

1988

Slavery and the Evangelical Enlightenment from "Religion and the Antebellum Debate Over Slavery (Univ. of Georgia Press)"

Robert P. Forbes

University of Connecticut Department of History, robert.forbes@uconn.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://opencommons.uconn.edu/torr_articles

 Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Forbes, Robert P., "Slavery and the Evangelical Enlightenment from "Religion and the Antebellum Debate Over Slavery (Univ. of Georgia Press)"" (1988). *Torrington Articles*. 4.
https://opencommons.uconn.edu/torr_articles/4

Slavery and the Evangelical Enlightenment

ROBERT P. FORBES



It is a truism that evangelical Christianity and Enlightenment liberalism have constituted two of the most influential movements in America. For much of the nation's history, the two forces have existed in a state of tension or outright conflict, each checking the most extreme tendencies and thwarting the ultimate goals of the other. To many participants, American history itself has seemed a struggle between these two poles—interpreted as the clash between righteousness and infidelity, in the eyes of one set of combatants; between the growth of knowledge and the persistence of ignorance and superstition, in the perception of the other.

On rare occasions, however, the goals and assumptions of the adherents of the two movements have converged to extraordinarily powerful effect. (Indeed, on one level, the American Revolution itself may be regarded as the most momentous result of such a convergence.¹) A similar intersection took place in the second decade of the nineteenth century, when, under the tutelage of moral philosophy, evangelical Christianity accepted and broadened the universalism of the Enlightenment and endowed it with the social authority and the existential urgency of religion.² This development created a distinctive cultural phenomenon, which I will refer to here as the Evangelical Enlightenment: a quasi-messianic vision of social and material progress, of global renovation and reform, anticipating the advent of an age of universal liberty, equality, and prosperity within an explicitly Christian, Providential framework.

This vision encompassed many aspects, of which the overthrow of slavery was an essential part. While the separate streams of evangelicalism and moral philosophy *could* be interpreted in ways that did not fundamentally undermine slavery, the fragile supports that each lent to the institution were undermined by crucial aspects of the other. By wedding the empiricism and cosmopolitan civic vision of the Scottish philosophy to the spiritual fervor of evangelicalism, the Evangelical Enlightenment galvanized a radical northern

opposition to slavery and contributed to an ideological crisis within the southern planter class that seemed for a moment in the 1830s actually to have shaken its hold.³

In this essay, the origins and attributes of the Evangelical Enlightenment will be discussed; an exploration will be made of the ways in which defenders of slavery sought to neutralize this momentous threat to the institution—efforts that, while they failed in their goal of preserving slavery, did succeed in restoring the hostility between liberalism and religion and redirected much of the Enlightenment project of the study of mankind to the service of racism and the justification of European supremacy. These unfortunate developments left a painful legacy that persists to the present day.

The confluence of evangelical Christianity and Enlightenment liberalism only became possible because of a rare conjunction of historical events. The most important of these was the downfall of Napoleon and the end of a quarter century of world war. Like the later conclusions of the First and Second World Wars, and the fall of the Berlin Wall, the peace of 1815 gave rise to sweeping—if short-lived—visions of global peace and cooperation. For Americans, the apparently Providential deliverance of the United States after her own disastrous second war with Britain resulted in an even more urgent sense of relief and gratitude for her unlikely deliverance. No conscientious observer could honestly claim that the nation had been saved by her own efforts. “A revolution, immense, striking, glorious, and delightful, has taken place in the affairs of our blessed country,” proclaimed Mathew Carey in April of 1815, “for which we cannot be sufficiently grateful to heaven. We have not—I say emphatically we have not—merited the change.”⁴

The peace secured by the Treaty of Ghent that ended the War of 1812 paved the way to an authentically American national policy for the first time. To some observers, it seemed that the true American nation was only now emerging, after a generation of revolution and political violence. “It is but four years,” Frances Wright observed in 1819, “that the United States can be said to have enjoyed an acknowledged national existence.”⁵ Finally disentangled from the European wars of religious politics that they had been fighting by proxy, religious radicals and conservatives declared a partial truce, as the “era of good feelings” defused Republican fears of clerical despotism and freed Federalist religious conservatives to acknowledge, and in some cases to welcome, the socially radical dimension of their biblical faith.

Such phraseology may sound strange to the ears of a generation of historians nurtured on secularism and unfamiliar at firsthand with the narratives of

the Bible. The near-monopoly that conservatives have had in overtly Christian political discourse in recent years, combined with the tendency of liberals to focus on individual liberties—a dimension of freedom concededly not much stressed by the Bible—has left the impression that Christianity in general and evangelicalism in particular are fundamentally conservative doctrines. This is one reason why the biblical defense of slavery has received more respectful treatment of late than its abolitionist antithesis.⁶ Understandably repelled by post-Civil War northern triumphalism and historians' anachronistic moralism, modern scholars have bent over backward to do justice to the proslavery argument, discovering in it a formal consistency, integrity, and intellectual merit that few even of its champions claimed for it during its ascendancy.⁷ One of the most brilliant scholars of the ideology of slavery, Eugene Genovese, has frankly asserted the decisive intellectual and theological superiority of slavery's defenders over its detractors and has even gone so far, he has claimed, as to offer his students an "A" on the spot if they could point to a single passage in the Bible that condemns slavery—he evidently is convinced of the impossibility of the feat.⁸ The historian Forrest G. Wood has carried this line of argument to its logical outcome, arguing that "English North Americans embraced slavery *because* they were Christians, not in spite of it."⁹ Thus slavery may not necessarily be in conflict with traditional American values, as it was once assumed: according to its most thorough recent student, the proslavery argument "was precisely one of the clearest possible indications of the nature and character of American society and its values—not merely in the Old South but throughout the nation."¹⁰ This new scholarship thus finds the advocates of a religious defense of slavery to be consistent, sincere, and even, in the frankness of their views, in some ways more attractive than their clerical opponents who condemned slavery in the abstract but floundered and temporized in their ineffectual efforts to counter the actual workings of the institution.

Such a perception, it seems to me, is not quite fair. Few groups in American history have been more subject to what E. P. Thompson called "the enormous condescension of posterity" than those Americans who agonized over the complexity of the slavery question without finding an effective and consistent answer—a condescension the more inexplicable in that the spectacular bloodbath that they feared might accompany the end of slavery actually did come to pass. "We can hardly expect that reformers should have persuaded southern planters to give up their slaves," observes David Brion Davis. "Even in times of crisis, no other group of planters accepted emancipation except when coerced by a central government or the slaves themselves."¹¹ The failure

of Christian principles to effect the peaceful end of slavery should hardly be taken as proof that Christianity sanctioned slavery.

To address the issue directly, then: did evangelical Christianity sanction slavery or condemn it? Clearly, as Lincoln suggested in his second inaugural address, in practice it could and did do both.¹² Taken by itself, the question perhaps cannot be answered and may indeed be considered a more appropriate subject for theologians than for historians. Evangelicalism does not exist in a cultural vacuum, however; it must be studied in the context of the society in which it manifests itself. Here, fortunately, we are on much more solid ground.

To the contemporary reader, the Bible's position on slavery is ambiguous and contradictory. On the one hand, a host of passages paint the institution in a negative light and impose stiff sanctions on certain practices related to it. Most notably on the antislavery side of the ledger, the book of Exodus provides a classic paradigm of the passage from slavery to freedom.¹³ Deuteronomy 24:7 condemns "man-stealing" as a capital offense, and another passage forbids the Israelites to return an escaped slave to his master (23:15-16). On the proslavery side, however, both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament portray societies not only tolerant of, but economically dependent upon slave labor; the institution is never condemned outright, even by Jesus, while Paul explicitly enjoins slaves' obedience. In a pitched battle of exegesis, as generations of controversy would prove, pro- and antislavery controversialists could generally match each other verse for verse and interpretation for interpretation.

This fact has often led historians to the reductionist conclusion that the Bible served the purposes of both sides equally well—an assumption that is often accompanied by reproachful observations about the misuse of scripture by "both sides" to grind their own "secular" axes.¹⁴ But such an interpretation is patently unhistorical in the context of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a period when it was still impossible to make a sharp division between "secular" and "religious" aspects of life. While there are clearly many alternative ways of reading Scripture, we can be much more specific about how Americans of the early republic, particularly those who actively identified themselves as Christians, interpreted it, and about aspects upon which they agreed. Although scriptural precedents for slavery continued into the nineteenth century to pose "a problem for orthodox Biblicists," we need not assume that the existence of slavery in biblical times meant that genuine and consistent Bible-believing Christians therefore had to concede that slavery possessed divine sanction, as later defenders of slavery insisted.¹⁵

It is fair to say that none of the disputants considered the point at issue to be the simple textual question of whether the Bible "sanctioned" or "condemned" slavery. There has never been an objective biblical literalism, nor can there be because the Bible is such a sprawling, dynamic, multifaceted work—certainly more narrative than prescriptive. Encompassing a historical period of almost fourteen centuries, it has always and in every age demanded interpretation; indeed, this is undoubtedly the key to its resiliency. The search for the "plain truth of Scripture" is confounded as early as the second chapter of Genesis, which presents an alternative account of the creation of Adam and Eve to the one given in the first chapter. Thus the question of "what the Bible teaches" on a given subject must always be determined by reference to a set of values at least partially rooted *outside* the text—in society. The "truth" of the Bible inevitably reflects the assumptions, understandings, and aspirations of the culture interpreting it.

Most of the "approved" interpretations of the Bible in the Anglo-American world in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century were composed by clerics in England, Scotland, and the northern United States who had little or no personal stake in, and often little knowledge of, domestic slavery in the Americas. It is hardly surprising that they produced few scriptural defenses of the institution. Indeed, in most cases, they historicized it, as they did polygamy, concubinage, and divorce, as a practice permitted to the Jews on account of the "hardness of their hearts," but contrary to the spirit of the Gospel.¹⁶ Local clergy were free to adopt different interpretations, of course (as were laymen, for that matter); but their jurisdiction and authority would be limited. Moreover, it was not uncommon for clerics and laypeople who were slaveholders themselves, such as Arthur Lee of Virginia or Philadelphia's Benjamin Rush, to affirm that the Bible did not support slavery.¹⁷

In the context of the times, it could hardly be otherwise. Americans had just fought a Revolution on the principle that "all men are created equal" and endowed with inalienable rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The author of these famous phrases asserted later that his purpose was simply "to place before mankind the common sense of the subject."¹⁸ Garry Wills argues convincingly that Jefferson used the expression "common sense" as a technical term, representing the systematic science of man elucidated by Reid, Kames, Ferguson, Hutcheson, and the other philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment whose thought reigned supreme in America.¹⁹ As Henry May explained, "Americans wanted to believe at once in social and even scientific progress and in unchanging moral principles. Thus the only completely acceptable European teachers, for the early builders of nineteenth-

century American official culture, were the Common Sense philosophers of Scotland."²⁰

A radical opposition to slavery had been implicit in the Scottish philosophy from the start, although significantly, it was hardly a libertarian objection. From Francis Hutcheson on, texts of moral philosophy examined the threefold principle of one's duty to God, to oneself, and to others. All three relationships presupposed a condition of liberty and were rendered impossible by slavery. Thus slavery not only constituted an infringement of the enslaved person's inalienable rights; perhaps even more urgently, it rendered him or her incapable of discharging solemn responsibilities to man and to God that could neither be revoked nor delegated.²¹

James Beattie went considerably further in his *Elements of Moral Science* (1793). "It is impossible for the considerate and unprejudiced mind to think of slavery without horror," Beattie asserted flatly; he added: "If this be equitable, or excusable, or pardonable, it is vain to talk any longer of the eternal distinctions of right and wrong, truth and falsehood, good and evil." Beattie clearly saw nothing radical or controversial in his pronouncement. Indeed, "[i]n arguing against slavery," he remarked, "it may perhaps be thought that I dispute without an opponent."²²

Yet Scottish antislavery sentiment in the eighteenth century largely remained in the realm of abstract theory and failed to engage the concrete issues of British involvement in the slave trade and in slavery in the West Indies. Discussing the enormous upsurge in theoretical antislavery thought in eighteenth-century Scotland, C. Duncan Rice noted, "The most striking thing about this ferment of criticism is that it had no material effect."²³ The point may be applied with still greater force to the Americans, whose "free" republic rested on the foundation of liberty and equality. If slavery was condemned by Scripture, by natural law, and by the unimpeachable authority of the Scottish Philosophy, why did they not move against it? From the American Revolution on, observers were struck by the inconsistency of a people aggressively asserting their inalienable right to liberty while denying it to an enslaved population in their midst. "How is it," marveled Dr. Johnson, "that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes?" The Scottish philosopher John Millar agreed; speaking of the incongruity of Americans asserting the right to impose their own taxes as an "unalienable right," while depriving "a great proportion of their fellow-creatures" of "almost every species of right," Millar concluded, "Fortune perhaps never produced a situation more calculated to ridicule a liberal hypothesis, or to show how little the conduct of men is at the bottom directed by any philosophical principles."²⁴

What seemed to Dr. Johnson like the rankest hypocrisy and to Millar a lesson in human folly appeared in 1763 to the dean of the Scottish Enlightenment, Millar's mentor Adam Smith, as a practical illustration of a basic principle of political science. "In a republican government," Smith asserted, "it will scarcely ever happen that [slavery] should be abolished. The persons who make all the laws in that country are persons who have slaves themselves. These will never make any laws mitigating their usage; whatever laws are made with regard to slaves are intended to strengthen the authority of the masters and reduce the slaves to a more absolute subjection. . . . The authority of the masters over the slaves is therefore unbounded in all republican governments."²⁵ Prefiguring Jefferson's famous condemnation of slavery in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Smith asserted that "the love of domination and tyrannizing" among slaveholding legislators would make it "impossible for the slaves in a free country ever to recover their liberty."²⁶ In a "monarchicall and absolute government," Smith asserted, slavery would be at once less rigorous and easier to remove than in a republic: "the monarch [t]here being the sole judge and ruler, and not being affected by the easing of the condition of the slaves, may probably incline to mitigate their condition; and this we see has been done in all arbitrary governments in a considerable degree."

The slaves' greatest ally, for political as well as theological reasons, Smith argued, was the church. In ancient Rome, slaves had been regarded as profane, deprived not only of social relations with other men and women such as marriage, but entirely excluded from religion: "we may justly say they had . . . no god."²⁷ Their exclusion from Roman religion was the reason that the monotheistic faiths, "which taught the being of one supreme and universall god, who presided over all," were "so greedily receivd by this order of men." The masses of slaves who flocked to Christianity thus became the church's most powerful constituency in the power struggles between nobles and kings. "The great power of the clergy thus concurring with that of the king set the slaves at liberty. But it was absolutely necessary both that the authority of the king and of the clergy should be great." Such was the case in "Scotland, England, . . . France, Spain, etc.," where villeinage was abolished by the end of the Middle Ages. Where the authority of the government was weak, however, as in the cases of the elective monarchies of Poland or Bohemia, or the elective Habsburg empire, slavery continued; and it was likewise where the state decisively overshadowed even a strong church, as in Russia. Nor was Christianity necessarily hostile to slavery, Smith added: "The masters in our colonies are Christians, and yet slavery is allowed amongst them." It appeared that only

under special circumstances, where the influence of both the state and the church were great, could the power of slaveholders be thwarted.²⁸

It is instructive to apply Smith's observation on the intractability of slavery in a republic to the case of the United States. Whether or not we should attribute to it the force of an iron law of political economy, it can be illuminating in several ways. First, it can be helpful in dispelling scholars' unrealistic estimations both of the power of moral suasion and of the feebleness of the institution of slavery. Too often, discussions of the failure of antislavery movements embrace the perfectionist notion that the United States should have been able to shuck off the burden of slavery by a sheer effort of good will, without having to resort to some form of coercion. The profound institutional obstacles to antislavery in America frequently go unexplored, and a fundamental question is rarely posed: *Could antislavery beliefs alone have ended slavery in the United States without coercion?* Experience suggests they could not. While such an outcome is impossible to rule out in principle, there is no historical evidence to support it.²⁹

Second, this provisional understanding that slavery was not going to go away except by coercion can help us to pursue an inquiry into Americans' beliefs about slavery which is not unfairly tied to outcomes.³⁰ Doing so allows us to reconcile Americans' professed hostility toward slavery with the nation's manifest and growing involvement in it without having to construct retrospectively out of a few scattered texts, a hitherto-undiscovered "genuine" strain of proslavery ideology percolating through the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.³¹ Republican slaveholders were far less troubled by the problem of ideological inconsistency than historians seem to be. In the Kentucky constitutional convention of 1790, for example, advocates of slavery saw no need to employ appeals to natural rights philosophy or proslavery interpretations of the Bible; instead, they "blatantly announced their selfish intention to hold on to all of their worldly possessions and trusted in universal acknowledgement of property rights to make their position appear one of principle rather than naked self-interest. . . . there was little need in frontier America for a sophisticated defense of the right to turn men into chattel."³²

It also seems perfectly plausible, in light of Adam Smith's analysis of the intractability of slavery in a republic, that many thoughtful slaveholders believed that the cost of removing the institution—were it possible at all—was simply higher than any society would willingly pay. If the alternatives to slavery appeared to be either civil war or bloody slave insurrection on the Haitian model, it is hard to fault conscientious slaveholders for an unwillingness to

choose between them, particularly considering the way in which events actually turned out.

Similarly, Smith's analysis suggests that the failure of the churches to counter successfully the institution need not be viewed as evidence of their acceptance or even promotion of it.³³ Such a view once again confuses *outcomes* with *beliefs*. It ignores or downplays the valiant efforts of evangelicals in the last decades of the eighteenth century to combat slavery with the weapons of moral suasion alone, a campaign effectively countered by social pressure, physical violence, and intellectual attacks, and undergirded by the overwhelming political force of massive institutional resistance.³⁴ Significantly, moreover, this successful effort to quash antislavery evangelicalism did not involve, at least at the denominational level, a formal acknowledgment of a scriptural sanction for slavery; under pressure from slaveholding laymen and clergy, denominational bodies simply gave up. The report of the Methodist General Conference of 1816 is remarkable chiefly for its candor:

The committee . . . are of the opinion that, under the present circumstances in relation to slavery, little can be done to abolish a practice so contrary to the principles of moral justice. They are sorry to say that the evil appears to be past remedy. . . . [I]n the South and West the civil authorities render emancipation impracticable, and . . . to bring about such a change in the civil code as would favour the cause of liberty is not in the power of the General Conference.³⁵

Even the celebrated "proslavery" arguments from Scripture offered by the South Carolina clerics Richard Furman and Frederick Dalcho in the wake of the Denmark Vesey slave conspiracy of 1822 do not in fact represent defenses of slavery—it needed no defense in that state—but defenses of *Christianity*, which many planters had come to regard as a dangerous luxury in a slave society. "To pious minds," wrote Furman, "it has given pain to hear men . . . sometimes say, that holding slaves is indeed indefensible, but that to us it is necessary, and must be supported." These authors therefore sought to prove that South Carolina did not have to choose between Christianity and slavery.³⁶ A realistic assessment of the status of the churches within southern slave society suggests that ultimately the only options open to them regarding slavery were acquiescence or exile. The Quakers, alone among denominations in the South, chose the latter course, although many thousands of members of other sects did so as individuals.³⁷ It is undoubtedly true, as historian Henry May has asserted, that "[t]he collapse of evangelical antislavery is the most melancholy fact in American religious history"; but the blame for that collapse can-

not be assigned solely, or even principally, to the moral failings of the church leadership.³⁸

Finally, Adam Smith's analysis of the nature of the threat to slavery may provide us with a key to understanding the strategies employed by its defenders in the United States. It is not necessary to postulate that American slaveholders were familiar with Smith's theories directly.³⁹ The content conveyed in them, however, is implicit in much of Scottish and continental political philosophy (including Montesquieu), and it is entirely consistent with Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *Wealth of Nations*, works well known in the southern states. From their actions and their words, it is clear that many slaveholders accepted the principle that the chief danger to slavery was a strong federal state bolstered by the moral authority of religion, and they took steps to avert it.

If belief alone could not threaten slavery, as we have asserted, why did slaveholders fear the union of evangelicalism and moral philosophy? Not principally because it might undermine the internal solidarity of slave society, although this was a serious concern; but more fundamentally because of its potential to mobilize the citizens of the free states to take the reins of the one institution that had a realistic chance of crushing slavery: the federal government. "We have abolition-colonizing bible and peace societies," North Carolina's senator Nathaniel Macon warned, "and if the general government shall continue to stretch their powers, these societies will undoubtedly push them to try the question of emancipation."⁴⁰

Slaveholders were unanimous in viewing the strong federal government created by the Constitution as the principal potential threat to slavery. By sharing sovereignty with states with no direct investment in the institution, the southern states were linking their destinies with potentially hostile societies that might, in time, choose to strike at it. This had been the chief argument of the southern antifederalists against ratification; and though, like Macon, most antifederalists had since become strict constructionists, fulsomely praising the wisdom—when narrowly interpreted—of the document they had unsuccessfully opposed, they still eyed the Constitution and the extended republic it created with suspicion.⁴¹

Until the second decade of the nineteenth century, however, the threat remained entirely hypothetical. A pervasive and perennial localism helped to check the growth of dangerous national sentiment. Besides, the document itself provided essential supports to slavery, such as the fugitive slave clause and the protection of a national militia, as well as critical safeguards against federal

interference with slavery, particularly the requirement of a supermajority for amendments and a twenty-year protection for the slave trade.⁴² An inviolable guarantee of equal senate representation ("the strong and strongest Federal feature") ensured a southern veto over legislation for many years after the population growth in the free states secured a vast northern majority in the House of Representatives.⁴³

Moreover, the American political style, itself inherited in good measure from the Scottish philosophy, eschewed the "factious" coalition-building and arm-twisting that would have been necessary to create a unified antislavery voting bloc, in favor of an elevated but thoroughly ineffectual discourse of appeals to reason and the higher good. In the debate over the Quaker slave trade petitions of 1790, for example, abolitionists "stressed individual conscience over interest and practicality and harmony over faction," framing their petitions as "supplications to do justice instead of requests loaded with arguments that would appeal to a congressman's practical interests. . . . This view of politics made it difficult for abolitionists to organize their activity in a politically effective way."⁴⁴ At the same time, the overriding interest of slavery provided slaveholders with precisely the kind of clarity of purpose and organizational focus that northerners lacked, almost without having to say a word. The slave trade debate of 1790 showed how thoroughly this interest transcended politics or ideology: the two most unbridled opponents of the Quaker petitions were William Loughton Smith, perhaps South Carolina's most prominent Federalist, and Aedanus Burke, one of Georgia's most zealous Republicans—men on opposite sides of every party question.

Despite these institutional and cultural safeguards, the lack of a practicable proslavery ideology posed a serious problem for slaveholders locked in a federal union with nonslaveholding states. It is not necessary to postulate a well-spring of southern "guilt" over slaveholding to recognize the extent of this difficulty.⁴⁵ Domestically, it is hard to see where such guilt would have come from. Within their own homes, plantations, warehouses, auction houses, commercial exchanges, and courts, slaveholders found all the lineaments of a functioning, well-arranged, prosperous society with its own traditions, folkways, and mores.⁴⁶ "[M]an is an imitative animal," observed Thomas Jefferson. "From his cradle to grave he is learning to do what he sees others do." Inside the socially constructed reality of the individual communities that made up southern society, there was no element intrinsically so alien to human experience as to cause the southerner to call into question the legitimacy of "the manners of his own nation, familiarized to him by habit."⁴⁷ The problem for southern slaveholders was not one of *absolute* social mores, however, but of *relative*

ones. The world *outside* their plantations—the Anglo-American cultural world of which they considered themselves an integral part—increasingly rejected slavery and slaveholding as incompatible with its fundamental norms.

For our purposes, it is unimportant whether such condemnations of slavery were valid and sincere or self-serving and hypocritical; whether they were authentic expressions of humanitarian concern or smokescreens for the expansion of industrial capitalism.⁴⁸ What is important is that the attack on slavery was widespread and virtually uncontested, except on the relatively narrow grounds of national mercantile interest.⁴⁹ Southern slaveholders in the Revolutionary era themselves marveled at the incongruous position in which they found themselves and scorned to construct excuses: "Would anyone believe," wrote a rueful Patrick Henry, "that I am master of Slave[s] of my own purchase: I am drawn along by the general inconveniency of living without them, I will not, I cannot justify it."⁵⁰ He could not do so because his identity as a leader of the American Revolution and as an international symbol of liberty were as essential to his identity as his slaveholding—but perhaps not more so. Instead of justifying it, Henry's generation of Virginians turned their talents to developing institutional safeguards for slavery that would not compromise their place in history as heroic champions of freedom.

In his unrelenting hostility to the centralized power of religion and the state, Patrick Henry's own career after the Revolution may be taken as a case in point. In 1785, as governor of Virginia, he successfully shepherded Thomas Jefferson's historic "Act for Establishing Freedom of Religion" to passage; two years later, he strenuously opposed ratification of the federal constitution.⁵¹ Henry's actions before the adoption of the Constitution were unflinchingly devoted to preventing the establishment of a state religion, both in Virginia and in the nation, and to opposing a strong central government—in other words, to preventing the conditions that Adam Smith had argued were essential to the removal of slavery. In his legendary speech against ratification of the Constitution in the Virginia Convention, where he again stressed the danger of established religion, Henry appealed explicitly to slaveholders to emphasize the acute danger the new government would pose to their interest.⁵² After the document's adoption, Henry promised to submit to it peacefully and devoted his efforts to securing a Bill of Rights that barred any religious establishment, guaranteed the right of property, and secured all unenumerated rights to the people, or to the states. While all these amendments can be seen as boons to freedom, they were also important safeguards to slavery. Henry's later years were devoted to preventing a clash between the federal power and his state—a battle, he was convinced, that Virginia could not win.

The historian of Puritanism, Harry S. Stout, has pointed to the other side of the coin in Henry's anticlerical struggle. "Significantly," Stout observes, the Congregational ministers of New England "were defeated both in their efforts to avoid disestablishment and in their campaign to eradicate slavery. And herein lies a clue," Stout continues, to the "most radical and far-reaching transformation" produced by the Revolution: "the weakening of deference and the theory of fixed hierarchy on which it rested." In New England, with its relatively equal distribution of wealth and purely economic power, the breakdown of "centers of authority," such as the established church and the traditional ruling gentry elite, led to the relocation of sovereignty "among the people."⁵³ In Virginia, the same Revolutionary rhetoric and the disestablishment of the far weaker Episcopal church led not to a redistribution of sovereignty "among the people," as historian Thomas Buckley has recently shown, but to the removal of an important check to the "raw power of a multitude of diverse, contending interests," among which the predominant economic and social force of the major slaveholders inexorably prevailed. Slaveholding Virginia legislators stripped clergymen of the right to hold office, deprived religious groups of the right to receive bequests and hold property, and even confiscated church lands in the manner of the French Revolution. "Rather than ensuring complete religious freedom and separating church and state as autonomous entities," Buckley demonstrates, "Virginia's antebellum leaders used the statute [of religious freedom] to subordinate the churches and their corporate activities to legislative direction," guaranteeing to the conservative antebellum planter class "the same privileged position over church and state that their colonial forebears had enjoyed."⁵⁴ While Buckley views this outcome as ironic and inadvertent, it seems likely that Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry knew precisely what they were doing and were as interested in preserving freedom from clerical coercion as they were in protecting freedom of conscience.

Slaveholders in the generation after the Revolution did not have to believe in or act upon the doctrines that slavery was fundamentally wrong, and that all men, including Africans, were created equal. But they could not reject these principles categorically and retain their "enlightened" status as full participants in what John Stuart Mill called "the Spirit of the Age."⁵⁵ Many southern planters, Virginians in particular, desired deeply to have it both ways: they longed to participate in the great revolution in moral and material advancement sweeping the western world, which they and their fathers had done so much to launch, while at the same time retaining the high social status and standard of living secured to them by slavery.⁵⁶ Typically, "enlightened" slave-

holders vociferously declared, especially to nonsoutherners, that the days of slavery were numbered. Jefferson was hardly unique in his assertion that "[n]othing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free." His sentiment was a commonplace, even among South Carolinians—the Americans most dedicated to preserving the institution.⁵⁷ If the end of slavery was not a matter of *if* but of *when* and *how*, such "enlightened" planters believed they could remain on the side of progress and benevolence by offering lip service to emancipation on every relevant occasion, cherishing it as a goal, proclaiming its inevitability, and asserting its divine sanction, while scrupulously doing nothing to alleviate the insurmountable difficulties entailed in determining "when" and "how" it would take place.⁵⁸

This "high-minded" approach was not without its dangers, as tidewater planters living in districts with substantial slave majorities were quick to point out. As long as slaveholders sought to stay on the side of progress by refraining from mounting a coherent defense of slavery, and even endorsing the abstract goal of emancipation, they weakened the intellectual cohesion of the planter class, which would then have to depend upon pure class interest, naked of any sophisticated ideological support for slavery.⁵⁹ First, the tactic opened the door to desertions, particularly among the young—a prime concern of Jefferson's.⁶⁰ Second, it relied too heavily upon purely institutional safeguards for slavery, trusting to the dispersed nature of federal power, as well as on the localism (and the apathy) of the citizens of nonslaveholding states to keep them from adopting emancipation as a national goal.

What made this high-risk southern strategy work was its ability to stigmatize the essential elements of any effective challenge to slavery—a powerful central government in concert with a strong religious authority—as mortal threats to republican liberty.⁶¹ The explosion of party conflict in the early 1790s proved to be an unparalleled boon to the "high-minded" defense of slavery. Southern Republicans' defense of the French Revolution, in alliance with northern artisans, farmers, and mechanics, secured for them gilt-edged radical credentials at little obvious cost to the security of their dominant position in a slave society.⁶² For their part, the Federalist coalition of conservative politicians and orthodox clergymen could not have more perfectly played the role of dictatorial "monarchists" and inquisitorial priests had their scripts been written for them by Jefferson himself. The Federalist agenda, particularly in the last years of the century, seemed to represent a genuine threat to basic American freedoms, perhaps even to independence itself. The jailing of Republican editors under the Sedition Act created martyrs to liberty whose names would be a rallying cry against oppression for a generation, while the

Virginia and Kentucky Resolves of 1798–99, which were designed to preserve constitutional liberty, would serve as the template for nullification and secession. The memory of the infamous Hartford Convention, at which New England Federalists reputedly plotted treason during the War of 1812, would be invoked to fan the flames of Republican outrage and rally the faithful to the polls for decades, exactly as the “waving of the bloody shirt” did in the years after the Civil War.⁶³ The High Federalists were genuine reactionaries; hence Republicans, arraying themselves against all that the Federalists stood for, successfully portrayed themselves as progressives, in spite of holding slaves.

Jeffersonian Republicans were so successful in shaping the interpretation of the events of this critical period that their version of the Jeffersonian-Federalist struggle still remains the dominant paradigm of American history for many historians, as well as for the public at large.⁶⁴ As long as such southern Republicans as Jefferson continued to proclaim their hatred of slavery and their determination to eradicate it as soon as practicable, most of their political allies in the free states were willing to give them the benefit of the doubt and leave emancipation in the hands of those who, presumably, knew best how to accomplish it and allowed it to be undertaken when the more pressing danger of Federalism had been defeated. It failed to occur to most of them that in dismantling the detested apparatus of the Federalist state and replacing it with the hands-off Jeffersonian government, the Revolution of 1800 had neutralized the one institution in the United States capable of implementing effective measures against slavery.

The ongoing tendency of American historians to view the events of the early republic from a Jeffersonian-Jacksonian perspective has perhaps nowhere led to more confusion than in the study of the slavery issue. The fundamental historiographic theme of the early republic has been the triumph of democracy and egalitarianism; the fact that the period also saw the federalization of the defense of slavery, the flowering of the “positive good” argument, and the formalization of racism has engendered such profound cognitive dissonance that, for years, scholars generally either skirted the issue or allowed it to drop from their histories entirely. “Slavery was the most accusing, the most tragic, and the most dangerous of all questions,” wrote Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who testified eloquently to its danger by all but omitting it from his celebrated study of the Jacksonian age.⁶⁵ Even where slavery is the focus, the picture presented is distorted frequently through a Jeffersonian lens. In his *Proslavery*, for example, Larry Tise portrays an exaggerated portrait of New England Federalism after 1800 as the progenitor of an implicitly proslavery “con-

servative counterrevolution” against a presumably antislavery “Jeffersonian Democracy.”⁶⁶

Such interpretations are in keeping with a secularist teleology that views religion in general, and evangelicalism in particular, as inherently reactionary and inimical to liberty. A classic work in this genre is Ford K. Brown's *Fathers of the Victorians*, a study—or rather an exposé—of William Wilberforce and the evangelical Clapham Sect of which he was the spiritual father; the book astonishingly managed almost completely to ignore the antislavery work that contemporaries and most later admirers almost universally regarded as the sect's central mission.⁶⁷ Forrest Wood's *Arrogance of Faith*, discussed previously in this chapter, is a more extreme example of this powerful antipathy toward religion in general and Christianity in particular. I am indifferent here to any possible theological or psychological explanations for these scholars' antireligious animus. My concern is rather that their interpretations are demonstrably ahistorical as a result of it.

An earlier historical tradition offered a very different interpretation of the significance of Anglo-American religious developments during the early nineteenth century. Historians from John Bach McMaster to Gilbert Hobbs Barnes viewed the rise of evangelicalism as an important element in the development both of antislavery and of democratization.⁶⁸ According to the Russian political scientist Mosei Ostrogorski, writing in the early twentieth century, the British campaign against West Indian slavery, inspired and directed by evangelicals, helped to transform the very nature of the political process by calling forth an unprecedented outpouring of popular participation in national affairs: “A new character—the fellow-creature, the ‘man’—was ushered from the [speaking] platform into the social and political world of aristocratic England, and was destined to remain there.” In addition to awakening a sense of fellow-feeling, the religious revival had prompted an expanded conception of duty that extended not only to personal morality but to responsibility for society as a whole.⁶⁹ Hundreds of thousands of men, women, and minors engaged in petition campaigns, antislavery fairs, monster meetings, and other forms of collective action that radically expanded the boundaries of political participation and reflected a changed sense of the relationship of the individual to the state.⁷⁰ The ramifications in the United States of these British developments were important but limited. In the early years of the American Republic, educators brought a relatively theoretical and passionless doctrine of antislavery to congregations possessing few or no slaves. By the end of the century, however, both of these factors had changed. Sensitized by Granville

Sharp's legal battle to abolish slavery in Britain proper and by the massive public struggle of the campaign to end the British slave trade (which finally triumphed in 1808), authors of texts on moral philosophy infused their anti-slavery arguments with a new urgency. At the same time, the explosive spread of cotton cultivation, made possible by Eli Whitney's cotton gin, was drastically expanding the demand for slaves and opening the ranks of slaveholding to a much wider class of Americans. Ironically, then, even as slaveholding became increasingly common and accepted in America, textbook opinions on slavery, still heavily influenced by British norms, increasingly portrayed the institution as outdated and immoral.

The standard discussion of the morality of slavery could be found in William Paley's textbook of practical ethics, *Moral and Political Philosophy* (1784). Perhaps the most influential, and certainly the most widely read work on moral science, Paley's text formed a major part of the senior-year curriculum at Yale, Harvard, and most other American colleges. Although Lawrence Cremin describes Paley's work as "bland" and "utilitarian," his denunciation of slavery was uncharacteristically scathing and uncompromising.⁷¹ Slavery, in Paley's definition, consisted of "an obligation to labour for the benefit of the master, without the contract or consent of the servant." Following traditional formulations, Paley argued that such obligation can only legitimately arise, "consistently with the state of nature," from crimes, from captivity, or from debt. "The slave-trade upon the coast of Africa is not excused by these principles," Paley observed. "When slaves in that country are brought to market, no questions, I believe, are asked about the origin or justice of the vender's title." Paley's picture of the slave trade constituted a veritable catalogue of crimes and violations of natural right: "The natives are excited to war and mutual depredation. . . . The slaves, torn away from parents, wives, children . . . are transported to the European settlements in America, with no other accommodation on shipboard than what is provided for brutes. . . . the miserable exiles are [then] placed . . . in subjection to a dominion and system of laws, the most merciless and tyrannical, that ever were tolerated upon the face of the earth. . . ." With uncharacteristic sarcasm, Paley dispensed with the claim of the "necessity" of slavery to cultivate America: "It is said that [the land] could not be cultivated with quite the same conveniency and cheapness, as by the labour of slaves; by which means, a pound of sugar, which the planter now sells for sixpence, could not be afforded under sixpence-halfpenny;—and this is the necessity."⁷²

Prof. John Daniel Gross of Columbia College in New York, author of *Natural Principles of Rectitude for the Conduct of Man* (1795), went even further

than Paley in denouncing the malevolent influence of slavery, which had "already so far advanced in our free country, that even the children of the farmer refuse the most necessary work, such as is essential to the management of a farm, under the foolish notion, that it is degrading to a freeman, and an occupation only fit for slaves."⁷³ A generation later, John L. Parkhurst of New Hampshire appended an inflammatory codicil to a discussion of slavery taken otherwise verbatim from Paley: "That the blacks, by the system of slavery, suffer more than the whites gain, is a proposition so evident, that he who disputes it, hardly deserves to be refuted,—unless it were by being chained, and subjected to the lash of a task-master. Therefore, as human happiness is diminished by the system of slavery, it is unlawful and ought to be abolished."⁷⁴ Finally, in 1835, Paley was decisively superseded by Francis Wayland's *Elements of Moral Science*, one of the best-selling books of the century, which argued ingeniously and unequivocally that slavery was forbidden by the Gospel, whose principles, "having gained a lodgment in every part of the known world," had instigated a "universal moral revolution" in order "to effect the universal abolition of slavery."⁷⁵

To what degree did such radical antislavery pronouncements in establishment-sanctioned educational texts reflect popular attitudes? In Britain, it appears likely that public opinion against slavery outstripped the moral philosophers, who merely strove in their works to constrain antislavery within acceptable theoretical bounds. Armed with the religious imprimatur provided by the evangelical wing of the Anglican church and aided by the centralized institutional framework of the British state, antislavery activists were able to translate moral fervor into concrete political results in remarkably short order. From the end of the Napoleonic Wars, "a universal outburst of public opinion" against the slave trade shocked politicians into taking a much stronger position than they had intended. "The nation is bent upon this object," wrote a bemused Lord Castlereagh in 1814. "I believe there is hardly a village that has not met and petitioned upon it . . . and the ministers must make it their policy."⁷⁶ In the United States six years later, the movement to restrict slavery in Missouri sparked a similar popular outpouring of activism. Almost immediately, however, an unbreachable wall of southern intransigence deadlocked Congress and stopped the campaign dead in its tracks.⁷⁷ Thus, as I have suggested, it is not necessary to point to any philosophical or theological change to explain the withering away of antislavery activity in the United States after the Revolution. The increasing economic power of the institution as well as the political intractability of the federal system (specifically designed to thwart the kind of sweeping social and economic changes imposed by the

general government that legislated antislavery would represent) provide all the explanation that is needed. While Britain and the United States possessed many remarkably similar antecedent cultural conditions, the political and economic exigencies of slaveholding in the United States substantially checked the moral response to arguments that galvanized thousands in Britain.

Thus we are able to observe a widening split between Anglo-American moral theory and American practice regarding the institution of slavery. Paralleling this division we may trace a growing cleavage within American society itself—one not without considerable irony. While Anglophilia continued to be the abiding trait of most socially conservative Americans (New Englanders in particular), the aristocratic English society from which they took their cues was undergoing major changes. British social thought, unencumbered by the presence of slavery in the metropolis and influenced and educated by the outcome of the American Revolution, developed along increasingly egalitarian lines, frequently carrying imitative Americans along with it. Practiced by patrician Clapham Sect abolitionists, such as Wilberforce and Hannah More, evangelical religion acquired a following among Anglophilic northeasterners that Cane Ridge-style frontier revivalism would never have gained for it.

Viewed in this Anglo-American context, the turn away from Jeffersonian liberalism to evangelicalism can only be described as a “conservative counter-revolution” by a severe twisting of terms. Even Jeffersonian Republicans had turned away from the extremism of the French Revolution and the violence and megalomania of the dictator who commandeered it. The upheavals caused by Napoleon's conquests and the international coalition raised to defeat him had together increased the interdependence of the world community, inspiring visions of cooperation and reform on a global scale. The end of the wars immediately sparked a rebirth of shipping and commerce, of which the United States was the greatest beneficiary, turning a new generation of provincial New England farm boys into seasoned world travelers and bringing an assortment of seamen from all over the world to American ports. At the same time, a fervent atmosphere of evangelical revival provided Americans with a psychological, as well as a theological, basis for regarding all the dizzyingly varied inhabitants of the globe as members of one community. The period of the Congress of Vienna has been regarded, with some justice, as an era of retrenchment and reaction, but this is only part of its legacy: to many contemporaries it appeared to be an age of limitless potential and Providentially directed progress. After the defeat of the Napoleonic “Antichrist,” anything seemed possible—even the prospect of the American nation living out the true meaning of its creed.

Yet the openings and opportunities of the second decade of the 1800s had the further effect of generating an increasingly powerful backlash. Slavery was too important an institution, both economically and socially, for slave society to in effect commit suicide by instructing its youth in demonstrably dangerous views. “Reforming” education—reshaping the beliefs of the next generation—became a chief priority of southern intellectuals. As early as 1779, Thomas Jefferson, as a visitor to the College of William and Mary, had replaced the professorship of divinity with one of “Law and Police.”⁷⁸ Intriguingly, Jefferson, who had once bemoaned the “unhappy influence on the manners of our people” caused by the “influence of slavery among us,” now became the first major advocate of “home education at the South.”⁷⁹ Before 1820, Jefferson began to spread the alarm of the dangers of northern schooling. “We are now trusting to those who are against us in position and principle,” he warned, “to fashion in their own form the minds and affections of our youth. . . . [who are] imbibing opinions and principles in discord with our own country. This canker is eating out the vitals of our existence, and if not arrested at once, will be beyond remedy.”⁸⁰ No contemporary Virginian could have had any doubt that slavery was the institution of “our own country” that Jefferson considered to be under attack.

Jefferson's solution was to create a state university in Virginia, where moral philosophy would never be taught, to forestall the need to send the state's youths to the North, where they would be turned into “fanatics & tories.”⁸¹ Jefferson's tireless campaign to build the University of Virginia has understandably been regarded as one of his greatest achievements, as he himself regarded it. But the reactionary dimension of Jefferson's project is demonstrated most glaringly in his quixotic efforts to put the University of Virginia under the direction of Thomas Cooper, an immigrant British physician and political economist and future pioneering formal racist and secessionist. Self-exiled from England at the time of the treason trials of 1794, Cooper settled in Philadelphia, where he practiced medicine, engaged in Republican politics, and displayed a hostility toward the clergy and religion perhaps more extreme than any other man in American public life. Thomas Jefferson's impassioned campaign to install Cooper at the helm of the university tells us volumes about the kind of “opinions and principles” Jefferson considered appropriate for Virginia's youth.

In one of his earliest letters on the subject, Jefferson wrote in 1800 to Cooper's mentor and father-in-law, the English scientist and theologian Joseph Priestley, that he intended to establish a “broad and liberal and *modern*” university in which “some branches of science formerly esteemed, may now be

omitted. . . ."⁸² Fourteen years later, he broached with Cooper his plan to establish a university to teach "all the branches of science useful to us, and at this day," hinting that Cooper might be the man to lead it.⁸³ In 1819, after Cooper had been asked to step down from a teaching position at the University of Pennsylvania, Jefferson not only invited Cooper to accept a professorship at the still-unfunded university, but he actually committed the school to a long-term contract with Cooper and advanced him fifteen hundred dollars—an action that nearly destroyed the institution before its birth.⁸⁴

Jefferson told Joseph C. Cabell, the university's chief supporter in the Virginia senate, that he considered Cooper to be "the greatest man in America, in the powers of mind, and in acquired information."⁸⁵ Nonetheless, Cabell frankly informed Jefferson that "the enlightened part of society" found "that either in point of manners, habits, or character, [Cooper] is defective."⁸⁶ The controversy exploded publicly in 1820, when a member of the university's board of visitors, John Holt Rice, a moderate Presbyterian clergyman, printed in his *Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine* a damning selection of frankly irreligious quotations from Cooper's appendix to Priestley's *Memoirs*, published in 1806.

In the appendix, Cooper blasted away at the central tenets of the Christian faith. "[T]he time seems to have arrived," Cooper exulted, "when the separate existence of the human soul, the freedom of the will, and the eternal duration of future punishment, like the doctrines of the Trinity, and Transubstantiation, may be regarded as no longer entitled to public discussion." The doctrine of the soul, Cooper asserted, "originated in ignorance" and was "supported by imposture." As for Jefferson's beloved Scottish Common Sense philosophy, Cooper averred that he "paid no attention to the hypothesis of the Scotch Doctors, Reid[,] Beattie and Oswald," derisively asserting that "the utter insufficiency of such young gentlemen and lady's philosophy as they have adopted, has secured them from further animadversion," and plunged them "into merited obscurity." Later in the book, exploring the possibility that a particular series of experiments investigating the theory of spontaneous generation might tend toward atheism, Cooper opined, "But if it do lead to Atheism, what then? . . . I [cannot] see how the belief of no God can be more detrimental to society or render a man less fit as a citizen than the belief of the thirty thousand Gods of the Pagans, or the equal absurdities of trinitarian orthodoxy."⁸⁷

Unsurprisingly, Rice reacted to these remarkable passages with indignation and fury. It was not enough for Cooper to describe such basic Christian doctrines as the immateriality and immortality of the soul and of future retribu-

tion as "pernicious error"; he scornfully rejected the arguments in support of them of the Scottish school of Common Sense, which Rice considered "the most cherished sentiments of the wisest and best men that the world has ever seen!" as "feeble and sophistical—mere lady's philosophy." On top of this, Cooper likened the fundamental tenet of orthodox Christianity, the doctrine of the Trinity, to the "exploded" doctrine of transubstantiation—the litmus test of popery—and sneeringly branded Trinitarians as polytheists. Finally, Rice took up Cooper's dismissive rhetorical question about the implications of doubtful scientific experiments:

"But if it do lead to Atheism, what then? . . ." What then? Why then, farewell to the dearest hopes and best consolations of man!—then, let the apostles be rejected with scorn, and the martyrs be branded with folly—then, the magnificent conceptions of immortality, and the anticipated joys of heaven are a dream—then, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die—we die forever—then all that is grand and goodly, in creation; all that is noble in man; all that is magnificent in eternity, is but the *ignis fatuus* which for a while tantalizes and misleads the weary traveller in a stormy night, and then leaves him hopeless of home and helpless, to sink in despair.⁸⁸

Although Jefferson had expected that such Presbyterians as Rice would oppose Cooper, he had thought that Episcopalians, Baptists, and Methodists would fall into line behind the choice. Instead, the nearly unanimous outcry against the appointment forced Cooper to withdraw, and the legislature converted his fifteen hundred dollar salary advance into a severance payment. This was not the end of the issue, however. As the editor of Jefferson's letters on the university observed with dry understatement, "the having been thus traversed in a favorite measure, seems to have somewhat disturbed the usual philosophic serenity of the venerable rector."⁸⁹ In fact, Jefferson was apoplectic, denouncing Rice, the visitors, and the entire Presbyterian church; attacking their religious opinions and accusing them of seeking to be established by law and to monopolize the whole system of education in the state.⁹⁰ These absurd charges, against a sect that included many steadfast Republicans and long-time personal allies, did much to tarnish Jefferson's reputation among his fellow citizens in his later years.

Why was Jefferson willing to threaten his beloved "bantling," the University of Virginia, over this controversial appointment? Why would Jefferson, who paraphrased Reid and Hutcheson in the Declaration of Independence and believed that Edinburgh was the best university in the world, want to place a man who scoffed at the Scottish Common Sense school as "lady's philosophy" in charge of education of Virginia's youth? Why did Jefferson insist that

Cooper, a versatile but superficial thinker, possessed "more science in his single head than all the colleges of New England, New Jersey, and . . . Virginia, put together?"⁹¹

Jefferson did not say, and his admiration for Cooper constituted a problem that perplexed many of his closest friends.⁹² We may find some hints, I believe, however, in his letters. In a well-known 1786 letter to Maria Cosway, known as the "Dialogue of the Head and the Heart," Jefferson's "two halves" debate whether he should see Maria again and expose himself to emotional harm, or whether he should avoid the entanglement and the potential emotional bruising it portended. "The art of life is the art of avoiding pain," says the head. This assertion Jefferson repeated years later in his "syllabus to the doctrines of Epictetus," which he annexed to an invitation to visit the University of Virginia in a letter to William Short:

Moral.—Happiness the aim of life.

Virtue the foundation of happiness.

Utility the test of virtue.

Pleasure active and In-do-lent.

In-do-lence is the absence of pain, the true felicity . . .

The *summum bonum* is not to be pained in body, nor troubled in mind.⁹³

This is the doctrine of the head in the Cosway letter. It is precisely the materialist doctrine taught by Thomas Cooper, the man whose "head" contained more "science" than all the colleges in America. The response of the heart, however, is that "[m]orals were too essential to the happiness of man to be risked on the incertain combinations of the head. She laid their foundation therefore in sentiment, not in science." "That this represents Jefferson's own belief," states Douglas L. Wilson, "is as certain as our knowledge of its source—Scottish common-sense philosophy."⁹⁴

Yet Wilson, along with several earlier commentators, mistakenly believed that the head stood for duty; the heart for the self-indulgent "philosophy of following wherever one's emotions lead." This is an anachronistic interpretation, at least as far as Jefferson is concerned. "To reach such conclusions," argues Garry Wills, one must "ignore the fact that all the arguments for duty and virtue come from the Heart; that the Head speaks only for a narrow, selfish interest. . . ."⁹⁵ For the slaveholding author of the Declaration of Independence, the demands of the heart—that is, the demands of one's conscience, one's "common sense"—were painful indeed.

This was just as it should be, asserted John Holt Rice in his discussion of Cooper's philosophy. "Many a man knows what is for his good, who does not

pursue it. . . . The heart must be imbued with sound principles, and right affections cultivated, and good habits formed, or man will continue to be a wretched wanderer from the path of happiness, his superior cultivation only serving to make self condemnation and remorse more pungent."⁹⁶ In the appointment of Cooper, Rice thought he detected an effort by the "Monticello-men" to inculcate "atheistical opinions" in the youth of the Old Dominion. "But let the faith of a nation be undermined," Rice admonished:

. . . let the whole community be without the fear of God before their eyes, and a storm is raised compared with which the uproar of the elements, the desolations of the tornado and the earthquake, are a mere "civil game." Unhappily many of our youth are brought up without religious principle. . . . They are allowed to live as they list, and their passions, unaccustomed to restraint, are particularly violent. We may reap the bitter fruit of this folly. Should the bonds which now unite us as a people be dis severed, and civil war arise—Which may God in his great mercy forbid—we believe that the contest would be marked by deeds of ferocity, and works of desolation, of which the world has exhibited few examples.⁹⁷

Jefferson himself had once written: "Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath?" Now he proposed to instruct the children of Virginia that such fears as "the eternal duration of future punishment" were mere "ignorance, . . . no longer entitled to public discussion." But Jefferson could never, of course, teach such a doctrine himself, without ceasing to be Jefferson; nor could he even bring himself to hold it in his heart. Thus he had recourse to Cooper. Ironically, Douglas Wilson concluded that the message of Jefferson's letter to Maria Cosway was "that the Heart, while not wanting in warmth, is obliged to occupy the same person as the Head." In actuality, Jefferson found it impossible to hold both sides of his personality within himself, and he deputized Cooper to pursue the "narrow, selfish interest" of the head.

It is to just such an interest that Thomas Cooper devoted himself when, as the second president of South Carolina College, he served the slaveholding class of that state with unparalleled zealousness for more than a decade. The historian Michael Sugrue has recounted the thoroughness and deliberation with which Cooper, the ostentatious champion of free speech, literally catechized the youth of the planter class in the principles of disunion, while inculcating a uniquely virulent and uncompromising proslavery ideology, founded on a formal assertion of the separate creation and inferiority of Africans—thus bringing to fruition the suggestions that Jefferson advanced in the *Notes*

on Virginia "as a suspicion only."⁹⁸ In South Carolina, Cooper carried out to the letter Jefferson's hope for a university which would prevent the propagation of "opinions and principles in discord with our own country."⁹⁹ To prevent the spread of such principles, Cooper found it necessary to dispense with the troublesome notion of "self-evident truths" in the Declaration of Independence, declaring that "he knew of no sense in which it ever was, or would, or could be true that men are 'born free, equal and independent,'" and that there was no validity to the doctrine of "unalienable and indefeasible rights." "Rights," Cooper taught, "are what society acknowledges and sanctions, and they are nothing else."¹⁰⁰

This socially determined definition of rights enabled Cooper to transmute the prejudice under which African Americans suffered into a fundamental principle of black subordination: "People of colour are, in every part of the United States, considered, not merely by the populace, but by the law, as a permanently degraded people; not participating as by right, of the civil privileges belonging to every white man, but enjoying what civil privileges they possess, as a right and grant, as a matter of favour conceded by the law, and revocable by the law."¹⁰¹ As Cooper's (and Jefferson's) biographer Dumas Malone recognized, this was the doctrine that Roger B. Taney would later adopt in his Dred Scott decision—though it would not be until the 1850s that Taney and others would make the fearful leap to viewing such a doctrine not as *invalidating* the Declaration of Independence but as *implicit* in it.¹⁰²

Most defenders of the slaveholding status quo were unwilling innovators, for obvious reasons. The strongest defense of a conservative social order was an appeal to tradition—a fact so plain that modern historians have often assumed that that is what defenders of slavery were making. Despite their incontrovertible social conservatism, however, such a strategy was denied because the most "approved" authorities disapproved of slavery. Proslavery writers, such as John Fletcher of Louisiana, were placed on the uncomfortable ground of opposing "the eloquent and magical pens of Dr. Johnson, Dr. Paley, Dr. Channing, Dr. Wayland, Mr. Barnes, and others," including Hutcheson and Reid—in other words, it was Fletcher of Louisiana versus the entire establishment of moral philosophy.¹⁰³ Against these bastions of authority, slavery's defenders could offer a few quotations from "Grotius or Huber," some passages of biblical commentary by Michaelis, and unnamed "numerous and elaborate treatises" from France that, while "learned, acute, and industriously compiled," were "impregnated, of course, with the poison of fanatical prejudices," and "colored with the peculiar sentiments and sociological reveries of their authors"—in other words, they were hardly tailor-made to the purpose

at hand.¹⁰⁴ It is scarcely surprising, then, that even though southern statesmen urged the "practical necessity" of developing an effective proslavery ideology, southern thinkers turned resolutely to the task, and southern educators showed a willingness to promote their efforts, southern *parents* for the most part ignored their novel efforts, preferring still to send their sons to northern schools or insisting that southern colleges continue to teach Paley and Wayland (despite their strictures against slavery) instead of such anodyne treatises as Jasper Adams's *Elements of Moral Philosophy* or John Fletcher's "Easy Lessons" on slavery.¹⁰⁵

More conservative slaveholders simply refused to play the game of searching for philosophical justifications for slavery. Charleston's Hugh S. Legaré dismissed the practice of justifying or condemning slavery on principles of natural law as "a very good thesis for young casuists to discuss in the college moot-club," but he asserted that "[w]e shall not undertake it, for we have no taste for abstractions." The true justification of slavery was historical: slavery, like war, had always existed and had always been "as lawful as any other arrangement of civil society." Perhaps the opinion of the world was changing; "but we must be allowed to hold on to the old logic a little longer."¹⁰⁶

The younger generation of slaveholding intellectuals, with South Carolinians trained by Thomas Cooper in the vanguard, considered this approach foolhardy if not suicidal. How could their addled elders have sat in silent acquiescence, the proslavery evangelist J. D. B. De Bow wondered, while the abolitionists indicted them on the basis of woolly-headed "unascertained premises"? "The abolitionists proceeded in their indictment of slaveholders like honest Dogberry: 'Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves; and it will go near to be thought so shortly. . . .'" Unfortunately, the issue was at once accepted in this blundering form by the defendants, and the earliest replies amounted to nothing more than a plea of confession and avoidance." De Bow's revised "line of defence" sounded less like the friendly debates of the "college moot-club" and more like intellectual commando warfare: "Opposition is vain, unless we seize the hostile battery, and turn against our adversary the same guns which have been making havoc in our ranks. The strength of our convictions, the soundness of our reasonings, the ingenuity and cogency of our speculative combinations, will prove utterly futile, unless we first conquer the facts which barricade and protect the hostile position."¹⁰⁷

The most effective tactic for capturing the heavy artillery of antislavery thought was also the most fearsome—and the most strongly resisted. It was a flanking attack on the most obstinate of accepted "facts"—the authority of

the Bible itself. The Bible's assertion of the common descent of all people, interpreted in light of the meaning of equality in the republican United States, proved to be a serious obstacle to the development of an effective rationale for African slavery. To the pioneering racist and proslavery advocate Josiah Nott—a devoted student of Thomas Cooper—it was essential to destroy the belief, handed down from Genesis, that blacks and whites had descended from the same set of parents. "Just get the dam'd stupid crowd safely around Moses," as Nott pungently put it, "and the difficulty is at an end."¹⁰⁸

A majority of southerners always refused to countenance such a move, ruling it out on grounds of propriety as well as theology. But perhaps as few slaveholders fully took to heart the more far-fetched attempts to sweeten the pill of slavery with the sugar coating of religion. Such efforts were, more often than not, northern imports, as Harriet Beecher Stowe's Augustine St. Claire asserted (almost 150 years before Larry Tise made the same point): "... To this day, I have no patience with the unutterable trash that some of you patronizing Northerners have made up, as in their zeal to apologize for our sins. We all know better. . . ." "I had often supposed," said Miss Ophelia, "that you, all of you, approved of these things, and thought them *right*,—according to Scripture."

"Humbug! We are not quite reduced to that yet."¹⁰⁹

The effort to reconstruct American ethics to defend slavery against the onslaught of the Evangelical Enlightenment ultimately failed. But it came close enough to succeeding to redraw the picture of traditional attitudes from a consensus that the institution was an evil—necessary or otherwise—to a debate, presumably more or less evenly matched, between "antislavery" and "proslavery" arguments. Yet it is essential that these arguments should not be abstracted from each other, from slavery itself, and from the larger complex of events that helped to shape their content and that they in turn helped to bring about.¹¹⁰ Appropriately, Abraham Lincoln rightly admonished his countrymen not to sit in judgment on a people who believed that religion sanctified slavery: "It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not that we not be judged." But this by no means implied that he felt that no judgment could be made; it simply meant that humans, with all their imperfections, were in no position to act as judge. The Civil War, however, Lincoln did consider a decisive and terrible verdict against slavery: "as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said: 'the judgments of the Lord, are true and righteous altogether.'"¹¹¹

NOTES

1. See, for example, Douglas Sloan, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1971), 129.

2. The conjunction of evangelical religion and moral philosophy in the early nineteenth century rarely has been examined in detail. Useful, but incomplete, are Sidney Ahlstrom, "The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology," *Church History* 24 (September 1955), 257–72; Henry F. May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 337–57, and David Brion Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 116–41. Daniel Walker Howe's *The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy, 1805–1861* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970) is more useful than Donald H. Meyer, *The Instructed Conscience: The Shaping of the American National Ethic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), but the value of the former work is somewhat diminished by its narrow focus. Mitchell Snay, in *Gospel of Disunion: Religion and Separatism in the Antebellum South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 82–89, examines the conjunction at a later period, arguing that moral philosophy was particularly "useful" and "attractive" to southern clergymen in developing their defenses of slavery (82). Rather, I would argue that the discipline was ubiquitous and unavoidable, thus demanding of proslavery advocates reformulations that substantively turned its doctrines of "rights, duties and relations" on their head.

3. On the relationship of evangelicalism to antislavery, see Robert H. Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), Anne C. Loveland, "Evangelicalism and 'Immediate Emancipation' in American Antislavery Thought," *Journal of Southern History* 32 (May 1966): 172–88, and Donald M. Scott, "Abolitionism as a Sacred Vocation," in *Antislavery Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Abolitionists*, Lewis Perry and Michael Fellman, eds. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 51–74. Still invaluable as well is Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse 1830–1844* (1933; reprint, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), 3–50. On the impact of evangelical antislavery on slaveholders, see Charles Henry Ambler, *Sectionalism in Virginia from 1776 to 1861* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1910), 185–218, esp. 190–97; also see William Campbell Preston, "Speech on the Abolition Question," March 1, 1836, in E. L. Magoon, ed., *Living Orators in America* (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1850), 349–62.

4. M. Carey, "Preface to the Fourth Edition," *The Olive Branch: or, Faults on Both Sides, Federal and Democratic. A Serious Appeal on the Necessity of Mutual Forgiveness and Harmony* (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), 22.

5. [Frances Wright Darusmont,] *Views of Society and Manners in America; in a Series of Letters from that Country to a Friend in England, during the Years 1818, 1819, and 1820* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1821), 313–14. See also Robert Wiebe, *The Opening of American Society from the Adoption of the Constitution to the Eve of Disunion* (New York: Random House, 1984), chap. 4, "The Politics of Independence," 67–89.

6. Important recent works in this vein include E. Brooks Holifield, *The Gentlemen Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture, 1795–1860* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press,

1978); Anne C. Loveland, *Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order, 1800–1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980); Eugene Genovese, "Slavery Ordained by God": *The Southern Slaveholders' View of Biblical History and Modern Politics* (Gettysburg, Pa.: Gettysburg College, 24th Annual Robert Fortenbaugh Memorial Lecture, 1985); James Oscar Farmer, *The Metaphysical Confederacy: James Henley Thornwell and the Synthesis of Southern Values* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1986), and Snay, *Gospel of Disunion*. Works reflecting the more traditional, critical view of proslavery religion include William Sumner Jenkins, *Proslavery Thought in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937); Donald G. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter in American Morality, 1780–1845* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965); H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But . . . : Racism in Southern Religion, 1780–1910* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1972), and John Lee Eighmy, *Churches in Cultural Captivity: A History of the Social Attitudes of Southern Baptists* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1972).

7. For example, the proslavery spokesman Josiah Nott wrote to former South Carolina governor James Henry Hammond that Nott's lectures on black inferiority, which he described as his "Nigger hallucinations," were written "with as little care as I write you, save the main points of the discussion," adding, "I want a reputation which will pay—that *Almighty dollar* is the thing at last" (Reginald Horsman, *Josiah Nott of Mobile: Southerner, Physician, and Racial Theorist* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 92, 101).

8. See esp. "Slavery Ordained of God" and "The Logical Outcome of the Slaveholders' Philosophy: An Exposition, Interpretation, and Critique of the Social Thought of George Fitzhugh of Port Royal, Virginia," in Eugene Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made: Two Essays in Interpretation* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), 118–244; and Genovese, *The Slaveholders' Dilemma: Freedom and Progress in Southern Conservative Thought, 1820–1860* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992). Genovese made the comment about awarding an "A" at the 1993 meeting of the Society for Historians of the Early Republic, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

9. Forrest G. Wood, *The Arrogance of Faith: Christianity and Race in America from the Colonial Era to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 38. For a devastating refutation of Wood, see the review by Eugene Genovese in *The New Republic* 203 (August 1990): 33.

10. Larry E. Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America, 1701–1840* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), xiv.

11. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 12; David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975), 256.

12. See the introduction to this volume, p. 1.

13. See, for example, Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

14. See, for example, Nathan O. Hatch and Mark O. Noll, eds., *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 39–58.

15. Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress*, 111; for proslavery literalism, see John Fletcher, *Studies on Slavery*, in *Easy Lessons, Compiled into Eight Studies, and Subdivided into Short Lessons for the Convenience of Readers* (Natchez, 1852); Albert Taylor Bledsoe, *An Essay on Liberty and Slav-*

ery (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1856), and Howell Cobb, *A Scriptural Examination of Slavery in the United States; with its Objects and Purposes* (Perry, Ga.: privately printed, 1856).

16. *Methodist General Discipline on Slavery* (1796), quoted in Lucius C. Matlack, *The History of American Slavery and Methodism, from 1780 to 1849* (New York, 1849), 21; see Matlack 19: 3–12.

17. Nash, *Race and Revolution*, 31–33, 91–94.

18. Paul Leicester Ford, ed., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 12 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1905), 10:343.

19. Garry Wills, *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 175–80. Also see Terence Martin, *The Instructed Vision: Scottish Common Sense Philosophy and the Origins of American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), and Gilman M. Ostrander, "Jefferson and Scottish Culture," *Historical Reflections* 2 (1975): 233–48; but see Ronald Hamowy, "Jefferson and the Scottish Enlightenment," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 36 (October 1979): 502–23.

20. May, *The Enlightenment in America*, 342.

21. This principle helps to explain why British social and religious conservatives, otherwise so friendly toward paternalism, rejected slavery so vehemently, even in its most benign and paternalistic forms: the master presumed to accept responsibilities for another created being that were not his or hers to transfer.

22. James Beattie, *Elements of Moral Science* (London, 1793), 26.

23. C. Duncan Rice, "Controversies Over Slavery in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Scotland," in *Antislavery Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Abolitionists*, Lewis Perry and Michael Fellman, eds. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 30.

24. John Millar, *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks; Or, an Inquiry into the Circumstances which Give Rise to Influence and Authority in the Different Members of Society* (Basle, Switzerland, 1793), 282–83.

25. Adam Smith, *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, ed. R. L. Meek, D. D. Raphael, and P. G. Stein (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 185. To Smith, then, the fact that the historian Edmund Morgan called the "central paradox of American history," that "[t]he rise of liberty and equality in America had been accompanied by the rise of slavery," was not a paradox at all but a logical outcome of republicanism in a slave society. See Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976), 4, 375–76.

26. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, William Peden, ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 162–63.

27. *Ibid.*, 179.

28. Smith, *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, 189, 191.

29. For an excellent theoretical discussion that points to this conclusion and explains its origins in the relationship of liberty and slavery, see Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982). Important discussions of the American context include Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976); Robert Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989); Sylvia Frey,

Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 234–42. Gary Nash's provocative and influential *Race and Revolution* comes closest to suggesting that slavery could have been ended peacefully at the time of the Revolution; although his later study with Jean R. Soderlund of the painfully drawn-out experience of emancipation in Pennsylvania, *Freedom By Degrees: Emancipation in Pennsylvania and its Aftermath* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), seems to cast doubt on such sanguine expectations and indeed bears out Adam Smith's theoretical point. In any case, it is likely that any form of emancipation envisioned by Nash during the era of the founding would have entailed federal coercion, sweetened with financial compensation (*Race and Revolution*, 36–38). Betty Fladeland demonstrates convincingly that compensated emancipation, far from being a neglected alternative, had been categorically rejected by slaveholders early and often in American history; Fladeland, "Compensated Emancipation: A Rejected Alternative," *Journal of Southern History* 42 (May 1976): 169–86. The well-known thesis of Charles W. Ramsdell that slavery had approached its "natural limits" by 1860 has been refuted convincingly by Alfred H. Conrad and John Meyer in "The Economics of Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South," *Journal of Political Economy* 66 (April 1958): 95–130; Harry V. Jaffa, *Crisis of the House Divided: An Interpretation of the Issues in the Lincoln-Douglas Debates* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959), 387–404, and Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), 62–64, 86–106. Historians have yet to propose a convincing alternative, then, to the view that slavery in the United States could have been ended only by coercion.

30. Robert W. Fogel, in *Without Consent or Contract*, has demonstrated that this linkage naturally stems from the long-standing but inaccurate American conviction that any economic practice that is morally wrong must intrinsically be unprofitable as well; or, in theological terms, "the proposition that divine Providence rewarded virtue and punished evil" (410). Thus George Washington, in his inaugural address: "[T]here is no truth more thoroughly established than that there exists in the economy and course of nature an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness" and "between duty and advantage" (U.S. Congress, *Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States from George Washington 1789 to George Bush 1989* [Washington, D.C.: General Printing Office, 1989], 3). In other words, if slavery were contrary to virtue, it must also be opposed to advantage.

A more typical assumption among modern scholars is that every practice engaged in by society on a wide scale must be buttressed by a convincing ideological justification, no matter how obscure. Thus Robert E. Shalhope, in his otherwise brilliant dissection of Thomas Jefferson's essential role in the development of southern secessionist ideas, chooses on the last page of his essay to postulate Jefferson's adherence to a hitherto-undiscussed ideology of "pastoral republicanism," which presumably reconciles all Jefferson's conflicts and avoids the unforgivable offense of "a historical bifurcation." It is apparently impossible that such southerners as Jefferson could have been deeply wedded to slavery if they did not have an ideological justification for it—that they could have chosen to pursue a way of life they did not "believe to be well and good" (556). For an impressive theoretical rebuttal of the view that racism is based on a consistent philo-

sophical foundation, see Lewis R. Gordon, *Bad Faith and Antiracist Racism* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1995).

31. It is remarkable that, at a time when the hoary Lovejoyan paradigm of the history of a pure idea, abstracted from its social and cultural milieu, has long since fallen into disfavor, the peculiarly Platonic conception of a disembodied, transhistorical "proslavery ideology"—an unchangeable domain of concepts and ideas, accessible to partisans in every age irrespective of differing social, political, or economic conditions—has obtained remarkable currency among historians otherwise conspicuous for their hardheaded materialism. The great exemplar of the old school of the history of ideas is Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (1936; New York: Harper and Row, 1960). The most striking application of the Lovejoyan model to the idea of proslavery is Larry Tise's influential *Proslavery*; see esp. p. 14.

32. Jeffrey Brooke Allen, "The Debate over Slavery and Race in Ante-Bellum Kentucky: 1792–1850" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1973), 30. Similarly, David T. Bailey describes the "silence of the proslavery forces" as "perhaps the great puzzle in the history of slavery and southwestern religion," and asks, "How, then, did this opposition so effectively thwart the goals of a highly organized antislavery movement, and how did it avoid taking a public stand in favor of the peculiar institution?" *Shadow on the Church: Southwestern Evangelical Religion and the Issue of Slavery* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), 112. Actually, these are hardly "great puzzles"; the West India lobby successfully employed silence—in combination with cash and other forms of influence—as its chief tactic in more than four decades of struggle with the eloquent British abolition movement. In each of these cases, silence perhaps merely demonstrated the absence of better arguments.

33. See, for example, E. Brooks Holifield, *The Gentlemen Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture, 1795–1860* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1978); Snay, *Gospel of Disunion* (esp. chap. 2); and Tise, *Proslavery*.

34. The tragic story is well told in James Essig, *The Bonds of Wickedness: American Evangelicals Against Slavery, 1770–1808* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982). See also Anne C. Loveland, *Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order, 1800–1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), chap. 7, and Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740–1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), chap. 8. For a passionate and scholarly account of the churches' travails that, however, fails to acknowledge the institutional obstacles to antislavery, see H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But . . .*, chap. 1. For an alternative view, see Douglas Ambrose, "Of Stations and Relations: Proslavery Christianity in Early National Virginia," in this volume.

35. *Journals of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1:169–70, cited in Smith, *In His Image, But . . .*, 45; see also Lucius P. Matlack, *The History of American Slavery and Methodism from 1780 to 1849 . . .* (New York, 1849), chap. 1; Eighmy, *Churches in Cultural Captivity*, ch. 1; Ernest T. Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, 3 vols. (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1963–73), vol. 1; Walter B. Posey, "The Slavery Question in the Presbyterian Church in the Old Southwest," *Journal of Southern History* 15 (August 1949): 311–24, and John W. Christie and Dwight L. Dumond, *George Bourne and "The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable"* (Wil-

mington and Philadelphia: Historical Society of Delaware and Presbyterian Historical Society, 1969), 15–65.

36. Richard Furman, *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists Relative to the Coloured Population of the United States in a Communication to the Governor of South Carolina* (Charleston, 1823), reprinted in James A. Rogers, *Richard Furman: Life and Legacy* ([Macon, Ga.]: Mercer University Press, 1985), 284. The elaborate and tortuous efforts of Furman and Dalcho to justify slavery by means of Scripture testify clearly to the novelty of the project. Dalcho, for example, concludes his painfully complicated attempt to link the biblical curse against Canaan to the Africans, whom he recognizes are not Canaan's descendants, with the highly antifundamentalist suggestion that "if we were to correct the text, as we should any classic author in a like case, the whole, perhaps, might be made easier and plainer"; [Frederick Dalcho], *Practical Considerations Founded on the Scriptures, Relative to the Slave Population of South-Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1823), 16. Furman's and Dalcho's deference to the authority of the "benevolent Wilberforce" and other "highly respectable" religious and political writers against slavery underscores the difficulty faced by relatively cultivated southern clergymen in attempting to defend the institution. See Furman, *Exposition*, 280, 285, and Dalcho, *Practical Considerations*, 6; see also Randy J. Sparks, "'To Rend the Body of Christ': Proslavery Ideology and Religious Schism from a Mississippi Perspective," in this volume.

37. See Stephen B. Weeks, *Southern Quakers and Slavery: A Study in Institutional History*, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, extra vol. 15 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1896).

38. May, *Enlightenment in America*, 328.

39. This is highly unlikely because the notes from Smith's lectures were not published until 1896. It is quite plausible, however, that some southerners may have studied under students of Smith or even attended his lectures at Glasgow.

40. Noble E. Cunningham Jr., "Nathaniel Macon and the Southern Protest against National Consolidation," *North Carolina Historical Review* 32, no. 3 (July 1955): 380.

41. See, for example, R. Kent Newmyer, "John Marshall and the Southern Constitutional Tradition," in *An Uncertain Tradition: Constitutionalism and the History of the South*, Kermit L. Hall and James W. Ely Jr., eds. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 105–23; Edwin Mood Wilson, "The Congressional Career of Nathaniel Macon," *James Sprunt Historical Monographs*, No. 2 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1900), 48–49, 72–73, 76–78, and Norman K. Risjord, *The Old Republicans: Southern Conservatives in the Age of Jefferson* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 175–79. Orlando Patterson's observations with regard to the relationship of Roman slaveholders to the central government is relevant here:

The slave latifundists needed the strong centralized state, because without it they were at the mercy of their slaves. But rural slavery irrevocably led to the localization of power. That, I feel confident in claiming, is a virtual law of large-scale slave society. Absolute power, which is what the latifundist had on his slave villa, did not necessarily corrupt the individual absolutely, as Lord Acton so famously imagined. What absolute power on the local and individual level did corrupt absolutely was the state and any sense of loyalty to it.

Orlando Patterson, *Freedom*, vol. 1: *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 347.

42. U.S. Constitution, art. 4, sec. 2; art. 1, sec. 8, respectively.

43. U. S. Constitution, art. 1, sec. 9; art. 5. The quote is from a letter by Willie P. Mangum to Bartlett Yancey, 15 January 1826, in Edwin Mood Wilson, "The Congressional Career of Nathaniel Macon," *James Sprunt Historical Monographs*, No. 2 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1900), 108. See Paul Finkelman, "Slavery and the Constitutional Convention: Making a Covenant with Death," in *Beyond Confederation: Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity*, Richard Beeman, Stephen Botein, and Edward C. Carter II, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

44. Howard Ohline, "Slavery, Economics, and Congressional Politics, 1790," *Journal of Southern History* 46, no. 3 (August 1980): 358.

45. See Gaines M. Foster, "Guilt Over Slavery: A Historiographical Analysis," *Journal of Southern History* 56, no. 4 (November 1990): 665–94.

46. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese has rightly directed attention to the "objective constraints" within which the "subjective dimensions" of community life must be evaluated. *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 68–70. See also Eugene Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965).

47. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, 162. Indeed, from the standpoint of most of human experience throughout history, and even in comparison with most of the rest of the contemporary world, living conditions on southern plantations, even for slaves, were likely far better than those endured by a majority of the world's population, just as southerners asserted. See George Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South, or the Failure of Free Society* (Richmond, Va.: A Morris, 1854), chap. 4; and Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, 116, 249.

48. For a thorough examination of these issues, see Thomas Bender, ed., *The Antislavery Debate: Capitalism and Abolitionism as a Problem in Historical Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

49. Thus George Fitzhugh: "All books in the whole range of moral science, if not written by Southern authors, within the last twenty or thirty years, inculcate abolition either directly or indirectly. If written before that time, even by Southern authors, they are likely to be as absurd and dangerous as the Declaration of Independence, or the Virginia Bill of Rights." "Southern Thought," *De Bow's Review* 23 (1857): 341. See also the observation of Eric Williams: "It is almost pathetic to have to deal today with the writers who opposed [Adam] Smith and [Thomas] Clarkson. None of the defenders of slavery have any merit or international significance today. If one had to mention a political economist who was opposed to Adam Smith, one could think only of Malachi Postlethwayt. Who has ever heard of Postlethwayt?"; *British Historians and the West Indies* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 25. Williams exaggerates for effect, but not greatly.

50. Roger Bruns, ed., *Am I Not a Man and a Brother* (New York: Chelsea House, 1977), 221.

51. Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, 284–85; Forrest McDonald, *E Pluribus Unum: The Formation of the American Republic, 1776–1790* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 356–58.

52. Merrill Jensen, et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution* (Madison, Wis.: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976–), 10: 1209ff.
53. Harry F. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 315.
54. Thomas E. Buckley, "After Disestablishment: Thomas Jefferson's Wall of Separation in Antebellum Virginia," *Journal of Southern History* 61 (August 1995): 448. See also Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, 278–95.
55. John Stuart Mill, *The Spirit of the Age* (1831; reprint Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), 91.
56. On white southerners' dual image of blacks as men and property, see Richard Bruce Erno, "Dominant Images of the Negro in the Ante-Bellum South" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1961), chap. 1.
57. Jefferson, *Autobiography* (1821), in Paul Leicester Ford, ed., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 10 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1892–99), 1: 77. On Jefferson's ambiguous anti-slavery commitment, see Davis, *Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, 182–85, and Paul Finkelman, "Thomas Jefferson and Antislavery: The Myth Goes On," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 102 (April 1994): 193–228; on the representativeness of Jefferson's attitudes, see Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (1968; reprint, Baltimore: Pelican Books, 1969), 429–40, 455–56; Robert McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), and Robert E. Shalhope, "Thomas Jefferson's Republicanism and Antebellum Southern Thought," *Journal of Southern History* 42 (November 1976): 529–56. Unfortunately, this essay was written too early to benefit from Conor Cruse O'Brien's powerful article, "Thomas Jefferson: Radical and Racist," *Atlantic Monthly* 278 (October 1996): 53–66.
58. See Paul Finkelman, "Jefferson and Slavery: 'Treason against the Hopes of the World,'" in *Jeffersonian Legacies*, Peter S. Onuf, ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994), 207–10. On the class identity of southern planters, see Jack P. Maddex Jr., "'The Southern Apostasy' Revisited: The Significance of Proslavery Christianity," *Marxist Perspectives* 2 (fall 1979): 132–41. Unfortunately, Maddex falls into the error I have discussed above of assuming that southern planters necessarily possessed an ideology to complement their class identity from an early date.
59. I am here using the expanded understanding of the slaveholding class offered by Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, 182–83.
60. The most celebrated such desertion was Edward Coles, a protégé of both Jefferson and Madison, who freed his slaves and left Virginia for Illinois in 1819. See Ralph L. Ketcham, "The Dictates of Conscience: Edward Coles and Slavery," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 36 (winter 1960): 46–62, and Drew R. McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 308–22.
61. See Shalhope, "Thomas Jefferson's Republicanism," 540–41, 553.
62. For an examination of a narrowly averted catastrophe brought on in part by the slaveholders' embrace of republicanism, see Douglas R. Egerton, *Gabriel's Rebellion: The Virginia Slave Conspiracies of 1800 and 1802* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

63. See Theodore Dwight, *History of the Hartford Convention* (1833; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1970).
64. The historian Paul Finkelman has quoted a recent observation of Gordon S. Wood to this effect: "Most Americans think of Jefferson much as our first professional biographer James Parton did. 'If Jefferson was wrong,' wrote Parton in 1874, 'America is wrong. If America is right, Jefferson is right.'" Thus, Finkelman observes, "The historian who questions Jefferson, it would seem, implicitly questions America." Finkelman, "Thomas Jefferson and Antislavery," 194–95.
65. Arthur Schlesinger Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1945), 424. Schlesinger refers to the subject only three times in discussion of events before 1845. The classic critiques of Jacksonianism have likewise virtually ignored the question of slavery. Leonard D. White's *The Jacksonians: A Study in Administrative History, 1829–1861* (New York: McMillan, 1954) is so artfully circumscribed as to exclude the issue entirely, except for the author's condemnation of northern citizens' "unlawful and tumultuous" opposition to the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law (526). Marvin Meyers's *The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1957) similarly ignores the slavery question (the index contains not a single reference to the topic). Lee Benson, like the 1844 Whig platform, "maintained eloquent silence" on the significance of slavery in antebellum American politics in his important study *The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case* (1961; reprint, New York: Atheneum, 1964), 238. See also Joel H. Silbey, *The Partisan Imperative: The Dynamics of American Politics Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), for a summary of its author's lengthy efforts to exorcise the issue of slavery from the antebellum period.
66. Tisc, *Proslavery*, chaps. 8 and 9.
67. Ford K. Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians: The Age of Wilberforce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961). Wilberforce's Oxford Movement sons performed an equally remarkable act of omission in their five-volume biography of their father by almost completely excluding references to his evangelicalism. See Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce, *The Life of William Wilberforce*, 5 vols. (London, 1838). Paul I. Johnson's *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, 1815–1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978) is perhaps the best-known American exemplar of the genre.
68. See John Bach McMaster, *A History of the People of the United States from the Revolution to the Civil War*, 8 vols. (New York: D. Appleton, 1883–1913), and Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse, 1830–1844* (1933; reprint, New York: Harbinger, 1964).
69. M. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties, Volume 1: England*, Seymour Martin Lipset, ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1964), 18–20. Ostrogorski's impression of the links between antislavery and democratization in Britain was widely shared by historians before the early twentieth century; it has been substantiated recently by the works of Seymour Drescher and James Walvin. See Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977), and *Capitalism and Antislavery: British Mobilization in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), and Walvin, "The Public Campaign in England against Slavery," in *The Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, David Eltis and James Walvin, ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981), 63–89. The

story of the virtual expulsion of the British antislavery campaign from historical memory is a fascinating and important one that has yet to be told in full.

70. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 354–60; Elie Halévy, *A History of the English People in 1815* (London: Ark, 1987), 400–401.

71. Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783–1876* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 27.

72. William Paley, *Moral and Political Philosophy* (1784; reprint, New York, 1824), 145–47.

73. Johan Daniel Gross, *Natural Principles of Rectitude for the Conduct of Man in all States and Situations of Life Demonstrated and Explained in a Systematic Treatise on Moral Philosophy Comprehending the Law of Nature—Ethics—Natural Jurisprudence—General Economics—Politics—and the Law of Nations* (New York, 1795), 338.

74. John L. Parkhurst, *Elements of Moral Philosophy: Comprising the Theory of Morals and Practical Ethics* (Concord, N.H.: J. B. Moore and J. W. Shepard, 1825), 124.

75. Francis Wayland, *Elements of Moral Science* (New York: Cooke, 1835), 214. For Wayland's ambiguous stance regarding slavery, see Deborah Van Broekhoven, "Suffering with Slaveholders: The Limits of Francis Wayland's Antislavery Witness," in this volume.

76. Halévy, *History of the English People*, 400–401.

77. See Robert P. Forbes, "Slavery and the Meaning of America, 1819–1833" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1994), chaps. 4 and 5.

78. William T. Foster, *Administration of the College Curriculum* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911), 16. Jefferson's revisions of 1779 also added the Law of Nature and of Nations and the Fine Arts to the duties of the professor of Moral Philosophy.

79. Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, 162. The expression is from the title of an article in *De Bow's Review* 10 (1851): 362, and refers of course to educating southern youth in southern schools, not to home schooling.

80. Jefferson to Gen. James Breckinridge, 15 February 1821, quoted in John S. Ezell, "A Southern Education for Southrons," *Journal of Southern History* 17 (August 1951): 303.

81. Ford, ed., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 12: 154–56.

82. Nathaniel Francis Cabell, ed., *Early History of the University of Virginia, as Contained in the Letters of Thomas Jefferson and Joseph C. Cabell . . .* (Richmond, Va.: J. W. Randolph, 1856), xx. The emphasis here and in the following quotations is Jefferson's.

83. *Ibid.*, xxi.

84. *Ibid.*, 164–65; Alf J. Mapp Jr., *Thomas Jefferson, Passionate Pilgrim: The Presidency, the Founding of the University, and the Private Battle* (Madison, Wisc.: Madison Books, 1991), 308.

85. Cabell, *Early History of the University of Virginia*, 169.

86. *Ibid.*, 165.

87. Cited in "Review," *The Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine* 3 (1820): 69, 71.

88. *Ibid.*, 72–73.

89. Cabell, *Early History*, 234.

90. *Ibid.*, 234–35.

91. Wills, *Inventing America*, pt. 3; Foster, *Administration of the College Curriculum*, 42n.; Mapp, *Passionate Pilgrim*, 308; see also May, *Enlightenment in America*, 333.

92. See John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 14 September 1813, in *The Adams-Jefferson Letters: The Complete Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and Abigail and John Adams*, Leslie J. Capon, ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 373; Joseph C. Cabell to Thomas Jefferson, February 22 and March 8, 1819, in Cabell, *Early History*, 165–66, 171–72.

93. Ford, ed., *Writings*, 12: 143–45.

94. Douglas L. Wilson, "Jefferson and the Republic of Letters," in *Jeffersonian Legacies*, Onuf, ed., 70.

95. Wilson, *ibid.*; Wills, *Inventing America*, 276.

96. Rice, "Review," 70.

97. May, *Enlightenment in America*, 333; Rice, "Review," 74.

98. Michael Sugrue, "'We Desired our Future Rulers to be Educated Men': South Carolina College, the Defense of Slavery, and the Development of Secessionist Politics," *Higher Education Annual* 14 (1994): 39–71. Thus Paul Finkelman is correct in arguing that "Jefferson was the intellectual godfather of the racist pseudo-science of the American school of anthropology"; but his patronage of Cooper, whose students spread and elaborated his racist proslavery arguments throughout the antebellum South, may have been as influential, if not more so, than his speculations in the *Notes on Virginia*. Finkelman, "Jefferson and Slavery," 186.

99. See Michael Sugrue, "'We Desired Our Future Rulers to be Educated Men,'" 39–71; and see also Sugrue, "South Carolina College: The Education of an Antebellum Elite" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1992).

100. Dumas Malone, *The Public Life of Thomas Cooper, 1783–1839* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), 290.

101. Cooper, "Coloured Marriages," (1823), cited in Malone, *ibid.*, 285.

102. William M. Wiecek, sounding suspiciously like Roger B. Taney, argued that the lines of the Declaration of Independence, "properly read in the light of American social conditions in 1776, contain the word 'white' before the word 'men'" (*The Sources of Antislavery Constitutionalism in America, 1760–1848* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977), 51. This contradicts the emphatic assertion of Abraham Lincoln in 1858 that "the entire records of the world from the date of the Declaration of Independence up to within three years ago, may be searched in vain for one single declaration from one single man, that the negro was not included in the Declaration of Independence." According to Lincoln, no man "ever said so until the necessities of the Democratic party had to invent that declaration." Harold Holzer, ed., *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates: The First Complete, Unexpurgated Text* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993), 252.

103. John Fletcher, *Studies on Slavery, in Easy Lessons* (1852; reprint, Miami: Mnemosyne, 1969), iv. Typically, Fletcher's defense of slavery is posited on scriptural grounds, but he calls into question his pose of pious orthodoxy in an unguarded observation: "[For] [m]ost men . . . [t]he wonderful works of nature create no wonder. A mine of sea-shells on the Andes excites no surprise" (p. 17). Fletcher's reference to this geological anomaly shows his familiarity with a favorite argument used in "parson skinning"—the efforts of anticlerical proslavery polygenists, such as Josiah Nott, to undermine the biblical doctrine of human unity by calling into question the chronology of Scripture. See J. C. Nott, "Ancient and Scripture Chronology," *Southern Quarterly Review* 2 (1850): 385–426, and William Stanton, *The Leopard's Spots: Scientific Attitudes toward Race in America, 1815–59* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959).

104. Michael O'Brien, *A Character of Hugh Legaré* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 164; "Ancient Slavery," *De Bow's Review* 19 (1855): 561. John Perkins Jr. in the same volume of *De Bow's*, also cites "French works on the organization of labor . . . which should be particularly pressed upon our attention at this time," although he does not name them. "Southern Education for Southern Youth," *ibid.*, 463.

105. John Hope Franklin, *A Southern Odyssey* (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1976), 71–80; Ezell, "Southern Education for Southrons," *passim*.

106. O'Brien, *A Character of Hugh Legaré*, 164.

107. "Ancient Slavery," *De Bow's Review* 19 (1855): 560, 562.

108. Reginald Horsman, *Josiah Nott of Mobile: Southerner, Physician, and Racial Theorist* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 100.

109. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin: or, Life Among the Lowly* (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1851), 88.

110. On the importance of reconnecting the study of abolitionism with the concrete institution of slavery, see James L. Huston, "The Experiential Basis of the Northern Antislavery Impulse," *Journal of Southern History* 56 (November 1990): 609–40.

111. Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953–1955), 8:333.

PART TWO



Conflict within the Ranks

 Religion

and the

Antebellum Debate
over Slavery

Edited by John R. McKivigan & Mitchell Snay

The University of Georgia Press • Athens and London

© 1998 by the University of Georgia Press

Athens, Georgia 30602

All rights reserved

Designed by Kathi Morgan

Set in Minion by G&S Typesetters

Printed and bound by Maple-Vail

The paper in this book meets the guidelines for permanence
and durability of the Committee on Production Guidelines
for Book Longevity of the Council on Library Resources.

Printed in the United States of America

02 01 00 99 98 C 5 4 3 2 1

02 01 00 99 98 P 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Religion and the antebellum debate over slavery / edited by John R.
McKivigan & Mitchell Snay.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-8203-1972-4 (alk. paper). — ISBN 0-8203-2076-5 (pbk. :
alk. paper)

1. Slavery and the church—United States—History—19th century.
2. Slavery—United States—History—19th century. I. McKivigan,
John R., 1949– . II. Snay, Mitchell.

E449.R35 1998

261.8'34567'0973—dc21 98-21073

British Library Cataloging in Publication Data available

For our sons,

Jeb Barnes-McKivigan and Elliott Abraham Snay