The Fighting Joe Wheeler Dispatch

Volume XLVI, Issue 11 — November, 2026

Camp Officers:

Commander: Spencer Harris
1st Lt. Commander: Barry Cook
2nd Lt. Commander: Joe Payne
Adjutant: Dave McCombs
Chaplain: Tim Whitfield
Color Sergeant: Pat Acton
Quartermaster: David Knight
Sergeant At Arms: Pat Acton
Camp Surgeon: Dr. Rick Price
Dispatch Editor: David Fisher
Commander Emeritus: Dr. Ira West

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Or e-mail fisherda@mac.com

Tuesday, November 10, 6:00 pm

The Civil War in New Mexico: 1861-1862

Speaker: Tim Whitfield

!!! NEW MEETING TIME 6:00 PM !!!

This Month During the War Between the States (1861-1865)

November 6, 1860	Lincoln elected 16th President
November 2, 1861	General John C. Fremont removed from command of the Dept. of the West by Lincoln
November 28, 1861	Missouri admitted to the Confederacy despite never officially seceding from the Union
November 21, 1862	James A. Seddon replaces George W. Randolph as Confederate Secretary of War
November 19, 1863	Lincoln delivers the "Gettysburg Address"
November 24, 1863	Battle of Lookout Mountain, Tennessee
November 25, 1863	Battle of Missionary Ridge, Tennessee
November 8, 1864	Lincoln re-elected President
November 15, 1864	Sherman departs Atlanta on the March to the Sea
November 30, 1863	Battle of Franklin, Tennessee

http://www.fightingjoewheelercamp.org

SCV Fighting Joe Wheeler Camp 1372 — FJWCamp1372@yahoogroups.com

Alabama: We Dare Defend Our Rights

"The principal for which we contended is bound to reassert itself, though it may be at another time and in another form." - Jefferson Davis, May 1865

The Fighting Joe Wheeler Camp presents

The Civil War in New Mexico: 1861-1862

by

Tim Whitfield



Battle of Glorieta Pass - Pigeon's Ranch by Roy Andersen

November 10, 2026
New Merkel House
6:00 pm

Commander's Report

November 2026

Brothers, Friends, Compatriots,

Wow has this year flown by!

For me personally it's been a great year. I completed my second semester of ministry school, I had my oldest Abby Grace and my oldest stepson Will graduate high school, I got married, I got Amy moved in down here in Alabama, and I've almost completed my term as your camp commander. It has been truly an honor to be given this role.

I'm proud that we have turned the gun show into a self-sustaining operation and have seen continued interest and growth in our camp throughout the year. I'm proud of the work we've done and the events that we've supported.

I look forward to seeing you all at our Camp Football Party at Amy's and my home (2327 Ridge Trail, Birmingham, AL 35242) on November 14th. I'll have the hamburgers and hot dogs. Bring some sort of dip or side and let's all socialize and cheer on our favorite team. Alabama has Vanderbilt, Tennessee has Texas A&M, and Auburn has Mississippi State. Hopefully, it's a good weekend for my house and yours.

Our own brother Tim Whitfield is speaking to us this month and I look forward to hearing his talk on the Civil War in New Mexico.

Remember, that our December meeting is open to everyone to speak on their own family history or some interesting history that they want to bring about the local area.

Thank you all again for the honor of being your commander, I look forward to seeing you on the evening of the 10th.

Thanks,

Deo Vindice

Spencer Harris
Commander Fighting Joe Wheeler Camp 1372

Chaplain's Report

Reading from 1 Corinthians Chapter 1 Verse 10: *"I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment"*.

I recall as a kid seeing an illustration of 2 mules with one end of 10 foot rope around each of their necks. Each mule has a pile of food 15 feet apart and they are pulling against each other trying to get to their pile. Neither is getting to eat given they are pulling against each other. In the next illustration they are sharing one pile of food. When it is gone they share the other pile in the 3rd illustration. Likeminded creatures, both wanting to eat, and figuring out how to be successful.

We will never get such a diverse group of people such as the entire population of a country or a state to be harmonious and work together. But Paul in this Bible passage is speaking to a like-minded group of Christians at the church in Corinth. Just as a church is a like-minded group of Christians, so too, are we like-minded in our goals and values in the Fighting Joe Wheeler Camp and the SCV. That is what makes it great to be a member, participate and figure out (just like those mules) how to attain our goals through participation and teamwork. My prayer is that we grow participation and teamwork united in our SCV Charge mission going forward in 2027.

Deo Vindice

Tim Whitfield,

Chaplain FJW Camp 1372

Reader's Corner

Attached please find an article that is the best I have every read regarding the North and The South and their relation to Biblical (note not say Church) Christianity!
Know all off you are busy so I color coded the most (for me) important parts.
Indeed, the remarks, some 100 years ago, were prescient, coming true even more dramatically in our current age!
PLEASE READ AND SHARE!

Dr. Fred Moss

Source: Abbeville Institute

https://www.abbevilleinstitute.org/the-south-as-a-christian-civilization/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=d26f44c8-c194-4eae-9a58-083ba972c940

Reader's Corner

FROM: Abbeville Institute Abbeville Institute Press
https://www.abbevilleinstitute.org/the-south-as-a-christian-civilization/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=d26f44c8-c194-4eae-9a58-083ba972c940

The South as a Christian Civilization By Karen Stokes October 29, 2026 Blog

Let me begin by quoting from a book entitled, *The Attitude of the Northern Clergy Toward the South*, published in 1942. Its author, Chester F. Dunham, wrote:

"Southern Christianity, or the theological position of Southern Christian Churches, was thoroughly orthodox. Religion in the South, by and large, supported the civilization, culture, and social order south of the Mason Dixon line."

Southerners saw themselves primarily as a Christian people, and their civilization was the outworking of that view. It was not perfect, of course, for no earthly system is, given human imperfection, and Southerners were aware of that.

In the decades just before the War Between the States, Southerners were also aware that their "peculiar" institution, slavery, was coming under increasing attack and condemnation by the rest of Western civilization. During this period, Southern clergymen and laity began urging reforms to the institution to bring it more in line with Christian principles. At the annual conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina in 1859 and 1860, for example, prominent laymen proposed resolutions concerning marriage, stating that "the marriage relation between slaves has the same divine obligation as that between masters and mistresses."

It was also recognized that more needed to be done to evangelize and minister to the black people, and to give an example of a response to this, in Charleston, South Carolina, in the 1840s and 1850s, at least two sizeable churches were established for the slaves. The first was Calvary Church, an Episcopal mission, and the second was Zion Presbyterian. The famous Presbyterian clergyman James Henley Thornwell preached at Zion's dedication in 1850. It began as a mission church, and its congregation grew so quickly under the ministry of John L. Girardeau that a new church was required. In 1858, Zion was the largest church building in the city, built at a cost of $25,000 dollars, from donations by the white citizens of Charleston. The prominent clergyman Rev. Thomas Smyth of Charleston's Second Presbyterian Church, who was partly responsible for the establishment of Zion, believed that Southern slavery was "a grand civilizing and Christianizing school, providentially prepared," and that "the two races were steadily and constantly marching onwards and upwards together" to eventual emancipation, when the enslaved race was ready to "graduate," so to speak.

In the first half of the 19th century, the major religious denominations in the United States were slowly but surely drifting apart, not just over the issue of slavery, but also because the northern churches were moving, as historian Eugene D. Genovese put it, "toward more liberal positions on original sin, human depravity, and the role of the laity." While Southern churches in general remained orthodox and conservative in their theology, Unitarianism flourished in the North, and new religious and reform movements proliferated there. Writing about this phenomenon in a pamphlet published in 1857, southerner George Fitzhugh asked of the North:

Why have you Bloomers and Women's Rights men, and strong-minded women, and Mormons, and anti-renters, and "vote myself a farm" men, Millerites and Spiritual Rappers, and Shakers ...and Grahamites, and a thousand other superstitious and infidel isms at the North? Why is there faith in nothing, speculation about everything?

We could also add to his list the Transcendentalists, as well as the Atheists, Utopian Socialists and Communists he mentions later in his pamphlet. Likely there were in the North a large number of persons who were more orthodox in their Christianity, especially in the rural areas, but the fact remains that all these "isms" took root in that part of the country and gained influence there, while they did not do so in the South.

James Henley Thornwell, whom I mentioned before, was a well-known and influential Presbyterian minister and educator from South Carolina. In the address he gave at the dedication of Zion Church, he set forth the Southern view of slavery, but also expounded on the political revolutions and upheavals going on in Europe, nationalistic and socialistic, and the causes of the worsening sectional tensions in America. Thornwell said:

It is not the not the narrow question of abolitionism or of slavery, not simply whether we shall emancipate our negroes or not; the real question is, the relations of man to society, of States to the individual, and of the individual to the States, a question as broad as the interests of the human race. These are the mighty questions which are shaking thrones to their centres, upheaving the masses like an earthquake, and rocking the solid pillars of this Union. The parties in this conflict are not merely Atheists, Socialists, Communists, Red Republicans, Jacobins on the one side, and the friends of order and regulated freedom on the other. In one word, the world is a battle-ground, Christianity and atheism the combatants, and the progress of humanity the stake.

Eugene D. Genovese noted that Thornwell and many other Southerners saw America's sectional conflict as a clash of cultures—essentially one of orthodox Christianity (in the South) against Northern liberals "who professed Christianity while they did their best to destroy its central doctrines." Some of the radical abolitionists in the North reviled the Bible because it did not condemn slavery, and admired John Brown for his violent, murderous rampage and raid at Harper's Ferry in 1859.

After Lincoln's election, the South Carolina legislature passed an act on November 11, 1860, calling for a State Convention to deliberate the issue of secession. Soon afterward, the governor proclaimed a day of humiliation and prayer, and on that appointed day of November 21, Dr. Thomas Smyth preached one of his most notable sermons. Printed under the title *The Sin and the Curse,* it lamented the death of "this glorious constitutional union," and identified America's "the true source of disunion" in the "infidel, atheistic, French Revolution, Red Republican principle" embodied in the egalitarian ideas of the Declaration of Independence. "All men are not born equal," Smyth contended. "The only equality, is that all men are born in sin." The nation was divided, he argued, because of the influence of a group of Americans who rejected the divine inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, and who developed their own code of morality, or "higher law principle." Smyth wrote that they were "an overwhelming mass" of

…atheists, infidels, communists, free-lovers, rationalists, Bible haters, anti-christian levellers, and anarchists…[who held] a self-developing morality…[and who decided that] a majority of his creatures can decide for God, and against God, that slavery is, in its essential nature, absolutely sinful; further, that it is so essentially and heinously wicked, that in order to overthrow it, compacts may be broken, and robbery, murder, arson, treason, rebellion and massacre with all the hellish crew of bigotry, hatred, uncharitableness, [and] excommunication… are let loose to devastate and destroy.

They pervert the great doctrines of personal responsibility, liberty of conscience… thought, opinion and…action. This they do by requiring all others to adopt as God's truth, that which is… beside and contrary to Scripture; and by assuming that they are responsible for the opinions and conduct of other men…And what, we ask, could finally be the result of this higher law—that is, the majority and equality-principle—but anarchy, prodigality, profanity, Sabbath profanation, vice and ungodliness in every monstrous form, and in the end the corruption and overthrow of the Republic, and the erection, upon its ruins, of an absolute and bloody despotism, of which coercion… is the vital principle. An anti-slavery Bible must have an anti-slavery God, and then a God anti-law, order, property and morality; that is no God but 'THE GOD OF THIS WORLD.'

The "God of this world," by the way, as identified in the Bible, is Satan.

Many Northern clergymen believed that the civilization and religion of what they called the "semi-barbarous" and religiously orthodox South should be done away with. As one historian put it, the Northerners "sought to make regnant in the South the Northern way of life." One religious journal of Boston, the Christian Register, editorialized in 1865:

…the present condition of the South, to a great extent, is the result of its religious teaching…She needs…men who preach the practical righteousness and aim to build up the church of the Divine humanity…The South is missionary ground and needs a new gospel. Its theology and preaching must be changed…The South, in order to be thoroughly regenerated, must have a religion which shall conform to the essential ideas, aims and spirit of Liberal Christianity.

So this writer was urging a kind of cultural genocide—making Southerners give up their traditions and beliefs, and making them over in the image of the North. There were also calls for the actual extermination of the Southern people. For decades before the war, the South was often publically subjected to venomous condemnation and demonization by Northern abolitionists and radicals, whose ranks included clergymen, newspaper editors, and politicians. In the 1850s, this demonization became more vicious.

Even some Northern clergymen whose denominations held to more orthodox doctrines were vocal in their denunciations of Southerners, and in their support for the war. One of these men was Rev. J. R. W. Sloane, the pastor of the Third Reformed Presbyterian Church in New York. His denomination, Reformed Presbyterian, became heavily involved in political causes in the 19th century, most notably that of the abolition of slavery, and from 1800 onward its members were forbidden to own slaves. Rev. Sloane, who was an admirer of John Brown, and who compared the moral condition of the South to that of Sodom and Gomorrah, was written about by a British journalist. In an article published in Blackwood's *Edinburgh Magazine*, in 1862, the British commentator observed the following:

It is extraordinary the amount of ferocity which exists among the population of the Northern States, especially among the Puritans of the New England States. The clergy, who are entirely dependent on their congregations, show themselves on this, as on former occasions, ready to pander to the worst passions of the people, and even take the lead in expressions of ferocity. Even in the churches the war fever rages. "Twenty churches of a night," writes [a correspondent] from New York, "hold prayer-meetings to get recruits." Here is an instance: The Rev… Sloane, pastor of the Third Reformed Presbyterian Church of New York, was reported in the newspapers to have said, in a speech abounding with similar atrocities, "That it was better that the six millions of white men, women, and children of the South should be slaughtered than that slavery should not be extinguished;" and being censured by an editor for expressing such an atrocity, Mr. Sloan replied, that what he really said was only as follows: "But suppose emancipation should lead to insurrection?...then I affirm that it is better, far better, that every man, woman, and child in every rebel state should perish in one widespread, bloody, and indiscriminate slaughter; better that the land should be a Sahara; be as when God destroyed the Canaanites, or overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, than that this rebellion should be successful."

Clergymen like Sloane were probably a type that one Southern clergyman wrote about during the war. In 1863, Reverend Isaac Handy, a civilian Presbyterian minister, was incarcerated at Fort Delaware as a political prisoner of the United States government after making remarks critical of that government in a private conversation. During the fifteen months he was imprisoned, he kept a diary that was later published in the 1870s.

In October 1863, Rev. Handy reported the following in his diary concerning some reading material that he was allowed to have. He wrote:

[T]he Federal Chaplain, called and left some papers for distribution. I am very glad to get these weeklies; but never read them without having my feelings hurt—notwithstanding many good things they contain. It is especially painful to find religious journals opposing compromise, and rejoicing with malignant spite, in the purpose of subjugation or extermination.
A correspondent of the Independent of October 15th says: *"We are to bring this civil war to a close, not by compromise. Compromise, thank God, is impossible. It is to come by subjugation or extermination of the rebels, and in no other way." Are they who thus teach disciples of the Prince of Peace? Are they not demons, belching forth the very spirit of the pit? Alas, for the age in which we live! The church is demoralized—the Christian name is too frequently a deceit—Christ's members (?) are mad men! All this is literally true to a very great extent at the North.*

When the famous English author Anthony Trollope visited America in 1861, he made it a point to hear a speech by Wendell Phillips, a Boston abolitionist and orator who was urging the U.S. government to emancipate the slaves immediately in the hope that they would rise up against the Confederate people. Trollope said of Phillips' speech*: "To me it seemed that the doctrine he preached was one of rapine, bloodshed, and social destruction. He would call upon the government…to enfranchise the slaves at once—now during the war—so that the Southern power might be destroyed by a concurrence of misfortunes…I have sometimes thought that there is no being so venomous, so blood-thirsty, as a professed philanthropist."*

In his book *When in the Course of Human Events*, Charles Adams stated that this kind of bloodthirsty rhetoric *"found expression in the devastation of civilians and civilian property by Sherman, Grant and Sheridan."* The North's ruthless conduct of the war brought them victory, and after the war was over, the Southern people had to come to terms with the outcome. So how did they interpret their defeat? Was it a judgment of God against them? [Urge all to read this book!]

Reader's Corner

The first book I co-edited and published was entitled *Faith, Valor and Devotion*. It was a collection of wartime letters written by a young Confederate officer and chaplain from Winnsboro, South Carolina, named William Porcher Dubose. Quite early in the war, in February 1862, he wrote a remarkable letter to his fiancée raising the possibility of "*our great cause finally unsuccessful & our beloved country conquered & ruined." Although he believed that the South's cause was righteous, he speculated that God might allow the calamity of defeat for the purpose of teaching his people a lesson. He wrote to her, "Might not God wisely & in love select such a method of teaching us that here 'we have no continuing city,'* but that we seek a better, even an heavenly.'" As DuBose suggests, if the South was a Christian civilization, then its people were citizens of not just one realm, but two. There was the earthly city, or system, and there was the heavenly one, that is, the Kingdom of God. Their primary citizenship was the latter.

The heavenly city to which Dubose referred is described in the book of Hebrews as the New Jerusalem which will, as foretold in the Book of Revelation, someday come down to earth ("a new heaven and a new earth"). (Rev. 21:1-2). His thoughts in this letter echo those of Saint Augustine, who observed the destruction of his own civilization when Rome was sacked by the Visigoths in the year 410. In response to the fall of Rome, Augustine wrote *The City of God* partly to console Christians with the assurance that though earthly governments may fail, their ultimate citizenship was in the kingdom of God. Along these same lines, DuBose added that "*we ought to remember that we belong to a kingdom that is above the kingdom of this world,"* and that the Christian life *"consists in the gradual withdrawal of our affections from things temporal & fixing them upon the eternal. If the dissolution of our earthly relations, the breaking up of earthly ties have any effect in advancing this result, then is the Kingdom of Christ promoted by these material disasters, & we, while we sorrow as patriots, ought to rejoice as Christians."*

You will find in letters written during and after the war speculations by some Southerners that the war was not going well, or was lost, because of sinfulness in the South. In February 1865, Dr. Francis Marion Robertson of Charleston, South Carolina, wrote, for instance, that he feared that some Confederates had been demoralized by the *"fraud, extortion, speculation and idolatry for gold which has been engendered by blockade running."* A soldier in Charleston named Theodore A. Honour wrote in July 1863 that if Charleston fell to the enemy, it was because "God is punishing us for some grievous sins which we have committed…the strongest of which is the terrible sin of extortion, and speculation on the miseries of the poor." Another sin brought up in Southern sermons was pride, and even fervently patriotic clergymen warned their congregations not to idolize their country, or their heroes.

The famous Presbyterian minister and intellectual from Virginia, Robert Lewis Dabney, also speculated as to why the South lost the war. There were two main possibilities, he wrote. The first was that the South lost for the purpose of moral and spiritual purification. William Porcher DuBose expressed a similar idea in his letter, as did President Jefferson Davis and others, and some evidence of that can be seen in the great spiritual revivals that took place in the armies of the Confederacy. Jefferson Davis also wrote that the overthrow of the South had shown "*how faithless, dishonest and barbarous our enemies were.*"

The second possibility, according to Dabney, was that the South's defeat was a chastisement for not sufficiently reforming slavery and bringing it in line with Biblical principles. There were other possibilities, of course. Regarding South Carolina's defeat in the war and conditions under radical Republican rule during so-called Reconstruction, Samuel M. McGowan of Abbeville (a former Confederate general), wrote in 1869: "*I…rather think our present condition the direct result of the work of the Devil!*" I tend to agree with General McGowan.

A few months after the end of the war, in July 1865, a South Carolina Episcopal bishop named Christopher P. Gadsden wrote to a friend (Edward McCrady) deliberating as to whether he should take the oath of allegiance to the United States, but he also expressed very eloquently his feelings about what a Christian response ought to be to the fate of his country. He wrote:

The conqueror having violated, if not destroyed, his own Constitution, to effect our conquest, I cannot see that it is our duty to help him, by the pretence of voluntary action, out of the difficulty into which he has brought himself. I am a bound spectator. I do not pretend to any political wisdom, but I have been compelled, in this crisis, thus to define to myself my own position & duties. I wait here, until I see a civil government established, & then I can better decide what course I ought to pursue. And how glorious now the realization of our heavenly citizenship. I have loved Carolina with the love of a son for a Mother, & now God has taken her away; she is a bleeding corpse, at the feet of her victor! In such a crisis a Roman would have refused to survive the land of his pride, but a Christian is better taught; though his heart is pierced, he bows his head before a sovereign God & "opens not his mouth." He feels the sin which has called down judgment; but in his repentance, he lifts his eyes to the everlasting hills & his soul is filled with the vision of the City of God. Was not this the condition of St. Paul, when he wrote "our conversation" or rather "citizenship is in heaven?" Blessed comfort of the Gospel of Christ! Our dearest earthly hopes may be crushed, our homes desolate, our land a captive, but for all that we are "citizens of no mean city;" we have an inheritance that "no man taketh from us." Never have I more deeply enjoyed these precious things of the covenant of grace; never have I so fully understood how "Christ is all in all."

Whatever the reason for the South's crushing defeat and subjugation, her people had to go living and find a way to deal with their earthly fate. Like Bishop Gadsden, many took comfort in the promises of God. Some may have been embittered by the South's defeat and perhaps lost their faith, but the majority of the Southern people clung to God and kept their faith in Him. If God, by allowing their defeat, was somehow testing this people to see if they would turn from Him, I think most passed the test.

In the years following the war, despite the oppression of Reconstruction, and widespread poverty in the South, there were men there who struggled to preserve and perpetuate what was best in Southern culture and civilization. One of those efforts resulted in the University of the South, which was first conceived in 1856 by two Episcopalian clergymen, Rev. James H. Otey and Bishop Leonidas Polk. In the 1850s, Polk was concerned that too many young Southern men were being sent north for their education, and he felt that a Southern university was needed where the students could be kept under the influence of Christian principles and the teachings of the Church. In 1860, at the laying of the cornerstone at Sewanee, Tennessee, Bishop Polk dedicated the university to "the cultivation of true Religion, learning and virtue." Unfortunately, today, the University of the South has become like most American universities, but originally, its outlook was strictly conservative and orthodox.

One of the most notable faculty members at Sewanee was John McCrady, a fiercely unreconstructed Southerner. A native of Charleston, he studied at Harvard University with Louis Agassiz. Later, he taught at the College of Charleston in the 1850s and 1860s, and in 1873 he joined the faculty of Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology. In 1877 he was asked to resign his position, and he believed this was because of his social and religious conservatism—because of his "southerness." After leaving Harvard, McCrady spent the rest of his life as a professor of biology and the relation of science and religion, at the University of the South.

In 1878, McCrady wrote a remarkable letter to fellow South Carolinian, Joseph B. Kershaw, and I wanted to share some of it with you, not only because it speaks to my subject but also because it's such a compelling and prophetic letter, and what he wrote then is still true today, even more so. In February 1878, McCrady wrote:

Dear Sir
From the time when the foresight at once Christian and patriotic of the lamented Churchman and Soldier, Bp. Polk, first projected the University of the South, I have not ceased to feel the liveliest interest in all that concerns it. The circumstances of my own life have besides tended to visit my attention upon the one great educational problem of our generation—How is it possible to teach the young the universal and unalterable truths of Christian Religion, and at the same time to train them to be independent and original investigators of every branch of human science, knowing no limit to research but those imposed by the Nature of Things. And since I am a Southerner…this question has always presented itself to my mind in especial connection with the particular problem of Southern Education under the peculiar social conditions of a despised and calumniated people—the Galileans of Christendom, who have not made themselves popular with Civilisation, by substituting its "new morality" for that of Christ, and whose traditions have consequently the unfashionable singularity of being eminently Christian.

I have long felt…this University, is the one grand opportunity Southerners have…of practically solving the problem of a United Scientific and Religious Culture. Since my connection with it, this feeling has grown into the conviction that the future of the University of the South, depends upon its success or failure in identifying itself with the tradition of Southern Christian Thought.

To effect this it has only to refuse to repudiate its own origin… It is the only institution in the whole South…wherein the people of those States can meet in council upon the many social and educational questions, great and small, peculiar to themselves, and which they alone can or ought to settle for themselves.

Of these questions, the greatest it seems to me, is that of the development of a genuine Southern Culture, having it basis in all that is pure and true and noble and good—all that is Christian in short in Southern tradition…
[Sometime I will share my attempts of such with some of the Black leadership in Bham—Fred]
I can see, as I write these words, the contemptuous smile of the devotee of antichristian civilisation: I can hear the civilised Christian, who has made a compromise with civilisation, asking, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? I can feel for the hopeless incredulity of the Southern patriot, who still stunned by the violence of his fall, and scarcely emerged from the struggle for bare existence, sees in my words only the shapes of a dream.



Reader's Corner



Political conquest, alone, does not annihilate a people. For that result another conquest is necessary, a conquest whose campaign begins, when the political subjugation is complete. It is the conquest of the mind of the conquered by the mind of the conqueror. It is a conquest in which the sacred principles and traditions of a people, the very stuff of which their true idiosyncracy and real life are made, gradually give way before the ceaseless aggressiveness of foreign ideas and traditions, and drop out of view one by one, like the dying leaves in our grand old forests. It is this conquest alone that can annihilate a people. No people was ever yet struck out of existence by absorption into another or ever more than temporarily subjugated, if its natural mind retained spirit and vitality enough, to hold fast under suffering, its own principles and traditions against foreign encroachment. The conqueror's "Education" is a far more potent destroyer than his sword…

I shall not have to say to you, that if any people have a marked idiosyncracy of tradition and principle it is the Southern people. Because of this idiosyncracy alone, have they been the victims of a war levied against them throughout the civilised world. We were assaulted and crushed, because we alone had the hardihood to resist the march of certain fanatical and antichristian extravangancies, which had slowly grown out of the gradual development of political liberty and civilisation in Europe, extravagancies which all the rest of Christendom more or less accepted. We resisted them because the peculiar circumstances of our own previous history had forced us to see, long before the world could understand it, that these ideas were fanatical extravagancies, begotten as usual by heated imagination and half-truth.

But where shall we be then? Shall we exist as a people? The march of Science is sure, but it is slow, very slow; very slow, even, where assisted by cherished prejudices. Meanwhile the ideas which threaten to destroy us, are working with the redoubled energy inspired by their temporary triumph. And if from faintheartedness or from the seductions of ease and comfort, or from other bribes we give up the mental struggle, the result will be, that our children will be a different people from their fathers; for the old Truth will be dead and buried, and the New will have nothing Southern about it but the geographical position. The old South will be dead and buried and in the same grave will lie the abortion of that contribution she might have made to the sum of human wisdom. The New South will be nothing but a provincial appendage to the North—a vast plantation worked by our degenerated children for their Northern masters.

I shall not discuss the political doctrines which are our peculiar inheritance and which our conquerors have made it high treason to profess. I shall only remind you that the right of self-government cannot be annulled by statutes nor even by conquest nor the rights of free thought and free speech abolished by any form of persecution. There is indeed as has been said an "irrepressible conflict" between the North and the South; but the Slavery question was only an episode of it. The true "irrepressible conflict" is one concerning the ideal of government. The ideal of the North is a gigantic North American power, concentrating wealth at home, and commanding applause from the visionary and inexperienced democratic element in Europe…The ideal of the South on the contrary is a pure and honest constitutional democratic government in any scale which experience may prove to be the practical limit of magnitude for such a government. Between these two ideals there is necessarily an irrepressible conflict. The Northern politicians know there is no middle ground between them; that so long as they exist together they must exist in conflict. They know that to secure the complete ascendancy of their own ideal, one of two courses is necessary—either they must exterminate the whole Southern population, or they must "educate" the South out of its ideal…This they mean to do if they can…Northern Civilisation and Culture have divorced themselves from Christianity.Southern Civilisation and Culture are still based upon Christianity…

There is more to McCrady's letter, but I'll end here. In his essay, "*The Older Religiousness of the South*," Richard M. Weaver commented that "[T]he Southern people reached the eve of the Civil War one of the few religious peoples left in the Western World." The generation that followed also remained largely faithful. Today the South remains the Bible Belt, and the principal part of the country where orthodox Christianity is still vital, yet we have seen morals and religion deteriorate to such a degree, it will be a very difficult fight to remain a religious people in any large degree. Just as James Henley Thornwell said in 1850, "the world is a battle-ground," and it still is.