but also a means to a heavenly afterlife, encouraged generals to risk both their own lives and the lives of their men in ways that seriously damaged the Confederate war effort. In particular, Jackson's death was unnecessary, and only occurred because he refused to take proper precautions to protect his life. While demonstrating one's personal bravery was essential for generals in mid-nineteenth century America, the extent to which generals were exposed to enemy fire was totally unjustified and is partially attributable to beliefs in Providence as well as the idea of the desirability of death. Lee considered ending his life at the end of the war by exposing himself to Union fire, but managed to convince himself to meet with Grant and end his army's resistance at Appomattox Courthouse instead.

In the final analysis, religion played a multifaceted role in the Confederate war effort. It gave Confederate generals faith and hope and encouraged them to practice charity, which aided their cause. It served as a means to enforce morality on their troops and to ignore the morally problematic nature of slavery in Confederate society. It encouraged a trust in Providence which gave most generals and many soldiers confidence in battle. It allowed them to voice their prayers to God, convincing them that such prayers would be heard and answered by a loving God. It gave generals the strength and the motivation to strive to perform their duty. Religion exhorted generals to abide by the laws of war, which in general they did, with the grievous exception of treatment accorded to African American soldiers and their white officers. It also gave their deaths meaning and purpose, and gave them consolation as they lay dying, in particular Jackson and Stuart.

However, religion also served to blind generals to different options, especially in terms of slavery's effect on their society and their war effort. Providence served to encourage men like Jackson to believe that they would only die on the day appointed by God, and thus led to rash and even suicidal behaviour. The fusion of duty and religion blinded generals like Jackson and Lee to the consequences of their behaviour, causing them to feel morally assured when perhaps they should have questioned their own motives and objectives. Religion also encouraged generals to embrace their role as leaders and to willingly die as a sacrificial offering to God. Religion also facilitated J. E. B. Stuart's desire to die on a cavalry charge. Religious belief and practice had a discernible and multifaceted effect on the Confederate generals' conception and conduct of the American Civil War.

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